

Introduction

In 2019 the Board of Trustees made the decision to develop this new Strategic Plan for Grymes Memorial School. The previous Strategic Plan, completed in 2014, effectively guided the school over five years. With an updated Mission and Philosophy, the School enhanced its curriculum, developed its character program, expanded its Junior Kindergarten program to include three-year-olds, added a STEM lab, improved the quality of its communications and marketing, redesigned its website, restructured its advancement office, added ten acres to the campus and planted a wild flower meadow and hedgerow, laid the groundwork for renovations to the main building, and met the challenge of matching a \$3 million donation in a campaign that grew the endowment to nearly \$10 million. The Grymes Board also orchestrated a smooth Head of School leadership transition in 2017-2018.

The School embarked on the planning for this new Strategic Plan at the same time it was completing its self-study for re-accreditation with the Virginia Association for Independent Schools (VAIS). Both processes provided the opportunity to assess the School's strengths and opportunities for growth.

There are four main areas in this Strategic Plan: program, building and grounds, marketing, and sustainability. In each area, we have developed goals that will help us to build on existing strengths and traditions while also ensuring that Grymes will remain open to innovative approaches that best serve our students and community. We will assess our offerings, both academic and co-curricular, with an eye toward prioritizing, strengthening, and developing essential programs and relationships both within and outside our school community. We will continue to improve and find ways to utilize our buildings and campus for the benefit of our students and the wider community. We will generate and more effectively communicate a message that conveys the core elements and value of a Grymes education. Finally, we will work to promote the two key attributes, academic excellence and a safe, supportive community, that should make Grymes distinctive for our families and the broader community.

One area of distinction that the Steering Committee recommended for emphasis is the special way that

students are nurtured at Grymes. To this end, we slightly modified our Philosophy, adding a phrase (in italics below) that underscores our recognition that children need time and space in order to truly thrive: We foster community by providing a warm family atmosphere that *allows children to be children* even as they grow and flourish as students.

Nearing the completion of this Strategic Plan, its durability and relevance were tested in a way that no one could have anticipated. In March the COVID-19 crisis compelled us to close our campus and develop a remote learning program. By an order from the governor, our initial two-week hiatus turned into a longer term ordeal, as our campus had to be closed for the remainder of the academic year, and our VAIS accreditation visit was postponed to 2020-2021.

The economic and societal changes caused by COVID-19 required a significant addition to this Strategic Plan. Although the goals remain intact, Grymes will now assemble a team to monitor, analyze, and respond to short- and long-term economic and programmatic impacts of the current crisis. We will continue to work toward achieving the goals laid out in the Strategic Plan. However, in light of the heightened uncertainty about the future, consideration will have to be given to priorities and measures required under these unexpected circumstances, and this crisis team will be tasked with this important responsibility.

Over nearly seventy-five years, Grymes Memorial School has built a solid reputation serving families in Central Virginia. At this challenging time for our country, we can find strength in the School's record of distinctive service, and this new Strategic Plan gives us more reason to hope that the School will weather the current crisis and even emerge stronger from it. We are grateful to the many people, including students, faculty, parents, grandparents, alumni, and friends of the School, who have contributed to the creation of this new roadmap for the Grymes future. In particular, Kathy Hanson, consultant with Marts & Lundy, led our process with expert guidance and wisdom every step of the way, and our Steering Committee deserves special commendation for providing invaluable and generous service in developing our Strategic Plan.



Program

Goal: *Boldly prioritize, strengthen, and develop relationships and essential programs.*

Strategies:

1. Ensure that existing programs, including academic, co-curricular, and character, effectively prepare students for the demands of high school and beyond.
2. Identify and develop distinctive aspects that can be strengthened and highlighted in each area of the academic program.
3. Explore opportunities for new programs that will strengthen the academic experience.
4. Strengthen key relationships, both within the school and with the broader community, that create opportunities to enhance school programs.
5. Explore opportunities for new relationships that will strengthen the academic program and student growth.
6. Evaluate school schedule with the aim of reviewing priorities and ensuring time for building key relationships and supporting essential programs.

Marketing

Goal: *Generate and communicate a unified brand message that clearly conveys the value of a Grymes Memorial School education for current and future stakeholders.*

Strategies:

1. Develop comprehensive brand strategy.
2. Develop and execute marketing plan to increase awareness.
3. Increase and improve marketing resources.
4. Improve yield, with emphasis on increasing economic, racial, ethnic, and religious diversity of the student body, through an enrollment management process.
5. Strengthen parent role in retention and marketing.
6. Strengthen alumni connections and engagement.
7. Integrate ongoing program improvements and success metrics into marketing plan.



Sustainability

Goal: *Maintain and enhance the attributes that should make Grymes distinctive: academic excellence and a safe, supportive community; and advance the recognition of those attributes by raising the School's profile.*

Strategies:

1. Establish a task force to study tuition in all its dimensions.
2. Provide the resources to hire and retain the best, mission-appropriate teachers.
3. Foster a safe, supportive community.
4. Develop and mount a comprehensive, cohesive and multi-pronged marketing campaign, and provide the resources for this.
5. Adopt "strategic budgeting."
6. Move from an "admissions approach" to an Enrollment Management approach to capture every opportunity to identify, enroll, and retain students.
7. Sustain and further develop philanthropic resources.



Buildings and Grounds

Goal: *Improve and utilize facilities and grounds to enhance the student and community experience.*

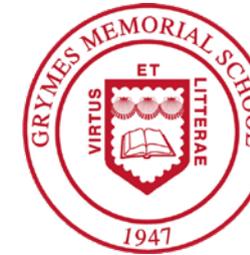
Strategies:

1. Develop a campus master plan that aligns the vision for buildings and grounds with the goals and values of the school and supports academic and co-curricular programs.
2. Prioritize the renovation of the main building, including functional and aesthetic improvements.
3. Identify ways to use the grounds more effectively in support of the school mission.
4. Identify current and future program needs that are specific to construction of a new gym and the renovation of the current gym and theater space.



Mission

Nurturing Character
Building Thinkers
Cultivating Creativity
Fostering Community
Launching Learners



Statement of Philosophy

We nurture the character of every child, emphasizing honor, respect, responsibility, and kindness.

We build curious, analytical and tenacious thinkers through a thoughtfully designed curriculum. We challenge students to take risks, whether solving a math problem, developing a scientific hypothesis, or writing a poem.

We cultivate creativity across all disciplines. Students discover their voices and grow in confidence as they explore varied means of expression.

We foster community by providing a warm family atmosphere that allows children to be children even as they grow and flourish as students.

By developing students of good character, who have built a strong foundation in thinking skills, who have found their voices through intellectual and creative outlets, and who are well-rounded in a caring community, we launch learners in pursuit of meaningful lives.

GRYMES MEMORIAL SCHOOL



STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025

