

2020

The Summit Preparatory School
Strategic Plan



The 2020 Strategic Plan represents a synthesis of individual perspectives and ideas aligned for future planning. The Board of Trustees and Administrative Team express sincere gratitude to all contributors to the strategic planning process.

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Summer 2020

As we celebrate 15 years since founding The Summit, stakeholders from throughout the organization gathered many times during the past year to thoughtfully craft the strategic vision for the future.

The Summit remains uniquely positioned in the Southwest Missouri education landscape with small classes and progressive independent education designed to build curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking skills. With strong leadership, positive enrollment trends, and improved financial stability, the organization looks ahead to define the growth path with new goals to achieve our vision and live out our organizational mission.

While The Summit has completed two prior strategic planning cycles, this year's strategic planning process has benefitted from additional insights and increased community involvement. The strategic planning task force began their work with valuable insights gathered through the ISACS (Independent School Association of the Central States) accreditation process. Specifically, the accreditation process involves a comprehensive self-study prepared by faculty and administrative teams and a report of recommendations from the ISACS team of independent education experts following their multi-day visit to the school. In addition, the strategic planning process benefitted from independent school benchmark comparisons, competitive marketplace intelligence, student performance trends, and the satisfaction survey results from students, families, and faculty.

Especially important to note amid uncertainties resulting from the COVID-19 global pandemic, the strategic plan is a dynamic report intended for execution over the next 3-4 years. The Strategic Planning Committee and Administrative Team are tasked to monitor activity and progress against strategic priorities while also instilling flexibility, the evolution of strategic thought in the organization, and responsiveness to a rapidly changing education and economic environment.

The 2020 Strategic Plan process has strengthened The Summit and will continue to guide the organization with clear purpose. The plan is set to propel the school forward and enable the organization, and each individual student, to reach the highest potential.

With confidence in The Summit's bright future,

Kathryn M. Heet, Ed.D., The Summit Preparatory School, Head of School

Susan Miranti, The Summit Board of Trustees, President

Our Strategic Planning Process

The Summit applies a cyclical model to continually guide the organization's strategic planning process.

The process is firmly based on the organization's mission, vision, and values. The plan is strengthened by real time inputs from internal (staff, faculty, students, parents) and external (competitive market, benchmarking, accreditation assessment) sources.

Priorities, goals, and action plans are established for critical targets. Review and assessment steps are applied to keep the process alive and relevant.

Year 1 - Process Planning, Establish Task Force, Insight Building

- A. Prep and planning
 - 1. Determine key date timeline
 - 2. Validate process
 - 3. Establish task force and engage community
- B. Who are we?
 - 1. Acknowledge/refine mission, vision, values
- C. Where are we now?
 - 1. Assess current strategic plan
 - 2. Complete self assessment
 - 3. Establish relevant data set and resulting insights
 - 4. Evaluate external opportunities and threats

Year 2 - Stakeholder / Community Engagement, Goal Setting

- A. Where do we want to be?
 - 1. Review strategic pillars (10+ year goals)
 - 2. Establish goals (3-4 years) for each pillar
- B. How do we get there?
 - 1. Establish writing teams
 - 2. Identify priorities and tactics for each goal (the to do list)

Year 3-4 - Execute and Monitor

- A. Are we moving the needle?
 - 1. Add reasonable timelines and sequence the priorities
 - 2. Create reporting system to establish accountability and increase communication



Strategic Planning Committee meets monthly; meetings are open.

Contact Board of Trustees Chair or Strategic Planning Committee Chair for meeting date and time.

2020 STRATEGIC PLAN TIMELINE

April & May 2019

Review 2016 Plan, Define Process, Self Assessment

June 2019

Insight Summary Presented to Stakeholders

June & July 2019

Stakeholder Idea Development, Prioritization Exercise

September & October 2019

Writing Teams Establish Tactics for Priorities

November 2019

Consolidate Tactics, Eliminate Duplicity, Sequence Timing, Publish

January 2020

Present Plan at State of the School

COVID-19 Response

While the response to the COVID-19 pandemic has many dimensions - education environment, distance learning, economic, enrollment, new employee supports - The Summit has worked consistently and cautiously to stay aligned to our mission and think creatively about the delivery of our education product to our students. The Strategic Planning Committee paused our plan roll out to focus efforts on the pandemic response and preparing our campus for students to return safely. Additionally, the tactics within our Strategic Plan were reviewed and refined to reflect the changes to our classroom model and increased employee support needs.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

*The Summit has long prioritized “**create engaging, inclusive culture and school community**” as a pillar of our strategic thinking framework. This year has surfaced a new level of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion awareness within our society and community. In summer 2020, the Strategic Planning committee refined the recently drafted plan to increase specificity on the school’s continued efforts to build Diversity, Equity and Inclusion awareness within the curriculum and the organization through intentional program development, employment initiatives and community building.*

Strategic Foundations

Mission - Why do we exist?

To prepare learners for success by providing a progressive education with a challenging curriculum in a supportive environment.

Vision - What are we trying to create?

Inspire Life-long Learners

Strategic Pillars (10 Years):

Develop and Refine Education Philosophy and Approach

Increase Awareness of School Identity

Maximize Revenue Opportunities and Manage Expenses

Define and Fund Future Growth Needs

Develop External Relationships

Create Engaging, Inclusive Culture and School Community

Priorities (3-4 Years):

Priority A:
Develop
Progressive
Education
Acumen

Priority B:
Improve
Program
Offering

Priority C:
Build the Team

Priority D:
Improve
Communications to
Drive Awareness,
Enrollment, and
Retention

Priority E:
Plan for
Long-Term
Financial
Success

Priority F:
Provide Needed
Facilities and
Supplies

Supported by SMART Plans with up to 3 year timelines to accomplish (2020-2023)



Priority A: Develop Progressive Education Acumen

Tactics:

1. Define progressive education and Summit specific tenets of the progressive education model
2. Increase unique and creative curricular integration to improve progressive education execution
3. Establish The Summit as an educational expert in the community to improve both recruitment and retention

Strategic Pillar Alignment:

Develop and Refine Education Philosophy and Approach

Increase Awareness of School Identity

Create Engaging, Inclusive Culture and School Community



Priority B: Improve Program Offering

Tactics:

1. Create distinct middle school and high school programs with focus on collaboration and enhanced program offering to meet student needs and create critical volume
2. Complete documentation of curriculum plans, execution and student outcomes by vertical and horizontal teaching teams
3. Enhance community and belonging within the school - students, faculty, admin, families, trustees, and other supporters
4. Integrate and grow mission-driven classroom and auxiliary program offerings with innovative curriculum



Strategic Pillar Alignment:

Develop and Refine Education Philosophy and Approach

Create Engaging, Inclusive Culture and School Community

Maximize Revenue Opportunities and Manage Expenses

Priority C: Build the Team

Tactics:

1. Develop a comprehensive professional development plan in support of organizational mission
2. Evaluate and evolve compensation and benefits offerings for optimum recruitment and retention
3. Define and grow personnel resources (in number and responsibility/role) to best support program offering, administrative function, and volunteer support
4. Establish standardized operating procedure documents and organizational structure for departments and divisions
5. Define and support the important, evolving parent role in their student's developmental growth and educational success

Strategic Pillar Alignment:

Develop and
Refine Education
Philosophy and
Approach

Create Engaging,
Inclusive Culture
and School
Community

Define and Fund
Future Growth
Needs

Priority D: Improve Communications to Drive Awareness, Enrollment, and Retention

Tactics:

1. Communicate The Summit's clear identity and share vision for the school
2. Improve the admissions process and increase communication efficacy and frequency
3. Increase frequency and effectiveness of communication tactics, using data-driven insight, to better engage new students and community members
4. Grow and celebrate The Summit community's culture of recognition and traditions, new and old

Strategic Pillar Alignment:

Create Engaging,
Inclusive Culture
and School
Community

Increase
Awareness of
School Identity

Develop External
Relationships

Priority E: Plan for Long-Term Financial Success

Tactics:

1. Create a long-term financial plan
2. Conduct a comprehensive, comparative, and regional tuition analysis and evaluate financial benchmarks
3. Create a development forecast and plan to fund facilities, additional programming, and financial aid
4. Establish and integrate procedures, policies, and fundraising needs for all auxiliary and support groups in coordination with school administration

Strategic Pillar Alignment:

Define and Fund
Future Growth
Needs

Develop External
Relationships

Maximize
Revenue
Opportunities
and Manage
Expenses



Priority F: Provide Needed Facilities and Supplies



Tactics:

1. Establish a long-term campus/facilities master plan that prioritizes organizational mission-driven needs
2. Provide the ideal supplies to support premier curriculum and enhance instruction
3. Upgrade technology infrastructure to support the learning environment
4. Continually evaluate and improve existing facilities and infrastructure

Strategic Pillar Alignment:

Define and Fund
Future Growth
Needs

Maximize
Revenue
Opportunities
and Manage
Expenses



Reaching Peak Potential at The Summit

An Upper School initiative to grow programming and enrollment in grades 6-12

The Summit's 2020 Strategic Plan identified areas of focus to evolve and enrich programming for grades 6-12:

1. *Integrate and grow mission-driven classroom and auxiliary program offerings with innovative curriculum*
2. *Strengthen and support the Upper School program for increased collaboration and enhanced programming to meet student needs and enrollment growth*
3. *Enhance community and belonging within the school among students, faculty, administration, families, trustees, and other supporters*

Using The Summit Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan as a guide, the Strategic Planning Committee created an assessment of the external environment by gathering information about programming, tuition, enrollment, and school community at Springfield area schools. The committee also researched independent schools in external markets beyond Springfield, changing expectations of independent school parents and students, and insights about the future of education through the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS).

After reviewing The Summit's parent satisfaction survey trends, the committee met with stakeholders one-on-one or in small group sessions to listen and learn about strengths and opportunities for The Summit. Stakeholders included students and parents from current, future, former families, and alumni.

Strengths

- Dedicated Faculty/Staff
- Scheduling Flexibility
- College Preparedness
- Independent School
- Non-religious School
- Progressive Education
- Physical and Emotional Safety
- Small Class Sizes

Neutral

- Academic Rigor
- Campus/Facilities
- Diversity
- Practical Life Skills
- School Culture

Opportunities

- Athletics and Extracurriculars
- Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment Opportunities
- Scholarship and Financial Aid Options
- SGF Community Engagement
- Student Population Size

Reaching Peak Potential

Critical Goals and Tactics

1. Opportunity:

Academic Programming and Rigor

The Summit's independent curriculum is thoughtfully crafted and undergoes continuous review and improvement. High academic performance results from increased focus on creativity, curiosity, strong communications, and a peer-supported community of learners. At The Summit, rigor is achieved not solely by testing or peer comparison. Instead, students exhibit an intrinsic desire to learn and are supported by equally committed peers. Summit students are highly engaged in meaningful classroom work and discussion, allowing them to enjoy a comparatively lighter assigned homework load and instead focus on class participation, project-based learning, and exploring their passions and interests outside of the classroom.

Goal: Differentiate Upper School academic programming and faculty

Looking forward, The Summit plans ...

- autonomous, yet consistent and complementary, middle and high school programs with differentiated faculty and unique classroom and commons spaces
- curricular offerings slated to grow with increased STEM curriculum, specifically engineering and technology, and continued expansion of unique electives to support greater student choice
- additional access to college level classes through dual enrollment (college classes taken on local college campuses) and dual credit (college level classes offered at The Summit) opportunities
- ongoing focus on excellent preparedness for both life and college studies in areas such as study skills and time management, financial acumen, health and mindfulness, and service and community-based internships

2. Opportunity: *Financial Considerations*

The Summit is a fully-accredited independent school and operates as a non-profit organization. Tuition at The Summit covers about 75% of the operating costs for the school. Support from donors enables The Summit to offer need-based financial aid and other discounts that provide greater choice and access to educational programs and experiences.

Goal: Add high-value attributes to the Summit educational experience

Looking forward, The Summit plans to...

- invest more high-value experiences into classroom study (robotics, cultural immersion and international travel opportunities, MIT Fab Lab distinction)
- integrate auxiliary fees within tuition model and increase scholarship and financial aid opportunities to reduce additional out-of-pocket costs for families
- increase tuition stipend offered to high school students enrolled in dual credit and/or dual enrollment college-level classes consistent with school policy



3. Opportunity: *Student Population Growth*

Small instructional class sizes are a signature attribute of a Summit education where students benefit from valuable personal relationships and individualized instruction. While maintaining small instructional class sizes, enrollment gains at The Summit will provide more diversity and enable additional student choice in programming and elective offerings.

Goal: Increase student population in grades 6-12.

Looking forward, The Summit plans to...

- achieve higher retention with creative tuition models and merit-based scholarships
- engage opportunities for international student enrollment and explore culture immersion or exchange programming
- foster a stronger sense of belonging at The Summit for students and families





4. Opportunity:

Student Excellence and Lifelong Learning

The Summit is committed to developing the whole person as a strong learner and strong individual, providing a safe environment to nurture curiosity, share peer support, and celebrate individuality. Throughout the progressive curriculum model, students grow through a gradual increase of age-appropriate expectations for personal organization, time management, contribution to group work, presentation skills, and an intrinsic desire to learn. Summit students have access to personalized guidance and counseling from dedicated faculty and a professional counselor who know each student and their strengths and opportunities for continued growth.

Goal: Enhance and celebrate The Summit's Whole Person Approach to help students reach highest individual potential

Looking forward, The Summit plans to...

- expand The Summit's unique social-emotional curriculum
- support increased faculty acumen in social-emotional learning with continued professional development and a specialized approach to middle school development
- Build program of expanded athletics and mission-aligned co/extracurricular activities for students based on individual interests and pursuits
- foster student's sense of purpose and leadership through integrated internship/shadow experiences and mentorship opportunities within the school and community (career shadowing, Leadership Springfield Academy Class, Medical Explorers, CAPS, etc.)



Required Resources

The Summit's plans for continued growth are fueled by tuition and donor pledges to annual giving and capital campaign projects. The Board of Trustees and administrative team partner to sequence the organization's income needs and expenses required to support programming for our students. We anticipate many required resources to support the plans shared including additional faculty and facility enhancements.

Faculty

The Summit plans to staff separate middle school and high school faculty teams with specialized adjunct instructors. Additional division specific leadership will be added to help management and growth. To effectively manage and sustain new co/extracurricular offerings, the school will employ coaches and content specific experts in concert with community volunteers and staff.

Facility Spaces

The Summit facility spaces will evolve to utilize our current building capacity by building out new classrooms and breakout pods and dedicating spaces for each division. Increased function in our outdoor and flex spaces will accommodate additional classes and electives. Expansion beyond the current roofline is also being developed within a long-term facilities plan for the organization. The 2020 acquisition of the adjacent property allows further opportunities for future campus expansion and program development.

As The Summit continues to grow, execution of the goals shared will also evolve. School policies and specific program communication will be kept up to date to offer the most current information to our families and students.





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