



Deepening Our Roots and Extending Our Reach

Summit School Strategic Priorities 2023–2028





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MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Dear Summit Community,

For 90 years Summit has stayed the course toward our true north: What founding Head of School Louise Futrell described as a “dream school where everybody could be a somebody.”

At Summit, we understand that curiosity is the basic fuel of learning, and so, we cultivate in our students the confidence to be curious by:

- Providing foundational learning as a platform for endless exploration.
- Understanding that every child has a voice that matters.
- Inspiring joy in the journey.

The Summit educational experience is both timely and timeless, as demonstrated in our exciting and ambitious *Strategic Priorities 2023-2028: Deepening Our Roots and Extending Our Reach*. Our three areas of focus are:

Exceptional Educators: The single biggest variable in student success is the quality of the classroom teacher.

Inspiring Learning: Inspiring learning is both who Summit is and what Summit does.

Enduring Stewardship: Safeguarding Summit’s ability to thrive for generations to come requires both vision and commitment.

The nine strategic goals and related action steps outlined in this plan reveal the synergy of Summit’s past, present, and future. By deepening our roots and extending our reach, we continue to develop the full potential of our students—now, and for the next 90 years!

Onward and upward,



Michael Ebeling
Head of School





SAIS/AdvancED/SACS Accreditation for 2023 - 2028

We are pleased to announce that after a year-long rigorous self-study, Summit has received the Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS)/Cognia accreditation for 2023-2028.

Accreditation is a critical process by which independent schools are governed. Managed by the Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS) and Cognia, accreditation ensures a school is providing successful education of children aligned with the school's unique mission. As stated by SAIS, "Accreditation is recognized throughout the world as a symbol of quality in education for students and teachers. To earn accreditation, schools must meet quality standards, be evaluated by an outside group of peer professionals, and implement a school plan focused on strategic improvement and student performance."

In their summary, the Visiting Team—comprised of talented teachers and administrators from sister independent schools from throughout the southeast—writes, "If you want to know if a school is living its mission, take some time to engage with its students. The students at Summit School described the faculty as going 'above and beyond' on a daily basis, and these same students described themselves as feeling inspired. It is clear that a sense of community permeates the day-to-day journey of a Summit education. The strength of Summit is clearly its dedicated faculty. Students are provided ample opportunities to learn, explore, try new endeavors, and give back to their communities. It is safe to say that Louise Futrell's dream school 'where everybody can be a somebody' has come to fruition."

After reviewing our Self Study, examining our new Strategic Priorities, and spending two days on our campus visiting over 50 classes and interviewing over 60 stakeholders (including students, faculty, staff, parents, alums, and trustees), the Visiting Team offered recommendations and commendations in support of Summit's three strategic goal areas: Exceptional Educators, Inspiring Learning, and Enduring Stewardship.

Highlights from the team's report were as follows:

Commendations

- Students, faculty, and parents all noted a sense of “community” and space in which they can be themselves. One student stated, “Summit helps me be the best me.”
- Teachers are a key asset in the student experience and feel supported by the institution. Summit’s “special sauce” is their teachers—because they put students first.
- A healthy culture of philanthropy at Summit School is indicated by the success of the Summit Fund and annual giving over the last few years.
- Student agency and an emphasis on being contributing members of the community are intentionally cultivated.
- The Triad division’s existence is a tremendous asset to the school. Many parents and students feel that Triad is “life-changing.”
- The engineering and design programs are at the peak of educational standards.
- Fiscal stewardship has placed Summit in a good position financially as it moves forward with future projects.

Recommendations

- Reviewing current engagement efforts with the Summit School community to help create a roadmap for telling the stories of the wonderful things that are happening every day.
- Updating the existing facilities’ master plan.
- Exploring what comes next now that the Belonging Statement has been established. What intentional and ongoing work around diversity, equity, and inclusion are (or can be put) in place for faculty, students, and parents?
- Exploring a faculty compensation study, a financial analysis of competing compensation models at entities such as local public and private schools.
- Establishing a clear set of guidelines on the role of the CEI as an internal vehicle for professional development and an outward-facing vessel to serve the broader educational community.
- Prioritizing depth over breadth in terms of new instruction initiatives and the work with content vertical alignment.
- Building out a recruitment strategy through faculty stories offered via video where faculty talk about why they chose Summit and why they have stayed at Summit.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

2023–2028



Which vowel rule
is used here?

The V/V rule!



lion

EXCEPTIONAL
EDUCATORS

The single biggest variable in
student success is the quality
of the classroom teacher.



01 GOAL

Become an Employer of Choice in the Triad Area.

- Achieve and maintain competitive salaries and distinctive benefits.
- Foster a diverse and inclusive working environment, as an expression of the School's Belonging Statement.
- Develop resources to help address childcare needs of faculty & staff.

02 GOAL

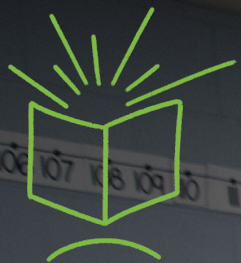
Integrate the concept and related practices of Point of Highest Contribution in the school culture.

- Refine the process in which teachers receive regular, meaningful, and growth-oriented feedback on curriculum, student learning, and pedagogy.
- Further develop, adapt, and implement tools which identify significant areas of strength and opportunities for growth in each employee.
- Regularly review how each employee's passions, skillsets/mindsets, and professional networks can contribute to the strategic needs and initiatives of the School.

03 GOAL

Expand the work of the Ebeling Center for Excellence & Innovation in Teaching & Learning (CEI) to serve as a premier professional development resource for the community, state, and region.

- Further refine and innovate on a professional growth program that develops, positions, and recognizes Summit teachers as educational leaders.
- Further develop programs for non-Summit teachers and members of the wider community who seek professional growth.
- Develop a variety of synchronous and asynchronous virtual professional development offerings.



INSPIRING LEARNING

Inspiring Learning is both
who Summit is and what
Summit does.



01 GOAL

Refine and enhance a program model that is academically rigorous, research-based, and promotes Summit's unique brand of hands-on/minds-on learning.

- Systematically refine the horizontal and vertical alignment of curricula across all divisions to increase continuity, coherence, and challenge.
- Design and develop a multi-year, interdisciplinary entrepreneurial endeavor for students.
- Innovate on the current 9th grade program as the culmination of the Summit educational experience.

02 GOAL

Express our Belonging Statement in all aspects of the Summit experience for children, families, educators, and community members.

- Further integrate the spirit and practice of belonging in both the social-emotional and academic facets of the student experience.
- Further develop the onboarding of new faculty and staff and the orientation of new students and families with a focus on belonging as a core commitment of our community.
- Regularly survey and gather feedback from all constituencies to better understand their experiences of belonging.

03 GOAL

Continue to develop Idea Shop as a vehicle for Summit students, teachers, alums, and community members to explore and implement innovative ideas that enhance the student experience.

- Develop a professional directory (including parents, grandparents, alums, and community members) as a dynamic resource for teachers in complementing and creating units of study and programs.
- Use co-curricular programs to research and develop curriculum.
- Explore an Entrepreneur-in-Residence program.





ENDURING STEWARDSHIP

Safeguarding Summit's ability to thrive for generations to come requires both vision and commitment.





01 GOAL

Incorporate the story of Summit's brand in all areas of the school.

- Assess the alignment between our programs and all facets of the brand.
- Ensure that brand is expressed in all areas of communication.
- Integrate all facets of the brand into the onboarding and ongoing professional development of faculty and staff.

02 GOAL

Complete a comprehensive campus master plan.

- Align long-term facilities master planning with near-term comprehensive campaign projects.
- Maintain, enhance, and further develop the cyber security plan.
- Prioritize accessibility and ADA features in all campus renovations and construction.

03 GOAL

Engage in a robust and successful comprehensive fundraising campaign.

- Design, fund, and begin construction on Science, Engineering, Entrepreneurship & Design (SEED) Center.
- Increase endowment to better attract, recognize, and reward high-caliber educators who demonstrate excellence and leadership.
- Bolster financial assistance for families.



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* * * CORE COMPETENCIES OF SUMMIT SCHOOL * * *

