

THE BENJAMIN SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2007-2012

Mission Statement:

The Benjamin School provides a challenging college preparatory education to a diverse student body in a structured, nurturing community environment. The school motivates students to master the skills of learning, communicating and evaluating choices; encourages them to grow intellectually, socially, morally and physically to their fullest potential; and develops in them a coherent set of values that include love of learning, concern for others, and a commitment to serve society.

At the Benjamin School we are guided by the following principles:

1. Excellence is central to everything we do at Benjamin.
2. Our primary purpose is to serve the educational needs of our students.
3. We have a balanced commitment to academics, the arts and athletics.
4. We value a sense of community, character development, and service to others. As a private school with a public purpose, we encourage members of our community to be active citizens within our democratic society.
5. Our strengths are our students, our faculty and our reputation. We strive to be the best school by having the best people. They are the foundation of our success.
6. We encourage creativity and innovation throughout the school. Teaching and learning are dynamic processes. We must meet the emerging needs of our students.
7. Our school is committed to diversity.
8. We believe in a partnership between school and home.
9. Our size needs to serve our students. A right-sized school allows each child to be known, cared for, and challenged.
10. Integrity and honesty are at the heart of our school.
11. We must set high standards and do everything we can to help our students meet them. Successful students become fearless, independent, self-directed, and collaborative learners.
12. We prepare our students for college and life, and measure our success by their commitment to lifelong learning in a global society.

PROGRAM

PROGRAM GOAL: To offer a challenging, balanced and integrated program, seamless in design and global in scope, which develops a love of learning and engages students in academics, athletics, and the arts. We will continue our historic commitment to foster the development of character and service to others.

RATIONALE: As custodians of children, we are obligated to provide them with opportunities to explore, understand, and appreciate the breadth and depth of human experience and understanding. Students need to develop a sense of who they are, an empathy for others, and a commitment to act for the common good. This goal will be achieved within a curriculum that is coherent, articulated, and regularly reviewed. The program will help students develop skills to lead self-directed, productive lives, working both independently and collaboratively.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

- 1. Review and improve, on a regular basis, the curriculum to ensure it is relevant, challenging, and cohesive.**
- 2. Ensure that the arts and athletic programs complement our academic program.**
- 3. Enhance the school's long-standing commitment to character development and service.**
- 4. Increase the use of interdisciplinary learning, which is learning that incorporates more than one academic area to examine and attempt to solve complex problems.**
- 5. Support more fully the different learning styles of students.**
- 6. Understand and address the distinct learning needs of each gender.**
- 7. Expand external opportunities for learning.**
- 8. Continue to evaluate the security of the school to insure our children's safety.**

FACULTY

PROGRAM GOAL: To support our mission and program, Benjamin will attract, support, evaluate and compensate faculty* who embrace that mission, hold themselves accountable to high standards and are themselves lifelong learners.

RATIONALE: Benjamin needs an outstanding and diverse faculty to challenge our most talented students, understand and support students who learn differently, and help all students achieve. Our faculty will develop meaningful relationships with our students based on advocacy and care, thus creating an environment that is most conducive to learning.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

- 1. Cultivate and retain a well qualified, caring and diverse faculty.**
- 2. Enhance and fund a model program of faculty professional development.**
- 3. Explore various ways to strengthen the relationships between faculty and students throughout the school program.**
- 4. Implement high standards for faculty evaluation and accountability.**
- 5. Review the compensation package for fairness and competitiveness at all levels of experience and work to enhance compensation for all faculty and staff.**

* For the purposes of this document we include in the term "faculty" all faculty, staff, and administrators. We expect all of these adults to advocate and care for our students.

DIVERSITY

PROGRAM GOAL: To increase the racial, socio-economic and cultural diversity of the students, faculty and staff of The Benjamin School and to create a climate that is supportive of all members of the school community.

RATIONALE: It is important that The Benjamin School be an inclusive community reflecting a wide range of races, cultures, and economic circumstances. This is consistent with the fundamental American belief in equality of opportunity and a tenet of the mission of our school. Inclusiveness encourages a union of strengths and broadens the vision of all. In this increasingly diverse world, we strive to create a talented, richly varied school culture and to educate our students with the necessary skills that will equip them to interact and flourish within our multicultural society and the interconnected global economy.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

- 1. Continue to increase the racial, socioeconomic, and cultural diversity of our students, faculty, and staff.**
- 2. Create throughout the curriculum a school community that more fully nurtures and supports all students.**
- 3. Develop, within the curriculum, more materials and experiences that help students understand a wide range of cultures and perspectives.**
- 4. Work to support and retain a diverse faculty and staff.**
- 5. Promote and foster inclusivity across the broad spectrum of our families.**

COMMUNICATIONS

PROGRAM GOAL: To make more explicit to the members of The Benjamin School and to the wider community, this institution's philosophy, values, goals, and needs to assure that The Benjamin School is recognized as an exemplary college preparatory school and that all members within our community advocate on behalf of the school. Additionally, we want all constituencies to understand that the school has been and will remain fundamentally concerned with the total development of the students—their character, personality, and outlook on life.

RATIONALE: To continue to attract talented students and supportive families, The Benjamin School must have effective communication with a rapidly evolving community. We need to articulate a unified message and instill a common school culture among all the school's constituencies.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

- 1. Identify clearly how The Benjamin School is special and unique.**
- 2. Educate prospective, incoming, and current parents about their opportunities and responsibilities as members of an independent school community**
- 3. Strengthen communication with parents and past parents.**
- 4. Increase outreach to departing families, past parents, and alumni and support of alumni.**
- 5. Communicate to the larger community our mission, philosophy, and program.**
- 6. Demonstrate how we are a private school with a public purpose.**

FINANCE AND PHILANTHROPY

PROGRAM GOAL: To develop a plan for long-term financial sustainability and to strengthen our culture of philanthropy. We will determine the optimal school size and evaluate physical plant opportunities.

RATIONALE: The Benjamin School has undergone major changes in the last decade. We now have a second campus, a larger enrollment, and higher tuition levels. Faced with these challenges and opportunities, we have a responsibility to plan for the future as well as the school of today.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

- 1. Create financial models to determine optimal school size.**
- 2. Undertake a feasibility study for a capital/endowment campaign while continuing to grow the Annual Fund.**
- 3. Strengthen the culture of philanthropy across the members of the school community.**
- 4. Support our need-based financial aid program.**

Revised September 4, 2007