Dear Country Day Community,

In February of 2014, current and former members of The Savannah Country Day School Board of Trustees, along with members of the administration, faculty and staff, parents, alumni, and other friends of the School, participated in a two-day strategic planning workshop led by experienced strategic planning consultant Susan Stone. Resources included comments from more than two hundred participants in the Strategic Plan “listening groups” and responses to the online parent survey, not to mention a wealth of information about the School, both past and present.

By all accounts, the workshop was a huge success, leaving all who participated energized and excited. Terry Pindar, then Chair of the SCDS Board of Trustees, described the workshop well in her March 2014 letter to the SCDS community:

The range of perspective was broad and diverse. The common denominator amongst all participants was knowledge of the School and a passion for the mission of Country Day and its vital role in our community. Without a doubt, the workshop served to promote this passion within all those in attendance and to solidify the belief that in our community there is no school that better educates the whole child in academics, arts and athletics and prepares students to excel academically and as leaders in college and life.

We are grateful to everyone who contributed to the strategic planning process, including Terry Pindar, whose leadership was instrumental. We are extremely excited about this plan and more optimistic than ever about our school's future.

Kef L. Wilson  Patrick T. O'Connor
Head of School  Chair, Board of Trustees

The Savannah Country Day School seeks to prepare students of academic and personal promise to meet with confidence, imagination, and integrity the challenges of college and of life. In partnership with supportive families, we strive to cultivate in each student the desire and the discipline to grow in wisdom, to lead lives of personal honor, to appreciate beauty, to pursue physical well-being, and to serve others with a generous, compassionate spirit.

In fulfilling our mission, we subscribe to the following core beliefs:

- that the ultimate goal of education is to cultivate in each student a lifelong passion for learning;
- that each student's academic potential is most fully realized through a challenging and varied curriculum undergirded with appropriate support;
- that students learn best in a respectful, supportive community of trust where each student's learning needs and abilities are understood and accommodated as fully as possible; that intellectual growth requires not only the acquisition of knowledge but also application in analytical, creative, and expressive ways that make learning meaningful to the student;
- that physical and emotional health is critical to the development of each student's personal potential;
- that each student's life is enriched in a diverse community where differences among people are affirmed and celebrated;
- that the school shares with families the responsibility for fostering in each student strength of character, a sense of personal responsibility, and an attitude of faith, reverence, and tolerance;
- that the development of leadership in each student should include instilling a commitment to use one's knowledge, skills, and resources in the service of others.

MISSION STATEMENT

STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Kef L. Wilson  Patrick T. O'Connor
Head of School  Chair, Board of Trustees

Terry Pinder  Pat O'Connor
Mike Kemp  Joel Goodman
Kell Wilson  Jason Allen
George Barrow  Will Monroe
Helen Bonello

Edgar Byrd  Jacob Cesar  Christina Chang
Dave Graz  Lisa Knight
Christine Lewis  Trey London  Will Monroe
Brian Orr

Cynthia Reeves  Mark Smith  Lane Lynch
Wade Herring  Kathryn McGirt
Milo Compton  Tim Osmond
Philip Solomon  Scott Barnard

Tim Kane  Lisa Team  Toni Barkleid
Lamar Klippy  Rocky Cheek  Alphonso Rhodes
Jeremy Hammond  Steve Kolman

Wayne Aaron  Bill Helfers  Leigh Beausang
Lisa McKeeney  Ulysses Jackson
Dale Parker  Kathy Hopkins
Mary Beth Fry

Patrick Poley  Ben Ford
Carrie Vetrovsky  April Cooper
Shawn Enos
Seeking and Supporting Students of Academic and Personal Promise

Goal: Seek and retain a diverse, optimally sized student body, each member of which will be challenged to discover and develop his/her unique talents and passions within a supportive, trusting and safe community.

RATIONALE: To ensure that The Savannah Country Day School continues to fulfill its mission of preparing students of academic and personal promise to meet the challenges of college and of life.

IMPLEMENTATION:
- Re-examine admissions standards and guidelines across divisions and grade levels to ensure that the admissions process yields students who can be successful and families who understand, appreciate, and support the mission of SCDS.
- Determine the optimal size of the School, including optimal class sizes and number of sections per grade in each division. Create a strategy for achieving that optimal size with the goal of creating full classes in all grades and wait pools at appropriate entry points.
- Seek new strategies to attract a diverse student body to SCDS.
- Assess all student support systems including SLD, English as a Second Language, guidance, advisory, and college counseling to ensure that all students are able to meet the demands of our program and are positioned well for admission to and success in college and life.
- Examine systems of support for students with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds; provide ongoing professional development for faculty and staff in how best to meet the needs of these students.
PREPARING OUR STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE AND FOR LIFE

Goal: Assess, evaluate, and build upon existing programs with a focus on relevance, challenge, and boldness.

RATIONALE: To ensure that Savannah Country Day continues to prepare students for success in college and for service, citizenship, and leadership in a rapidly changing global world.

IMPLEMENTATION:
- Seek ways to foster and encourage the creation and implementation of bold and innovative curricula and programs that are consistent with the mission of the School and further distinguish The Savannah Country Day School from other schools.
- Continue to strengthen and strive for excellence in all programs — academics, athletics, and arts — by creating a system of ongoing oversight and review that incorporates both qualitative and quantitative measures of success, current research, and best practices from other institutions.
- Continue to build and improve developmentally appropriate service learning and ethical leadership opportunities.
- Continue to explore ways to support involved students and help them balance the demands of academics and extracurricular activities.
- Assess and seek ways to evaluate, improve, and better convey the value of the School’s Honor Code.
- Develop a plan for engaging students in the history of the School.
Goal: Ensure that our compensation, benefits, policies, and procedures maximize our potential to recruit, support, and retain diverse, talented, and dedicated faculty, staff, and administrators.

**RATIONALE:** To ensure the continued excellence of the School by maintaining the high quality of administration, faculty, and staff.

**IMPLEMENTATION:**
- Re-examine levels of compensation, including stipends for all employees to ensure that they are competitive with appropriate benchmarks; also, examine systems of compensation, including factors that determine levels of compensation.
- Review employee benefits to ensure that they are competitive with other NAIS schools in the Southeast.
- Develop standards of professional excellence for all employees and continue to build on existing efforts to create an evaluative process to support those standards.
- Explore ways to enhance systems of mentoring and professional development for all employees, ensuring that they are supported in both time and compensation; prioritize faculty growth and improvement in technology integration, leadership development, and student advising.
- Examine workloads to ensure that they are reasonable and consistent across divisions, departments, etc.
- Re-examine recruitment and hiring practices to ensure that we are using every tool available to hire excellent employees; continue efforts to recruit faculty and staff of color.

Promoting Professional Excellence
RATIONALE: To ensure that the physical plant supports program needs and ensures safety and security while being environmentally responsible and respecting the aesthetics, heritage, and character that is the hallmark of SCDS.

IMPLEMENTATION:
- Develop and maintain a comprehensive facilities management plan that is vetted annually for budgeting and implementation purposes.
- Develop and maintain campus facilities and grounds standards.
- Develop and maintain a comprehensive security plan that is flexible yet safe for a dynamic educational environment.
- Review the current master plan and amend when necessary.
- Develop, maintain, and prioritize a “Strategic Facilities Projects List,” amending when necessary.
- Continue to explore the acquisition of adjacent property.

Goal: Ensure, through thoughtful stewardship, that the campus and physical plant continue to support the mission of SCDS.
Conveying the Value of a Country Day Education and Improving Communication Between School and Home

Goal: Seek to ensure that everyone in the greater Savannah Country Day community understands and appreciates the value of a Savannah Country Day education; create a strategy for communicating that value to all in a way that appeals to a broad audience, seeking to foster throughout the Savannah area a sense that “I Belong” at Country Day.

RATIONALE: To foster pride, unity, and trust, justify cost, achieve enrollment goals, attract and retain strong students, faculty, and staff, attract and retain financial supporters, create expectations of excellence, ensure clear, concise, and consistent messaging and communications, promote diversity, increase alumni involvement, and promote the School as a community asset.

IMPLEMENTATION:
- For each division, develop a set of expected student outcomes that distinguishes them from their peers at other schools in Savannah.
- Create a short statement that flows from the mission, captures the essence of a Savannah Country Day education, and differentiates Country Day from other schools in Savannah.
- Develop a more intentional and comprehensive marketing strategy—one that fosters a sense of pride throughout the Country Day community and that creates a sense of shared responsibility for that strategy.
- Develop a plan to effectively and consistently engage former Country Day families and alumni and promote their successes to all.
- Evaluate and explore ways to improve the accuracy, consistency, comprehensiveness, and coordination of the School’s databases to enhance the School’s marketing and communication efforts.
- Continue to evaluate all systems of communication between the School and home to ensure that parents feel informed of their children’s progress and connected to the life of the School.
Goal: Continue to operate on a sound fiscal basis, develop a culture of philanthropy, and fund the initiatives of the strategic plan.

RATIONALE: To be able to maintain an optimal enrollment by keeping tuition affordable, attract and retain the best employees, maintain and improve a strong physical plant, and support continued program initiatives.

IMPLEMENTATION:
- Explore ways to make the School’s operating budget less dependent on tuition revenue by increasing fundraising capacity, growing endowment, or identifying other sources of revenue; launch a planned giving program to support the growth of the endowment.
- Continue efforts to educate all stakeholders about the role annual giving plays in the operating budget and in mitigating tuition increases.
- Increase oversight and coordination of fundraising and solicitation activities conducted by auxiliary school organizations (e.g. Parents’ Association, Booster Club, and Arts Alliance) with particular attention to the timing of solicitation and ensuring that funds raised are used to support the needs of the School.
- Explore ways to ensure an appropriate degree of transparency in school finances.
- Develop a multi-year budgeting strategy, as well as a strategy for non-consumable expenditures.
- Review financial aid policies and procedures, investigate best practices at other schools, and explore changes that will further mitigate the cost of SCDS while minimizing impact on budget.
- Continue efforts to enhance the strategic focus of the Board of Trustees by, among other things, creating a budget line for ongoing Trustee education, periodically self-scoring using the ISM stability markers, and creating a set of “dashboard indicators,” all of which will assist the Board in its effort to assess and maintain the School’s financial health and stability.