

Smith College Campus School

STRATEGIC PLAN
2017-2022



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Smith College Campus School

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STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

IN MARCH 2017

the provost of the college called for the Campus School to engage in a comprehensive study to address and answer a number of vital questions:

How to better define and describe the school’s mission, priorities, educational philosophy, and teaching and learning models

How to advance its understanding of what it means to be a lab school at Smith College

How to optimize enrollment and operate with a sustainable financial model

How to define the administrative and governance structures that best advance the mission of the school

Consequently, the college initiated a strategic planning process and created a transition council to steer the plan’s creation and oversee the transition to new Campus School leadership. Consultants Rich Dufresne and Jane LaPointe were engaged to manage the strategic planning process and led several focus groups, including those with Campus School teachers, staff, and parents; Education and Child Study department professors; representatives from the library, MacLeish Center, Botanic Garden, Museum of Art, Center for Early Childhood Education, and music, engineering, social work, and science center departments; and Smith College education majors.

These valuable perspectives formed the basis for further reflection and plan development at two planning committee retreats. Six months of careful analysis, featuring the perspectives of a broad range of stakeholders, has led to a strategic plan that is ambitious in scope and provides the structure to answer the questions posed by the provost in the spring of 2017.

The Smith College Campus School is a vibrant learning community where children flourish because they are

KNOWN, VALUED, CHALLENGED, AND NURTURED.

As the lab school of Smith College we advance the common good by mentoring the next generation of teachers while designing and sharing innovative practices in teaching and learning.

We harness the learning resources of the college to enrich a holistic K-6 program, creating a unique setting where children realize their potential, become informed and engaged citizens, and are well prepared to continue their educational journeys.



CELEBRATING

our 90th anniversary and poised to make a bold leap into the future, the Smith College Campus School's strategic plan will animate a vision that is both aspirational and practical.

As we move toward the school's centennial, we commit ourselves to an ambitious plan of improvement and refinement, one that will build on current success and ensure future growth and sustainability. As the lab school of a dynamic liberal arts college, we have a unique opportunity to be a center of excellence in elementary education, to provide Smith undergraduate and graduate students with exceptional mentoring and preparation in teaching and child study, and to serve the larger profession of education through curriculum innovation and applied research. This pivotal moment in the Campus School's history is brimming with opportunity. We seize it with confidence, excited by the future before us.

As an exemplary school for children, we will

- ▶ Ensure our students flourish as learners and people.
- ▶ Recruit and retain teachers of the highest professional caliber who are passionate about and committed to the work of elementary teaching and who embrace the lab school ethic that teaching is intellectual and creative work that is ever improvable.
- ▶ Make parents feel welcomed, informed and involved in their children's learning and development.
- ▶ Be a diverse and inclusive community that has the courage to fully engage with the challenges and opportunities of a rapidly changing society and culture.
- ▶ Align around clear, relevant, and impactful learning goals and best practices.

As a lab school, we will

- ▶ Partner with the education and child study department to be an exemplary center for teacher preparation and to design, research, and share innovative practices in teaching and learning.
- ▶ Deepen our collaborations with the broader college community, both to enhance teaching and learning at the Campus School and to provide essential value to the college.
- ▶ Serve the common good by advancing dialogues about educational best practices and sharing and demonstrating our work regionally, nationally, and globally.

Collectively, we will

- ▶ Tell our story in unique and compelling ways and be clear about what makes us distinct.
- ▶ Acquire and steward the resources necessary to live our vision, mission, and values.
- ▶ Consistently reflect on and assess our work.



Four interrelated strategic objectives are critical to achieving the vision of this plan:

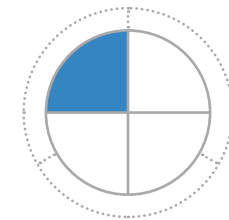
- 1 To provide our students with an exemplary education
- 2 To be a vital and innovative lab school, indispensable and strategically relevant as a unique teaching resource of Smith College
- 3 To articulate the distinctive value of a Campus School education
- 4 To be a leader in teacher education, the field of teaching and learning, and the profession of education

Three additional strategic objectives are vital to the success of the strategic plan:

- 5 To refine and then operate with a clear identity, mission, and vision
- 6 To secure the resources required to invest in the Campus School strategic vision
- 7 To establish and operate with an effective and responsive administrative and governance structure to advance and sustain the Campus School strategic vision

PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH AN EXEMPLARY EDUCATION

At the heart of an exemplary education for children is a shared vision and a strong commitment to collective goals. Striving to achieve these ideals animates and defines the work of educators; it also requires the support and commitment of everyone who holds a stake in the Campus School, from students, staff, and teachers, to parents, to Smith faculty and the administration of the college. An exemplary education is, in short, a collective endeavor and the highest priority of the Campus School.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ONE

Curriculum & Programs

- ▶ Create and implement school-wide learning goals that reflect the mission and philosophy of the school.
- ▶ Identify the systems, structures, and personnel needed to consistently review and align the curriculum to ensure it reflects the school's mission, learning goals, and exemplary practices in elementary education.
- ▶ Create signature programs that connect the unique learning resources of the college to the educational program of the Campus School.
- ▶ Define the range of students the Campus School can best serve. Identify the structures and resources required to effectively and comprehensively serve our students.
- ▶ Identify and develop appropriate systems, structures, and resources to become a more diverse and inclusive school, both in the composition of our community and the content of the curriculum.
- ▶ Evaluate and recommend the effective use of technology as teaching and learning tools and identify the resources necessary to achieve this goal.

Teaching & Teachers

- ▶ Attract, nurture, and retain premier educators as teachers for children, mentors for student teachers, and contributors to the profession. Identify the resources required to achieve this goal.
- ▶ Further define the roles of teachers within a lab school, especially as it relates to mentoring, research, and professional development, bringing greater clarity to expectations and the implications for time and resources.
- ▶ Refine the systems for teacher evaluation and professional growth, ensuring there are clear standards and expectations and the resources necessary to ensure uniform excellence.
- ▶ Update and strengthen the orientation and mentoring of new Campus School teachers.

Operations

- ▶ Review and identify the compensation structures needed to attract and retain excellent teachers and staff.
- ▶ Prepare for and schedule a self-study and an external accreditation review.
- ▶ Conduct a facilities audit to assess ways the physical environment of the school can better facilitate exemplary teaching and learning.
- ▶ Create the necessary structures and systems to regularly seek feedback from parents and other Campus School stakeholders in order to improve practices and sustain the Campus School as a place of excellence in education.
- ▶ Ensure the school is in compliance with college policies and protocols and best practices as articulated by the National Association of Independent Schools.

Community

- ▶ Support a productive and inclusive PTO with greater participation rates and a clear sense of purpose.
- ▶ Build community through more intentional conversations and programs about diversity and inclusion.
- ▶ Clarify professional expectations and how they support a productive and healthy faculty culture and community.
- ▶ Review optimal ways for students to connect across grade levels, including buddy programs and leadership opportunities.
- ▶ Review and optimize the orientation and support systems for new parents and students.



STRATEGIC
OBJECTIVE
TWO

STRATEGIC GOALS

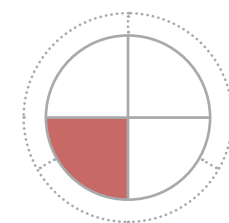
ARTICULATE THE DISTINCTIVE VALUE OF A CAMPUS SCHOOL EDUCATION

Twenty-first century schools exist in a complex, competitive marketplace. The Pioneer Valley offers a variety of school choices, and the Campus School must better and more publicly articulate its unique characteristics: its rich, innovative curriculum, its varied partnerships with Smith faculty, and its abundant creative and intellectual resources, helping the Campus School stand out as a unique and highly desired school of choice.

- ▶ Develop a marketing plan to enhance school visibility, optimize enrollment, and reduce attrition.
- ▶ Create a network of parent and teacher ambassadors who can assist with admissions efforts.
- ▶ Develop a communications plan and identify the resources and personnel necessary to actualize it.
- ▶ Communicate the strategic plan to all stakeholders, particularly current and prospective parents.
- ▶ Create strategic tuition policies and revenue goals, balancing affordability, the need for new investments, and fiscal sustainability.
- ▶ Assess financial aid and how aid is allocated. Understand and address questions of affordability and accessibility in meeting enrollment and revenue targets.
- ▶ Strengthen and sustain the connection with the Center for Early Childhood Education to ensure greater enrollment of CECE families at the Campus School.
- ▶ Assess the impact and feasibility of an expanded school year and assess the length of the school day and the vacation schedule.
- ▶ Assess the impact and feasibility of expanded summer programs including those for families not currently enrolled in the Campus School.



diez	10
veinte	20
treinta	30
cuarenta	40
cincuenta	50
sesenta	60
setenta	70
ochenta	80
noventa	90
cien	100



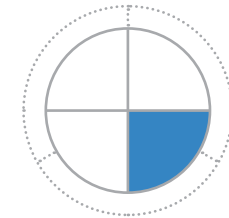
STRATEGIC
OBJECTIVE
THREE

STRATEGIC GOALS

BE A VITAL AND INNOVATIVE LAB SCHOOL THAT IS INDISPENSABLE AND STRATEGICALLY RELEVANT AS A UNIQUE TEACHING RESOURCE OF SMITH COLLEGE

The Smith College Campus School serves a wide range of functions within the Smith community. It is a site for student teachers to observe and enact best practices in the field, it is a research site for faculty engaged in scholarship across many departments and fields, and it serves as a recruitment tool for faculty and staff. In all these ways and more, the school must play a vital role in supporting the college and advancing its mission.

- Evaluate existing and potential connections between the Campus School and the college. Cultivate connections that strengthen the Campus School's position as a unique teaching resource of the college.
- Recommend how to best initiate and pursue these connections. Identify the structures, systems and capacity to build and manage this integration over time. Study, evaluate, and adapt the experience and success of other Smith centers.
- Evaluate the relationship between the Campus School and the Department of Education and Child Study. Recommend what to strengthen and what to modify. Identify the implications for needed resources and capacity at the Campus School.
- Develop and disseminate a user guide for Smith faculty and staff that describes the ways a lab school can serve the mission of the college, including providing opportunities for observations, research, practicum placements, and special projects.
- Develop vehicles to showcase and communicate the Campus School's value as a unique teaching resource of the college.
- Explore reinstating former and adding new graduate student fellowships at the Campus School.
- Develop a proposal to seek funding for a chaired professorship or a rotating visiting professorship in the education and child study department focused on teacher development and preparation including expertise in utilizing a lab school in the college setting.



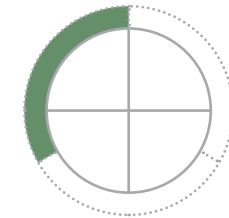
STRATEGIC
OBJECTIVE
FOUR

STRATEGIC GOALS

BE A CONTRIBUTOR AND LEADER IN THE PROFESSION OF EDUCATION AND THE FIELD OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

- ▶ Create a clear and compelling understanding of how the Campus School faculty and staff, in collaboration with the Department of Education and Child Study, will contribute to the field of education and to the profession of teaching. Consider developing conferences, institutes, publications, partnerships, and collaborations within and beyond the college.
- ▶ Build a school professional identity, presence and reputation within and beyond the campus by building closer ties to other lab, public, and independent schools; by participating in education associations, conferences, and workshops; and by cataloging and sharing the professional achievements of teachers, professors, and Smith College education graduates.
- ▶ Create a plan and recommend the resources necessary to develop and fulfill this contribution.

As a laboratory school, the Smith College Campus School is uniquely situated and resourced to make important contributions to the field of education. Linked to an internationally renowned women's college and nested in a collaborative relationship with the college's education faculty, the lab school holds great potential for extending its intellectual outreach and promoting teacher leadership. The Campus School will position itself as a leader in teacher education, a model for best and innovative practice, a setting for inquiry and research, and a vehicle for teachers' voices, nationally and internationally.



STRATEGIC
OBJECTIVE
FIVE

STRATEGIC GOALS

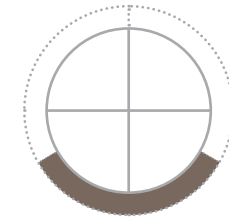
OPERATE WITH A CLEAR MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY

- ▶ Convene a committee to draft for review and feedback the mission and educational philosophy of the Campus School. Seek approval of the mission by the college.
- ▶ Create opportunities to communicate and promote the revised mission and philosophy within the Campus School, the college, and the broader community.
- ▶ Establish a process to regularly review the mission of the school, ensuring it is vital and relevant.

In the very best schools every member of the community—from students to staff, parents to teachers— can clearly articulate and promote the school’s mission. This clarity of mission is critical to a school’s identity and excellence. Once defined, a mission needs to be consistently reviewed to ensure it remains clear and viable while holding to its founding principles. The Campus School will review, clarify, and actualize its mission, unifying all stakeholders around a shared school identity and purpose.

In order for a laboratory school to exist as a site of best practice and innovation, it needs exemplary resources. Those resources are both material and human; they range from the quality of the school's programming, teaching staff, and facilities to the diversity of the school's student and faculty bodies. The Smith College Campus School must secure and carefully steward the resources necessary to realize these various and critical needs.

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE SEVEN

STRATEGIC GOALS

ESTABLISH AND OPERATE WITH AN EFFECTIVE AND RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP, ADMINISTRATIVE, AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE TO ADVANCE AND SUSTAIN THE CAMPUS SCHOOL STRATEGIC VISION

The Smith College Campus School is privileged to operate within a network of exceptional support systems. The college, the education department, and the school itself all possess distinct administrative structures and systems of governance that interconnect in complex ways. To make the most of these vital partnerships, governance structures must be clearly defined. Teachers and administrators within the school require a clear understanding of who is in charge of what and how to best address problems and leverage opportunities. Faculty and staff outside the school need to understand the parameters of their influence. Clarifying the administrative and governance structure of the Campus School will help forward the school's vision, build deeper collaborative bonds, and help all those involved with the school to best utilize its resources.

- ▶ Study and then recommend the effective leadership and management structures needed in the near and long term to advance the mission and strategic vision and plan of the Campus School.
- ▶ Clarify the role of the faculty director and the administrative relationship between the Campus School and Department of Education and Child Study.
- ▶ Consider developing a board of advisors, being clear about the composition, purpose, and authority of this body. Evaluate models already in place at Smith and/or at other lab schools.
- ▶ Assemble and use credible evidence to assess the operations, administration, and governance of the Campus School.
- ▶ Identify and recommend the effective use of technology for administrative support and functioning.