



Cottonwood Classical Preparatory School

Strategic Plan 2015-2020

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The Strategic Planning Process

In order to continue to provide an exceptional educational experience for the Cottonwood Classical school community, CCPS is building on its history of success by undergoing a strategic planning process aimed at identifying key strategic initiatives to improve the school's ability to carry out its mission and achieve its vision. In the spring of 2015, Cottonwood Classical Preparatory School's Governing Council began the process of developing the strategic planning process for the school. Operating under the assumption that an organization that is not moving forward is already in decline, and lacking an overall plan, we felt a sense of urgency to begin this process. The ground rules were simple:

- Involve as many stakeholders as possible;
- Keep an open-mind throughout all discussions;
- Think strategically, not operationally;
- Make goals measurable;
- Be both visionary and practical;
- Keep the school's mission and educational philosophy in mind throughout the entire process.

Based on the School's mission, founding principles, and the organizational realities of operating a charter school in the state of New Mexico, the strategic planning committee was created. The Governing Council, Executive Director, Student Government, Foundation, PTA, and PAC representatives to the Governing Council were all tasked with recruiting members representing all constituency groups.

Throughout the process, the committee identified key strategic issues in the following areas:

- Teaching and Learning
- School Community and Culture
- Student Affairs
- Constituent Relations and Advocacy
- Financial Stewardship
- Growth and Sustainability

As with any strategic plan, this is a living document that will be reviewed, revised, and fine-tuned. We are extremely grateful for the school community's investment in this effort during this past summer, the efforts of which are ensuring that this plan results in an even stronger Cottonwood Classical Preparatory School.

Strategic Planning Committee Members

The time and commitment of the strategic planning committee members during the process is greatly appreciated. Below is the list of committee members, in alphabetical order by last name, who participated in the strategic planning process.

- **JoAnn Anderson** – Governing Council Member
- **Mattie Del Toro** – Student
- **Miles Donahue** – Student
- **Darrell Garcia** – Governing Council Member and Committee Chair
- **Jackie Geerts** – Registrar and PTA Vice President
- **Peter Goss** – Director of Development and College Counselor
- **Kristen Kelley** – PAC Representative
- **Meghan Lowe** – IB Coordinator and Leadership Team Representative
- **Peter Lukes** – Faculty Member
- **Sam Obenshain** – Executive Director
- **Jennifer Olson** – PTA Representative
- **Richard Romero** – Consultant, Facilities
- **Tanya Shelvock** – CCPS Foundation
- **Bill Torres** – Athletics and Activities Director
- **Frank Volpe** – Associate Director

Mission Statement

The mission of Cottonwood Classical Preparatory School (CCPS) is to develop highly skilled, socially-responsible learning activists who can analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information and take responsibility for their own learning. Cottonwood Classical promotes intercultural understanding in an all-inclusive learning environment and our graduates will be prepared to enter and thrive at any of the world's accredited colleges and universities becoming driving forces in their local, regional, national, and global communities. Students will be well-versed in communicating through reading, speaking, writing, and listening with diverse audiences and will be able to transfer skills and knowledge into a post-secondary setting and global marketplace.

Educational Philosophy

The founders of Cottonwood Classical not only felt that all children can learn, but that they should be afforded the kind of high quality education found in private schools at no cost. At Cottonwood Classical Preparatory School students of all abilities will not only meet and exceed state standards but will also grow as young adults into productive citizens in the working world. Cottonwood Classical Preparatory School will embrace a variety of methods, curricula, and delivery models to meet the diverse educational needs of all students.

Because the Paideia method is a conversation-based program, it allows the curriculum to be both challenging for the gifted students and therapeutic for the at-risk students. Through Socratic Seminar, students of all abilities and backgrounds will participate in oral discourse, learning over the course of their middle and high school careers essential skills such as reading comprehension, social interaction, teamwork, and critical thinking. The classic texts used will cover ideas and issues of enduring importance allowing students to find for themselves their values and voice.

CCPS's Strategic Plan

Cottonwood Classical Preparatory School's strategic plan aims to keep the school and all its constituent groups focused moving forward together with the intent of "educating the whole child for the whole world."

Teaching and Learning

Cottonwood Classical Preparatory School's founding documents call for a rigorous program that will educate the whole child for the whole world. The school's founders had a vision of providing high quality education for the price of a public education. The founding documents called for the use of the Paideia Methodology culminating with the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program. In light of this, it is time to reaffirm our dedication and commitment to the practice of fidelity and rigor.

Goals
CCPS will implement the Paideia methodology with fidelity at every grade level through all content areas giving students and teachers enhanced opportunities for active learning and real life experiences.
CCPS will focus on improving coached Paideia projects and increasing the integration of authentic audiences.
CCPS will improve its focus on cultivating international mindedness, the traits of the IB Learner Profile, and the fulfillment of the IB mission.
CCPS will develop a written, clearly articulated vertical, and horizontal curriculum in order to promote student academic and individual development in pursuit of the IB Diploma.
CCPS will broaden the diversity of curricular and programmatic offerings in order to promote a more inclusive and well-rounded learning environment. This will include an emphasis on cross-curricular instruction and activities.

School Community and Culture

The culture of Cottonwood Classical Preparatory School has a significant impact on the wellbeing of all faculty, staff, and students. By creating a shared culture that reflects the mission, values, and beliefs of the school, we can create a dynamic environment conducive to student learning and employee satisfaction.

Goals
CCPS will attract, retain, professionally develop, and evaluate the highest quality employees.
CCPS will focus on recruiting, retaining, and supporting faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds and perspectives.
CCPS will work towards balancing faculty and staff workloads.
CCPS will develop and implement plans to improve the physical, social, and emotional well-being of all CCPS community members.
CCPS will increase, retain, and support students from diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

Student Affairs

Student engagement outside of the classroom is aligned with academic performance, graduation rates, and lifelong work habits. Cottonwood Classical Preparatory School will carefully study the areas of need, student interest and associated costs, and incorporate new engagement opportunities while improving support, management, and integration of these opportunities within the school to improve the student experience.

Goals
CCPS will raise its external profile locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally to improve the academic experience for students and to provide greater opportunities for CCPS students pre-, mid-, and post-secondary.
CCPS will develop and implement plans to improve the physical, social, and emotional well-being, as well as the intellectual growth of all CCPS students.
CCPS will increase student leadership opportunities.

Constituent Relations and Advocacy

Relationships with internal and external constituents are vital to the long-term success of Cottonwood Classical Preparatory School. In order to maintain and improve our status as one of the top schools in New Mexico, Cottonwood Classical Preparatory School will support efforts to bring together all people and organizations with a vested interest in our school to work together towards reaching common goals.

Goals
CCPS will improve the relationships among and between the defined constituent groups to support the instructional program.
CCPS will increase efforts to advocate for IB across the state.
CCPS will be a leader in the local, state, regional, and national charter school movement including advocacy for public school options.
CCPS will actively engage in collaborative practices for all internal constituents, i.e. faculty, staff, administration, students, and families.
CCPS will increase parent and student investment in CCPS’s mission and academic rigor.

Financial Stewardship

Financial health and stability plays an important role in maintaining all aspects of the school environment and culture. Because of its importance to all aspects of the school, Cottonwood Classical Preparatory School will take the necessary steps to maintain transparent, sound, and responsible financial practices. In addition, CCPS will examine revenue sources to ensure financial sustainability to advance student achievement and enhance the school’s mission.

Goals
CCPS will develop a fundraising plan with a clear set of fundraising goals that supports the school’s mission.
The CCPS Development Office will coordinate fundraising efforts across the entire school.
CCPS will develop mechanisms for transparency to make the school’s financial status more visible and accessible to the community.
CCPS will maintain its financial position to meet all requirements as established in its charter performance contract, bond covenants, and state and federal regulations.

Growth and Sustainability

Demand for student enrollment continues to remain at an all-time high for Cottonwood Classical Preparatory School, demonstrating a community need for our academic model. CCPS will explore options for growth at our current location and replication within the state. Tied to growth and replication is the maximization of existing facilities, using available funds for proactive maintenance; upgrading in accordance with the Facilities Master Plan as additional funds become available, and prioritizing safety and security in implementing strategic facility goals.

Goals
CCPS will develop a long term facilities master plan.
CCPS will develop a multi-year technology master plan.
CCPS will examine Governing Council capacity in order to support growth and sustainability efforts of the school.
CCPS will explore the options available for school growth and replication.

Appendix

The SWOT Analysis was created at a Strategic Planning Committee meeting on June 17th, 2015. Items were subsequently added via email communications with Governing Council member and committee chair, Darrell Garcia once members had the opportunity to discuss with their constituent groups.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Rigorous specialized curriculum
- Autonomy
- Staff
- Teachers
- Student and family involvement
- High achieving students
- Families with high expectations
- Smaller class size
- Facility
- Transportation
- Location of school
- US News and World Report Ranking
- Leadership team
- IB Program
- Media/Publicity
- Academics
- Art Program
- Growth
- Demand
- Graduation rate
- College acceptance rate
- Student/Teacher relationships
- Fall/Spring breaks
- Student support
- Reflective practices
- Advisory activities
- Retention rate of students
- Diversity
- Family commitment
- College readiness
- Athletics

Weaknesses

- Facility limitations (activity, athletic, performing arts, class size)
- Financial (bond/lease payment), 2% mandatory giveback to PED
- Rapid growth – impact to culture and instructional fidelity
- Technology (wireless network, bandwidth, number of devices, etc.)
- Decline in family involvement and financial support (reduced school efforts and ability to promote involvement and communication)
- Information (maintenance fund)
- Fundraising (Foundation)
- Restrictions due to size (lack of activities and electives)
- Retention of students (8-9 and 10-11)
- Communication (external and between internal entities)
- Alignment of 6-12 instruction, curriculum, and assessment
- Support and promotion of student motivation and wellness
- Mental health (teacher and student stress)
- Faculty/Staff overwhelmed with increased responsibilities
- IB Program
- Discovery education
- Media/publicity
- Building (one building and lack of space)
- Lack of participation at events
- School spirit
- Parent participation – bridge from elementary
- Teacher pay and benefits
- School growth
- Lack of volunteers
- Lack of fidelity to Paideia
- Non-researched based practices and policies
- Athletic offerings
- Lack of gender diversity with school leadership
- Lack of cohesion between constituent groups
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Opportunities

- Replication and/or expansion
- Adjacent land
- Reducing liabilities to increase operational fund (lease \$ vs. operational)
- New Development Director
- Reputation (US News and World Reports)
- Growth of student population allows for more support
- IB Program
- Legislature/Advocacy
- Other charter schools – partnerships
- School culture/spirit

- Make CCPS an IB School not a school with an IB program
- Bus Stops – get to know you – community building
- Consistency in learning and teaching
- Diversity outreach
- Volunteer
- Paideia training
- Maintaining small community feel throughout growth
- College visibility and community
- Community involvement
- Growth of athletics
- Relationships/partnerships with in-state colleges and universities
- Relationships/partnerships with Journal Center businesses/organizations
- Internships to increase hands-on learning beyond what the school can provide
- Strengthening Governing Council and Foundation to better include key community members
- Creating policies/practices that set the bar for charter school's
- Harness the power of the GC and Foundation to support shared goals

Threats

- Adjacent development
- Master plan of Journal Center properties
- New or existing comparable programs
- APS change in administration
- Changes in state leadership (especially Governor and Secretary of Education)
- Reputation and perception of CCPS charter and charter malpractice
- Past performance does not predict future achievement (don't rest)
- Politics/legislation
- Support of new students with expansion of student population and demographics
- Media
- Ourselves – push the envelope vs. complacency?
- Other charter schools (existing and new)
- Ratings
- Public Education Department mandates
- Changes in transportation policies
- Litigation for malpractice or inappropriate behavior at all levels
- Unexpected changes in school administration/leadership
- Unexpected changes in Governing Council leadership
- Changes in demand for CCPS
- Changes in community needs and expectations of charter schools
- Reductions in SEG funding and its relationship to financial obligations
- Unfunded mandated increases such as increases teacher pay