

Seven Hills Classical Academy

Strategic Development Plan 2009-2012

Seven Hills Classical Academy

Mission Statement

Seven Hills Classical Academy provides students with a classical education in an academically rigorous environment designed to promote strong citizenship and life-long learning.

Strategic Vision

Recognizing that all students have a right to pursue academic and personal excellence, Seven Hills Classical Academy challenges students by:

- Providing a caring and structured small-school environment
- Maintaining high expectations of students, staff, and the community
- Inspiring critical thinking, creativity, and an appreciation for beauty through active implementation of the Core Knowledge curriculum
- Promoting a strong value system that embraces **C**ooperation, **A**ssertion, **R**esponsibility, **E**mpathy and **S**elf-control (**CARES**)

Seven Hills Classical Academy

Situation Analysis

Seven Hills Classical Academy (SHCA) is in its fourth year of operations. The school has enjoyed continued operational success as evidenced by, waiting lists in multiple grade levels, outstanding academic growth and achievement and positive school culture. Enrollment in the 2009-2010 academic year is 387. In order to meet community interest, the SHCA Board of Directors has authorized accepting enrollment to fill three sections in each grade, Kindergarten through 5th grade. At capacity, then, SHCA's enrollment will be 432 students, assuming an average class size of 24.

During its second year of operations, SHCA's Board took active steps to welcome Beacon Preparatory School to its site. Beacon Preparatory School is a Classical Core Knowledge middle school, chartered 6th through 12th grade and has Friends of Education as its sponsor. The school was previously located in the northwest suburbs of the Twin Cities, and relocated to the SHCA site on July 1st, 2008. Miss O'Brien is the Director of both SHCA and Beacon Preparatory School. It is expected that Beacon Preparatory School will offer a middle school program for the 6th through 8th grades.

The 2009-2010 school year brings both challenges and new opportunities. The first challenge is the 27% hold back in funding from the Minnesota Department of Education. Due to this hold back we anticipate a cash shortage beginning in March of 2010 and continuing through September 2010. We have had to freeze all staff salaries, reduced consumable spending, and are working with our vendors and banks to assist with this funding deficit. The opportunity of the year is the renovation of our building to accommodate additional Seven Hills students as well as expanded Beacon Preparatory enrollment. Students began the year in temporary classrooms until the renovation is complete. The anticipated move in to the new facilities is January 2010.

The school has fully implemented the development of individualized learning plans for each student in attendance, identifying strengths and weaknesses of each child and implementing strategies designed to meet the needs of all students. In furtherance of this initiative, the entire staff continues to participate in a global Professional Development Plan, funded by a Q Comp Award secured by the school's administration in the 2007-08 academic year. Pursuant to that plan, classroom instruction and curriculum implementation will be guided through individualized Professional Development Plans designed to further data driven instruction, a Classical Education model and Differentiated Instruction methodologies.

The board composition has now shifted to a teacher majority with six of the nine positions held by teachers. The board is attempting to find a community member to fill a vacancy in a teacher position to better represent the full spectrum of constituents.

Operational issues under consideration by the Board and the administration include:

- Enhancing academic growth
- Maintaining enrollment/sustaining waiting list growth
- Special Education Programming
- Securing a line of credit from a lending institution
- Transition to a renovated facility

I. STRENGTHS

- Core Knowledge curriculum
- Strong and caring teachers
- Engaged families providing parental support
- Executive Director's leadership and enthusiasm
- Great facilities and location
- Small school culture
- Strong enrollment
- Financial stability resulting from strong enrollment and sound business management
- Commitment to high academic standards / Program reaching
- Dedication to all students regardless of ability level

II. WEAKNESSES

- Communication; efficiency and effectiveness
- Organizing parents to volunteer
- Communication of what the SHCA technology program is
- Community understanding in Core Knowledge and Classical curriculum
- Anticipated student transition issues between SHCA and Beacon Preparatory School (Beacon) as enrollment in one, does not guarantee acceptance in the other
- The recognition that potential issues could arise because of two separate schools and two separate boards
- Administration of two schools with a single administrative staff
- Challenge in cash position with a 27% hold back from the MDE

Seven Hills Classical Academy

Goals: 2009 - 2012

To meet community needs and to ensure Seven Hill's successful growth, the strategic planning committee has identified five contributing goals:

1. Academic Programming -

To further the plan for monitoring and effectively implementing a Classical Education program based on the Scope and Sequence of Core Knowledge to ensure progression towards full realization of the school's mission and vision.

2. Community Development -

Attract and establish a community of believers in Classical Education, the value of lifelong learning, strong citizenship and promotion of a strong value system embracing cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy and self-control (CARES).

3. Facility -

Identify and address the unique needs of a Seven Hill's facility to grow and strengthen its K-5 program, considering long term facility options and collaboration with Beacon.

4. Leadership -

Develop a strong and skilled Board of Directors (Board) that works to promote the growth of Seven Hills, its mission, vision and values.

5. Operations -

Empower the Executive Director with the leeway required to run a school efficiently while providing sufficient oversight to ensure that the Executive Director is meeting the Board's objectives, including student achievement and staff development.

Academic Programming

Goal:

To further the plan for monitoring and effectively implementing a Classical Education program based on the Scope and Sequence of Core Knowledge to ensure progression towards full realization of the school's mission and vision

Supporting Actions:

- 1) Assess instructional strategies to ensure the most effective implementation of Classical Education curriculum via the Scope and Sequence of Core Knowledge, Math, Language Arts and other curriculums
 - a) Professional development in Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence, best practices, and other curriculums as appropriate
 - i) Responsible party: Core Knowledge Coordinator, Q-Comp Leadership Team, and Curriculum Director
 - ii) Timeline: Annually, ongoing
 - b) Professional development in classical education as defined by the "Seven Hills Classical Academy Statement on Classical Education"
 - i) Responsible party: Curriculum Director, Q-Comp Leadership Team and Executive Director
 - ii) Timeline: Annually, ongoing
 - c) Coaching of teachers to ensure that Classical Education model instructional strategies are engaging entire population of students
 - i) Responsible party: Curriculum Director, Q Comp Leadership Team, and Differentiated Instructional Strategies Coach
 - ii) Timeline: Annually, ongoing
- 2) Create strong, meaningful enrichment and remedial programs
 - a) Maintain and enhance Gifted and Talented program tailored for identified students
 - i) Responsible party: Gifted and Talented Specialist, Literacy Specialist and Curriculum Director
 - ii) Timeline: Ongoing
 - b) Maintain and enhance Remediation program tailored for identified students
 - i) Responsible party: Remediation Specialist, Literacy Specialist, Curriculum Director
 - ii) Timeline: Ongoing

- c) Maintain effective communication between enrichment staff and classroom teachers through assessment team meetings
 - i) Responsible party: Gifted and Talented Specialist, Remediation Specialist, Curriculum Director and Q Comp Leadership Team
 - ii) Timeline: monthly or as needed
- 3) Implement an effective Full Inclusion model with regard to academic programming for all students, including those identified with special needs
 - a) Professional development for all staff to encourage meaningful collaboration between general education classroom and special education staff
 - i) Responsible party: Curriculum Director, Literacy Specialist, Q Comp Leadership Team and Executive Director
 - ii) Timeline: ongoing
 - b) Monitor efficacy of implemented Full Inclusion model
 - i) Responsible Party: Administrative Team
 - ii) Timeline: ongoing
- 4) Assess effectiveness of curriculum choices and instructional strategies to ensure the most effective implementation of the Classical Education curriculum
 - a) Annually establish a Curriculum Committee to review material and address weaknesses/challenges with identified curriculum
 - i) Responsible Party: Curriculum Director and Executive Director (Curriculum Director will act as Chair of the committee)
 - ii) Timeline: Annually
 - b) Assessment Specialist will develop assessment teams to analyze NWEA test data to determine the effectiveness of current curriculum
 - i) Responsible Party: Assessment Specialist
 - ii) Timeline: Three times a year, following testing periods
 - c) Grade level teams will meet with Curriculum Director, the Literacy Specialist, the Assessment Specialist and the Executive Director to assess effective implementation of curriculum at each grade level
 - i) Responsible Party: Curriculum Director, Literacy Specialist, Assessment Specialist and Executive Director
 - ii) Timeline: Monthly
 - d) Ongoing curricular support for effective implementation of curriculum at each grade level

- i) Responsible Party: Curriculum Director, Literacy Specialist, Assessment Specialist
- ii) Timeline: Monthly

Needed Resources:

- 1) Revenues to support:
 - a) Staffing needs
 - b) Material resources
 - c) Contracted services
 - d) Contact information for external assessments
 - e) Professional development

Outcome:

Seven Hills will have an effectively implemented Classical Education program via the Core Knowledge K-5 Scope and Sequence, and other related curriculum which feature exceptional educational offerings for all of its students.

Measurements:

- 1) Achievement on the State Assessment tests (MCA-II's) as outlined in the education goals agreed to with the school's sponsor
- 2) Achievement on the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress as outlined in the education goals agreed to with the school's sponsor
- 3) Seven Hills will maintain at least a 95% student attendance rate
- 4) 90% of parents and staff will indicate satisfaction with the school on the annual survey

Community Development

Goal:

To attract and establish a community of believers in Classical Education, the value of lifelong learning, strong citizenship and promotion of a strong value system embracing cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy and self-control (CARES).

Supporting Actions:

- 1) Promote a culture of respect, learning and caring shown through student behavior and modeled by staff and community members
 - a) Teach and reinforce school culture and values
 - i) Responsible party: Executive Director and Seven Hills Classical Academy staff
 - ii) Timeline: Ongoing
 - b) Review and modify the family support pledge and secure signatures at the beginning of the school year and after the winter breaks
 - i) Responsible party: Executive Director and Seven Hills Classical Academy staff
 - ii) Timeline: Ongoing
- 2) Establish effective and efficient communication channels and information dissemination processes
 - a) Maintain and utilize website
 - i) Responsible Party: Executive Director designee
 - ii) Timeline: Beginning February 2007, ongoing
 - b) Refine communication systems for core audiences: Email, weekly parent bulletin, special announcements, teacher to parent announcements, Parent Connection information, Board approved information, etc
 - i) Responsible party: Executive Director, Administration, Seven Hills Classical Academy Teachers, Board
 - ii) Timeline: Ongoing
- 3) Communicate the Seven Hill's message and personality in broader community
 - a) Empower Public Relations Committee

- i) Responsible party: Seven Hills Board of Directors (Public Relations Committee)
- ii) Timeline: Ongoing

Needed Resources:

- 1) Public Relations Committee
- 2) Seven Hills Classical Academy Board of Directors
- 3) Seven Hills Classical Academy Faculty

Outcome:

Seven Hills will be a welcoming, accessible, and transparent community that is rich in high expectations for staff, students and the parent community.

Measurements:

- 1. Interactive website for users both internal and external
- 2. 90% of students and parents favorably rate the school culture
- 3. 60% of parents will volunteer in the school or at a school function, totaling a cumulative 4,000 hours

Facility

Goal:

Identify and address the unique needs of a Seven Hill's facility to grow and strengthen its K-5 program, considering long term facility options and collaboration with Beacon Prep.

Supporting Actions:

- 1) Annual review of present facilities including review of compliance under long-term lease
 - a) Responsible party: Facilities Committee
 - b) Timeline: Yearly, at the end of the school year
- 2) Monthly meetings with the landlord's representative to promote healthy tenant/landlord relationship
 - a) Responsible party: Executive Director
 - b) Time line: Ongoing

Needed Resources:

- 1) Facilities Committee, administration, board, and facility
- 2) Potential incidental costs or fees for professional support from architects, facility planners, banking/finance experts, lawyers

Outcome:

Seven Hills will have a facility that supports growth of the school in East Bloomington and excellent education.

Measurements:

- 1) The school facility will accommodate the increase in grades, programs, and number of students
- 2) Financing of the facility will be affordable and within the school's annual budget

Leadership

Goal:

Develop a strong and skilled Board that works to promote the growth of Seven Hills, its mission, vision and values.

Supporting Actions:

- 1) Ensure that the board composition meets the standards set by the Minnesota Department of Education
 - a) Review the current requirements for board composition
 - b) Adjust the board composition to ensure compliance
 - c) Utilize a Board Profile identifying what expertise is needed in a board and recruit potential Board members with the expertise needed (i.e. Legal, Financial, Educational, Political, etc.)
 - d) Review governance structure of Board, especially reviewing the need and function of committees
 - i) Responsible party: The Governance Committee and Board Chair
 - ii) Timeline: March 2010
- 2) Increase visibility of Board operations to encourage transparency
 - a) Continue biannual town hall meetings
 - b) Board attendance at community events
 - c) Create a Board email address for community members to communicate with Board
 - i) Responsible party: Executive Director and Board Chair
 - ii) Timeline: Ongoing
- 3) Improve the Executive Director evaluation process
 - a) Create a policy with the timeline for the evaluation process
 - i) Responsible party: Executive Committee
 - ii) Timeline: December 2010

Needed Resources:

- 1) Governance Committee
- 2) Board

Outcome:

Seven Hills will be known throughout the Twin Cities and the state as one of the premier schools for all students because of the achievements of its students, its talented and dedicated administration and staff, and the support and involvement of community members.

Measurements:

- 1) Annual survey will indicate that 80% of parents and students will be familiar with the school's mission and vision statements
- 2) Annual survey will indicate that 80% of community members understand the function of the board
- 3) The Board will have implemented a board development program for all Board members
- 4) Board will approve Executive Director Evaluation policy

Operations

Goal:

Empower the Executive Director with the leeway required to run a school efficiently while providing sufficient oversight to ensure that the Executive Director is meeting the Board's objectives, including student achievement and staff development.

Supporting Actions:

- 1) Ensure that the goals of our sponsor, Friends of Ascension, are met or exceeded each year, especially in regards to student achievement
- 2) The Board should review each month the financial performance of the school
 - a) A focal point of this review should include the amount of financial resources going directly toward the classroom (cost per student); this is especially important as the school continues its expansion
- 3) Annual reviews of the integration and cost-sharing arrangement with Beacon should be scrutinized for continued improvements
- 4) The Board should ensure that the funds and financial records of SHCA and Beacon Prep are maintained separately and are not being combined or commingled
- 5) The Board (or an appropriate Board Committee) should review the annual calendar during each monthly board meeting to ensure that all external-reporting requirements are met
 - a) Each monthly review should cover the prior month's requirements as well as the current month's requirements
- 6) The Board (or an appropriate Board Committee) should review student enrollment, and consider its potential impact on academic achievement

Needed Resources:

- 1) Finance Committee oversight and recommendations to the Board
- 2) Annual engagement of independent public auditing firm

Outcome:

SHCA will continue to meet or exceed the goals of our charter sponsor, especially in the area of student academic achievement. The Executive Director will feel that he or she has the support of the Board, confident that he or she is able to make executive decisions without constantly verifying them with the Board, yet still feel accountable to the overall objectives and requirements of the Board. The partnership with Beacon will be successful and continue for many years or until the schools are formally combined.

Measurements:

- 1) Reports to Friends of Education
- 2) State-required academic achievement testing
- 3) Monthly financial statements
- 4) Monthly review of reportable items to external agencies
- 5) Annual audit

Strategic Planning Committee Members and Key Contributors

Name	Roles	Document Contribution Years
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