Sound Judgment

THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR
ST. MARK'S SCHOOL

Note from Dr. Ivory Hills

This strategic plan is the product of nine months of institutional reflection involving four task forces, dozens of faculty and trustees, and hundreds of conversations with students, parents, alumni and friends of St. Mark's. What follows is a set of integrated strategic choices designed to make St. Mark's School the most distinctive and compelling boarding school of its size.

This strategic plan is, at its core, an interpretation of the mission, or an answer to the question: What does St. Mark's do, build and become to deliver on these commitments with an integration and depth that no other institution can match? The plan draws out five convictions embedded in the mission: that purpose is discovered through challenge; that courage and integrity are practiced attributes; that intellectual and spiritual development belong together; that a global community requires intentional composition; and that knowing and valuing each student demands a scale and structure built for depth rather than breadth. When combined and aligned, these convictions furnish a school unlike any other.

The plan is organized around a framework drawn from the school's own motto, *Age Quod Agis*. The letters **A-G-E** organize our three strategic pillars: Attentive Relationships and Engaged Community; Global Citizenship for Our Students' Future; and Episcopal Values of Inclusivity, Compassion, Integrity and Service of the Common Good. These are the commitments that distinguish St. Mark's from other institutions and guide resource allocation, hiring, program design and fundraising for the next several years.

This plan guides not only what St. Mark's chooses to add programmatically but also what it chooses to sequence, simplify or discontinue. Initiatives that do not advance the mission, strengthen the **A-G-E** framework or support the enabling conditions of this plan yield to those that do.

I. MISSION STATEMENT

St. Mark's prepares students for lives of purpose, courage, and integrity. We cultivate sound judgment through intellectual and spiritual curiosity within a global community that knows and values each student.

Ratified by the Board of Trustees, April 11, 2026

St. Mark's mission statement is the institution's primary decision-making filter. Its commitments of purpose, courage, integrity, sound judgment, intellectual and spiritual curiosity, global community, and knowing and valuing each student are design specifications. Every program, policy, hire and investment should demonstrably advance one or more of these commitments.

The inclusion of sound judgment in the mission statement reflects a strategic conviction that among the distinctive qualities of a St. Mark's graduate is the capacity to make wise decisions

under conditions of complexity, uncertainty and competing values. Sound judgment integrates intellectual rigor with ethical reasoning, perspective-taking with self-awareness, and knowledge with wisdom. It is the throughline that connects the academic program to the values of the Episcopal tradition and to the residential experience, and it is the capacity that matters most in a world increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence and rapid change.

II. VISION

St. Mark's School is the boarding school of choice for students, families and faculty who believe that developing sound judgment is essential preparation for a complex world. In a global community that knows and values each student, St. Mark's cultivates the purpose, courage, integrity, curiosity and capacity for human connection that lives of consequence require.

Our school delivers on what it promises. Specifically:

- **Each student is genuinely known, valued and challenged** to discover their purpose through exploration and experience.
- **The faculty is a team of committed boarding school professionals** who view the residential program as integral to the mission of the school and understand the necessity of attentiveness to students.
- **Families enthusiastically choose St. Mark's,** seeking a school that prepares students for their futures through challenge, community, character development, and the cultivation of sound judgment and wisdom.
- **The institution is financially sustainable,** through a model built for depth rather than scale, supported by an endowment and philanthropic base that reflects the conviction of its graduates, families and friends.
- **The St. Mark's experience extends beyond graduation,** with a vibrant network of alumni and parents who remain connected to the school and to one another, part of the enduring value of a St. Mark's education.

This aspiration embraces a model of education that insists students can be both intellectually rigorous and spiritually grounded, both globally aware and locally accountable, and both courageous individuals and committed members of a community larger than themselves.

III. THE A-G-E FRAMEWORK

Three strategic pillars, drawn from the school's motto, *Age Quod Agis* (Do What You Do), define how St. Mark's differentiates itself.

The pillars of the **A-G-E** framework:

- Attentive Relationships and Engaged Community
- Global Citizenship for Our Students' Future

- Episcopal Values of Inclusivity, Compassion, Integrity and Service

These pillars are mutually reinforcing. Attentiveness creates the relational depth that makes global learning transformative. Global exposure creates the diversity that demands Episcopal values of inclusivity and compassion. The values of the Episcopal tradition lay the character foundation that makes an attentive and engaged community possible.

A — Attentive Relationships and Engaged Community

At St. Mark's, community is not incidental to the education; it is one of the primary ways students are formed. Because each student is known and valued, each student can also be appropriately challenged to belong fully, serve generously, lead responsibly and launch with purpose. To make this formation more visible and reliable, St. Mark's will strengthen the structures that shape student life: a signature developmental journey, a true seven-day residential culture, co-curricular experiences that build character and cooperation, and shared community practices that give rhythm and meaning to school life.

A Signature Student Journey

The student experience follows a clear developmental arc organized around form-based stages. One structure is a Belong, Serve, Lead and Launch with Purpose sequence. This progression is a structured formation pathway with shared signature experiences at each stage.

A signature journey:

- **III Form (Belong):** A Brantwood Experience and a foundational global and cultural studies course establish belonging, shared responsibility and an introduction to the school's mission and Episcopal values.
- **IV Form (Serve):** Integrating service into the student experience and a formative interdisciplinary course develop personal responsibility, cooperation and the habit of contribution.
- **V Form (Lead):** An expanded Lions Roam Global-Local Exploration serves as a capstone-style leadership experience, cultivating agency, problem-solving and perspective-taking.
- **VI Form (Launch with Purpose):** An expanded Fellowship experience, required public speaking and a culminating return to Brantwood provide structured reflection on values, purpose and readiness for life beyond St. Mark's.

A Seven-Day Residential Culture

St. Mark's functions as a true seven-day boarding school. This requires compositional changes toward a student body eager to be on campus and aligns with weekends as integral to the experience.

Building Character Outside the Classroom

Athletics, the arts, community service and other team-based programs intentionally develop teamwork, resilience, accountability and contribution beyond self. A required participation model ensures every student engages across multiple disciplines, with targeted investment in a limited number of strategic programs and broad support for inclusive, joyful community participation.

Community Practices as Cultural Architecture

Shared experiences are the infrastructure of community. Chapel, seated meals, school assembly, a work program, advisory, residential life and Saturday morning opportunities are each reassessed and redesigned to ensure they authentically serve their formative purpose.

G — Global Citizenship for Our Students' Future

In a world shaped by global interdependence, cultural complexity and artificial intelligence, students need more than information, exposure or technical fluency. They need sound judgment: the capacity to reason ethically, communicate across difference, make wise decisions amid competing values, and act with purpose, courage and integrity. St. Mark's cultivates that judgment by making global citizenship a lived feature of the student experience through an international residential community, shared global competency expectations and sustained development of the humanistic skills students will need for the world they inherit.

This work requires St. Mark's to move beyond isolated global programs toward an integrated model of global formation: who students live with, what they study, how they reflect, where they travel, how they use technology, and how they learn to understand people, cultures, beliefs and perspectives different from their own.

A Global Community

St. Mark's students live and learn in a deliberately international residential community where global citizenship is experienced daily. Residential programming, advising, dorm structures, seated meals and weekend life intentionally foster sustained cross-cultural relationships among domestic and international students, making the school's global community a foundation of belonging, perspective-taking and shared responsibility.

Global Competency Expectations

Every St. Mark's student develops defined global competencies through multiple pathways, including course-related travel, curricular study, exchanges and on-campus intercultural engagement. These experiences include intentional preparation and reflection so that students do more than encounter difference; they learn to understand context, ask better questions, examine assumptions, and act with humility and responsibility. Over time, endowment growth ensures that financial barriers do not limit participation in signature global experiences.

Humanistic Skill Development and Sound Judgment

St. Mark's ensures that its rigorous academic program develops distinctly human capacities that enable students to exercise sound judgment: ethical reasoning, communication across difference, comfort with ambiguity, perspective-taking, self-awareness and responsible engagement with technology. Sound judgment unites intellectual rigor, interdisciplinary learning, Episcopal ethical tradition and responsible communal living. It is one of the defining outcomes of a St. Mark's education.

The academic program embeds humanistic skill development across disciplines, with commitments to:

- **Public speaking and persuasive communication,** developed through sustained practice across multiple settings at every form level, so that graduates can speak with clarity, confidence and conviction.
- **Ethical reasoning and the navigation of complexity,** developed through coursework, residential life, chapel, advisory, service and structured reflection.
- **Digital literacy and responsible use of emerging technologies,** with emphasis on discernment, authorship, integrity, creativity and judgment in an AI-infused world.
- **A strengthened Religion and Philosophy program,** preserving a meaningful requirement while expanding opportunities for students to explore ethics, meaning, belief, culture and human purpose in ways that connect spiritual development, intellectual inquiry and global awareness.

E — Episcopal Values of Inclusivity, Compassion, Integrity and Service

St. Mark's Episcopal values are visible in the lived practices of the school. Inclusivity, compassion, integrity and service become real when they shape how students reflect, how they take responsibility for one another, how adults model mission-aligned relationships, and how the community remains connected across generations. St. Mark's makes character development an institutional throughline via a shared Portrait of a Graduate, intentional practices of reflection, structured service-learning, mission-aligned admissions and hiring, and enduring relationships among students, families, faculty and alumni.

Character Development as the Institutional Throughline

Grounded in its Episcopal values, St. Mark's integrates intellectual rigor and spiritual formation to cultivate sound judgment, character and purpose. A Portrait of a Graduate serves as the school's aspirational framework for evaluating programs, practices, policies and student experiences.

Reflection as Institutional Practice

St. Mark's embeds reflection across academic, residential, athletic, artistic and spiritual life.

Faculty and staff are equipped to model mission-aligned dialogue, facilitate conversations across difference, and help students make meaning from experience. Practices such as silence, journaling, advisory reflection, house and team conversations, and chapel-based reflection deepen accountability, self-awareness and formation.

Service as Mutual Responsibility

St. Mark's establishes a structured service-learning program that integrates residential life, curriculum and global engagement. Service is framed not as an isolated requirement but as a practice of mutual responsibility and preparation for global civic participation. The developmental sequence moves from shared responsibility within the school community, likely through a III Form work program, to leadership and initiative in the IV and V Forms, and finally to mentorship and outward-facing engagement beyond St. Mark's in the VI Form. Students come to understand responsibility, contribution and the common good as essential parts of belonging.

Mission-Aligned People and an Enduring Community

St. Mark's aligns admissions, faculty hiring and evaluation, and parent partnership around the school's mission, thus prioritizing students, educators and families committed to deep relationships, character development, residential engagement and full participation in the intellectual, spiritual and co-curricular life of the school.

The school also cultivates alumni and parent networks as enduring extensions of its mission. By investing in lifelong relationships among graduates, families, current students and faculty, St. Mark's strengthens a community rooted not only in affiliation but also in shared formative values.

IV. STRATEGIC FOCUS — Institutional Choices for Depth and Distinction

Our commitments require St. Mark's to align its operating model with its mission. A school that seeks to know and value every student, cultivate sound judgment, sustain a global residential community, and offer a true seven-day boarding experience makes deliberate choices about enrollment, faculty vocation, campus investment and financial sustainability. St. Mark's therefore focuses institutional energy and resources on five enabling conditions: enrollment designed for mission, faculty culture built for boarding school life, an integrated student experience, spaces that sustain community, and finances built for depth rather than scale.

1. A Right-Sized School

The size and composition of the student body are not incidental to the mission; they are design specifications derived from it. The **A-G-E** framework requires a school sized for shared experience: every student and teacher can gather in chapel, every student and teacher can sit for

a common meal in the dining hall, and no student can pass through St. Mark's anonymously.

2. A Fully Engaged Faculty Culture

St. Mark's invests in an integrated faculty vocation — teaching, advising, coaching, mentoring and residential life — supported by competitive compensation and housing, intentional onboarding, calibrated workloads, mission-aligned evaluation and development, and broader national and international recruitment. Faculty excellence at St. Mark's is defined not only by classroom teaching but also by full participation in the formation of students.

3. An Integrated Program Architecture

St. Mark's develops the structures necessary to translate this plan into a reliable student experience: a Portrait of a Graduate, form-based developmental expectations, common assessment of signature experiences, clear ownership for global competency and service-learning requirements, and a process for evaluating whether academic, residential, spiritual and co-curricular programs are advancing the mission.

4. A Renewed Main Building With Spaces That Sustain Community

The school initiates a master planning process centered on the Main Building: the school's most iconic asset, most heavily used space and greatest deferred maintenance liability. The strategic principle is to treat the Main Building as mission infrastructure, modernizing essential spaces, addressing critical systems and strengthening the community experience without expanding the campus footprint.

The master plan addresses the following priorities, in order of strategic significance:

- **Dining Hall and Kitchen Facilities:** A single, open-concept dining environment that accommodates the entire school for shared meals, improves daily flow and retains the distinctive architectural character of the existing hall. This investment directly enables the community practices central to the plan's vision.
- **Student Dormitory Modernization:** Refreshed common rooms, modernized bathrooms and comprehensive functional upgrades to all residential spaces.
- **Centralized Student Center:** A vibrant, centrally positioned student hub that becomes a natural crossroads of campus life, essential to the seven-day residential culture.
- **Faculty Housing:** Main Building units reconfigured to provide true home environments for faculty at different career stages. Faculty housing across the campus portfolio follows a consistent, predictable refresh cycle.
- **Academic Neighborhood:** Relocation and realignment of physically siloed departments to create contiguous, flexible learning spaces that support interdisciplinary

collaboration.

5. A Sustainable Financial Model

The commitments in this plan require a financial model built for depth rather than scale. A right-sized enrollment, a predominantly boarding and geographically diverse student body, access to global learning opportunities, sustained faculty investment, increased financial aid, and renewal of the Main Building all require disciplined long-term resource planning. Tuition revenue is calibrated to a high-quality enrollment model, while endowment growth is the primary mechanism for sustaining access, program excellence and institutional resilience.

The promise of this plan is integration. St. Mark's becomes more distinctive by becoming more fully itself: a residential Episcopal school where students are known and challenged, where community forms character, where global citizenship is lived, and where sound judgment is cultivated through intellectual and spiritual curiosity. By aligning enrollment, faculty culture, student formation, campus renewal and financial stewardship with that purpose, St. Mark's offers a boarding school education of unusual depth, one that prepares graduates for lives of purpose, courage, integrity and consequence.