



Strategic Plan 2008



VISION STATEMENT

The Willow School is the educational model that captures the essential elements of a comprehensive, progressive education. We envision a future when individuals who have been touched by the Willow School have clarity around and commit to taking full responsibility for themselves and their environment.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Willow School, a small, independent coeducational day school for students in kindergarten through eighth grade, is committed to combining academic excellence and the joy of learning and to experiencing the wonder of the natural world. Mastery of the English language is an essential element in an integrated curriculum that helps students comprehend the patterns of how things are connected and prepares them for all areas of their secondary education. The school is dedicated to maintaining an environment where respect for the individual, an outstanding faculty, and an understanding of place foster independent thinking, creativity, responsibility, and integrity. The Willow School education enables children to develop an ethical approach to all relationships, to realize their full potential, and to believe in their power to effect positive change.



Dear Willow Community,

We are pleased to share with you the Strategic Plan that will inform our decision making for the next three years. This document is the result of collaborative efforts of parents, faculty, administrators, students, and trustees. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to all those who gave their time, energy, and thoughtful deliberation as they participated in the planning process.

The Strategic Planning Committee began this process three years ago when they developed an historical narrative from which our current strategic plan flows. The six primary areas of focus within this plan are the result of the continuation of the work of the previous strategic plan combined with our current needs. The areas include The Educational Experience, Education for Sustainability, Marketing and Growth of the School, Extracurricular Activities and External Programs, Growth of the Campus, and Financial Means. For each of the six areas in our 2008 Strategic Plan, we have set out three goals and proposed two to four means for achieving each goal.

Over the next three to five years our extraordinary school community will pursue our strategic goals. At the same time we will remain focused on our overarching vision of a unique educational environment designed to combine rigorous academic activities, ethical training, ecological knowledge, and community service in a nationally

recognized setting. The commitment is more fully realized each year. The young people graduating from The Willow School will have the intellectual skills to make decisions confidently and knowingly. The students will comprehend the full meaning of living an ethical life, both as it pertains to their relationship to each other and to their relationship to the natural systems that support them. They will evaluate their contributions with an understanding of the need to develop sustainability and regeneration of place to address the complexity of values, behaviors, and lifestyles in our economically, ecologically, and culturally diverse world.

Strategic planning is an ongoing and organic process, and this is truly a living document. We hope to have input and feedback from any and all. Your ideas will help evolve our sense of self and shape our thinking as Willow continues its leadership role at the forefront of twenty-first-century education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kate Burke Walsh". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kate" being the most prominent.

Kate Burke Walsh
Head of School

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gretchen Biedron". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gretchen" being the most prominent.

Gretchen Biedron
Founder and Chair of Trustees



EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

1. Produce artifacts that demonstrate and celebrate academic excellence

- 1.1 Create a multimedia web-based publication
- 1.2 Produce an annual portfolio of each student's work
- 1.3 Dedicate a day to student sharing of work with the community
- 1.4 Complete the New Jersey Association of Independent Schools' accreditation process by May 2009

2. Demonstrate how the school community internalizes virtues

- 2.1 Hire a Service Learning Coordinator to publicize programs, events, and curriculum
- 2.2 Create ongoing, grade-specific service projects
- 2.3 Continue to develop meaningful traditions and rituals at every grade level
- 2.4 Enhance the Morning Gathering program's support of the virtues curriculum

3. Ensure professional development of the school community to support the essential elements of The Willow School's mission

- 3.1 Create an in-school structure for faculty collaboration and sharing
- 3.2 Establish a program of faculty and staff stipends and grants for classroom-based projects
- 3.3 Provide the time and opportunity for faculty enrichment
- 3.4 Support teacher-designed professional development plans that address the four essential elements of the school



EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

1. **Work towards a zero-waste campus which eliminates the very concept of waste**
 - 1.1 Analyze the current waste systems and conduct a feasibility study
 - 1.2 Create and maintain systems that minimize waste and use only materials that can be composted on-site or recycled
 - 1.3 Incorporate these systems into our curriculum
 - 1.4 Promote an awareness that ecological thinking is a catalyst for ethical behavior

2. **Develop and promote The Willow School as a resource center for regenerative design and sustainable culture**
 - 2.1 Continue to design future buildings and landscapes to be regenerative and instructive
 - 2.2 Create a new web site that illustrates how The Willow School is a community resource for regenerative design
 - 2.3 Organize and develop programs that increase the school community's knowledge of education for sustainability and regeneration of place

3. **Enhance and maintain a national leadership position in the development of educational programs on sustainability and regeneration of place as a living system**
 - 3.1 Continue to provide professional development for teachers and staff
 - 3.2 Provide support for teachers to collaborate and develop curriculum to solidify the student's understanding of ecological, economic, and cultural sustainability
 - 3.3 Promote The Willow School's reputation as a place of strong academic and environmental curriculum



MARKETING AND GROWTH OF THE SCHOOL

1. **Attract and retain the highest quality student body**

- 1.1 Achieve and maintain full enrollment
- 1.2 Measure and publicize the success of both the curriculum and the secondary school placement program
- 1.3 Recognize and communicate the benefits of financial, racial, and ethnic diversity among the student population
- 1.4 Implement best practices to increase student retention

2. **Attract and retain the highest quality faculty and staff**

- 2.1 Prioritize the recruitment and retention of an outstanding faculty and staff as vital to the success of the school
- 2.2 Implement and communicate an extensive professional development and mentoring program
- 2.3 Ensure that faculty and staff are vested emotionally and financially in the success of the school
- 2.4 Ensure that The Willow School's commitment to living an ethical life is central to relationships in the entire school community

3. **Develop and implement a marketing plan**

- 3.1 Emphasize the educational mission of the school and ensure that the surrounding community is aware of the school's strengths
- 3.2 Communicate and promote a consistent, united vision shared by all constituents
- 3.3 Define our target market and create community stakeholders
- 3.4 Hire a dedicated Marketing and Communications Director who will manage the marketing plan and coordinate external events



EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND EXTERNAL PROGRAMS

1. **Provide The Willow School children with external programs and extracurricular activities to enhance their education**
 - 1.1 Continue to grow and develop after-school enrichment programs that include multifaceted, hands-on, child-centered, team-building activities that align with the mission of the school
 - 1.2 Provide a comprehensive after-school drama program that will be integrated into the curriculum
 - 1.3 Design and implement conscious and thoughtful programs in the arts
 - 1.4 Structure summer programs to draw in a broad range of communities and to provide content reflecting the mission and vision of The Willow School

2. **Design programs that enrich the lives of The Willow School parents and help build thriving individuals, successful relationships, and prosperous communities**
 - 2.1 Design and implement adult education programs
 - 2.2 Design and implement parent education programs
 - 2.3 Provide opportunities for the parents to engage fully in the Willow experience

3. **Establish ongoing partnerships with organizations to create opportunities for service projects for The Willow School and to engage the larger community**
 - 3.1 Develop grade-level and school-wide service learning traditions that enhance our virtues curriculum, build strong ties, and broaden our perspectives locally, as well as globally
 - 3.2 Reinstate The Willow School Fair on an annual basis



GROWTH OF THE CAMPUS

1. **Construct a new USGBC LEED Platinum classroom building using sustainable and regenerative design strategies that demonstrate the ethical relationship between people and nature**
 - 1.1 Employ a collaborative process that includes students, faculty, and administration and that ensures a workable program design to integrate efficient energy usage
 - 1.2 Conduct a collaborative design competition with student, faculty, and community involvement
 - 1.3 Address demands for parking and accessibility to meet the needs of a growing campus
 - 1.4 Address need for storage space
2. **Construct a USGBC LEED Platinum Health, Wellness and Nutrition Center using sustainable and regenerative design strategies that demonstrate the ethical relationship between people, nature, and food cycles**
 - 2.1 Employ a collaborative design process that includes and engages students, faculty, and administration in the building design process
 - 2.2 Consult experienced people, employ best practices, and ensure integration of space among the gymnasium, performing arts areas, and dining facility
 - 2.3 Articulate guiding health and wellness principles, including those that indicate how the athletic center teaches our students about proper fitness and nutrition
 - 2.4 Provide an excellent library with maximum accessibility
3. **Improve the campus infrastructure**
 - 3.1 Hire additional staff to manage buildings and grounds and events
 - 3.2 Review and update the crisis management plan quarterly
 - 3.3 Create and maintain a facilities manual while investigating best practices used by other schools
 - 3.4 Educate faculty and staff regarding the sustainable and regenerative design of the campus infrastructure



FINANCIAL MEANS

1. Continue to build the endowment

- 1.1 Raise \$5Million
- 1.2 Establish specific investment guidelines for the endowment
- 1.3 Conduct annual reviews to determine whether the endowment is meeting the school's needs

2. Reduce the operating budget deficit

- 2.1 Increase nontuition income by 10% per year
- 2.2 Add one source of nontuition income each year

3. Develop the Capital Campaign for Phase III building

- 3.1 Structure a \$12Million campaign to cover a new classroom building (\$5M) and the Health, Wellness and Nutrition Center (\$7M)
- 3.2 Hold a kick-off event by May 2009
- 3.3 Raise all money by December 2010 in order to complete the classroom building



SINCERE THANKS

Strategic planning is vital to every organization, especially so to a young, progressive school that seeks to define new directions in education. Vision and confidence characterize The Willow School, and nowhere are these qualities revealed more clearly than in the pages of the 2008 Strategic Plan. The entire school community deserves appreciation for its participation in this important project. To the administration, faculty, advisory council, board of trustees, parents, and students we offer our sincere thanks for their dedication and insight. We acknowledge a special debt of gratitude to Dr. Peter Relic, consultant and former President of the National Association of Independent Schools, for his friendship, guidance, and wisdom throughout the planning experience.

Reid Hausmann
Chair, Strategic Planning Committee

STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKING GROUPS

Educational Experience

Daly Arnett, Sheila Donovan, Shannon Downey, Reid Hausmann, Gretchen Johnson, Julie Kim, Michael Kris, Gus Link, Liliana Lisboa, Adele O'Brien, Paul Parker

Marketing and Growth of the School

Joseph Avellino, Tony Cannon, David Donovan, Corinne de Palma, Gina Lefferts, Beth MacPherson, Susan Palmer, Annette Worthington

Education for Sustainability

Jeff Ammeen, Sara Angeletti, Andy Boszhardt, Alex Boye, Catherine Luborsky, Suzanne Mahoney, Louisa Pitt, Judy Salisbury, Jean Scott, Noelle Schacht, Lily Steele, Kate Burke Walsh, Kim Yousey

Growth of the Campus

Mark Biedron, Jeff Bravstein, Mark Casey, Carol Fontaine, Karen Hilde, Delaney Jones, Eugene Kalkin, Bruce Molloy, Christy Moynihan, Linda Niedzwiecki, Steve Rubenstein, Dorian von Aulock, Sarah Webb

Financial Means

Mark Biedron, Charlotte Escaravage, Mark Ferriso, Adam Fischer, Brad Gano, Linda Niedzwiecki, Scott Thompson

Extracurricular Activities (External Programs)

Andrew Callahan, Dorrie Dillon, Eugene Kalkin, Sharon Kawam, Suzanne Mahoney, Andy Pruzick, Paula Runnells, Jane Steele, Dorian von Aulock



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