

The American School in London Strategic Plan



Winter, 2010

To the ASL community,

By its nature, a strategic plan looks to the future and establishes the goals and aspirations that allow an institution to reach new heights. A school's strategic plan sets the priorities and identifies the strategies that will help it provide the very best education for its students.

Over the past 18 months, representatives of the ASL Board of Trustees, the administration, faculty, staff and parents have been gathering information, debating alternatives, setting aspirations and considering ways ASL should evolve to meet future needs and challenges. The Strategic Plan now being presented is the culmination of this work. The plan identifies areas that are priorities for the School in the next three to five years and recommends specific initiatives that can be undertaken to strengthen and enhance ASL. While any strategic plan is a living document requiring continuous review and reflection, this plan provides a roadmap to move the School forward. The administration is now charged with its implementation.

The strategic planning process is always about the future, but it necessarily reflects both the past and the present situation of the School. One outcome of this process is confirmation that we start from a position of great strength. We have an outstanding faculty and administration, and a community of responsible and engaged students. We have sound financial health and the beginnings of what we hope will become a sizable endowment. We are in the fortunate position of being able to aspire to achieve even greater heights.

Our work on this plan has been inevitably colored by the economic climate of the past two years as well as our acknowledgment that the world around us is changing. We recognize the need to consider the School's role and position in an increasingly global and economically diverse world, and some of the new strategic goals reflect this: the importance of providing our students with a global perspective and an authentic commitment to character, service and leadership, and the need to ensure that our community remains inclusive and diverse. Other goals reflect our thoughts on how to provide appropriate facilities to meet our future needs and how best to preserve and enhance our financial stability.

Ultimately, however, every goal and each strategic initiative identified represents our most important priority—to ensure that we best meet the educational needs of our students and successfully fulfill the School's mission. Through this plan, we are continuing ASL's evolution as a truly unique and outstanding educational institution in the heart of a great international city.



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Chair of the Board of Trustees



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An Outstanding Educational Program



The mission of ASL is to develop the intellect and character of each student. Central to the success of this goal is the commitment to an outstanding program that teaches our students to think critically, to communicate clearly, to collaborate effectively, and to contribute meaningfully as students and citizens. While developing the self-awareness and self-confidence needed to engage with the intellectual, emotional, and social tasks before them, our students must be challenged and supported by a talented faculty that is well trained, creative, and committed to our mission and program.

Desired Outcomes

- 1** Our students experience a cohesive, dynamic curricular program characterized by excellence, creativity, and depth.
- 2** Our students have opportunities to develop their particular passions and strengths through curricular and experiential avenues.
- 3** Our faculty has the resources, time, and encouragement to develop a dynamic and challenging curricular program.
- 4** Our faculty aspires to the highest performance standards in the profession.
- 5** Our faculty has access to the finest professional development opportunities available.

Strategies and Initiatives

A renewed focus on a dynamic and coherent K-12 curriculum, including

A In-depth K-12 curriculum evaluation and review, to ensure that all parts of the curriculum provide appropriate content and depth and reflect a commitment to best practices in pedagogy.

B Improving K-12 curriculum coordination among divisions and disciplines, and exploring interdisciplinary work and course offerings.

C Pursuing best practices to implement effective means of measuring student learning.

A continued emphasis on fostering faculty excellence, including

D Establishing a culture of collaboration, continuous improvement and mutual support among faculty by providing professional learning structures and sufficient time for reflection and collaboration, and ensuring that the needs of faculty and staff are considered and addressed.

E Continuing to ensure that we offer competitive compensation and benefits to attract and retain an outstanding faculty and staff.

F Pursuing best practices and developing new protocols to implement effective means of faculty and staff evaluation.

G Coordinating and broadening K-12 professional development that promotes effective teaching and learning strategies and developing a summer institute for professional development.

A Global Perspective and Character, Service and Leadership



We seek to develop a global perspective and a commitment to character, service and leadership in our students and our community. We recognize the value of promoting in our students a sense of empathy, cultural understanding and the obligation to serve others. Students must participate in authentic and meaningful service opportunities and learn the elements of effective leadership skills. We must extend the walls of our classrooms to London, Europe, and the world. We hope to contribute our voice to worldwide leadership in the areas of global education and cultural understanding and create young adults with a commitment to responsible participation in the world around them.

Desired Outcomes

- 1** Our students acquire those skills and understandings that will prepare them for participation in a global society through the development of a global awareness, including the ability to communicate effectively in additional languages.
- 2** Our students engage fully with London, taking advantage of its role as a global capital.
- 3** We establish connections with other international schools and organizations in order to pursue best practices in global education for ASL students.
- 4** Our students develop respect and understanding of others as well as a clear consciousness of their ethical responsibilities to the wider world, including committed citizenship and environmental stewardship.
- 5** Our students experience authentic service opportunities, coming to know the value of partnerships, both locally and internationally.
- 6** Our students have opportunities to develop effective leadership skills.

Strategies and Initiatives

A school-wide focus on global awareness, including

- A** Developing a clearly articulated definition of global education and incorporating it into all aspects of the curriculum and K–12 academic program.
 - B** Pursuing long-term partnerships in the UK and abroad with both schools and organizations, including student and teacher exchanges, service programs and other meaningful opportunities for authentic engagement.
 - C** Examining best practices and current pedagogy worldwide in order to develop a curriculum that helps prepare our students to contribute responsibly to the global community.
 - D** Implementing programs that help our students pursue the full range of varied educational opportunities offered by the School's location in London.
- ### A school-wide commitment to character, service and leadership, including
- E** Developing a clearly defined and articulated K–12 program that values character, service and leadership and reflects community commitment and collaboration, cross-divisional coordination and curricular integration.
 - F** Expanding authentic opportunities within the School and the larger community for effective service and leadership, including extracurricular activities, clubs, class and individual projects, local and global partnerships, and possible service requirements.
 - G** Examining best practices for mentoring and advisory programs and other methods of ensuring a school-wide culture of support, collaboration and contribution.

An Inclusive and Diverse Community

Our community recognizes diversity as a component of excellence and believes that an environment that values difference promotes true learning and encourages respect for others. We must ensure that the broad range of diversity represented by our students, faculty and staff, families, alumni and parents of alumni continues to be developed, nurtured and celebrated. We must also reaffirm our commitment to inclusivity in order to strengthen our supportive and engaged community on campus and worldwide.

Desired Outcomes

- 1** We attract students, teachers, staff and administrators who bring a diversity of cultural, national, and ethnic backgrounds to our community.
- 2** We provide sufficient financial aid to broaden the potential for greater socioeconomic diversity at the School.
- 3** We value our diversity within the School and our community and ensure that we take full advantage of the educational benefits conferred by this diversity.
- 4** We ensure that all constituents—on campus and throughout the world—are included, represented, and involved in the life, programs, and governance of the School and that we are effectively and efficiently communicating with all constituents.

Strategies and Initiatives

- A** Ensuring that our international and cultural diversity is fully integrated into the life, programs and governance of the School by exploring ways to make the School more attractive to prospective international students, families, faculty and staff.
- B** Articulating and promoting our commitment to financial aid in order to increase the socioeconomic diversity of our student body.
- C** Increasing our funding of financial aid to 8 percent of gross tuition revenue and working towards establishing endowment funds (expendable and permanent) to further support this initiative.
- D** Developing robust programs for alumni and parents of alumni to connect and participate in the local and extended life at ASL, from reunions and summer programs to career-networking possibilities and meaningful volunteer opportunities.
- E** Striving to make all communications with constituents clear, manageable and timely, and to provide better information about the workings of the School, including admissions, finances, governance and fundraising.



Effective Space to Meet Future Needs



Our facilities must support our evolving programmatic goals for ASL students. We must provide the proper facilities for flexible instruction and enrollment, a sense of community, program integration, physical education, the arts and athletics. Our goal is to improve our facilities so as to enhance our environmental performance. We must also remain strategically poised to take advantage of any properties adjacent to or near ASL that become available and to make adjustments to our facilities as our needs change.

Desired Outcomes

- 1** We continuously assess the facilities needed for the current and future ASL educational program and maintain a long-term Master Plan for Waverley Place and possible other future ASL facilities to meet these needs.
- 2** We adopt and implement a Master Plan for athletic facilities, including Canons Park and possible additional venues.
- 3** We plan carefully and implement appropriate work for the ongoing maintenance of our current facilities.
- 4** We remain vigilant about identifying and acquiring adjacent properties and forming strategic alliances that could support ASL's programmatic needs.
- 5** We improve conservation practice and environmental awareness at ASL.

Strategies and Initiatives

- A** Ensuring that Canons Park is brought up to a standard that serves the best purpose for our athletic programs and other ASL community activities.
- B** Exploring additional athletic facilities (in particular, tennis courts and an all-weather pitch) that would complement Canons Park.
- C** Completing work on a Master Plan for Waverley Place that reflects the need for additional Lower School classrooms, better Middle School space, improved teaching environments and more flexible community gathering places.
- D** Refining our ongoing Planned Maintenance budget to assure the long-term integrity of all ASL facilities and technology.
- E** Continuing to pursue actively properties that are adjacent to or within a reasonable distance of the School with a view to accommodating possible expansion or relocation of certain facilities.
- F** Developing and implementing initiatives that enhance sustainability and improve environmental performance throughout ASL.

Long-term Financial Stability and Flexibility



Financial stability is critical to the long-term confidence and continuity of the School. We recognize the need to provide competitive compensation for our outstanding faculty and staff, increased financial assistance for our families, and sufficient funds for program excellence and innovation, including facility maintenance and improvement. We are equally cognizant of concerns around rising tuition costs and the extent to which the School will reflect and respond to global economic variability and enrollment changes. We recognize the ongoing importance of robust endowment funds and enrollment reserves. We must provide appropriate financial stewardship, prudent oversight and careful planning on both a yearly and ongoing basis to ensure financial security for ASL.

Desired Outcomes

- 1** We maintain a steady enrollment that provides long-term financial stability.
- 2** We continue to balance and manage our operating budget in accordance with a long-range financial plan that supports our priorities of attracting and retaining an excellent faculty and offering an outstanding program for all students, while recognizing the impact of tuition increases.
- 3** We continuously refine a funding plan that matches our short- and long-term needs with appropriate sources of revenues.
- 4** We remain vigilant about pursuing funding opportunities and investing our capital wisely.

Strategies and Initiatives

- A** Developing a program to help the School attract a broad-based and varied student population that is not overly dependent on any particular industry or nationality.
- B** Further developing funding and revenue streams other than tuition.
- C** Maintaining our robust Annual Fund to support the current operating budget.
- D** Continuing to raise and invest funds for all ASL endowments.
- E** At the appropriate time, initiating a campaign to fund the various initiatives in the Strategic Plan.

Our mission is to develop the intellect and character of each student by providing an outstanding American education with a global perspective.

Our Vision for Excellence

Learning

The heart of our school lies in the dynamic relationship between student and teacher. ASL provides a rigorous program that engages students through inquiry and collaboration. Our dedicated faculty encourages students to think critically, to take risks and to be creative. We challenge students to strive for personal and academic excellence, and we treasure the intellectual, social, artistic and physical development of each student. ASL students are expected to participate actively in their learning and to engage fully in the intellectual life of the School.

Character

We believe that students develop integrity and strength of character by learning to make good choices and by taking responsibility for their actions. We expect ASL students to be kind, honest and respectful of others. We value a strong work ethic, and we seek to instill in our students a sense of optimism and determination in the face of challenge. Our supportive environment encourages students to develop the courage to act independently and the confidence to pursue leadership opportunities.

Community

Respect for individual and cultural differences is a central value of ASL. We celebrate the open exchange of ideas and spirit of inclusiveness that flow from our multicultural community. The active involvement of students, families, alumni, faculty and staff creates the energy and enthusiasm that characterize the ASL experience. Our community participates wholeheartedly in the extensive opportunities found in London, and we are committed to pursuing learning experiences throughout the world.

Service

We believe that service to others teaches young people to be productive and effective citizens, and we challenge ASL students to find passion and purpose beyond themselves. ASL offers meaningful opportunities in the classroom and through service learning for students to participate actively in our school, local neighborhoods, and abroad. We seek to inspire the compassion and international awareness necessary for students to contribute responsibly to the global community.

The American School in London

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