**
5 Year Strategic Plan**

**Background:** Five Stars Academy is revising the traditional model of education through our thought processes, our projects, the way we use technology, our hand-picked curriculum, our forward-thinking, highly motivated instructors, and our willingness to look at challenges from all angles.  We guide, lead, and partner with each of our students to tap into a child's innate love of learning.

Outdated educational models focus almost entirely on one element of the school experience: coursework and course content. While these are key components to a valuable education, we believe that education should provide opportunities for students to learn self-sufficiency, develop leadership skills, and understand the impact they can have on their surroundings.

**Vision:**  **Students will:**

* Receive an effective, challenging, and engaging education.
* Feel physically and emotionally safe.
* Communicate effectively and respectfully.
* Make responsible decisions.
* Become adept at using emerging technologies.
* Become productive and engaged citizens.

**Teachers/Staff will:**

* Respect and develop the emotional, physical, social, and intellectual well-being of each child.
* Consider the various learning styles and backgrounds of students.
* Promote character development.
* Research and use innovative teaching strategies.
* Communicate effectively and professionally.

**Administration will:**

* Attract, develop and retain the best teachers.
* Serve as responsible stewards of financial and physical resources.
* Adopt policies that are in the best interests of students and reflect the values and priorities of

the community.

* Collaborate with civic and government organizations for the betterment of the community.

**Parents and families will:**

* Actively participate in school functions and events.
* Provide opportunities for community based learning.
* Support the school with their time, talents, and gifts.
* Realize and appreciate the benefit of a successful school.

**Five Stars Academy’s strengths include:**

* academic excellence
* strong and dedicated faculty
* successful college counseling and admissions
* intellectual environment
* language learning
* personalization
* project-based learning
* community service
* school-wide traditions (such Holiday program and graduation ceremonies)
* small class-size
* teacher/student partnership
* individualized attention to students
* training students in critical thinking (as opposed to rote memorization)
* intellectual freedom
* deep respect for learning and culture of academic rigor
* strong student body with vigorous work ethic
* fostering a sense of self-reliance in students
* culture of respect, tolerance, and kindness
* earth connection

Based on our above strengths, we have developed a strategic plan that will take us through the next 3 to 5 years.

**GOAL SUMMARY**

**Goal #1: Mission:** To continue our work towards our school mission. “In cooperation with parents and community, Five Stars Academy will provide creative and challenging programs that will empower all learners to make thoughtful and informed choices and become assets to society as they realize their unique potential.”

**Goal #2: Academic:** Strengthen curriculum and better monitor progress, with special emphasis on science, math, and foreign languages; and expanding opportunities for students to distinguish themselves in areas of special interest or ability. Expand knowledge and use of digital resources.

**Goal #3: Community Service:** Expand student involvement and opportunities in the local and global community.

**Goal #4: Instructors and Training:** Attract and retain quality employees. Expand opportunities for an enhanced professional development program; just as we are committed to “the conversation between student and teacher,” we will expand on the commitment to “the conversation between teacher and teacher.”

**Goal #5: Physical Environment:** Create a physical environment that improves the efficiency, cohesion, and beauty of the campus, and cultivates a safe, supportive, and secure learning environment.

**Goal #6: Financial**: Develop a financial model that attracts the broadest pool of qualified applicants; reduces dependence on tuition; and adequately funds FSA’s programs and the goals of this strategic plan.

**GOAL DETAIL**

**Goal #1: Mission:** To continue our work towards our school mission. “In cooperation with parents and community, Five Stars Academy will provide creative and challenging programs that will empower all learners to make thoughtful and informed choices and become assets to society as they realize their unique potential.”

**Recommendations:**

* Examine the range of academic abilities that Five Stars Academy is best positioned to serve.
* Maintain the culture and practice of open communication within the school community — among faculty; between faculty and administrators; and between the school and families — that leads to collegiality and shared understandings that serve the best interests of the “whole child” and assures that families, teachers, and administrators build a partnership that supports our students at each stage of their development.
* Examine our requirements, expectations, practices, and assumptions based on the recognition that student success is driven in part by well-being, balance, and social connection; enable students at every stage of their development to reach their full potential in a nurturing environment. This will involve examining:
	+ the evolving roles and responsibilities of administrators and all instructors
	+ the amount of homework; the scheduling of assessments; and the multiple, sometimes competing, demands placed on students involved in the school’s extracurricular activities and programs; and
	+ the ways in which the school and families can work together to address issues of stress and balance in students’ lives.
* Examine the current size of the student population to determine the ability to grow while maintaining individualized instruction.

**Goal #2: Academic:** Strengthen curriculum and better monitor progress, with special emphasis on science, math, and foreign languages; and expanding opportunities for students to distinguish themselves in areas of special interest or ability. Expand use of digital resources and online resources.

**Recommendations:**

* Regularly conduct curricular review, involving both internal and external assessments, with the intention of spurring dialogue about curricula and professional practices.
* The school will examine the structure and organization of our K-12 course offerings, both required and elective. When not dictated by college-entrance requirements, the school’s graduation requirements will focus more on students’ proficiency rather than on sheer numbers of classes taken. We will also regularly analyze and update our elective offerings to ensure these align with our school-wide mission and vision.
* The school will provide the faculty with the support needed to integrate, into their teaching, technologies that will enhance instruction and provide students with essential digital skills, while also developing courses that blend in-classroom and online components as appropriate.
* The school will seek partnerships with educational institutions and other civic organizations that will augment students’ learning experiences and help students apply what they learn in real-world settings wherever possible.
* Expand our ability to offer AP courses; work towards approval to offer AP exams on site.
* The school will explore alternatives to the current schedule that will facilitate the objectives listed above.
* **Science**: FSA will focus more on inquiry-based learning, in which students actively explore and generate questions during classroom discussions and research, rather than passively receiving information from lectures. In this more interactive model, teachers will increasingly guide students in generating the questions that help students discover knowledge for themselves. Whenever feasible, students will learn through research and experimentation, and in so doing will gain a deeper understanding of biological, physical, and chemical processes. To this end, FSA will work to:

- Expand in-school opportunities for authentic research, experimentation and problem-solving by students in science courses.

- Create meaningful science enrichment opportunities outside the classroom from Kindergarten through Grade 12, ultimately including opportunities beyond the school (e.g., work in hydroponics laboratories or marine biology) for students to pursue advanced work in the natural sciences in preparation for advanced, distinguished scientific work at the university level.

- Offer an advanced curriculum that will engage and challenge students who have a deeper passion for science.

* **Math**:

- Expand opportunities for increased process- and problem- centered learning in math courses.

- Continue to identify and offer an advanced curriculum that will challenge students who have a stronger passion and aptitude for mathematics.

- Enhance opportunities beyond the school for students to pursue advanced work in mathematics and to pursue interdisciplinary work in which mathematical understanding is an essential part of complex analysis and problem-solving, in preparation for advanced, distinguished work in collegiate mathematics.

- Utilize online courses for AP or other advanced math coursework.

- Re-examine and improve the way math classes are presented.

* **Foreign Language:**
- Recognize that FSA families speak multiple languages and better integrate their knowledge into the foreign language we offer.
* Provide teachers and students with the digital tools, resources, and support they need to connect, collaborate and create in a way that maximizes learning.
* Utilize digital tools and processes to streamline administrative functions, reduce the need for paper copies, and improve ease of communication and record-keeping.

**Goal #3: Community Service:** Expand student involvement and opportunities in the local and global community.

**Recommendations:**

* Assure that we are exposing our students to current events across the curriculum in order to deepen our students’ awareness and understanding of our rapidly changing world.
* Re-examine our philosophy and practice around local, national, and international field-trip/travel for students so that these programs provide the richest, and most enriching, possible experiences for students at every level.
* Seek to increase and broaden opportunities for study abroad and continue to appeal to international students interested in spending a semester at FSA.
* Rework our community service initiatives to include service learning (i.e., community service tied to the curriculum and characterized by “research, reach out, and reflection”) that offers local, national, and international service opportunities as appropriate for all students; seek additional financial resources to support the community service program and to make all opportunities accessible to all students.

**Goal #4: Instructors and Training:** Attract and retain quality employees. Expand opportunities for an enhanced professional development program; just as we are committed to “the conversation between student and teacher,” we will expand on the commitment to “the conversation between teacher and teacher.”

**Recommendations**

* Identify and then prioritize critical professional development topics that are school-wide—as well as specific to each grade- level, division, and department (academic and administrative).
* Ensure that faculty and staff set individual professional development goals specific to their areas of teaching.
* Create time in faculty and staff’s schedules for individual and collaborative learning on the topics identified, and also for faculty and staff to share with each other the expertise, information, and skills.
* Identify online resources, workshops and classes for professional development.

**Goal #5: Physical Environment:** Create a physical environment that improves the efficiency, cohesion, and beauty of the campus, and cultivates a safe, supportive, and secure learning environment.

**Recommendations**

* Continue to enhance the current campus that combines our desire for reducing the carbon footprint, better utilizing the current space we have, and provide fast, consistent internet to supplement our on-site learning with the latest online learning tools available
* Constant improvement of FSA’s existing facilities; these improvements may include the following initiatives:
	+ Equip each classroom a TV and laptop to provide for online lessons in the classroom or online learning when required.
	+ Provide more outdoor, covered dining and play space.
	+ Develop a science lab classroom, specifically for chemistry and biology.
	+ Expand gardens. Integrate hydroponic gardening with a generated electrical source.
	+ Look for financial assistance to begin the process of moving to a solar powered school.
	+ Move lockers out of the classrooms into covered, secure space, to provide more classroom area.

**Goal #6: Financial**: Develop a financial model that attracts the broadest pool of qualified applicants; reduces dependence on tuition; and adequately funds FSA’s programs and the goals of this strategic plan.

**Recommendations**:

* Provide the resources — compensation, professional development, technology, and facilities — that will enable FSA to attract and retain teachers, administrators, staff, and students who will continue to build the dynamic learning environment.
* Seek financial resources that would enable the expansion of technology resources available to our students.
* Develop a long-term financial model aimed at FSA’s tuition dependence and increasing our ability to respond to new and emerging educational opportunities.