

THOMAS MACLAREN SCHOOL
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
ANNUAL STRATEGIC PLAN

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2024

APPROVED JANUARY 25, 2024

PART 1: VISION AND MISSION

VISION STATEMENT

We believe all students should be immersed in the best our tradition has to offer. We believe all students can be active and useful participants in the ongoing and enduring conversation that is a vibrant civilization. We believe all students can be formed in a habitual vision of greatness that makes lifelong learners of the doctor and the mechanic, the homemaker and the professor. Thomas MacLaren School strives to build a lasting community of learners in which each student is the agent of his or her education.

MISSION STATEMENT

From the seminar to the science lab, from the music room to the playing field, we begin with the conviction that **all human beings can know truth, create beauty, and practice goodness**. To that end, we expect students to develop basic tools of learning, ordered basic knowledge, moral seriousness, breadth and depth of imagination, artistic ability and sensitivity, and a sense of wonder.

We believe all students can be active and useful participants in the ongoing and enduring conversation that is a vibrant civilization. Jacques Maritain, the French philosopher, described education as a human awakening. The goal of Thomas MacLaren School is to develop young men and women who are fully human and fully awake to the world.

PART 2: GOALS

STRATEGIC GOALS

The following goals are intended to focus the attention and efforts of the Board of Directors and the Executive Director on particular objectives critical to the long-term health and success of the School. They are not intended to reduce or restrict the responsibilities of either (see below) or to articulate all the initiatives and activities undertaken in pursuit of the School's mission. Their purpose is to help the Board and administration as they prioritize their use of time and resources.

ANNUAL GOALS

1. Consistently graduate students who excel according to MacLaren-specific standards.
2. Maintain the culture of liberal arts learning in a community.
3. Continue to receive the highest evaluation for academic, financial, and operational performance from our authorizer.
4. Consistently place among the top schools in the state and region according to state performance measures and college placement.
5. Build on the base of \$100,000 in fundraising revenues via the Annual Appeal.
6. Expand the Masters Fund proportional to the growth of the school.

ONE-YEAR GOALS

1. Raise faculty salaries.
2. Continue education of all stakeholders, including Board, staff, parents, and students in a deeper understanding of the mission of the school in the context of school Executive Director transition.
3. Support key transitional years for students: K, 6th, 9th, 12th, and transfers.
4. Implement the Development program and strategy.
5. Research and update demographic goals.
6. Continue to implement Continuum of Supports (MTSS through special services).
7. Revise facility master plan in light of school growth.

TWO-TO-FIVE-YEAR GOALS

1. Develop a set of student and faculty performance measures for the MacLaren-specific mission and program objectives.
2. Develop strategies to better recruit and retain mission-aligned faculty.
3. Provide market-competitive base teacher salaries, salary increases tied to Per Pupil Revenue (PPR), and bonus/merit pay tied to MacLaren-specific performance criteria.
4. Develop a strategy to address short- and long-term facility needs.
5. Develop student recruitment strategy to sustain K-12 enrollment goals.
6. Implement seamless transition between outgoing and incoming Executive Director.

FIVE-TO-TEN-YEAR GOALS

1. Expand the K-5 program into a full four-strand program.
2. Move towards full plan for facility development.
3. Provide attractive base teacher salaries with salary increases and merit pay tied to MacLaren-specific performance criteria.
4. Provide a salary scale that encourages a career at MacLaren.

PART 3: CONTEXT

S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

REVISED NOVEMBER 11, 2023

The following is the inventory of internal School strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and challenges, conducted by the Board of Directors at its annual retreat.

STRENGTHS

- Campus in the heart of an established D11 neighborhood
- Offer a K-5 program that aligns with 6-12 program
- Excellent curriculum
- Excellent student performance
- Attention to strong culture amid high student enrollment and faculty growth
- Rated "Performance with Distinction" by authorizer (CSI)
- Good reputation and recognition for excellence
- Strong Executive Director and leadership team
- Committed administration and excellent faculty
- Board commitment
- Administration focused on the right priorities
- Strong academic leadership pipeline, including expanded leadership team
- Strong organizational and financial management
- Sound risk management
- Investment in health and safety needs through facility improvements
- Third strand built out in the Lower School
- High parent satisfaction and trust
- Strong community engagement
- Ability to respond nimbly to challenges as they arise
- Recognized athletic program
- Increased financial security

WEAKNESSES

- Salaries that are not competitive enough relative to faculty hiring and retention needs
- Continued post-pandemic struggles with staff shortages
- Continued post-pandemic struggles with staff retention

- Challenging faculty recruitment owing to unique academic program and current educational market
- Retention of students from middle to high school
- Have not yet attracted strong philanthropic attention
- Fundraising trends low relative to future needs
- Aging campus and facility systems

OPPORTUNITIES

- Connection with the immediate neighborhood
- Enhance connections with other school communities and advocacy groups– charters and classical schools
- Partnerships with mission-compatible organizations
- Marketing potential of academic performance
- Student and alumni advocates
- Contacts made through athletic and extracurricular programs
- Growing networking capacity, including strategic relationships with vendors/parents
- Growing alumni population
- Increased presence in the community through MacLaren Society and MacLaren String Quartet
- Advocacy at the state level
- Continued diversification of fundraising pipelines and donors
- Student recruitment and retention
- Pre-K programming
- Educating parents in the liberal arts mission and the goal of a MacLaren education
- Leverage alumni community to create buy-in to our culture for parents and students

THREATS

- Continued post-pandemic mental health and behavioral needs
- Competition for students and faculty, particularly in tight hiring market
- Variation in state funding
- PERA and health insurance rate increases
- Burden of compliance reporting and state required testing
- Unfunded mandates from the state requiring increased hiring and increased work load
- Legislation unfriendly to charter schools or to single-sex education
- External pressure to be a college-prep school

PART 4: KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

KEY BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

The MacLaren Board of Directors has the following responsibilities:

- to safeguard the school's mission and vision;
- to select, direct, and evaluate the Executive Director;
- to provide proper financial oversight;
- to provide adequate resources for the school to fulfill its mission;
- to ensure legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability of everyone else in the school through the proper chain of command;
- to ensure effective long-range planning;
- to recruit and orient new board members and periodically assess its own performance;
- to contribute to school fundraising efforts;
- and to continually enhance the school's public standing by clearly articulating the school's mission, accomplishments, and goals to the public and garner support from the community.

KEY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Director is the chief administrative officer of the School, charged with

- faithfully implementing the design and mission of the school;
- executing all phases of the School's operation;
- leading the faculty and staff, which includes leading the community of learners and teaching at least one course per year;
- hiring, firing, evaluating, and disciplining faculty and staff, as necessary;
- looking ahead strategically in all areas: academic, operational, financial.

The Executive Director reports directly to the Board of Directors.