

STRATEGIC PLAN

SOUTHLAKE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY



SouthLake Friends,

SouthLake Christian Academy enjoys both a remarkable history and a bright future. The school opened in the fall of 1994 with 23 students and three teachers in combined classes that included kindergarten through fourth grade. The founders of the school were members of SouthLake Presbyterian Church who intended for the Academy to prepare students for college and to proclaim Christ while welcoming students of all faiths. Today, the Academy enrolls more than 600 students in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade and its commitment to rigorous college preparation in a Christ-centered environment is stronger than ever.

As SouthLake Christian Academy approaches its third decade of service to the community, we know strategic planning is vital to the ongoing health and momentum of the organization. Our board members, administrators, teachers, coaches, parents, and community partners each have a vested interest in a strong future for the school. For these reasons, SouthLake Christian Academy launched a strategic planning process in the fall of 2018 and completed the process in the winter of 2020. We are excited to present the results here, particularly because you will see many plans are already underway or completed.

We believe the plan detailed in these pages honestly reflects collaborative input from all SLCA stakeholders and represents our best efforts to capture both God's direction and the collective wisdom of our community. The most challenging step of any planning process is the execution. As the strategic planning process concluded, a global pandemic ensued. The success with which SouthLake thrived during unprecedented financial and logistical challenges underscores our God's remarkable grace toward our community. Moving forward with confidence into the future, we will continue to seek God's direction and the faithful involvement of all our stakeholders. We pray this strategic plan inspires each of you to participate actively in the future that God has for SouthLake Christian Academy.

Onward,



Matthew S. Kerlin, Ph.D.
Head of School



OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- 1** Student & Faculty Success
- 2** Spiritual Vitality
- 3** Enrollment Growth & Marketing
- 4** Facility Enhancement
- 5** Financial Strength



STUDENT & FACULTY SUCCESS

Promote an academically rigorous environment to prepare students for college and life.

OBJECTIVES

1 Recruit and retain high-quality Christian teachers from diverse backgrounds, providing them with competitive compensation and supporting professional development through continuing education, **peer mentoring, regular evaluations, and constructive feedback.**

Create innovative opportunities for students to learn life skills through technical training, work-study programs, **leadership development, and personal finance education.**

Promote a classroom environment conducive to learning, **keeping class sizes small**, setting age-appropriate behavioral expectations, and maintaining campus safety as a high priority.

Enhance academic rigor by adding classes for ACT/SAT preparation, engineering, **robotics, debate, public speaking, Christian ethics, theatre**, and American Sign Language, as enrollment and funding allow.

**These items are already in progress.*





ACTION PLAN

- +** Conduct a salary study to assess competitiveness of our salary and benefits relative to peer schools.
- +** Recruit diverse teachers from strong education programs in North Carolina.
- +** Set a budget for professional development and create a grant proposal process for teachers to request funds for conference attendance.
- +** Implement our new teacher evaluation and mentoring program (***STEP program***).
- +** ***Survey parents and students annually for feedback on teacher effectiveness.***
- +** ***Enhance elective and summer course offerings for Upper School students.***

**These items are already in progress.*

SPIRITUAL VITALITY

Foster Christ-centered community at school and beyond.



OBJECTIVES

Establish ways for students to serve the community and the world, sharing Christ through local service projects and international mission trips.

Continue to develop a school-wide Bible curriculum and discipleship initiatives to ensure that SLCA graduates possess both the biblical literacy and theological competency to engage culture through a Christian worldview.

Teach students to worship and to lead in worship by building music programs and ministry leadership initiatives that serve the school and local churches.

Create ways to minister to SLCA families through parent Bible studies, spiritual life conferences, and pastoral care to families in need.

Provide additional support for students with specialized academic, spiritual, and mental health needs.

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ACTION PLAN

- + Promote service-learning projects for each grade, deepening community relationships.
- + ***Evaluate and strengthen current Bible curriculum and spiritual life programs with a thorough understanding of the needs of our changing community.***
- + Develop a robust worship leadership program through Chapel Band class, performing arts ensembles, and other worship leadership programs.
- + Begin a weekly Bible study for parents, host periodic special events for families (lunch speaker series, conferences, etc.), and identify resources to minister to families in need.
- + ***Identify additional personnel to support students at risk or in crisis.***

**These items are already in progress.*



ENROLLMENT GROWTH & MARKETING

Create ownership and appreciation for the SLCA mission, reputation, and brand.

OBJECTIVES

Establish standards for efficient and effective communication between SLCA and its employees, families, alumni, and other constituents.

Manage the SLCA brand for consistent messaging and appearance of our logos, colors, website, social media accounts, signage, uniforms, mascot design, and school-related print materials.

Develop a plan to encourage SLCA constituents to share stories of school success and achievement reflecting the school's Christ-centered mission.

Recruit students and employees from the ranks of international and minority populations so SLCA reflects the demographics of our city and the diversity of the Body of Christ.

**These items are already in progress.*

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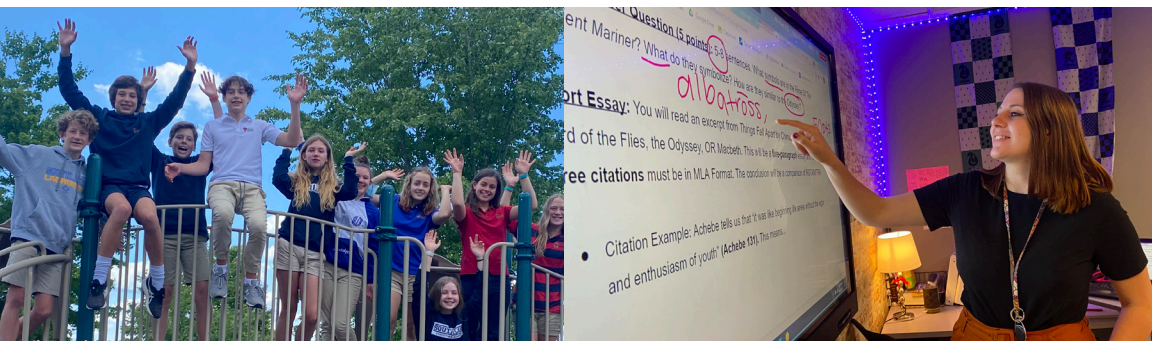
ACTION PLAN

- +** Manage information flow from the school to all constituents in order to streamline communications while maximizing social media engagement.
- +** Identify a professional marketing firm to conduct a brand audit and help us better tell the SLCA story.
- +** ***Right-size school enrollment to a level at or near our efficient operating capacity by grade and class***, without sacrificing academic standards or our commitment to grow minority student enrollment.
- +** Enlist an enrollment consultant to assist with minority student recruitment and maximize financial aid for under-represented student populations.
- +** Develop social media standards and plans to promote school innovation and excellence.

**These items are already in progress.*

FACILITY ENHANCEMENT

Improve campus facilities and infrastructure to support the Academy's academic and spiritual mission.



OBJECTIVES

Identify new full-service dining space and a commercial kitchen for on-site food preparation, expanding healthy food options to meet the dietary needs of all students.

Update the appearance and function of First Building to reflect current usage, beautify property with new campus-wide landscaping, improve playgrounds, and install a sound system in the stadium.

Build a new gymnasium to provide added space for JK-12 physical education, athletic competition, indoor recreation, and supporting locker rooms and meeting spaces for teams, coaches, officials, and teachers.

Reconfigure existing gymnasium for use as a space for worship, fine arts, and school assemblies.

Continually upgrade technology infrastructure to increase WI-FI bandwidth, provide teachers with new laptop computers, and update touch-screen technology in all classrooms.

****These items are already in progress.***

ACTION PLAN

- + Present conceptual renderings that provide visual support for the SLCA strategic plan.
- + Assess the feasibility of converting the lower level of Hampton Hall to a full-service dining facility for use until a new building is built.
- + Develop plans for remodeling the exterior of First Building, **converting existing gym into assembly space**, and improving campus landscaping.
- + Develop plans for a new building to include a gym, dining space, a commercial kitchen, and classrooms.

**These items are already in progress.*



FINANCIAL STRENGTH

Build financial stability and establish a culture of philanthropy to protect the Academy's future.

OBJECTIVES

Promote an Annual Fund allowing SLCA to make campus improvements, help fund financial aid, and keep SLCA affordable for as many as possible.

Launch a Capital Campaign to fund the major initiatives of the SLCA Strategic Plan, including academic, athletic, fine arts, and facilities improvements.

Retire debt, allowing the school to contain tuition increases and devote more revenue to school improvements.

Build an endowment to support school longevity and provide resources for potential school emergencies and disaster recovery.

**These items are already in progress.*



ACTION PLAN

- +** Conduct a feasibility study to determine realistic fundraising goals.
- +** *Establish convenient methods of charitable giving, including complete matching funds information, payroll deduction, estate and stock gifts, and gifts in-kind options.*
- +** *Seek an Advancement and Marketing employee to lead the school's fundraising efforts and build a culture of loyalty and philanthropy with our alumni, parents, grandparents, and community constituents.*
- +** Build cash reserves equal to five months of operating expenses and included deferred maintenance projects in the school's annual budgeting process.

**These items are already in progress.*

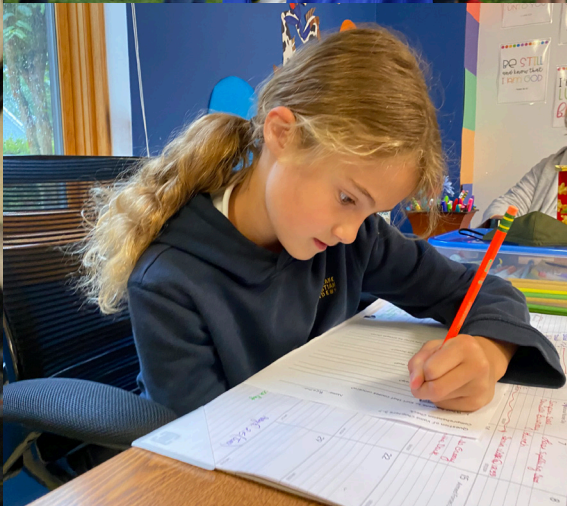


ONWARD

An effective strategic plan should guide an organization for approximately five years. No plan will capture all that a school does. Some initiatives identified during the planning process are already underway or complete. As no plan is perfect, minor changes to the plan will be necessary. We need the flexibility for additions, subtractions, and adjustments to the plan to reflect continuously changing realities. Because our plan is ambitious, we may not complete every goal. Because our God is able, we may accomplish more than we imagine.

For some organizations, strategic planning takes years and involves significant struggle and disagreement. This has not been the case with SouthLake Christian Academy. It is possible that those familiar with the Academy will read this document and ask, “Why did this plan take more than a year to devise? These objectives were obvious to me before the process began!” If that is your response to our Strategic Plan, then the Task Force will have accomplished its purpose. Task Force members will testify to how harmoniously a consensus emerged concerning the main objectives of the plan. Our belief from the beginning was that many voices would yield a better result than only a few. Participation in the formation of this plan was extensive by all SLCA constituents, including parents, teachers, students, administrators, alumni, and community members. Our prayer is that SouthLake Christian Academy will be better for the collaborative work of all those who contributed to these plans.





Thank you to the Strategic Planning Task Force

Matthew Kerlin, Head of School & Parent
Jed Belvin, Parent & SouthLake Presbyterian Church Elder
Lisa Cernuto, Alumni Parent
Derek Farley, Class of 2021
Richard Hester, Parent
Brian Hines, Parent
Brooke Hondros, Parent & Advancement Director
Sam James, Class of 2003
Sholeh Kornegay, Parent & School Board Member
Lynn Moore, 2nd Grade Teacher & Alumni Parent
Stuart Ross, Parent
Kim Sailors, Parent
Kennedy Smith, Class of 2019



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#gosouthlake

