



CLIFF VALLEY

STRATEGIC PLAN

Spring 2021

Board of Trustees

Strategic Planning Committee

MISSION

Cliff Valley provides outstanding education focused on students' academic and social development in a caring community environment.

VISION FOR CLIFF VALLEY SCHOOL

- A leading choice for independent education in Metro Atlanta.
- A superior academic institution, specializing in differentiated instruction and the development of executive function skills, serving students in preschool through grade 8. Our students are well prepared to succeed in a challenging secondary school setting.
- A program with a global perspective emphasizing the arts and the environment.
- An intimate school community built on a student body that is small by design, and appropriately sized for optimizing children's academic, social, and emotional development, in a caring environment.
- A socio-economically diverse, scholarship institution.
- Comprehensive programs with emphasis on promoting respect, responsibility and resourcefulness among our students. Cliff Valley students thrive academically, artistically, physically and socially. They take risks, explore new things, and participate in school and society with self-confidence.

ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

Strategic Objective

We are committed to our mission: to provide an outstanding education focused on students' academic and social development in a caring community environment.

In keeping with our strategic vision, we will remain small and selective, maintaining our longstanding practice of having low student/faculty ratios and multiple instructors in our classrooms.

It is the role of our Board to continually evaluate marketplace conditions, and position future Boards to potentially consider expansion – if and when that becomes the right thing to do for the school and community, and if and when it becomes financially feasible. We recognize that expansion through high school would require significant demand from our community, as well as significant financial and property resources.

Mission Impact

Our programs are organized to drive the key elements of our mission: an *outstanding* education in a *caring community*. We are serious about those descriptors and choose to serve students of average to high ability with a high quality curriculum in a small and selective school setting.

Action Items

- Attract and retain diverse, outstanding, highly competent teachers who demonstrate a clear understanding of our school's mission and educational philosophy.
- Continue admissions and enrollment processes to maintain a selective, engaged student body of median to high achieving learners.
- Increase program offerings and reach of the Cliff Valley Institute, which offers professional development and parent education opportunities under the auspices of Cliff Valley.
- Continue to monitor enrollment demand and structure our program accordingly for our families' needs and our school's long-term success.

FINANCE

Strategic Objective

The Board and administration work to create and execute annual financial plans that include a balanced operating budget, positive cash flow and earnings retention.

We maintain pricing strategies that position the school competitively in the independent school market. We seek to offer exceptional value for an outstanding educational program. Such a program requires significant resources, and we price our services accordingly. Unlike some peer institutions, we choose not to rely on fundraising to bridge shortfalls between income and expenses.

We use debt only prudently and responsibly, particularly for additional facilities and growth.

Mission Impact

We recognize that the primary role of the Board is to ensure the successful operation of the school for current and future families, and we take seriously our role as a non-profit organization. We're committed to fiscal responsibility and sound business practices, and we budget accordingly.

Action Items

- Create and analyze long-range financial projections and scenarios for board planning.
- Set annual plans for tuition and financial operations.
- Service and reduce debt on an ongoing basis, and refinance as advantageous opportunities arise.

ADVANCEMENT

Strategic Objective

The focus of our advancement efforts is to safeguard financial sustainability, support future growth of the school, and serve future students.

We seek a student body primarily made up of “lifers” – students who join our community at preschool and stay to graduate – augmented by a healthy mix of new applicants, maintaining a strong sense of community among our student body.

Our advancement plan includes strategies to: build endowment for future generations; finance capital improvements; increase brand recognition, brand awareness, and applications; and communicate effectively to our families and the surrounding community.

Mission Impact

Successful fundraising and marketing efforts have enabled our school to grow from a neighborhood preschool to a preschool through grade 8 school known across metro Atlanta. These same efforts are key to our future progress and continued success.

Action Items

- Create fundraising, marketing and communications plans annually that support financial goals, brand awareness, admissions, and enrollment.
- Continue to raise funds for scholarships through vehicles including the Georgia Student Scholarship tax credit and our Harrison Scholarship Fund, while also raising funds for future needs.
- Promote growth of the 2066 Endowment.
- Evaluate needs and timing for future capital campaigns.
- Monitor and benchmark competing area educational options, including independent, parochial, and charter schools.

FACILITIES

Strategic Objective

We provide a campus and facilities to support the delivery of an outstanding program, preschool through grade 8, and an overall outstanding experience for our customers and community.

Mission Impact

An outstanding education – and our caring community environment – is enhanced by quality facilities. We must ensure that our state-of-the-art campus stays that way, and offers future opportunities to broaden our program offerings as appropriate.

Action Items

- Consider options for additional field, athletic, and artistic spaces as opportunities and finances permit.
- Review space utilization needs regularly to determine priorities for use of space and future plans.
- Evaluate potential opportunities to expand the campus, to position future boards to consider physical plant expansion, if and when warranted.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS & ENRICHMENT

Strategic Objective

We must maintain outstanding quality in our preschool through grade 8 curriculum and programs. In doing so, we build on Cliff Valley's historic strengths in environmental and arts education.

Our school develops well-rounded students who are academically, socially, and emotionally prepared. The faculty and staff work to imbue students with a global perspective, the ability to speak and present confidently, and strong executive function skills.

We ensure that parents and students have a seamless experience from preschool through grade 8. We are committed to preparing our graduates for acceptance to, and success in, metro Atlanta's finest upper schools.

Mission Impact

Our reason for being, and the heart of our mission, is offering an outstanding education to our students, with superior quality academic and enrichment experiences.

Action Items

- Continually evaluate and adjust programming to ensure student success and development throughout the program.
- Maintain certifications from top accrediting bodies.
- Offer a strong variety of quality enrichment experiences for students, including arts and athletics.
- Continue to develop and offer comprehensive parent education that provides parents with the resources and tools to address the developmental needs of their children.