



**RABUN GAP**

RABUN GAP-NACOOCHEE SCHOOL

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2020-2025

Values.  
Voices.  
Vision.

Dear Rabun Gap Family,

We are honored to share with you Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School's strategic plan: **Values. Voices. Vision.** Beginning in the spring of 2019, the Board of Trustees embarked on the initial steps of this planning process which continued as a key focus of its work during the 2019-2020 school year. Detailed in the pages following is the aspirational plan that will guide Rabun Gap in the years ahead. Given the incredible challenges of 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic, we are especially grateful to the trustees, senior administrators, and committee members whose dedication has helped to maintain the focus of this important work.

**Values. Voices. Vision.** is a theme that reflects the core elements throughout the landscape of the plan.

**Values** speaks to the grounding provided by our school's beloved motto, which provides the philosophical basis for our actions and goals. This element of our three-part theme encapsulates our traditional motto of Work Study Worship while connecting those historic values with character, intellect, and spirit to reinforce the transcending and universal appeal of the Rabun Gap experience. This connection meets students in the complex world in which they live while maintaining our historic mission, uniting generations of alumni and students, and preparing them for lives of leadership and service.

**Voices** speaks to the many individuals who have helped to shape the plan and the voices that enrich and enhance Rabun Gap's diverse community. The extensive planning process has engaged the voices of Rabun Gap alumni, parents, students, faculty, and supporters through surveys and dialogue. Echoes of these voices ring throughout the plan and tell of the importance of tradition as well as a call for progress. In discussion and planning, there was a consistent call from all groups to preserve what is distinct and special about the Rabun Gap experience while also always striving to improve and best prepare students to lead and serve in the world.

**Vision** speaks to a desired destination in view and the wisdom to get there. Like the cupola that stands above Hodgson Hall, this plan must be grounded firmly in Rabun Gap's values and voices, and yet, must look outward and beyond this valley to ensure the sustainability and care of the school's mission for generations to come.

Special thanks to the many committees of the board of trustees, administrators, and faculty who have remained dedicated to this important planning process even in the midst of quarantine. This plan presents many aspirational goals, and the work will continue in the weeks and months ahead as committees embrace the tactical planning necessary to operationalize and implement the strategic principles. On many fronts, this plan has already been put into action. Together, with the support of the committees and the loyalty of our Rabun Gap community, we invite you to join us as we continue the good work that started over 118 years ago and that today touches the lives of this local community and reaches to all corners of our world.

**Margaret Carton**  
Co-Chair,  
Strategic Planning Committee  
Past Chair, Board of Trustees

**Jeff Miles**  
Head of School

**Lynda White**  
Co-Chair,  
Strategic Planning Committee

**George Wirth**  
Chair, Board of Trustees

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Jessie Ball duPont Foundation located in Jacksonville, Florida.*



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## **OUR MISSION**

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Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School prepares young people for college, career, and a lifetime of leadership and service. In our beautiful mountain environment, we inspire students to grow in character, intellect, and spirit. We value educational accessibility and foster a community of learners whose diversity is honored and reflects the world.

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## **OUR HISTORIC VALUES**

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Work Study Worship





# OUR HISTORIC PILLARS

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## Work

The “Work” value at Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School has long been an essential part of the community, dating back to its earliest roots of the school’s inception. While the definition of the term has evolved over time, the concept of selfless service to better our community has remained the same. Through all aspects of student life and community service, Rabun Gap shall encourage, inspire, and teach principles of work that are the foundation of this school. We will continue to produce graduates that exemplify Rabun Gap’s historic work ethic.

CHARACTER

## Study

The “Study” value has been the core of what Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School has been able to successfully deliver since the school was founded by Andrew Ritchie in 1903. As the needs of our learners have evolved, so has our ability to provide a relevant, inclusive, global, and applicable learning model that prepares students for success in college and beyond. The goal is for students to use their skills and passion for learning to meet the challenging endeavors they face throughout their lifetime.

INTELLECT

## Worship

The “Worship” value at Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School was founded on Christian principles. Throughout our school’s history to the present day, we continually support and encourage students of all faiths, beliefs, cultures, and backgrounds to love and care for one another. Inclusion and respect for the dignity of all people is at the heart of who we are and consistent with God’s care for the whole world.

SPIRIT



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## STRATEGIC VISION STATEMENT

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Rooted in a commitment to provide a superb education to students representing a broad socioeconomic, demographic, racial, religious, and geographic spectrum, **Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School** pledges to:

## **Curriculum: Mastery & Relevance**

**Design and implement** educational programs that manifest the traditional values of Work Study Worship in a 21st century global context – grounding these values in rigorous academics, real world relevance, and a skill-focused curriculum;

## **Faculty & Staff: Heart of Excellence**

**Explore and secure** pioneering ways to attract, retain, and develop mission-driven faculty who inspire, empower, and challenge students, preparing them for a world in which there are no limits in their opportunities to make a positive difference;

## **Land & Facilities: Our Mountain Heritage**

**Protect and leverage** our unparalleled campus to maximize learning opportunities for our community – creating interdependent natural and built environments designed to enrich the mind, nurture the body, and refresh the spirit;

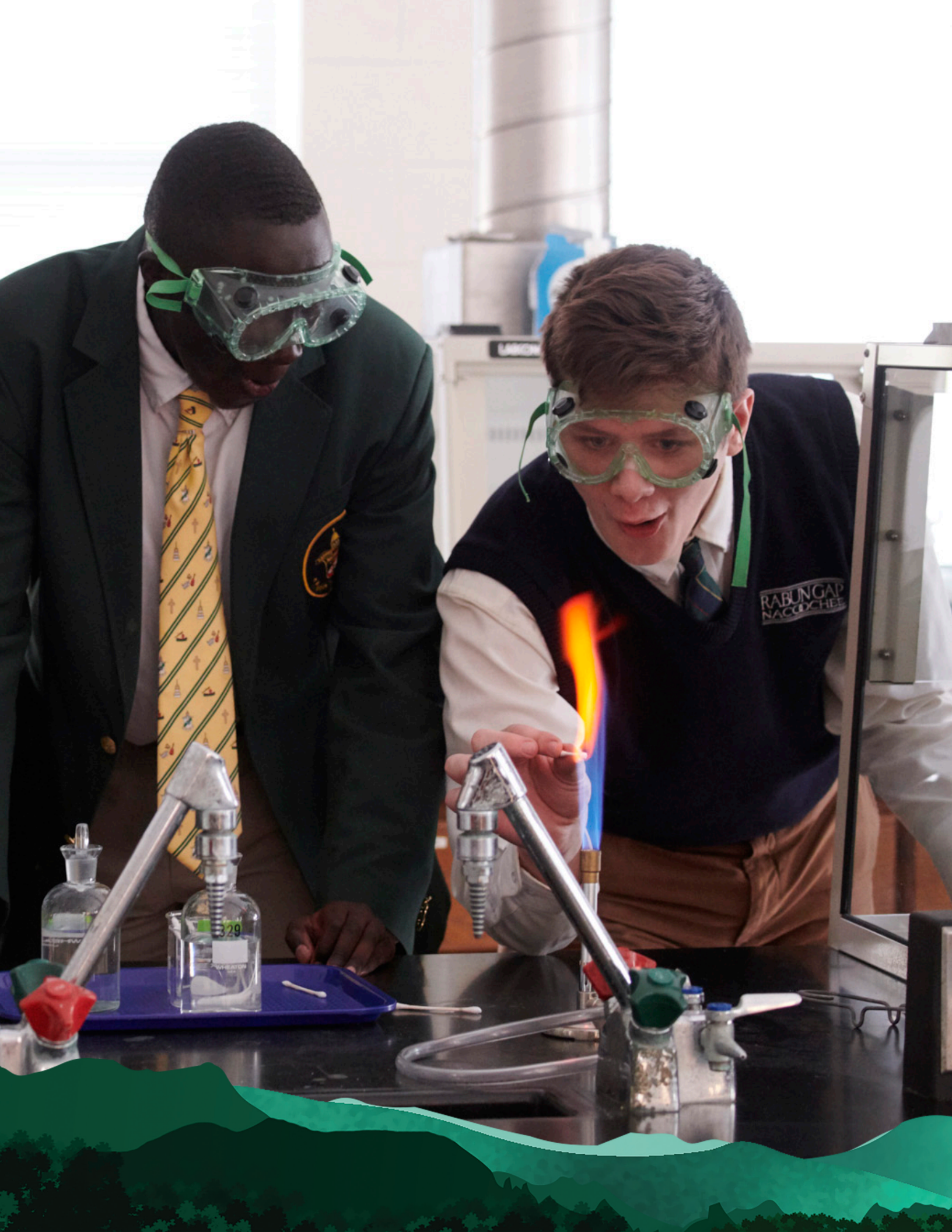
## **Campus & Beyond: Building One Community**

**Embrace** our diverse school community and safeguard our communal health, while practicing the values of hospitality, empathy, and leadership rooted in service;

## **Visionary Leadership: Sustaining Our Mission**

**Protect the future** of Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School through visionary leadership and disciplined stewardship of our human, financial, environmental, and capital resources.





# Curriculum

**Design and implement** educational programs that manifest the traditional values of Work Study Worship in a 21st century global context – grounding these values in rigorous academics, real world relevance, and a skill-focused curriculum.

**Create an authentic, division-aligned, cross curricular, and applied learning curriculum that focuses on our students and the skills they will need to be successful in the modern global economy.**

- Create a clear vision for our curriculum and academic program.
- Create a “Portrait of a Rabun Gap Graduate.”
- Create and maintain curriculum maps for all three divisions.
- Develop an academic leadership team that will visit other institutions (including colleges) to ensure our students are learning the necessary skills that will empower them to be leaders in their careers.
- Implement concentration areas of study for Entrepreneurship & Financial Literacy and Architecture & Design.
- Evaluate our religious studies program to better reflect a balance between our international and local communities.
- Align our academic, arts, and athletics programs across the three divisions.
- Evaluate the weekly schedule for each of the three divisions and determine the best schedule to promote our academic vision.



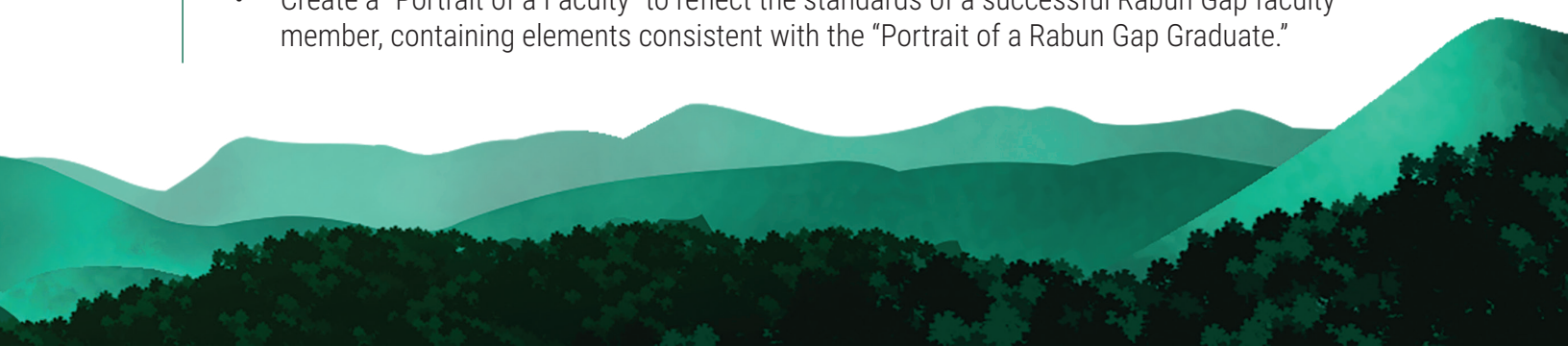


# Faculty & Staff

**Explore and secure** pioneering ways to attract, retain, and develop mission-driven faculty who inspire, empower, and challenge students, preparing them for a world in which there are no limits in their opportunities to make a positive difference.

## **Develop a systematic approach to attract and retain the highest quality faculty and staff.**

- Establish goals for retention and recruitment.
- Examine the compensation and benefits packages for regional and national institutions similar to Rabun Gap, taking into consideration equity in benefits.
- Initiate and develop salary increases within a system that emphasizes high standards of teaching, coaching, arts programming, residential programming, and other faculty duties.
- Evaluate work-life balance and commitments for faculty.
- Implement ways to support mental and physical health, including ways to address emotional support and geographic isolation.
- Create a clear, collaborative process for hiring more racially and ethnically diverse faculty and senior administrative team members who better reflect the diversity of our student population.
- Evaluate and prioritize the renovation of existing faculty homes, explore the need to build additional faculty homes, and consider other options to accommodate our growing faculty.
- Institute an evaluation and/or growth plan process for faculty and staff.
- Establish a “mentor” program for all new faculty and staff.
- Create a “Portrait of a Faculty” to reflect the standards of a successful Rabun Gap faculty member, containing elements consistent with the “Portrait of a Rabun Gap Graduate.”





# Land & Facilities

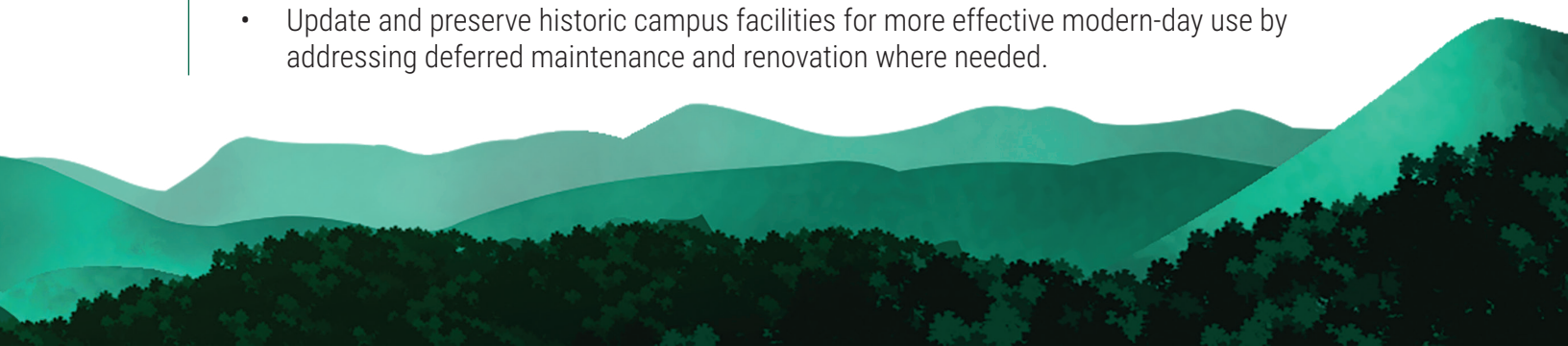
**Protect and leverage** our unparalleled campus to maximize learning opportunities for our community – creating interdependent natural and built environments designed to enrich the mind, nurture the body, and refresh the spirit.

**Optimize the use of Rabun Gap's amazing 1,400 acres of land and facilities to create an environment for community engagement, curricular development, and faculty retention, while providing a sustainable model for the future.**

- Develop a campus master plan and land use policy.
- Create mission-aligned, environmentally mindful campus use policies that include environmental opportunities and increased revenue streams.
- Implement innovative and flexible learning spaces that reflect our relevant curriculum, while utilizing our unique natural landscape.

**Ensure a modern, environmentally conscious, and relevant campus with a focus on academics, arts, housing, and athletics.**

- Renovate Hodgson Hall classrooms to create a space optimal for an “applied learning” environment.
- Complete the Middle School outdoor classroom.
- Evaluate the need to renovate areas of the Arts & Technology Building.
- Upgrade our athletic facilities, including a lighted stadium for multiple sports.
- Update and preserve historic campus facilities for more effective modern-day use by addressing deferred maintenance and renovation where needed.





# Campus & Beyond

**Embrace** our diverse school community and safeguard our communal health, while practicing the values of hospitality, empathy, and leadership rooted in service.

**Continue to promote and develop both an inclusive local and global community that values all constituents from various backgrounds and areas of diversity, including but not limited to faith, race, ethnicity, gender, disability, age, and socioeconomic class.**

- Examine the relevance of each of the school pillars, Work Study Worship, and establish a unified understanding of each.
- Hire a Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as a senior administrator to provide professional development training to faculty and staff across our entire school community .
- Develop partnerships in the local community to assist in creating a “one community” philosophy, which will allow people from the community to better understand Rabun Gap.
- Create domestic and international travel opportunities for our students.
- Evaluate our community service program to prioritize local community needs, while creating incentives for top community service hour earners.
- Establish a Racial and Social Justice Issues Group to focus on ensuring inclusivity.
- Develop a “Portrait of a Student” and/or “Portrait of a Rabun Gap Graduate” and mutual responsibilities for these objectives.



# Visionary Leadership

**Protect** the future of Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School through visionary leadership and disciplined stewardship of our human, financial, environmental, and capital resources.

**Create a mission-aligned, sustainable financial model that minimizes our endowment draw each year while maintaining a balanced budget for all program needs.**

- Grow philanthropic engagement from school constituents and other supporters.
- Expand auxiliary revenue streams through summer programs and other services.
- Establish effective enrollment management plan to ensure fiscal sustainability.

**Continue to strengthen our Board of Trustees and its strategic focus.**

- Broaden membership on the Board of Trustees to reflect all facets of diversity.
- Focus on recruiting and retaining Board members with a connection to Rabun Gap to enhance retention of Trustees.
- Enhance racial and ethnic diversity of the Board of Trustees and Board-appointed committees to better reflect the student population served.
- Extend geographic Board representation by recruiting in other US and international cities including those with geographic relevance (i.e. Athens, Asheville, Greenville, Charlotte).
- Focus on recruiting Board members with diverse skill sets to enhance Board capabilities and competencies.
- Include regular programs at Board meetings that enhance the Board's understanding of best governance practices and importance of strategic, not operational, Board focus.





**Establish endowment and capital campaign goals considering the programmatic, financial aid and capital needs identified in the other areas of the strategic plan.**

- Conduct a fundraising feasibility study to establish realistic goals for comprehensive endowment and capital campaign(s).
- Prioritize and schedule potential campaigns to reflect institutional priorities and feasibility study results.
- Continue to promote legacy giving toward the goal of at least \$100 million endowment.





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[www.rabungap.org](http://www.rabungap.org)