

Vision for the Future

June 2020



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Executive Summary

The Grosse Pointe Academy began a long-term strategic planning process in the fall of 2018 and engaged a team of outside consultants to facilitate and support the process in November 2019. As this planning process was nearing completion, the country and the state of Michigan began fully encountering the COVID-19 pandemic. While no one can clearly predict the impact, the gravity of the pandemic is significant. Schools are closed for the remainder of the 2019/2020 academic year. The Academy made the difficult decision to postpone the annual Action Auction, an event projected to produce approximately \$400,000 in net income. Business closures and employee lay-offs will undoubtedly impact both returning and new student enrollments in the fall of 2020.

At the same time, the strategic vision created through this planning process still reflects the fundamental direction of the organization and the foundation required for the Academy to create a sustainable and vibrant future. It embraces the reality that disruption is here to stay. The school will pursue **educational innovation** and becoming a **recognized leader in Pre-K through Grade 8 education**. The vision includes **reimagining the middle school** through creating and delivering a curriculum that meets the needs of tomorrow's workplace while continuing to strengthen each

student's academic foundation. The outcome is increased student enrollment with a more **diverse student body**, that offers strong after-school, virtual and part-time student programming, and new programs for infants and early 5s. These initiatives will create a sustainable campus with 350+ students by 2030 supported by an **exceptional and award-winning staff and faculty**.



Enrollment strategies leverage the school's strengths and highlight the opportunity for students to engage in an extraordinary educational experience. Tuition assistance programs, including the **Merit Scholarship** for new grade 5-8 students, will support attracting and retaining students. Initiatives to increase student enrollment across the metro area will include **strategic partnerships** such as the Summer 2020 Camp with College for Creative Studies. Future plans are designed to increase access for a diverse student body.



"Education is in the futures business in that it is responsible for preparing students to live successfully in the future, however success is defined."

Yong Zhao,
Professor,
University of Kansas

The vision for the school identifies the need to sell, lease, or repurpose buildings and campus property in order to create a **financially sustainable physical campus**. This includes selling or leasing the underutilized Lake Shore Building and potentially removing or repurposing the Moran farm house to house an infant program. Long-term financial sustainability, supported by a **\$20M endowment**, is a critical goal for the organization.

As an independent school and 501(c)3, fundraising will continue to provide significant revenue that will enable the organization to best nurture, challenge and inspire each child. **Expanded**

fundraising initiatives including expanding the alumni network, developing **Planned Giving** initiatives, and working with the education-focused **foundation community** to create and fund innovative programming. Engagement with major donors and the identification of mission-centric initiatives will support strategic **Leadership Gifts**. The **Action Auction** and **Academy Fund** will continue to focus on increasing current and former parent participation, as they provide opportunities for engagement and community building.





Mission

The mission of The Grosse Pointe Academy is to nurture, challenge and inspire the intellectual, creative, and personal potential in each and every child.



Core Values



Excellence
in everything we do



Reflecting
Christian Values



Respect
for our students,
parents, faculty, and
community



Creating a strong
Community



Inspiring
Intellectual Curiosity



Embracing
Innovation
to prepare our
students for
tomorrow's world

Stakeholder Value Proposition

The Academy has numerous stakeholders who receive benefits from the Academy's role as an independent school educating and preparing Pre-K through Grade 8 students for their best future. While there is overlap in value among the various stakeholders,

there are also unique benefits for constituents. Understanding these value propositions enables the organization to better meet the educational needs of the students and the community.

Stakeholder	Value
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Exceptional personalized education ■ Best version of themselves when they leave ■ Confidence ■ Sense of belonging to a community ■ Potential has been tapped ■ Prepared ■ Validated as to what they can do ■ Connections ■ Curious ■ Character development
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Return on investment ■ Confident that their children are well equipped for the future (skills and tools) ■ Proud of their education ■ Nurturing environment ■ Children are known ■ Family environment ■ Community
Staff/Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Work with dedicated professionals ■ Community ■ Great reputation ■ Jobs - salary ■ Family environment ■ Freedom in teaching curriculum ■ Flexibility ■ Impacting lives
Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Supporting the mission of the school ■ Ensure an environment that is best for kids and the community ■ Ensuring the long term sustainability of the school ■ Educating young people
Donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Supporting the education - pay it forward ■ Donate for a specific reason ■ Mission alignment
Alumni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Giving back - pay it forward ■ Pride in their school ■ Nostalgia
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Enriches the community ■ Historical site ■ Pillar in the community (50 years) ■ Building / Grounds (1889) ■ Support businesses ■ Provides competition and strengthens the public schools

Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, and Threats

The Academy has a more than 50-year history of providing exceptional educational experiences for Pre-K through Grade 8 students. This history is reflected in the school's strengths utilized to educate and nurture students and build a strong sense of community. Challenges reflect changes in the ecosystem and highlight the need for innovative programming to position the

Academy as an academic leader and to build enrollment. The future of the Academy is bright as the school recognizes the strengths and challenges and aligns with the opportunities to deliver a vibrant and sustainable school ready for the next 50 years.

Strengths

- Whole child approach
- Montessori program
- Christian values
- Leadership opportunities for children
- No high school
- Small classes
- Strong sense of community
- Culture nurtures students and faculty
- Dedicated faculty and staff
- Board of Trustees
- More than a 50 year history
- 19 acre campus

Challenges

- Faculty and staff spread too thin
- Financial sustainability
- Tuition rates
- Traditional curriculum
- Declining enrollment
- Building and grounds maintenance
- Perception of academic programming
- Transportation
- No high school
- Classes too small in middle school (total of 38 students)
- Innovation
- No counselor/social worker
- Internal communications
- Competitive faculty salaries
- Brand awareness

Opportunities

- Lease or sell building and property
- Stronger relationships with parents
- Partnerships with other educational institutions for pathways to high school (U of D, CCS)
- Innovative curriculums
- Diversified learning platforms
- Expanded summer program offerings
- GPPSS middle schools changes
- Population and socioeconomic growth/shifts in Detroit
- Tuition modeling - one size doesn't fit all
- Microschool offerings
- Unbundled programming

Threats

- Competition
 - Independent schools
 - Religious schools
 - Grosse Pointe Public Schools
- Declining birth rates and school-age population
- Growth in senior population in the immediate area
- Cultural and generational shifts with families choosing how to spend their dollars
- Resistance to change in Grosse Pointe
- Economic downturn
- COVID-19 or other global catastrophes



The Future of Independent School Education

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“Independent schools will need to strengthen or redefine their value propositions, rethink their approach to teaching and learning, and put in place business models better designed for current market realities.”

Donna Orem,
President, NAIS

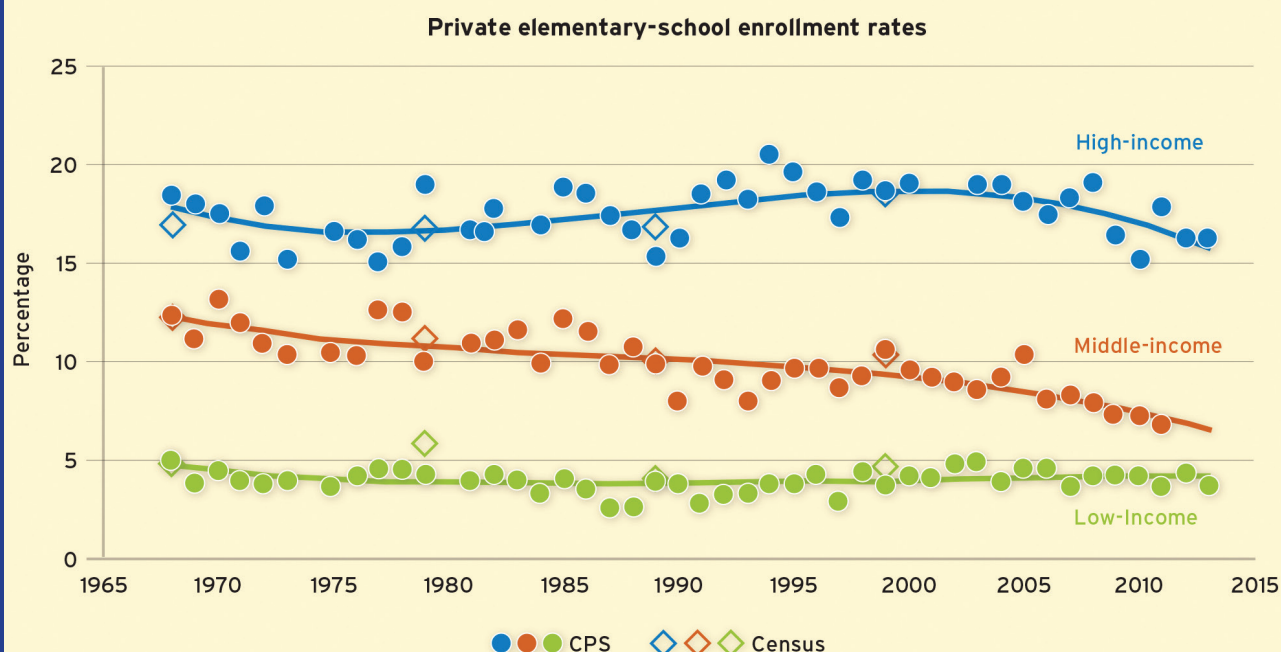
Approximately 40% of parents in 2013 said that they would prefer to send their children to a private school.¹ Private schools in the US have traditionally served about 10% of the total student population.² The cost of tuition is the key attribute impacting decisions not to send children to an independent school. This barrier is exacerbated by the growing wage gap. The middle class is now making less money per capita (on a dollar-equivalence basis) than in years past. Studies have shown that a high-income family pays about 6% of their income for a student to go to an independent school while a median household pays 18% and a low income family could pay upwards of 25% of household income. Add into this the growing cost of college and parents are having to make critical decisions on funding the education of their children.

Religious-affiliated schools comprise another sector of private schools typically offering lower tuition and serving a wider economic cohort. In recent years, the closure of many Catholic schools created an even greater gap in affordable options for families who desire a private-school education.

Median tuition at independent schools increased by 48% from 2006-2015, while median income increased only by 17%. Only 5% of students in independent schools are from low-income families. The number of students from high-income families was flat from around 1975 to 2006 and then had a deep decline just after the Great Recession from 2008-2015.³

Fewer Students from Middle-Income Families Enrolling in Private Schools (Figure 2)

From 1968 to 2013, the proportion of children from middle-income families enrolled in private elementary schools declined by almost half while the proportions of children from affluent and low-income families attending private schools held steady. Over this period, the gap in enrollment rates between high- and middle-income families widened from 5.5 to 9.3 percentage points.



NOTE: Low-, middle-, and high-income families are defined as those from the 10th, 50th, and 90th percentile of the national income distribution for families with children in grades 1 to 8, respectively.

SOURCE: U.S. Census and the Current Population Survey

Schools have developed a number of innovative programs to help keep the independent school vision alive. These include:

- Exploring multiple platforms for the delivery of learning — traditional location-based school, experiential/real-world learning, and virtual. These alternatives reduce costs, generate additional revenue, and provide more access to educational programs.
- Lobbying for publicly funded programs such as vouchers, tax-credit scholarships, and education savings accounts.
- Increased investments in fundraising to bolster private donations and endowment funds.
- Tuition assistance programs.
- Creative revenue streams such as the alternative use of facilities, work-study programs, and teacher training programs.
- Reducing overhead and staffing to lower per-student costs.
- Greater use of technology, both for instruction and to reduce facility costs.

A growing trend in the independent school world is the emergence of the **microschool**. These are intentionally small, autonomous schools with multi-age classrooms and a personalized approach to instruction. It has been characterized as a learning institution where the teacher is a “guide on the side” rather than the “sage on the stage”. An enrollment threshold of 150 students is often used as the guideline, based on the Dunbar’s number, which is a suggested cognitive limit to the number of people with whom one can maintain stable social relationships — relationships in which an individual knows who each person is and how each person relates to every other person.⁴ These microschools praise autonomy and the agility of small size to enable innovation and iteration.⁵

Unbundled schooling has been getting additional scrutiny in the independent school world. This allows for educators to offer and families to select educational programming à la carte that aligns with the needs of homeschooling families and the individualization of younger generations.

The **NAIS 2025 and Beyond Initiative**⁶ is building on the work done by Stanford to reimagine what the university could be in the context of a changing world. In April 2020, NAIS identified the following provocations for independent school to explore and reimagine their future:

Foundation and Finance

- Hidden Levers: Reconfigure the infrastructure and building blocks of K–12 institutions. What no longer makes sense? What could be accomplished more effectively? How could collaboration or networking help us to think about

infrastructure differently?

- Radical Affordability: Reimagine the way that independent schools are financed, business models are configured, and families could afford to pay for independent schools. How can we open up access to a greater diversity of students?

Work and World

- Career Crafting: Rethink what happens after high school. With a new generation of students who may want options other than college, how could we prepare students to go directly into the workforce or pursue alternatives?
- Citizen Shaping: Reengineer how we prepare students to be global citizens with a mission for solving some of the world’s biggest problems. Can we help students to shape an education guided by mission?

Pace and Place

- Changing Paces: Think differently about the time it takes to move through a K–12 education. Consider how we could introduce flexibility in the time of day, semester, or school year.
- Changing Spaces: Rethink where and how understanding happens to support different types of student learning. Can we use what we are discovering from our current e-learning environments to think about what could be possible?

Acumen and Agency

- Competency-Centered: Reorient the student experience around the whole student and the competencies they will need in this changing landscape. How might we rethink education in a world where human and machines partner?
- Agency-Oriented: Extend student agency through personal learning agendas and purposeful learning experiences. How can we even more intentionally put the



1. <http://www.edchoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/More-Than-Scores.pdf>

2. <https://www.capenet.org/facts.html>

3. <https://www.educationnext.org/research-shows-middle-class-needs-school-choice/>

4. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunbar%27s_number

5. https://bellwethereducation.org/sites/default/files/Working%20Toward%20Equitable%20Access%20and%20Affordability_Bellwether.pdf

6. <https://www.nais.org/learn/independent-ideas/april-2020/the-nais-2025-and-beyond-initiative-an-invitation-to-participate-in-co-creating-our-future/>

Primary Research

Focus groups, listening sessions, individual interviews, and surveys were conducted between November 2019 and March 2020 with over 125 participants. These participants included current and past parents, grandparents, staff, and Board members.

Board Listening Session and Interviews

The 15-member Board of Trustees is an informed group of parents and community members with a deeper understanding of the school's finances, challenges, and opportunities. Their key takeaways included the following:

- Current business model is not sustainable
- Messaging (and focus) of schools needs to be clear on what the school is and is not (Catholic, Christian, or independent)
- There is a need to create a clearly defined value proposition
- Changes in public middle schools might be an opportunity to increase middle school enrollment
- Consider merging or partnering with other educational institutions
- Beautiful campus is a significant asset
- Value in the Montessori environment in the Early School

Parent Listening Sessions and Interviews

25 parents participated in 4 listening sessions on December 9th and January 14th and numerous individual interviews. The parents consistently expressed their love for the Academy and the Academy community, while providing valuable insights on continuous improvement. Below is a summary of their key reflections on the Academy:

Challenges

- Demographics in GP with fewer kids per family
- Clear messaging on Christian values and academic performance
- Limited diversity
- Small middle-school class sizes
- Strength of GPPSS
- Limited male teachers and teacher diversity

Opportunities

- Create a center for GPA graduates to offer tutoring, test prep, foreign language practice, sports/training
- Partner with a high school to offer preferred admissions
- Focus on attracting and retaining the best teachers
- Create unique educational experiences to differentiate the school and bolster the value proposition
- Offer post-graduation programming

2020 GPA Family Survey

A short survey was distributed to all Academy families in January 2020. Approximately 50% of families (69) responded. Scoring 4.0 or above on a 5-point scale, the top 7 reasons a family chose the Academy were:



Moral
Development



Educational
Innovation



Character
Development



Montessori
Curriculum



Academic
Program



Size of the
Classes



Inclusive
Environment

Families responded that they would like to see more focus on 21st century skills, academic excellence, innovation, and extracurricular activities. Key areas for improvement included increased enrollment, greater diversity, more innovation, stronger academics, and more leadership opportunities. 91% of the families responded indicating they were very likely (56%) or likely (35%) to recommend the Academy to others.

Departing Families Survey and Interviews

Feedback from families leaving the Academy prior to graduation is critical for a better understanding of why they are departing. Outreach to families not returning for the 2019/2020 school year resulted in several individual interviews and 8 responses to a survey distributed to all these families. While some decisions are financial, there are a variety of reasons that drive this behavior, and ultimately it is a decision families make relative to the investment and the value their child is receiving. Other families said they never intended to remain at the Academy through Grade 8 and/or always intended to transfer the child to the public schools. Some families did identify cost as an issue. One family cited an issue with bullying behavior and another said the Academy was just not a good fit for the child's personality. Future plans call for more systematic gathering and potentially the use of third-party survey resources.

NAIS Strategy Lab

The Academy is a member of the NAIS Strategy Lab founding cohort. The NAIS Strategy Lab has provided a framework to help schools understand challenges and opportunities, align opportunities to market demands, and design mission-centered solutions grounded in clear outcomes and metrics. Working closely with innovation consulting firm The Rewired Group, NAIS has identified four key reasons parents choose to enroll their children in an independent school:

- When my child's school is failing him or her
- When I have a child who is intelligent and emotionally mature
- When a school is focused almost solely on test scores and academic curriculum and not my child's social and emotional development
- When my child has talents that must be cultivated in order for him or her to fulfill their potential



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“Design a school that can truly prepare our children, all children, for the life they want to live – to be the best versions of themselves, to be successful in the fullest way possible – so they can live a fulfilled life. A life filled with financial security, purposeful work, strong relationships, meaningful community, and personal health.”

Diane Tavenner,
CEO, Summit Public
Schools

Big Hairy Audacious Goals and Strategic Initiatives

The Big Hairy Audacious Goals (BHAGs) represent long-term goals to be achieved in 10+ years. Strategic initiatives provide the incremental steps and achievements required to make the long-term goals a reality. The table below depicts the BHAGs and the associated strategic initiatives. Each strategic initiative is

supported by SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound) goals that reflect annual goals and milestones for tracking, discussion, and potential course corrections on a quarterly basis by the staff and Board of Trustees.

BHAG (10+ YEARS):

Recognized Leader in Pre-K Through Grade 8 Education

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES (1-5 YEARS):

- Reimagined middle school curriculum
- Clearly mapped arch of development between early, lower, and middle-schools
- Mastery Transcript (measurement of cognitive and social/emotional attainment) for all students
- Diversifying the delivery of learning — on-campus/in-person, experiential/real-world, and virtual
- Tutoring and other activities for high school students
- Student achievements reflect the Portrait of a Graduate with an individual dashboard tracking student achievements (academic, soft skills, and character/community)
- Strong and systematic parent-school partnerships and engagement
- Partnerships with higher ed institutions

BHAG (10+ YEARS):

350 Students

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES (1-5 YEARS):

- Implementation of tuition assistance modeling
- Increased diversity (geography, race, religion) year over year
- Early 5s program added 2021/2022
- Infant program added 2022/2023
- 5% average student enrollment year over year growth post COVID-19

BHAG (10+ YEARS):

Award-Winning Faculty

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES (1-5 YEARS):

- Creating a culture of academic rigor and innovation
- Professional development to support diversified learning and delivery models
- Annual performance goals and assessments to identify opportunities and challenges for support and development
- Competitive wages and benefits

BHAG (10+ YEARS):

Reimagined Campus

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES (1-5 YEARS):

- Sell or lease the Lake Shore Building to reduce annual operating expenses
- Remove or repurpose Moran farm house for infant program
- Add new programs and partners to increase year-round utilization of the campus

BHAG (10+ YEARS):

\$20M Endowment

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES (1-5 YEARS):

- Long-term debt retired with sale or lease of buildings and campus property
- Alumni outreach for Academy Fund
- Planned Giving initiatives
- Leadership Gift initiatives
- Increase parent giving participation
- Establish relationships with local and regional foundations for grant funding

Reimagining the Curriculum: Middle School

As the Academy middle-school program enrollment has declined to 38 students, the school is at a critical point to pivot the program in order to remain relevant and sustainable. This new curriculum will require real innovation and continue to evolve as the needs of the future workforce are transformed. The January 2016 Future Jobs Report cited that nearly 40% of the skills required by key jobs in industry are not yet part of the core skill set of these functions today.⁷ McKinsey's Global Institute Report (2017-2019) estimates that one-half of all the jobs that currently exist in the world will disappear over the next decade. Many more will be created, but we don't know what they will be. This uncertainty creates significant challenges and great opportunities for the Academy to create and deliver a curriculum designed to meet these needs.

The key fundamentals for middle-school programming will **preserve and enhance the academic foundation** in the middle school, while including creative and innovative programming focused on providing the education and skill sets required to best prepare students for their future. The curriculum will ensure that **learning is relevant** to future success and that the creative abilities of students are fully fostered and developed. The **practical life foundation** in the Academy's Montessori program will also be more fully integrated throughout the early and middle-school curriculums. This curriculum envisions creating the leadership and communication skills, self-confidence, academic excellence, and moral and ethical compass to meet the needs of tomorrow's workforce and supports the arch of learning at GPA from early school through middle-school graduation.

Developing, implementing, and supporting a state-of-the-art middle-school curriculum will require dedicated staff resources to create and guide these initiatives and strong professional development for the staff. It is important to acknowledge that the Academy programs should incorporate best practices seen today in independent schools across the country. Best practices are available from the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), Knowledge Works and specific independent schools including, Lakeside Schools in Seattle, WA.

This reimagined middle school will require a better balance of core competencies and 21st century competencies. This pivot includes changes in teaching philosophy, changing curriculum offerings, and the elimination of programs or activities to ensure there is room for the depth of learning

necessary. Current offerings that will continue to be emphasized include communication skills, leadership training, the student store, and the Capstone Project in grade 8. Specific curriculum changes beginning in 2020/2021 include:

- Reviewing current elective offerings to determine value and opportunities for change (adding and/or removing options)
- Offering more technical skills including, STEM and Robotics
- Increasing cross-curricular and real-world experience problem solving
- Engaging and leveraging parents and alumni to provide real-world exposure and experiences
- Proposing increased community service and off-campus experiences related to elective programming
- Evaluating the frequency and delivery of special programming such as art and music.
- Supplementing PE with the currently required after school sports
- Adding forensics as a requirement and eliminating middle school plays

New **partnerships and collaborations** present an opportunity to more quickly and efficiently provide new and differentiated programming at the Academy. The summer 2020 pilot program with the **College for Creative Studies** will bring 2 weeks of summer programming to the Academy campus. Local resources such as Junior Achievement and Toastmasters plus national resources such as Debatabl Kids in Seattle and Debate It Forward in Chicago offer relevant and accessible programming options.

The **Portrait of a Graduate** was developed to reflect the goals and outcomes for each and every GPA graduate. It reflects the emphasis on rigorous core academic skill development, a personalized educational program, and a partnership with parents to nurture, challenge, and inspire students to reach their full academic physical, and creative potential, be prepared for success in an ever-changing world, possess determined intellectual curiosity and a life-long love of learning, and exhibit the highest moral character and principles.



“Independent schools do not have a divine right for existence. They must continue to inspire and be relevant to changing times, making valuable contributions to the outside world through their work.”

Ian Symmonds,
*Ian Symmonds
& Associates*

7. The Future of Jobs: Global Challenge Insight Report, World Economic Forum, January 2016

New and Expanded Programs

New programs will enable the school to increase enrollment, diversify revenue streams, and expand their impact on the community at large. Several initiatives were identified that meet needs in the community, leverage technology, and expand the market overall for the Academy. These programs need to be further evaluated and developed to validate demand, revenue potential, and resources required to launch and support. While the online and virtual programming expansion is targeted for

2022/2023, the experience with online delivery during COVID-19 may enable the school to accelerate these initiatives.

Current programs including hosting **weddings** and **summer camps** also provide important incremental revenues and the opportunity for growth and expansion. The opportunity is to maximize campus occupancy year-round while meeting the needs (space and safety) of the core student body. Below is a proposed time-line:

Early Fives

LAUNCH DATE: 2021/2022:

- Integrated into existing Early School facility
- Staff requirements include 1 new teacher and aides
- Estimated revenue Year 1 \$192K

Infant Daycare

LAUNCH DATE: 2022/2023:

- Potential to house in Moran farm house
- Significant unmet need in Grosse Pointe community
- Estimated revenue Year 1 \$225K

Tutoring and other Activities for High School Students

LAUNCH DATE: 2021/2022:

- Allows opportunity to continue to engage GPA alumni through high school
- Creates new earned revenue streams and employment opportunities
- Develops stronger connection between students and the Academy throughout high school
- Increases building and campus utilization after school, evenings, and summers

Online/Virtual Students

LAUNCH DATE: 2022/2023:

- Opportunity to expand geographical reach
- These could be full-time or part-time students
- COVID-19 crisis preparing the faculty to leverage technology for online learning

Part-Time Students

LAUNCH DATE: 2021/2022:

- Designed to support students schooled at home and other students seeking enrichment programming
- Increases building and campus utilization

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“Nationally, it seemed as if we no longer needed to debate the need for a new model of education in the 21st century: the real question was: How do we make it happen?”

Ken Kay,
CEO, EdLeader21

Admissions and Recruitment

Increasing student enrollment will require best practices across all admission initiatives. Strategic tuition and tuition assistance initiatives will support student attraction, retention, and diversity.

Tuition assistance in 2019/2020 at the Academy included scholarships, financial assistance and multiple child discounts of approximately \$600,000 or 16% of total tuition revenues. A new \$100,000 merit scholarship program, The Academy Leadership Scholars, will be awarded to up to 10 qualified students entering the Academy in the fall of 2020 in grades 5-8. The team is evaluating tuition assistance models that would attract incremental students representing diverse race, socio-economics, and geography such as the flexible tuition model developed by the Gordon School.⁸

Geographic and economic diversity will be bolstered by marketing directly to families outside of Grosse Pointe,

promoting the new merit scholarship program, and potentially providing transportation for students outside the Grosse Pointe community. Currently 25% of all GPA families live outside the Grosse Pointe community. Grosse Pointe has less than 44,000 residents with an estimated 12,500 children under the age of 18.⁹ The 6-county metro Detroit region has 4.3M residents with almost 1.1M potential students under the age of 18.¹⁰

Data-driven decision making is critical to ensure admission strategies reflect market trends, competitive changes, economic realities, and target return on investments for the school. This requires the technology infrastructure to track and analyze enrollment trends at the Academy and quickly react to changes and opportunities in the ecosystem.



Marketing and Messaging

While the Academy benefits from its 50 plus year history, the declining enrollment trends reflect the critical need to build a brand that accurately reflects the value of an Academy education. Messaging needs to speak to current and potential families and reach them on multiple marketing platforms that include the website, social media, text messaging, email, and direct mail. A clear and consistent strategic marketing plan will be developed by the fall of 2020 that focuses on the school's value proposition and differentiators.

External marketing strategies to support attracting new students relies primarily on the website, social media, and collateral materials. Videos are a compelling medium to share the stories of current students and alumni and will be expanded.

Internal marketing is critical to student and parent satisfaction and ultimately both their referral and retention rates. While the communication needs of today's parents varies widely, there is a need for consistent multimodal communication. Standard operating procedures should direct routine parent communications, including in-person, phone, text, email, newsletters, and other written documents. The goal is to transition all parent communications from flyers to email and text

for the 2020/2021 academic year. The overall communications strategy will ensure consistent and appropriate marketing and messaging to all stakeholders.

A **comprehensive marketing plan** will be developed by the fall of 2020 to focus on clear and consistent messaging to tell the story of the Academy and position its value proposition. Components of this plan include a **brand refresh**, potential **name change**, and **updated website** that creates engaging pages for external and internal audiences. **Earned and paid media** will support the acquisition of new students outside the Grosse Pointe community. The **social media** strategy will continue to leverage sponsored ads with easy navigation from Facebook feeds to the admission pages on the website. The Academy deploys public and private pages for Facebook and Instagram and has sporadically supported Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn. The marketing plan will include a comprehensive social media strategy and content calendar for consistent, timely, and targeted posts. Updated **video** equipment or the use of contracted resources will be deployed to capture student stories and create professional video clips for multiple platforms.

8. <https://www.gordonschool.org/admission/family-individualized-tuition>

9. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/>

[grossepointewoodscitymichigan,grossepointefarmscitymichigan,grossepointeparkcitymichigan,grossepointecitymichigan,PST045218](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/grossepointewoodscitymichigan,grossepointefarmscitymichigan,grossepointeparkcitymichigan,grossepointecitymichigan,PST045218)

10. <https://statisticalatlas.com/metro-area/Michigan/Detroit/Age-and-Sex>

The Campus

The Academy campus sits on 19 acres in Grosse Pointe Farms with multiple buildings for students, faculty, and administrative staff. Since the Academy was created in 1969, the **Lake Shore Building** has not been used for student classrooms. Currently,

11 administrative staff members have offices in the first two floors of the building with the third and fourth floors unoccupied. Below is a chart comparing the square footage and utilization for the student building and the Lake Shore Building.

Building Utilization

Building	Square Footage	# of Staff and Students	Sq. Footage per Person
Main School	49,080	133	369
Early School	12,730	97	131
Lake Shore Building	35,880	11	3,262

The Board of Trustees voted to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) in January 2020. Multiple community engagement and key stakeholder listening sessions followed in addition to meetings with leadership from the City of Grosse Pointe Farms in early 2020. A Lake Shore Building ad hoc committee was formed to develop the RFP, facilitate its distribution and select a development partner. The goals for this project include the following:

- Enhance the educational experience for GPA students and strengthen the school's long-term financial sustainability.
- Ensure that the design of any proposed repurposing thoughtfully responds to the needs of the GPA and surrounding community, while delivering an outcome that is architecturally harmonious with the building's heritage and ensures the safety of the students.
- Identify mutually beneficial business partnerships between the selected partner and the Academy that recognizes the long-term coexistence between the two entities.

- Minimize disruption to the GPA campus and community during the construction phase as well as ongoing operations.
- Make an impactful contribution to the Grosse Pointe community through the repurposing of the historic Lake Shore Building.

The current timeline anticipates issuing an RFP in early summer 2020 with a development partner engaged by the end of the calendar year. The revenues will be used to retire outstanding long-term debt and enable annual operating costs of over \$250,000 to be redirected to student education.

Additional campus initiatives include removing or repurposing the **Moran farm house** for an infant program beginning fall of 2022 and continuing to explore opportunities to increase rentals and occupancy of other **school buildings** and **athletic fields** without compromising the needs of the core student body.



Fundraising

COVID-19 is significantly impacting both fundraising capacity and a shifting of donations (individual, corporate, and foundations) to COVID-19 specific needs over the next 18+ months. While it is difficult to predict the extent of the impact, it led to the cancellation of the May 2020 Action Auction. Over \$200K in funds were already secured for the event and many of these will be carried over for the 2020/2021 Action Auction. While the Academy has enjoyed tremendous success with their **Action Auction** for over 50 years, there are current and potential challenges that include declining corporate sponsorships, event attendance, and parent participation at approximately 30%. The future success of the event will demand continuing to deliver an event that increases parent, alumni, and community support.

The **Academy Fund** generated \$204K in 2018/2019 with the 2019/2020 forecast projected at \$150K. Initiatives to increase parent engagement and giving will target increasing parent giving from 46% to 65% in 2020/2021 with the longer term goal of 80%+ parent giving. **Leadership Gifts** in 2019/2020 totaled \$1.2M,

representing significant donations to the school for a comprehensive facility assessment and tennis court renovations. Engagement with major donors to identify strategic and impactful giving opportunities will be a priority as the school seeks funding for a successful and sustainable future.

Future initiatives also focus on growing the **alumni program** and alumni giving to tap into the over 2,100 GPA alumni and families. Outreach to this community began in 2019/2020 with an event in Chicago to personally connect with alumni. With over 50 years of graduates, there is an opportunity to engage this group and develop a strong and lasting relationship with GPA. This group, including parents and grandparents, can be instrumental in the development and launch of a **Planned Giving** program.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted giving priorities for many foundations, there is an opportunity to build relationships and seek support from foundations focused on education, as equitable educational access and innovative learning solutions remain a high priority for many organizations.

“A strong and thriving democracy requires citizens who are well informed and engaged, who understand the weight of their vote and the value of their voice.”

Diane Tavenner,
CEO, Summit
Public Schools

The Team

As the school aspires to be a recognized leader in Pre-K through Grade 8 education, they need to attract and retain the very best faculty. This will be achieved by providing a school that supports and rewards innovation and teaching excellence and provides competitive wages and benefits. The school will be restructured to reflect three (rather than four) divisions comprised of the early school, lower school and middle school. The lower school will include grades 1-4 and the middle school will include grades 5-8.

Professional growth and development opportunities will be identified and supported by the **Professional Development Committee** to provide the skills and exposure to new and innovative educational philosophies and practices. The Professional Development Committee also plays a key role in creating a culture for the staff aligned with the core values of respect, excellence, intellectual curiosity, Christian values, community, and innovation. Continued engagement in NAIS and ISACS provides data and insights on best practices and benchmarks for private schools. The staff will engage in site visits and develop professional relationships with leading independent schools to explore successes and lessons learned.

Annual performance goals and assessments will identify training needs and opportunities to leverage staff strengths through mentoring and coaching. As GPA recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic and school enrollment increases, the school will continue to evaluate **total compensation packages** relative to other independent schools in order to attract and retain the best talent. This includes salaries and wages, benefits, professional development, and paid time off.

The team is led by Tommy Adams, **Head of School**, and supported by Jennifer Kendall, **Assistant Head of School for Early and Lower School Education and Curriculum**, and Deidre DeBoer, **Assistant Head of School Grades 4-8**. The administrative staff includes Gray Jessiman, **Director of Admissions**; Emily Scupholm, **Interim Development Director**; and Lani Martin, **Director of Marketing and Communications**. As of April 2020, the full staff includes 39 full-time positions and one vacant third-grade teaching role as well as 18 part-time positions. Staff needs will be carefully assessed and aligned with 2020/2021 student enrollment and curriculum delivery requirements.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees provides guidance, oversight, and fundraising support for the Academy. Standing committees include the Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Enrollment and Marketing Committee, Development Committee, Buildings and Grounds Committee, and Educational Policy Committee.

2020/2021 initiatives include in-person or online Board training and development to support success and engagement for all Board members. The current Board of Trustees includes the following members and roles:

Executive Committee

Tommy Adams
Head of School

Andrea Soave Provenzano
President

T. Hart Mecke III
Vice President

Dr. Peter Donaldson
Secretary

Charles Tourangeau
Treasurer

Dr. Melanie Darke
Executive Committee Member at Large

Trustees

Bridget Bearss, RSCJ

Hali H. Giessler

Marita S. Grobbel

Beth Boji Kelly

Carole J. Peabody

Kate Peabody

Bob Rahaim

Megan Stooke

Amy Tomlinson

Key Performance Indicators

Key performance indicators (KPIs) enable the school to track the fundamental performance metrics of the school and share these with staff, Board of Trustees, and other community stakeholders. The following KPIs are closely tied to the long-term vision and strategic initiatives and will enable the team to continually assess and analyze current successes and challenges.

of
Total
Students

Student
Retention
Rate

Net
Income

Development
Revenue

Mastery
Transcript
(% of students)



Thank You to the Strategic Planning Committee

Tommy Adams

Didi DeBoer

Marita Grobbel

Gray Jessiman

Jen Kendall

Claudia Leslie

Lani Martin

Sue Martin

Bridgette Murray

Andrea Soave Provenzano

Angela Randazzo

Emily Scupholm

