Long Range Plan 2015 - 2022
Strategic Planning at Grace
Elyce Arons, Chair Board of Trustees

Grace Church School has adopted its fifth Long Range Plan at a historic juncture in the life of the School. When the previous Long Range Plan was adopted in 2006, Grace Church School looked very different. The vision of adding a high school division was in its infancy then, but this fall we will welcome more than 730 students in a full complement of grades from Junior Kindergarten through Grade 12. In the spring of 2016, we will graduate our first class of high school seniors.

The dramatic changes that took place over the course of the last Long Range Plan make this a particularly exciting time to be charting the next phase of growth and achievement for the School. While much may be different today, the core tenets that have defined Grace Church School for more than 120 years have not changed. We know that our future success lies at the intersection of tradition and innovation. The new Long Range Plan embodies a commitment to maintaining the traditions and ideals that have served Grace Church School well for so long, while also embracing innovations in curriculum content and design demanded by the complex and interconnected world in which we live.

The strategic planning process began with the Board of Trustees identifying goals and aspirations for the School within four distinct areas: continued focus on programmatic and academic excellence; Episcopal identity as the foundation for our intentionally diverse community; greater integration of the four divisions of the School; and financial security and sustainability. The new Long Range Plan is the culmination of a yearlong process of deliberation and refinement. The Plan sets forth six statements defining who we are and what we strive to be as an institution followed by specific actions to be undertaken over the life of the Plan to enable the School to fully realize these goals and aspirations.

The Plan provides a roadmap for trustees, administrators and faculty in whom primary responsibility for shaping the future of the School lies. However, the larger Grace Church School community – students, parents and alumni – also has an important role to play in determining how Grace Church School will honor its traditions while continuing to adapt to its expanded structure and the challenges of a rapidly changing world. The diverse and vibrant Grace Church School community is one of our most valued assets and will be critical to the realization and success of the Long Range Plan.

We are deeply grateful to the trustees, teachers, parents, alumni and administrators who devoted countless hours to the creation of the Long Range Plan. Preparing students to be successful in today’s world requires flexibility and continual evaluation. This Long Range Plan provides the framework for that kind of thinking and will guide us as we undertake a new phase of capital development, mark our 125th anniversary in 2019, and, most importantly, prepare all Grace Church School students to thrive academically, embrace challenges with confidence, and pursue meaningful and fulfilling lives.

[Signature]
Actions...

- Foster excellence in thought and action anchored by ethics and goodness as students develop competence and confidence.

- Prepare students academically and intellectually to embrace the challenges that they will encounter at each stage of their education and in life.

- Continue to abide by the principle that relationships between and among students and faculty at the School take precedence over the demands of systems and efficiency.

- Recruit and hire faculty with cross-disciplinary skills and inter-disciplinary perspectives.

- Provide professional development to equip faculty to integrate knowledge across disciplines and to use cutting edge research tools to access salient information.

- Develop curricula that integrate and strengthen the sciences, math, art, design thinking and technology.

- Review the scope and sequence of language instruction with a particular eye to when to begin it, which languages should be taught, and the experiential opportunities that would enhance the foreign language curriculum.

- Continue the school’s historic commitment to multi-sensory teaching and learning, recognizing that different students learn in different ways.

- Provide top-quality physical education and competitive athletic programs supported by excellent athletic facilities.

- Integrate fully into the School’s program experiential and service learning opportunities, partnerships with neighboring institutions, cross cultural exchanges and global citizenship.

- Continue to build extracurricular and after school programs at all ages so that the students have an enriching and invigorating range of choices.
At Grace Church School, our Episcopal identity provides the foundation upon which our intentionally inclusive community is based, where each person is welcomed and valued and all voices are heard.

Actions...

• In order to foster a deeper understanding of our Episcopal identity, articulate the Episcopal school traditions that are applicable to GCS and communicate their meaning and importance to the broader community.

• Identify and build upon the synergies between the service and social justice activities of the School and those of Grace Church and other Episcopal and like-minded community organizations.

• Incorporate the NAES Episcopal Identity and Culture Self-Study into the NYSAIS accreditation review and create a concise, easily understood statement about religious diversity at GCS, an Episcopal school that includes children of all faiths or no faith.

• Continue to broaden and deepen all aspects of diversity in our community and programs, including, without limitation, religious, racial, ethnic, economic, sexual orientation and gender identity diversity.

• Increase community awareness of the depth and breadth of our diversity programming and devote sufficient staffing to maintain, expand and evaluate such efforts in every grade, JK through 12.

• Recruit, hire and retain faculty and staff who reflect the diversity of the New York Metro Region.

• Develop and implement a plan to increase racial and economic diversity in early childhood and lower school admissions.

• Actively and openly promote the School’s efforts to ensure that all students and families feel welcome and are able to fully participate in the life of the School. Regularly evaluate the success of these efforts.
At Grace Church School all four divisions are united into one JK through 12 School that inspires, engages and challenges students in each stage of their learning and growth.

**Actions...**

- Design and implement a process of regular cross-divisional meetings to discuss curriculum, teaching, and developmental expectations.

- Provide School-sponsored opportunities for faculty and staff to socialize and engage in activities that benefit the life of the School.

- Create communication vehicles to familiarize parents with the entire JK through 12 program, including curriculum overview and milestone activities.

- Foster traditions that integrate the School’s four divisions and create and nurture links between the two campuses.

- Provide parents with appropriate and accessible ways to be involved in their children’s education and engaged with School culture through effective communication about the entire program.

- Develop a marketing initiative for the School that includes explicit phrases that characterize our mission and explores ways to best present the School’s visual identity.

- Integrate new high school parents as fully as possible into the life of the School.
At Grace Church School we are committed to increasing the financial resources of the School, within a prudent capital structure, to achieve the sustainable financial health required to build and nourish programs that attract outstanding students and faculty.

At Grace Church School we work to develop structures that responsibly provide for affordability at all levels.

**Actions...**

- Maintain tuition at a level that equals at least the median of our peer schools in the NYC Guild of Independent Schools.

- Continue to build a financial aid program that assists many income levels so that the School remains broadly accessible and affordable, with emphasis on increasing the breadth of financial support in the younger grades.

- Be at the top rank of schools offering financial assistance by aspiring to provide financial aid to 24 percent of School families with an average grant equal to 70 to 80 percent of tuition.

- In order to recruit and retain the very best faculty and staff, regularly review the balance of their compensation and benefits and strive to maintain the combined package at the 75th percentile of the Guild.

- Explore efficiencies in operations and seek alternate sources of income.

- Increase the School’s endowment to equal at least 110 percent of outstanding debt.

- Fund the anticipated $15 million construction of the gym at 46 Cooper Square through a mixture of campaign receipts and short-term debt.

- Develop a prioritization model for maintenance and growth capital expenditures.

- Continue and further the generous spirit of the School’s community, with the goal of increasing annual fund contributions one-third by 2021.

- Develop programs that enhance the financial support of the School by its graduates.
Mission Statement

Grace Church School aims to establish in its students firmly rooted confidence in themselves and their abilities. Because we believe that school experience sets the foundation for lifelong intellectual and social growth, we strive to develop in each student mental keenness, physical confidence, pleasure in learning, and the skills basic to understanding one’s self and the world. Our structured curriculum, enriched with broad opportunities for creative expression, assumes as fundamental the mastery of a specific range of academic skills, especially the ability to express one’s own ideas and to appraise those of others.

Yet the educational goals of the school are broader than intellectual and social development. We nurture in our students a steady, affectionate trust in themselves and their world, made resilient by the interaction of different ethnic, religious, and socio-economic influences. We strive to help each student develop an active ethical consciousness, supported by close acquaintance with Judeo-Christian beliefs and enhanced by the beauty and faith inherent in Grace Church.

We encourage a mutually supportive relationship between family and school. We aim to have students graduate from Grace Church School with a strong sense of self, able to think clearly, function well academically, and embrace coming challenges with confidence.