

# **Innovate And Evolve: ASF 2030**

## **A Strategic Vision for The American School Foundation**

### **OUR VISION**

Since its founding in 1888, ASF has been at the forefront of educational innovation. Building on the traditions of the past and reflecting our enduring values, ASF looks to the future with excitement, contemplating all the new opportunities that the tools of the 21<sup>st</sup> century provide to make education personal, relevant, engaging, and ultimately inspiring for students as they develop a deep understanding of themselves and their place in the world. The realization of this strategic plan will move ASF to a position of preeminence among world-class American and International schools. ASF will be recognized for the quality and range of our educational programming and the exceptional faculty and staff who collaborate to create a culture of excellence in which all members of the community are challenged to be at their very best and model for students what a life-long commitment to learning looks like – whether in or out of the classroom.

### **OUR GOALS**

Our goals are intentionally designed to overlap and reinforce one another, thereby strengthening the alignment of all our efforts towards the overall realization of our vision for ASF.

#### **1. VALUES IN ACTION**

At ASF, we understand that elevating our shared values of Justice, Understanding, and Truth is essential to clarifying who we are. Rooted in the traditions of the earliest days of the school, our values, which are reflected in our BEARS Code, provide the necessary foundation upon which we, as The American School, will continue to deliver an outstanding American educational experience for our students.

Our community has long sought clarity on the fundamental question of the school's identity, so reinforcing who we are at this moment in our history, grounded in our enduring values, is essential to our being able to move forward with the energy, focus, and pride that will be required to achieve our ambitious goals. In the end, ASF is the sum of its parts. Are we an American School? Are we a Mexican School? Are we an International School? The answer is yes! In the spirit of the U.S. motto, *E Pluribus Unum*, out of many one, ASF embraces its multiple identities and proudly commits to being a diverse community committed to shared values.

## Initiatives:

- A. Highlight ASF's identity by elevating the power of everyday action.

**Description:** The power of everyday action reinforces ASF's Identity by accepting that who we are is ultimately a function of what we do. These actions aim to integrate essential components of American-style education into the daily lives of students at ASF, ensuring they are well-prepared for top-tier universities in the U.S. or wherever they may go. By providing robust opportunities in academic, athletic, and the arts, as well as extracurriculars, the best of American education seeks to develop well-rounded individuals with strong character, social and emotional awareness, and academic knowledge and skills so that they can become positively contributing citizens in a democratic society. This initiative will reinforce the identity of ASF as the preeminent school in Mexico City, delivering an American education with a global perspective.

### Key Action Steps:

1. Shift from English being the language of instruction to being the language of the classroom and strengthen the overall commitment to English as the *lingua franca* of learning at ASF.
  2. Attract a diverse student body seeking an American-style education
  3. Focus on American-style education in all areas of learning by maintaining and strengthening the American idea of educating students in academics, the arts, and athletics, with robust co-curricular offerings to engage their personal interests.
  4. Increase enrollment at top U.S. colleges and universities by
    - a. Strengthening the College Guidance program by adding staff and developing programming aimed at increasing awareness of and interest in attending U.S. colleges and universities.
    - b. Strengthening SAT prep.
- B. Reinvigorate and enhance our admissions practices to ensure alignment with our shared values, mission, and our identity as Bears.

**Description:** Our community is ultimately defined by the extent to which we live our shared values, and ensuring that all members of the community understand and share these values and conduct themselves in accordance with them is critical. The admissions process offers the critical and strategic opportunity to evaluate the degree to which students and their families' natural inclination is toward the values, mission and Bears identity that define ASF.

### **Key Action Steps:**

1. Clearly define ASF's target family and student profile for admission.
  2. Develop a marketing plan based on our unique brand identity that targets the segments of the population we want to reach and maintain, i.e., American Embassy families, American expatriates, expatriates and embassy families from other countries, as well as talented students who may need financial aid, etc.
  3. Develop screening and interviewing tools that will more successfully identify a family's and a student's alignment with our values, mission, and our identity as Bears.
- C. Implement strong hiring practices to ensure alignment with our values, mission, and our identity as Bears.

**Description:** Because a community is ultimately defined by the extent to which we live our values, our hiring process offers the critical and strategic opportunity to evaluate the degree to which employees' natural inclination is toward the values, mission and Bears identity that define ASF.

### **Key Action Steps:**

1. Clearly define ASF's profile for employees (faculty, staff, administration, operations).
2. Develop a marketing plan based on our unique brand identity that targets the kinds of employees we want to reach.
3. Develop screening and interviewing tools that will more successfully identify a candidate's alignment with our values, mission, and our identity as Bears.

## **2. INNOVATE LEARNING FOR THE FUTURE**

Building on the strong educational foundations of the school and its long history of innovation in education, ASF sees the need to strengthen our commitment to a holistic approach to learning that is active, engaging, and informed by student interest. While there will always remain a set of essential skills and knowledge that all students should possess, we know that, in a time of rapid change in the world, it is more important than ever to expand the range of learning opportunities and intentionally center the skills of communication, collaboration, entrepreneurship, and creativity, among others, that students will need in order to be successful regardless of their future paths. As emerging

technologies rapidly and increasingly impact how we navigate the world, our students must be ready to navigate such a world with the skills and knowledge that will allow them to manage technology rather than be managed by it.

**Initiatives:**

A. Establish The ASF Center for Innovation

**Description:** The ASF Center for Innovation will serve as the central hub for a variety of innovative, socially-engaged, entrepreneurial, and research activities that will involve students and faculty in a collaborative practice of discovery across a wide range of fields, and connect on-campus activities with external organizations and with individuals, including alumni and parents who can support our educational goals. Ensuring a multi-disciplinary approach to learning, the Center will provide purpose, structure, and resources to students and faculty to support inquiry, problem-solving, and difference-making, both on and off campus. The ASF Center for Innovation will ultimately become the flagship cross-divisional program of the school.

**Select Key Activities:**

1. Define the scope of The ASF Center for Innovation Activities, specifically including the following elements:
  - a. Social Entrepreneurship and Service Learning (will include partnerships and off-campus experiential learning opportunities as well as a Service Learning Requirement)
  - b. Research that will support data-informed decision-making in all areas of school life.
  - c. Pathways Internship Program (off-campus, experiential learning external partnerships that take advantage of our relationships with parents and alumni)
  - d. Professional Development/Faculty Innovation Cohorts
2. Hire a Leader for the Center.

B. Explore the re-establishment of the IB Middle Years Program.

**Description:** Previously, ASF had been a continuum school, so the elimination of the MYP program has caused an awkward gap between the Lower and Upper School programs. It also leaves ASF without a coherent educational philosophy or approach across divisions. These issues need to be addressed, and evaluating how MYP might contribute to ASF's achievement of its overall educational vision and goals should be part of the process.

**Select Key Activities:**

1. Evaluate the programmatic and financial impacts of re-establishing the MYP program in advance of the 2026-2027 budgeting process so that, should the decision to re-adopt the MYP be made, the necessary funding can be allocated.

- C. Integrate Experiential and Project-Based Learning into the Curriculum K1 through Grade 12 to promote authentic critical thinking and problem-solving.

**Description:** In order to leverage the opportunities that the tools of the 21<sup>st</sup> century provide to make education personal, relevant, engaging, and ultimately inspiring for students, we must update our pedagogical approaches to include many more inquiry-based, constructivist, and experiential strategies. These approaches, which can and should be implemented from K1 through Grade 12, are consistent with the overall approach of the International Baccalaureate, as well as validated by the current research on teaching and learning. They also require that students are able to consider a broad range of differing opinions, especially on complex issues, as they develop the analytical, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills they need.

**Select Key Activities:**

1. Develop and implement a program of professional development to support faculty in integrating these strategies into their classroom practices.

- D. Establish a digital skills curriculum for Grade 1 through 12.

- E. Develop a strategy with respect to educational tech that addresses ethical, cybersecurity, AI, and infrastructure issues.

- F. Enhance personalized learning from Lower to Upper School by hiring sufficient faculty in key areas to achieve classes below 20 students in Middle and Upper Schools and student to faculty ratios in class of no more than 12-1 in Lower School.

- G. Expand the range and strengthen the quality of extracurricular activities available for Middle and Upper School students through Athletics & Extended Learning.

### **Select Key Activities:**

1. The Director of Teaching & Learning will Coordinate with the Director of A&EL to strengthen the after school offerings for MS and US students.

## **3. CONNECT THE ASF COMMUNITY**

ASF has always been a remarkable community of students, faculty and staff, parents, alumni, and supporters who come together to ensure that the school reflects the best of American educational traditions while also embracing the global perspectives and cultures that enrich everyone. ASF feels that it is ever more important to be a model diverse community, strengthening the bonds that join us together and ensuring that each member has the resources they need to be able to engage fully in the activities of the school. As we look to the future, we are committed to providing the resources and support members of the community need to assure the realization of our lofty collective ambitions.

### **Initiatives:**

- A. Create a comprehensive onboarding and integration program so newcomers (students, families, employees of all types) know they are welcome, know they belong, and understand how to be a Bear.

**Description:** Schools like ASF have strong cultures, and because we want newcomers both to understand, embrace, and support the culture, as well as feel as if they are truly part of their new community, we need to create ongoing programming that achieves these goals. Not knowing the unspoken language of a community can leave a person feeling disconnected and excluded, and it is the obligation of the school to support newcomers in learning the language of ASF and finding their place in the diverse mosaic of the community.

### **Select Key Activities:**

1. Review and strengthen the faculty and staff onboarding program with activities planned throughout the first year.
  2. Review and strengthen the family onboarding program to include support for families in their first year at ASF and ongoing programming to reinforce ASF's values.
- B. Design and implement a community-wide house system.

**Description:** ASF is a large community, and we know every large community can be strengthened by creating opportunities for affiliation and camaraderie. A well-designed and implemented House System will create opportunities for collective engagement, as well as friendly competition. House activities will serve to reinforce the values of the school while promoting a sense of school pride, and may include opportunities for service and engagement beyond the limits of the campus, thereby supporting other goals of this plan.

**Select Key Activities:**

1. Determine the scope of inclusion of a House system, taking into account the implications for including or not including various constituencies.
  2. Design, establish budgets for, and implement a House system by the 2026-2027 school year.
  3. Develop a clear, coherent, and mission-aligned program of activities for the House system for implementation in 2026-2027, including input from all House stakeholders consistent with the pedagogical approaches identified in other areas of this plan.
- C. Redesign and strengthen the advising program in the Upper School to build on the work of Responsive Classroom in the Early Childhood Center, Lower School, and Middle School.

**Description:** One characteristic of the best American and International Independent Schools are robust programs of social-emotional support. The recent implementation of Responsive Classroom has laid a strong foundation for this work at ASF, and a strengthened advisory program in the Upper School will reinforce that work and provide support for students' social and emotional health, ensuring that every student is known and known well by at least one adult.

**Select Key Activities:**

1. Continue training all faculty in Responsive Classroom, with level one training for new faculty and level two training for returning faculty.
2. Review the existing Advisory Program in the Upper School and make refinements as necessary to ensure the successful adoption of the program by the US faculty.
3. Provide training for the US faculty on the roles and responsibilities of being an advisor.

- D. Highlight the ASF Brand - Sharing ASF Stories - both internally to reinforce values alignment and externally to ensure the preeminence of ASF for families seeking a school for their children, employees seeking a place to work, and to ensure the strength of ASF's relationship with alumni whose support of the school is a critical part of its success.

**Description:** As the most important and prominent school in Mexico, ASF has long enjoyed a position of strength that made the need for marketing and brand development unnecessary. In the rapidly changing educational market in Mexico City, in order to maintain our position as a market leader, we must become much more effective in communicating the strength of our brand and in marketing our stories effectively to our target audiences to ensure that ASF remains the school of choice, both for families seeking a school for their children, and for professionals seeking a premier place of employment.

**Select Key Activities:**

1. Develop a strategic branding and marketing program to take advantage of the many ASF stories that can be shared to elevate the school's profile in positive constructive and inspiring ways in CDMX, Mexico, and internationally.
  2. Implement a multi-platform strategy to reach key audiences (prospective families, potential employees, alumni, and supporters).
  3. Establish and track key metrics for each targeted population segment.
- E. Develop a strategic community engagement plan that aligns the work of the Alumni Council, The Parents Association, and the Bear Boosters to achieve ASF's goal.

**Description:** Understanding the critical importance of these three organizations to the life of the school and the quality of community that we seek to achieve, and recognizing the tremendous resource that our parents and alumni represent as we seek to further our goals, ASF is committed to strengthening our relationships with these key community members as we seek to meet the goals of this plan, especially with respect to networking, internships, and other experiential learning opportunities that our parents and alumni might offer our students.