



STRATEGIC PLAN : 2019-2023

A Vision for Tomorrow



Free thinking since 1966



“Our highest endeavor must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives. The need for imagination, a sense of truth, and a feeling of responsibility—these three forces are the very nerve of education.”

— Rudolf Steiner



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INTRODUCTION

Strategic Planning takes many shapes and forms - but at the root of each effort is a dedicated group of people who accept the challenge of helping to shape the future of their organization. Clearly, the biggest challenge to any strategic planning process is the synthesis of all potential future directions, aspirations, realities and dreams into an actionable plan that has full support of all constituents of the school and reflects the mission of the school. The Detroit Waldorf School strategic planning process was developed in several phases - research and discovery; reflections and analysis; reaching consensus on priorities and goals; and finally crafting of the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan.

DETROIT WALDORF SCHOOL MISSION

The mission statement of the Detroit Waldorf School has evolved through the decades. Most recently, the mission statement was revised and ratified in 2016 as follows: “The mission of the Detroit Waldorf School is to provide a rich and dynamic pre-K to 8th grade Waldorf education to a geographically, racially, and socio-economically diverse student body in Detroit and Southeast Michigan. The Detroit Waldorf School is a community dedicated to helping each child develop his or her full human potential: clear, creative thought and expression, balance and compassion in feeling, and conscience and initiative in action. Waldorf education fosters the development of free-thinking, moral and self-confident individuals who lead successful and inspired lives.”

PLANNING CONTEXT

The Detroit Waldorf School opened in 1966 at the height of Detroit’s Civil Rights tumult. Representative of the school’s dedication to cultural and ethnic diversity, it was one of the first integrated schools in the city in the 1960s and the only independent school not connected to a charter or religious denomination. The late Dr. Rudolf Wilhelm and his wife Amelia, out of concern for the quality of education in the city, and a strong belief in the mission of Waldorf education, funded the school’s creation in its early years out of their own pocket. They also opened a program to train teachers in the unique curriculum and philosophy developed by Rudolf Steiner.

After the first year operating in the basement of a local Methodist church, the Wilhelms purchased the school’s current building. Designed by Albert Kahn it is now designated as an historic building. The school grew from a kindergarten to include grades 1 through 8 and a high school. In the 1980s the high school ceased operating and the teacher training program relocated to New York. With the support of the area Waldorf schools another local teacher training program was established and operated for many years until its recent decision to close.

Currently, DWS has a strong play-based early childhood program with parent child classes, preschool and a Kindergarten specific class that serves as a bridge to the grades. The school offers a rich academic and artistic curriculum for all students in grades 1-8 including science, mathematics, language arts, literature, history, geography, fine and practical arts, German and Spanish, eurythmy, music including orchestra and band, physical education, a remedial resource program, and after school sports, extended care and camps programs.

Now in its 53rd year, the Detroit Waldorf School stands alone as the only remaining private independent school in Detroit - surviving economic downturns, charter school development and fluctuations in Detroit’s population and

neighborhood decline. The recent shift in economic investment in Detroit has created a new resident base of young families in the city and neighboring suburbs which has benefitted the school in growing enrollment. This dynamic increase in enrollment has created a climate of rapid change in the school community that could jeopardize a sustainable growth trajectory.

As recently as 2007, the future of Detroit Waldorf School was in jeopardy when the United States' economic recession greatly impacted Detroit's economy and caused our student population to plummet. As a result, the Strategic Plan conducted for the critical years of 2007-2010 provided the bold vision required to rebuild the student population that supported families, faculty and the community through those difficult times. That plan maintained a strong commitment to the principles of Waldorf education and a shared spirit of openness to community cooperation, respect and care for all community members and a commitment to diversity and strengthening, not closing, the school. The school's dedicated focus to develop new funding mechanisms for tuition together with the support of the school's well-established endowment fund helped keep the doors open. As a result, DWS has survived as the last remaining independent school in Detroit.

Shift in metrics and strategic planning purposes:

The primary impetus of the previous strategic planning process required the development of a new platform for student enrollment in conjunction with enhancing the quality of the DWS school experience to enrich the lives of students and families. Reviewing school practices, governance, funding and curriculum played a role but the primary focus was to grow (and retain) the student population to levels that could sustain the school. It worked. The introduction of Accessible Tuition for All program (ATA) allows families of all means greater financial access to a Waldorf education. ATA remains a key contribution to the overall health of the school which has increased the volunteer base and expanded DWS's fundraising opportunities. Student enrollment (grades 1-8) has increased from the school's low of 102 students in 2007 to a healthy 176 in 2018. Similarly, the pipeline for students from the Early Childhood Center (Pre-K) increased from a low of 32 students in 2007 to full capacity at 78 students and now more families interested in enrollment than there are openings. DWS now offers parent-child classes five days per week - an increase from two days, which also fill rapidly and offer future growth of the Early Childhood programs.

Increases in the student body have generated demonstrable benefits of a more active parent body, robust classroom for each grade that are at or close to capacity, added faculty, rounded out curriculum and enhanced educational support staffing and services. A building improvement plan was developed with long-range plans for maintaining the historic century-old facility with grace and care. New focus on environmental stewardship within the education model and a desire to continue to expand the diversity of the staff and student body have also begun. Strategic planning has indeed set the course for the next 50 years of the Detroit Waldorf School.

Planning for the next phase of school needs

The overwhelming success of previous planning requires this strategic planning team to plan for growth and future development. This shift in focus creates a wide range of opportunities and challenges for the future of DWS within the limits of space, staff and physical infrastructure. A recent Accreditation Team report conducted in 2017 recommended reflection on the demands of the future through a new Strategic Plan to help envision our future that incorporates sustainable growth and a commitment to continue the mission of the school within the city of Detroit.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

This document was created to provide the school with a blueprint for action, allowing the school's leaders, teachers, and parents to be more effective at accomplishing its mission and more intentional about priorities while motivating others to help achieve them. It is intended to serve and guide both long-term and annual plan development and help create a clear path for growth that is based on consensus of facts and a vision for the future. The strategic plan is intended to be a living document. Throughout the plan there are clear imperatives for implementation alongside an understanding that the document will need periodic updates in order to remain relevant and responsive to an ever-changing and dynamic school community.

The Strategic Planning Committee was comprised of volunteer parents and members of the Detroit Waldorf School College of Teachers.

Members of the committee include:

Huda Ahmed (Current Parent)

Helena Mitchell (Faculty)

Mark Hausner (Current Grandparent, Board Member)

Sarida Scott Montgomery (Current Parent, Board Member)

Kamilah Henderson (Current Parent)

Mae Nordin (Current Parent, Board Member)

Garrick Landsberg (Current Parent, Board Member)

Simone Shurney (Faculty)

The Strategic Planning Committee convened in March 2018 and successfully completed several important phases of work to arrive at a final product. The first phase - research and discovery - included gathering high quality strategic plans from other Waldorf and independent schools as examples for structure and content of this plan. The Committee identified aspects of the most recent DWS strategic plan that were accomplished, and the aspects that need to be brought forward into this plan for future action. The following themes were culled from the DWS Self Study Report (2017):

1. Fulfilling DWS Education Program
2. Strengthening a Diverse, Connected and Involved DWS Community
3. Planning for Stability and Financial Security
4. Imagining DWS' Future Expansion in Detroit.

During the reflections and analysis phase, each committee member brought their informed perspective, (as a teacher, parent, administrator, or board member) to fully understand the complex data sources that were available. Using previous staff and parent surveys, and school enrollment data, the committee identified recurring themes that were closely aligned with the existing DWS strategic plan.

Then in consensus building, the committee designed and disseminated an online parent, staff and community survey that was open for two months. The committee made the survey process accessible by also encouraging respondents to contribute their perspectives and concerns in writing on large placards that were placed in the DWS community room. Finally, the committee held an all-community meeting, to serve as a series of mini-focus group discussions, in spring 2018. The meeting was well attended and included teachers, parents, and staff.

The final phase, recommendations, required teams within the committee to develop the goals, strategies, future vision, metrics and pathways to follow within a recommended timeline to bring the final plan to completion. The committee utilized the initial themes defined by a DWS Self Study Report conducted in 2016, and formulated the following four Strategic Planning Pillars to organize the outreach process and inform the defined strategies and desired outcomes.

The four pillars are:

1. Academic and Developmental Excellence
2. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
3. DWS Future Expansion
4. Financial Strength and Security

The Strategic Planning Committee analyzed the qualitative and quantitative data that was compiled over the course of the three phases and then began the process of bringing structure and cohesion to the new strategic plan. Because of the breadth and depth of community voice throughout the process, the Strategic Planning committee is pleased that the new document reflects broad community perspectives, consensus building, and clarity of shared values. The four planning areas that serve as guideposts - Pillars - for the new strategic plan are detailed in the following pages.

The broad community input process demonstrated the community's shared values and commonly identified needs for the future which helped to steer the formation of each strategic plan recommendation. These valuable findings were applied to each of the four Pillars as the support for future growth and planning.

The following chart provides an overview of all four areas including the goal, future vision and strategies for each, while the following sections give the greater details for each. The four areas of focus in the following "At a Glance" chart become the four pillars guiding the implementation process outlined in a separate chart that describes the next phase of the Strategic Plan to be carried out by the implementation committees.



AT A GLANCE

Academic & Developmental Excellence

Improve and expand curriculum and programs to better meet the needs of students and create our pathway to the future while maintaining a commitment to Waldorf principles.

STRATEGIES

- Develop revised curriculum in Math and Technology studies to reflect new research regarding High School preparation.
- Improve the school's connection to surrounding metro-Detroit communities by inviting groups and individuals to DWS to support the development of students' skills in technology, science and engineering.
- Develop consistent systems for grading and evaluations across all subject areas.
- Increase professional development opportunities for faculty and staff to more effectively support students' educational, emotional, social, and developmental needs.
- Expand parent/community education programs to support the school community in developing a clear sense of Waldorf education.
- Increase professional development opportunities for faculty and staff to more effectively support students' educational, emotional, social, and developmental needs.

Diversity Equity & Inclusion

Strengthen the diversity of the school community to reflect a wide range of cultures and traditions.

STRATEGIES

- Create a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee to lead new school initiatives that strengthen values in this area.
- Revise hiring practices and create a specific plan to recruit more faculty, staff and board members from underrepresented groups.
- Revise outreach and enrollment policies to match goals for diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Ensure that a diverse student body is reflected in the curriculum, festivals and activities.

DWS Future Expansion

Maintain, improve, expand, and leverage the DWS facilities as required to accommodate new programs and growth.

STRATEGIES

- Explore the feasibility of expanding the school to offer a Detroit Waldorf School education to a growing number of families.
- Identify community and civic partners to maximize opportunities for capital funding, programming, and space utilization.
- Leverage existing spaces to create additional revenue and/or community partnerships.
- Explore opportunities to reinstate Waldorf teacher education training to sustain and enable the capacity to expand.
- Immediately activate the vacant Fischer Street lots with a land-based use that supports and enhances the DWS curriculum.

Financial Strength & Security

Improve and expand curriculum and programs to better meet the needs of students and create our pathway to the future while maintaining a commitment to Waldorf principles.

STRATEGIES

- Increase teacher and staff retention rates by expanding compensation and benefits.
- Ensure the financial viability of the Accessible Tuition for All (ATA) program through assessment and pursuit of new opportunities to sustain the program.
- Support development of a stratified funding system that incorporates diversified funding mechanisms that fit into overall financial strategies.
- Create a development staff position to coordinate new funding mechanisms.
- Assure financial health to allow for a thriving school while enhancing pedagogy and programming to support students, families and staff.

NEXT STEPS:

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The recommendation for implementation of the Strategic Planning process are outlined below and should be directed by a Board of Directors level Strategic Plan Implementation Team comprised of at least four board members that will each be charged with leading one of the Pillar Sub-Committees that engage a broader segment of the school community. Each of these teams will be responsible for stewardship of the implementation of each of the Pillars.

Upon board approval of the DWS Strategic Plan, the current Strategic Planning Committee will conclude its work and the Board of Directors will establish the board-level Strategic Plan Implementation Team that will lead Pillar Sub-Committees. The Implementation Team and each of its Sub-Committees should be established within three months of Strategic Plan approval.

It is recommended that each of the Pillar Sub-Committees should be comprised of no less than five and no more than 10 members and in addition to a Board of Directors member should include at least one member of DWS staff, one parent from the lower grades (grades 1 through 4), one parent from the upper grades (grades 5 through 8) and one member from the geographically surrounding community. The Implementation Team should designate one of its members to be responsible to initiate a call for the additional Team members by posting to the DWS parent Facebook page, Through the Gate newsletter, and by class leader emails.

The Board Strategic Plan Implementation Team will form the separate Pillar Sub-Committees and will meet at least once a month and more frequently if the Team determines it is necessary. The Board Implementation Team and Sub-Committee members should not be involved in more than two other committees within DWS. There will be no limit to the length of membership. Upon forming the Team and the subcommittees, the Team will work together to define roles and responsibilities.

The board member will assume the responsibility of oversight and report monthly to DWS Board of Trustees on the progress of implementation of each of the Pillars.

One Implementation Team member should be designated to provide periodic updates to the community via Through the Gate newsletter to otherwise keep the school community apprised of the Team's progress, new developments, as well as requests for needed expertise, funding or volunteers.

Each of the Pillar Sub-Committees will be dedicated to fulfilling the goals of each Pillar and its respective strategies, pathways and metrics. The Pillar Sub-Committees are defined as: (1) Academic and Developmental Excellence; (2) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; (3) Future Expansion Team; and (4) Financial Strength and Security. Each of the Pillar Sub-Committees will communicate regularly with the Board Strategic Plan Implementation Team.

The primary task of the Board Strategic Plan Implementation Team will be to help support and encourage the work of each of the Pillar Sub-Committees created to implement the strategies set forth in the Strategic Plan, to meet the outlined metrics deadlines, and to help coordinate resolution to any issues that arise in the implementation process if needed.

BOARD STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION TEAM (BIT)

Academic & Developmental Excellence (ADEC)

- Develop revised curriculum in Math and Technology studies to reflect new research regarding High School preparation.
- Improve the school's connection to surrounding metro-Detroit communities by inviting groups and individuals to DWS to support the development of students' skills in technology, science and engineering.
- Develop consistent systems for grading and evaluations across all subject areas.
- Increase professional development opportunities for faculty and staff to more effectively support students' educational, emotional, social, and developmental needs.
- Expand parent/community education programs to support the school community in developing a clear sense of Waldorf education.

- Create a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee to lead new school initiatives that strengthen values in this area.
- Revise hiring practices and create a specific plan to recruit more faculty, staff and board members from underrepresented groups.
- Revise outreach and enrollment policies to match goals for diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Ensure that a diverse student body is reflected in the curriculum, festivals and activities.

Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DEI)

Space Planning & Development Committee (SPDC)

- Explore the feasibility of expanding the school to offer a Detroit Waldorf School education to a growing number of families.
- Identify community and civic partners to maximize opportunities for capital funding, programming and space utilization.
- Leverage existing spaces to create additional revenue and/or community partnerships.
- Explore opportunities to reinstate Waldorf teacher education training to sustain and enable the capacity to expand.
- Immediately activate the vacant Fischer Street lots with a land-based use that supports and enhances the DWS curriculum.

- Increase teacher and staff retention rates by expanding compensation and benefits.
- Ensure the financial viability of the Accessible Tuition for All (ATA) program through assessment and pursuit of new opportunities to sustain the program.
- Support development of a stratified funding system that incorporates diversified funding mechanisms that fit into overall financial strategies.
- Create a new, expanded development plan.
- Assure financial health to allow for a thriving school while enhancing pedagogy and programming to support students, families and staff.

Financial Strength & Security (FSAS)

ACADEMIC AND DEVELOPMENTAL EXCELLENCE

Context:

The Detroit Waldorf School is a vibrant and dynamic educational community that strives to educate children in an artistic and developmentally appropriate way. In the research and discovery phase of the strategic planning process, the team asked the school's community members (faculty and staff, parents, students and board) questions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the school's education, mission and programs to inform the recommendations outlined in this document. The review of these responses indicated that community members feel strongly that the educational philosophy, pedagogy, curriculum, school environment and sense of community are the school's most important strengths. Community members also indicated a wide range of concerns in this area that need to be addressed as the school community continues to grow and change.

Goal:

Improve and expand curriculum and programs to better meet the needs of present-day students and accommodate the pathway to the future while maintaining a commitment to Waldorf principles.

Future Vision:

Educational experience that is relevant to the 21st century and reflective of a society that is growing and changing.

Active involvement and commitment to a collaborative vision for the future by all community members.

DWS students are prepared to meet the demands of competitive high school programs and higher education institutions.

A vibrant teacher community fulfilling Waldorf principles.

Strategies:

1. Develop revised curriculum in Math and Technology studies to reflect new research regarding high school preparation.
2. Improve the school's connection to surrounding metro-Detroit communities by inviting groups and individuals to DWS to support the development of students' skills in technology, science and engineering.
3. Develop consistent systems for grading and evaluations across all subject areas.
4. Increase professional development opportunities for faculty and staff to more effectively support students' educational, emotional, social, and developmental needs.
5. Expand parent/community education programs to support the school community in developing a clear sense of Waldorf education.
6. Continue to diversify pedagogy and community events to reflect the growing cultural diversity in the student body.

RECOMMENDED PATHWAYS TO STRATEGIES

1. Develop revised curriculum in Math and Technology studies to reflect new research regarding High School preparation.

Findings:

Strong support from all surveys indicate the need to improve math and technology offerings.

Pathways:

1. Review pros and cons of employing math specialist in grades 6-8 and make a decision about whether or not this resource would benefit our school. Research other Waldorf Schools that have a proven strong math curriculum.
2. Review curriculum resources for middle school math and determine which resources might most effectively meet students' needs in preparation for high school math.
3. Research math standards and expectations for first year high school students at schools frequently attended by DWS graduates.
4. Thoughtfully integrate standardized test prep strategies and concepts necessary to meet the challenges of high school level math in middle school mathematics lessons starting with 6th grade.

Metrics:

1. Review plan to determine best strategy within one year - may include support from a consultant. If yes, move forward with appropriate funding and support from personnel. If yes, position is filled when strong candidate comes forward (we cannot predict how soon this will occur).
2. Within 2-3 years, define and document standards for our school that are based on research. This will include updating the scope and sequence.
3. Integrate new strategies within four years. Track level of preparation for 8th grade students over 10 years.
4. Publish revised curriculum in 3 years and evaluate new curriculum in 5 years.

Budget:

Cost of new hiring consultant or additional faculty.



2. Improve the school's connection to surrounding metro-Detroit communities by inviting groups and individuals to DWS to support the development of students' skills in technology, science and engineering.

Findings:

DWS needs to form closer connections with the wider community to better access available resources.

Pathways:

1. Compile a resource document for parents that provides a directory of organizations and individuals that can be sought out when students require individual support in math and science. This resource could also include standardized test preparation resources.
2. Research and review potential community partners (organizations and individuals) that may offer support and special programs to middle school students in math, science and technology.
3. Develop a list of organizations and individuals in the community that students and teachers may contact for support on special projects (8th grade projects, community and environmental projects, art and technology).

Metrics:

1. Compiled resource document available to parents within one year.
2. Compiled document available to school community within two years.
3. Select 2-3 organizations or individuals to work with in 2021; review new programs in 2022.

Budget:

Minimal - printing costs, volunteer and staff time

3. Develop consistent systems for grading and evaluations across all subject areas.

Findings:

Parents requested high priority for consistency in grading and evaluations.

Pathways to Strategies:

1. Reflect upon Waldorf education principles in considering the best methods for grading students.
2. Work with teachers to agree upon and clearly define a more consistent system for grading and student evaluations.

3. Update student code of conduct.
4. Evaluate the use of standardized testing at middle school entrance to capture progress in prior academic skill development.

Metrics:

1. More clearly define grading strategies within two years.
2. Teachers and students will attain a clear understanding of grading and evaluation systems once they are defined.
3. Establish new/revised/clarified grading system in the third year.

Budget:

Staff time and purchase of materials to assist with the review and evaluation materials.

4. Increase professional development opportunities for faculty and staff to more effectively support students' educational, emotional, social, and developmental needs.

Findings:

Teachers require additional support services to meet growing student needs implicit with larger student enrollment.

Pathways:

1. Training in emotional support as well as learning differences and challenges for faculty and staff.
2. Research professional development opportunities outside of the Waldorf community.
3. Expand Educational Support Program providing additional assessment, remedial and tutorial support for students in need.

Metrics:

1. Teachers and staff will receive more support in working with students that face emotional and learning difficulties more effectively.
2. Publish plan to increase professional development opportunities and report on efforts by the end of the second year.
3. Implement increases staffing or other effective avenues for assessment, remedial and tutorial support for students in need.

Budget:

Financial resources for staff support training and to expand Educational Support staffing.

5. Expand parent/community education programs to support the school community in developing a clear sense of Waldorf education.

Findings:

The parent body is a critical part of the functions, health and continuity of the Detroit Waldorf School community. While survey responses indicate strong support for teachers and staff, pedagogy and growth of the school, it is also evident that rapid growth of the school's student population may have resulted in fewer opportunities for close parent connections. Institutional complexities should not limit parent involvement or understanding of the foundational principles under which the school operates and thrives.

Pathways:

1. Provide forums for parents to learn about the curriculum and philosophy of Waldorf education.
2. Offer more opportunities for parents to experience our educational programs.
3. Create new literature that uses accessible language to speak to Steiner's philosophy and the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America's (AWSNA) principles.
4. Gather information related to supporting students in their transition to public and private high schools outside of the Waldorf community.

Metrics:

1. Parents and the wider school community will develop a firm understanding of Waldorf principles and pedagogy.
2. Propose potential new parent enrichment programs within one year; move forward with planning for new programs in second year.
3. New literature in process by second year.
4. Compile research over two years - develop document for parents and students in second year.

Budget:

Volunteers, literature design and printing, staff time for research and presentations, costs associated with programs for parents.

6. Continue to diversify pedagogy and community events to reflect the growing cultural diversity of the student body.

Findings:

As encouraging cultural diversity continues to be a desired goal for all students and staff, teaching methods and curriculum must also be examined and updated to reflect a diverse, connected and involved DWS community.

Pathways:

1. Ongoing faculty study on the issues of cultural diversity and inclusion, and continued reflection on cultural groups that are not represented in our curriculum. Utilize the existing faculty that have successfully integrated cultural diversity into their curriculum to expand to all grade levels and subjects.
2. Review and revision of DWS festival cycle to incorporate opportunities for greater cultural diversity.
3. Gather feedback from families from underrepresented cultural groups about what changes they would like to see in the curriculum and programs.
4. Gather feedback from students and alumni about new approaches to diversify the curriculum.

Metrics:

1. Students at DWS will feel that their cultural identities are clearly and purposefully reflected in their school experience.
2. Publish implementation plan for expanded and culturally diverse events in coordination with the DEI committee.
3. Coordination with the DEI committee results in implementation at staff level (reference Diversity and Inclusion Pillar below for additional detail).

Budget:

Volunteers and staff time.



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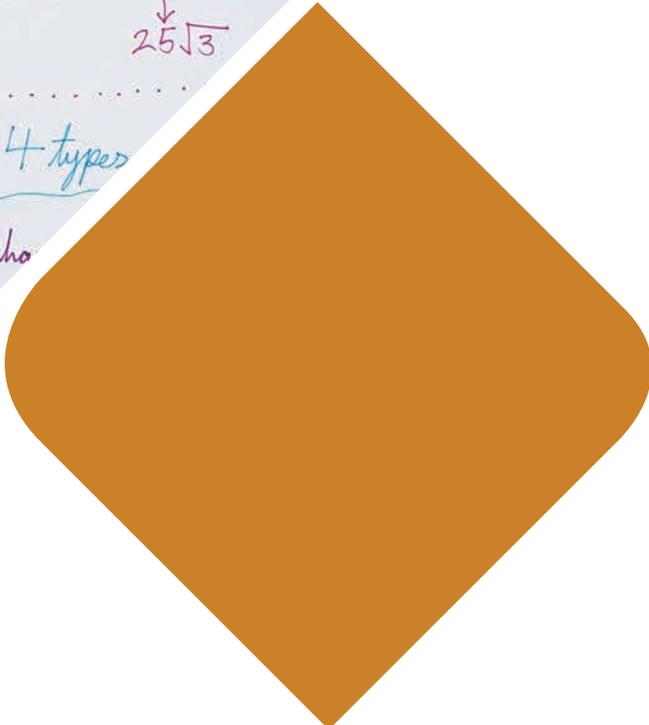
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NEXT STEPS: ACADEMIC AND DEVELOPMENTAL EXCELLENCE

Following the adoption of the Strategic Plan, the Board Strategic Implementation Team will need to take steps to form an Academic and Developmental Excellence Committee (ADEC). This committee will be established within three months of the plan's approval and will hold the responsibility of following the pathways outlined above to implement new strategies and move forward in achieving future goals.

The Team will meet up to twice a month. A call for committee members will be listed on the DWS parent Facebook page, through the Gate Newsletter, and via class emails. Upon forming the committee, roles and responsibilities will be defined with no limits to the length of membership. Roles should include designated members to coordinate meetings and other group communications, to provide regular updates to the Board Strategic Implementation Team, and to provide periodic updates to the community via the school weekly newsletter as needed and to keep the community apprised of the progress, new developments or requests for expertise or volunteers that may be needed.

The core of the team, comprised of a board member, two parents, the grades pedagogical chair, a class teacher, a staff member, and a member of the community will work together to facilitate the scope of the work in each of the six Strategies listed. Each Strategy will have additional members or collaborative requirements, as described in each section, that call upon additional members of the faculty and staff who may have experience, expertise or responsibility in the specific area being addressed. The core will take up each of the six strategies within the following timeline:

1. Develop revised curriculum in Math and Technology studies to reflect new research regarding High School preparation.

- a) Within four months, the ADEC will assess the benefits and possible challenges of employing a math specialist in the middle school. This process will include researching practices in other Waldorf Schools across the country, as well as approaches used in public and private schools in the metro-Detroit area. At the end of 6 months, the committee will come to a decision and provide a written recommendation to the College of Teachers, Board and Administrative Council. If it is decided that a math specialist will be hired, ADEC will need to work with administration and the Personnel Committee to reach out to potential candidates for this position.

- b) Over the next 2 years (2019-2021), ADEC will need to review curriculum resources for middle school math instruction and determine which resources might most effectively meet students' needs in preparation for high school. At the start of the third year (2022), the team will work to revise the indications for mathematics in the DWS scope and sequence and outline new pedagogical strategies and standards. The changes made to the scope and sequence can then be used to form a new curriculum for this area of study. This new curriculum should be formed by the end of third year (2022) and should be assessed/evaluated two years after implementation (2024).
- c) New strategies and standards should be put in place by the start of the fourth year (2023). ADEC will also need to form strategies to assess and document the quality of student preparation upon entering high school over the next 10 years.

2. Improve the school's connection to surrounding metro-Detroit communities by inviting groups and individuals to DWS to support the development of students' skills in technology, science and engineering.

- a) By the end of the first implementation year, ADEC will compile a resource document for parents that provides a directory of organizations and individuals that can be sought out when students require individual support in math and science. This resource may also include standardized test preparation resources.
- b) In the first year, ADEC will research and review potential community partners (organizations and individuals) that may offer support and special programs to middle school students and math, science and technology. The committee should then aim to compile a formal document that may be available to the school community by the end of 2021.
- c) Once the above document is compiled, ADEC will work with the College of Teachers and middle school teachers in particular to select 2-3 organizations to work with in 2021. A review of these new programs will need to occur after one year.

3. Develop consistent systems for grading and evaluations across all subject areas.

- a) ADEC will take time to reflect on Waldorf education principles in considering the best methods for grading middle school students. The committee will then work with class teachers to more clearly define grading systems and strategies within two years. All requirements and standards will need to be clearly communicated to the school community (teachers, administration, parents and students) through formal documentation in the third year.
- b) Once this process is completed, ADEC will take steps to evaluate the possibility of increasing standardized test practices in the middle school to capture progress in prior academic skill development. These evaluations will need to continue to occur on an ongoing basis.
- c) ADEC will also make an effort to consider potential updates to the student code of conduct. Updates should be completed by the end of the second year (2021).

4. Increase professional development opportunities for faculty and staff to more effectively support students' educational, emotional, social, and developmental needs.

- a) By the end of the first year, ADEC will devise a strategic plan for professional development training for teachers and staff that relates directly to supporting students emotionally and working with learning differences and diversity among students in every classroom. This plan will need to be reported to the school community at the start of the second year, with a clear timeline for implementation. A critical review of the plan and implementation will follow.
- b) By the start of the fifth year, ADEC will provide clear recommendations and strategies for expanding the DWS Educational Support Program to include additional assessments, remedial and tutorial support for students in need.

5. Expand parent and community education programs to support the school community in developing a clear sense of Waldorf education.

- a) ADEC will dedicate time in the first 6 months to assessing the needs of the school community as it relates to this issue.
- b) At the end of the first year, ADEC will propose potential new parent enrichment programs based on assessments and research. Plans for new programming should continue in the second year.
- c) ADEC will also work to create or revise educational materials for the school community. The committee may seek a consultant to conduct a comparative analysis of materials used in other independent schools. A plan for new literature to be in process by the end of the second year.

6. Continue to diversify pedagogy and community events to reflect the growing cultural diversity in the student body.

- a) ADEC will aim to continue to investigate effective strategies for promoting diversity and culture inclusion as it relates to the school's curriculum and pedagogy over the course of the first year. This will require continued and sustained dialogue with all community members. Conversations with students, parents, faculty and new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee will be especially important. As the ADEC continues to reflect on this issue, recommendations and strategies will need to be outlined and communicated to the wider community. An implementation plan for expanded diversity in pedagogy and school events will be in process by the end of the second year.
- b) Members of ADEC may also work in collaboration with the Pedagogical Committee to create a plan for faculty studies related to this issue. This collaborative work will need to take place on a continuous basis.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Context:

Detroit Waldorf School has a history of pursuing diversity, equity and inclusion, with an intent to keep Waldorf education accessible to all children and families. While the current DWS community leads other Waldorf schools in its diversity, the strategic planning process revealed a need, desire and opportunity to do more to bring accountability and success to this important goal.

The strategic planning committee noticed that there was great interest from parents and students in creating a more inclusive school community, where all people feel welcome and supported. The school is known for creating a strong sense of belonging among students, and yet there are great opportunities to bring more intentional focus to this value across the curriculum and social activities. Specific feedback received during the strategic planning process included a call for maintaining a racially and ethnically diverse faculty, staff and student body; revisiting school festivals to ensure that they reflect the diversity of the school, and supporting and retaining students who come from diverse backgrounds.

Additionally, the strategic planning committee reviewed data that revealed opportunities to explore new diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. Of note was the feedback received from the eighth grade students regarding perceived or real preferential treatment of certain students, and conversely, a lack of clarity in disciplinary measures that extend to the full student body. As the school continues to grow, and as the city of Detroit evolves, it is important to recognize the need for consistent policies. DWS must be intentional in its efforts to be diverse, equitable and inclusive.

The goals and strategies highlighted below provide a roadmap for an ongoing journey in ensuring that DWS is a diverse, equitable and inclusive school community. It is likely that the school can meet these goals within 1-2 years. It will then need to continue its progress by advancing new initiatives for year three and beyond. By nature of the fact that diversity, equity and inclusion goals are based on an ever-changing student body, this set of goals will evolve in response to shifts in the school demographics.

Spearheaded by a newly formed, standing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, their goal and future vision follow.



Goal:

Strengthen the diversity of the school community to reflect a wide range of cultures and traditions within faculty, students, and community connections.

Future Vision:

- A diverse DWS community that is welcoming and celebrates, nurtures and supports all; and
- An established and active DWS Equity, Diversity and Inclusion committee that sets goals, develops work plans and monitors progress to ensure an equitable, diverse and inclusive community.

This vision will be accomplished through the following near-term and long term strategies:

Strategies:

1. Create a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, to lead new school initiatives that strengthen values and action.
2. Revise hiring practices and create a specific plan to recruit more faculty, staff and board members from underrepresented groups.
3. Revise outreach and enrollment policies to match goals for diversity, equity and inclusion.
4. Ensure that a diverse student body is reflected in the curriculum, festivals and activities.

RECOMMENDED PATHWAYS TO STRATEGIES

- 1. Create a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee a pillar of the Board Strategic Plan Implementation Team that consists of parents, teachers, students and staff charged with creating DEI goals.**

Findings:

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are central to achieving the stated mission of DWS. While there is an understanding that these concepts and values are interwoven throughout the school community, more attention and intentional planning needs to be done to strengthen these areas. Due to DWS's decentralized structure, a standing committee is needed to maintain progress in diversity, equity and inclusion.

Pathways:

1. Charter the DEI committee with the following membership structure: a) two chairs to include one existing DWS board member and one parent; b) teachers, to include at least one from the College; c) parents; d) students; and e) staff.
2. This broad committee membership will create a chartering document to formalize how it will meet its goals and engage with the larger school community.
3. The group's charge will be to create pathways and implement action plans to reach Diversity, Equity and Inclusion goals for the school year.
4. The committee will hold a debrief meeting to explore the data collected from the strategic plan process, and determine approaches to meeting all goals.
5. It will seek peer learning opportunities that will glean lessons from colleagues at other Waldorf schools and independent schools.

Metrics:

1. DEI committee launches in May 2019.
2. A DEI committee chartering document will be drafted and board approved by December 2019.
3. June 2019 planning meeting to finalize action plan for the 2019 - 2020 school year.
4. DEI committee will hold a debrief meeting to include data review in June 2019.
5. DEI committee will create a document identifying opportunities developed from colleagues by September 2019.

Budget:

Cost of committee members and possibly others to attend DEI conference or training session, and volunteer hours.

2. Update hiring practices and create a specific plan to recruit and retain an increased number of faculty, staff and board members from underrepresented groups.

Findings:

As positions open for faculty, staff and board members, one component of DWS's success will be a commitment to attracting, hiring and retaining people from underrepresented backgrounds.



Pathways:

1. DEI committee to interview partner Waldorf schools and other independent schools who have been successful in reaching this goal, in order to gather insights into best practices and ways to set achievable goals.
2. DEI committee to propose new draft policy of hiring practices for teachers and staff, and recruitment practices for board members and volunteers, to be approved by the DWS College and board.
3. DWS faculty and staff will receive training in the implementation of the new policy, to ensure that it meets the intended purpose.

Metrics:

By Fall of 2019, DWS implements new hiring process and recruitment process that contributes to a 25% increase in diversity across staff, teachers and students.

Budget:

Volunteer hours.

3. Revise outreach and enrollment policies to match goals for diversity, equity and inclusion.

Findings:

As students matriculate or withdraw, it is important to maintain a standard of diversity across the students and families that are targeted and invited to enroll.

Pathways:

1. DEI committee to interview partner Waldorf schools and other independent schools who have been successful in establishing and maintaining diversity-focused enrollment goals, in order to gather insights into best practices and ways to set achievable goals.
2. DEI committee to propose new draft enrollment policy to be approved by the DWS College and Board.
3. DWS faculty and staff will receive training in the implementation of the new policy, to ensure that it meets the intended purpose.

Metrics:

1. By Fall of 2019 DEI Committee helps formulate and draft a new enrollment policy that elevates diversity in enrollment.

2. By Fall of 2019, DWS implements new enrollment policy that contributes to a 25% increase in diversity across students population.
3. In 2020, DEI Committee will conduct diversity-focussed training for DWS faculty, staff and board members.

Budget:

Volunteers.

4. Ensure that a more diverse student body is reflected in DWS curriculum, festivals and activities.

Findings:

As increased cultural diversity continues to be a desired goal expressed by parents, students and staff; teaching methods and curriculum must also be examined and updated to reflect a diverse, connected and involved DWS community.

Pathways to Strategies:

1. Partner with the College of Teachers to enhance existing offerings to bring school curriculum, festivals and activities into alignment with diversity, equity and inclusion values.
2. DEI committee to interview partner Waldorf schools to understand Waldorf education best practices on this topic.
3. DEI Committee to partner closely with the College of Teachers to identify near-term solutions that can be achieved in the 2019-2020 school year.

Metrics:

By December 2019, DWS has a plan to develop a diverse, equitable and inclusive range of festivals and activities across the curriculum and all programs.

Budget:

Volunteers.



NEXT STEPS: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

The development of a new, standing committee is foundational to bringing diversity, equity and inclusion to the forefront of all that we do at DWS. The concept of forming a new committee emerged from the strategic planning committee's imperative that this work is necessary and critical, especially given the political and socioeconomic changes in the city and region. We know that DWS is a welcoming school environment, and the new committee should work to intentionally impact all relevant school policies so that it continues to be so.

As listed in the previous "Pathways" section, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee plans to launch in May 2019 with enthusiasm, optimism and action. It will be necessary to identify a range of community members to serve on this committee, so that the work will not diminish or wane during the school year.

There are two existing strategic planning committee members who are very interested in this issue area, and have worked on this aspect of the strategic plan throughout the process. They propose that the DWS board will allow them to step into the co-chair role to make a smooth transition of knowledge sharing between the two committees.

Ultimately, the DEI Committee will meet the stated goals that will prepare the school community for increased diversity, equity and inclusion in the 2019-2020 school year and beyond. The initial steps for all near-term goals are as follows.

April 2019

The DEI co-chairs will issue an open call for committee members, and bring together one board member, two faculty, two students, two parents and one staff person. The call for committee members will be listed on the DWS parent Facebook page, Through the Gate newsletter, and by class leader emails. The committee will ask people to make a two-year volunteer commitment so that less time will have to be spent revisiting data and research to set imperatives.

May 2019

The DEI Committee will form and hold its first meeting to draft a committee charter, which will include roles, responsibilities, communications, and meeting cadence. It will submit the charter to the DWS board for approval.

The committee will research best practices, cull existing data, and gather community support. It will contact AWSNA to identify three Waldorf schools that are excelling in their diversity, equity and inclusion work, and will forge a relationship with those schools. The hope is to have an information exchange that can help DWS advance its work thoughtfully, and complement the ideals of Waldorf education.

The DEI Committee also will explore other local independent schools that are accomplished in this area of work. It is likely that a cross-school peer learning group does not currently exist. The DEI Committee believes that it would be helpful to invite a number of DEI administrators from local independent schools to share their learnings during an in-person meeting.

The committee will aim to use Skype or Zoom technology to connect with learning partners long distance.

June 2019

The committee will meet to develop an action plan for the 2019-2020 school year and present it to the DWS board for approval. This will require the following interim steps: to distribute the action plan by email to the College of Teachers, AdCo, and then prepare revisions. Once the action plan is approved, the committee will set its meeting schedule for the fall and 2019-2020 school year.

September 2019

The committee will reconvene to launch the action plan. The goal will be to design and implement the policies that are listed in this strategic plan. The committee will also find other opportunities to strengthen the school's diversity, equity and inclusion strategy, and this will be the time of year for the committee to scope out the action steps.

The committee will spend the fall 2019 semester developing new recruitment and enrollment policies and new hiring policies. It will work closely with the DWS College and board to finalize all planning.

The committee will also make recommendations to the College of Teachers to redesign festivals and celebration activities across the school curriculum. It is likely that the faculty will already have distinct and well prepared plans for this area of work, and so the committee will look to assist with any helpful research to support their planning.

December 2019

New recruitment and enrollment policies, and new hiring policies will be announced at this time. The committee will work with the DWS board and AdCo to ensure that there is training for faculty and staff who will need to implement these new plans.

New approaches to festivals and other celebration activities will be embedded into the curriculum. The College of Teachers will determine the content and implementation of this aspect of the work.

January 2020

The committee will develop a progress report that will give the DWS board and community a clear sense of the impact to date and the next steps for 2020. This will also be an opportunity for the committee to assess whether its existing structure allows it to meet its goals, and whether there are opportunities to bring new ideas into the work.



DETROIT WALDORF SCHOOL FUTURE EXPANSION

Context:

Detroit Waldorf School is fortunate to be housed in a culturally significant school building sited in a naturally landscaped campus in the heart of Detroit; factors that are well-suited to the school's pedagogy, image, and mission. However, the existing facility is near its maximum utilization at the very time that growth is continuing at an unprecedented level. Concurrently, the growth of the Early Childhood Center (ECC) has exceeded the limits of current space and teacher capacity resulting in waiting lists that represent lost potential revenue and student matriculation to older grades. Surveys and focus groups also indicate strong support from parents in exploring the feasibility of adding a high school curriculum. An expanded student population, combined with potential growth in ECC or high school capacity, will require a stable source of additional Waldorf teachers.

Changing enrollment demand has also been generated by the recent growth of younger families with children moving to adjacent neighborhoods, and also the loss of other Waldorf and/or independent schools in the region. Lastly, the opportunity for expansion is no longer limited to the existing site as vacant land and underutilized facilities in the immediate area may offer several opportunities for expansion or adaptive reuse of older spaces. In anticipation of such expansion, in 2018 the school entered into a purchase agreement with the Detroit Land Bank Authority to acquire vacant lots on Fischer Street adjacent to the school parking lot. The city's expectations for developing these sites will also influence this critical planning process.

Realizing the long-term impact that growth can have on the future sustainability of DWS the Future Expansion Strategies are focused on accomplishing the goal of growth without compromising the school and upholding an overall goal to expand wisely.

Goal:

Maintain, improve and leverage the DWS facilities as required to accommodate new programs and growth.

Future Vision:

- DWS expansion plans catalyze a new model for school and community partnerships in the region.
- All DWS facilities reflect the school's commitment to the environment and nurturing children.
- DWS is prepared for future fluctuations in student enrollment through flexible space utilization and connections to the greater Detroit community.

Strategies:

1. Explore the feasibility of expanding the school to offer a Detroit Waldorf School education to a growing number of families.
2. Identify community and civic partners to maximize opportunities for capital funding, programming and space utilization.
3. Leverage existing spaces to create additional revenue and/or community partnerships.
4. Explore opportunities to reinstate Waldorf teacher education training to sustain and enable the capacity to expand.
5. Immediately activate the vacant Fischer Street lots with a land-based use that supports and enhances the DWS curriculum.

Recommended Pathways to Strategies:

- 1. Explore the feasibility of expanding the school to offer a Detroit Waldorf School education to a growing number of families.**

Findings:

Multiple indicators of growth for the school suggest that the current growth rate will continue to climb as the parent/child classes fill to capacity and all grade levels continue to expand to unprecedented levels. It is clear from parent surveys that there is a strong demand to expand the school as a means to provide increased access for additional families and provide continuity in Detroit-based Waldorf Education through high school. DWS must, however, improve and expand space without compromising the existing historic building and beautiful natural setting of the existing facility which is central to the school's experience. A continued commitment to the city of Detroit is also fundamental. A careful assessment of the demand for space in relation to the financial ramifications must be explored to assure that our education programs can be expanded without compromising the future viability of the school.

Pathways:

1. Establish Space Planning & Development Committee (SPDC) to include parents, staff and professionals in the fields of architecture, real estate development, finance, and planning.
2. Complete Needs Assessment/Demand Analysis.
3. Review utilization of Existing facilities.
4. Collect staffing, space and programmatic requirements for ECC and/or High School.
5. Commission an architectural feasibility study and a marketability study.

Metrics:

1. By Summer 2019, committee has been formed.
2. Needs Assessment and Demand Analysis studies complete for both ECC and high school options.
3. Existing space, needs and demands are documented.
4. By December 2019, review study results and recommend ECC and/ or High School expansion and commission architectural study.
5. By mid 2020 feasibility studies are complete and capital campaign is launched aligned with the beginning of the 2020-21 academic year.

Budget:

Cost of needs assessment/demand analysis studies, architectural feasibility and market studies and capital campaign analysis

2. Identify community and civic partners to maximize opportunities for capital funding, programming and space utilization.

Findings:

DWS should not assume full responsibility for development or construction of a new or adaptively reused facility without first exploring the capacity of multiple community resources to determine possible synergies and partnerships. While the future of the Fischer lots is being planned, there may be an opportunity to reuse or partner with an existing nearby facility to accommodate immediate expansion. Such identification and reuse of an interim facility may be included as an option in various permanent expansion studies outlined in Strategy #1.

Pathways:

1. Schedule meetings with potential partners and resources including Detroit Land Bank Authority, Detroit Public Schools Community District, Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, Detroit Building Authority, Detroit Planning Department and others to be identified.
2. Work with the College of Teachers to identify space requirements or future needs for existing and proposed new curricula.
3. Incorporate findings into the architectural feasibility and marketability studies.
4. Establish Space Planning & Development Committee (See Strategy #1 above).
5. Research and suggest possible adaptable buildings and space into the feasibility study cited in Strategy #1.

Metrics:

1. By mid 2019, meetings with partners and resources are underway and new community and civic partners are identified.
2. By Fall 2019, adaptable buildings or potential sites are vetted and potentially included in architectural feasibility and marketability studies per Strategy #1.

Budget:

Volunteer hours and staff time.

3. Leverage existing space to create additional revenue and/or community partnerships.

Findings:

The current facility could provide more revenue if offered for community partnership uses to attract greater after school programming and weekend use.

Pathways:

1. Create a market strategy for effectively leasing space including issues of insurance, security and maintenance.
2. Communicate availability of space to community groups, institutions, and businesses or other groups.
3. Review utilization of existing facilities (See Strategy #1).
4. Identify rooms, areas or outdoor spaces that could generate additional revenue without impacting school programming.
5. Establish Space Planning & Development Committee (See Strategy #1).

Metrics:

1. By 2020, leasing prototype agreements are in place.
2. By 2020, partnerships are established.

Budget:

Legal and marketing expertise, leasing contractor.

4. Explore opportunities to reinstate Waldorf teacher education training to sustain and enable the capacity to expand.

Findings:

Expanding the DWS school curriculum in any capacity will require additional Waldorf trained and certified instructors, which at this time, are limited in this region. DWS could host trainings during summer months.

Pathways:

1. Establish Space Planning Committee (See Strategy #1).
2. Work with faculty to determine space needs for the teaching program; and costs to run and staff a program.
3. Incorporate recommendations into Community Partnerships feasibility study (#3 above).

Metrics:

By the end of 2019, faculty input has been incorporated into all feasibility studies.

Budget:

Volunteer and staff time.

5. Immediately activate the vacant Fischer Road lots with a land-based use that supports and enhances DWS curriculum.

Findings:

The vacant lots on Fischer Street adjacent to Quietland and the DWS parking lots were acquired from the Detroit Land Bank Authority and will require an action plan with the DLBA to remain in compliance with the sale of land. While these lots provide an opportunity to increase the physical space requirements for growth, planning is required to assure the highest and best use plan for ventures that reflect the Waldorf curriculum, values and environmental standards.

Pathways:

1. Establish the Space Planning & Development Committee (See #1 above).
2. Develop a strategy with the faculty to identify possible internal programming for the lots to enhance curriculum.

3. Create a funding or volunteer strategy to raise funds for immediate improvements, such as fencing or other temporary uses.
4. Identify potential community partners (Eastern Market, urban farmers, etc.,) to develop feasible strategies for temporary or permanent uses.

Metrics:

1. The Fischer lots are productively occupied by the end of Summer 2019.
2. Permanent plans for the Fischer lots are developed in tandem with expansion planning for 2020 plans.

Budget:

Funding for temporary land improvements.



NEXT STEPS: DWS FUTURE EXPANSION

Central to the satisfactory implementation of the Future Expansion portion of the Strategic Plan is formation of the Space Planning & Development Committee (SPDC). This team of Waldorf stakeholders will seek to include architects, real estate developers, facility managers, finance professionals, marketers, landscape architects and others experienced in the analysis, operation, funding and expansion of facilities and grounds, as well as faculty and staff.

Formation of the SPDC will occur in early April 2019 to coincide with the release of the Strategic Plan. Potential members will be recruited via direct outreach to parents, DWS social media, newsletters, and other communication strategies. In addition to the professionals and DWS staff members with specific areas of expertise needed to complete the different aspects and phases of the SPDC's work, the committee will include representation from the board, faculty, college, staff and parents. As soon as it is formed, SPDC must immediately begin to work with building management and faculty to document existing facilities and urgent needs. Maintenance issues, projects already in the pipeline, faculty needs, and pedagogical changes envisioned by this strategic plan must all be taken into account. Given the urgency of the need to create and sustain momentum and the need to gather data, make decisions, and chart a development path, the SPDC should be constituted with a membership committed to weekly meetings through at least the end of 2019.

During late spring and summer 2019, the SPDC should complete a needs assessment and demands analysis confirming the apparent increase in enrollment, catchment area for new enrollment, polling of potential new DWS families and other studies or activities intended to provide the SPDC hard data concerning projected enrollment in additional programs, should they be developed. Such studies may require outsourcing to competent professional consultants depending on expertise among SPDC's member body.

At the same time SPDC will explore potential short term expansion options that may be found in the adaptive reuse of nearby vacant buildings or underused facilities. Such opportunities, dependent upon the review of the Committee as other data comes in, may become short-term expansion options allowing immediate expansion of program while a longer capital campaign is underway. Alternatively, nearby facilities may be studied as an option to fulfill permanent plans for additional space in lieu of or in addition to development on the Fischer lots.

During this same period, and extending into early fall of 2019, the SPDC should compile initial staffing, space, and programmatic requirements for an expanded ECC or high school, which will serve as the baseline data for the

commission of an architectural feasibility study. The SPDC will concurrently review the results of needs assessment, demand analysis, and potentially commission other financial or marketing studies to arrive at a decision on whether to pursue expansion of the ECC, a high school or both. Such expansion may be multifaceted and occur in stages; e.g., expansion of the ECC may be recommended to occur within our current building, creating a corresponding need to house some upper grades in a new or expanded facility that could offer programming, spaces and equipment that are appropriate for upper grades. Such a decision will be reviewed and approved by the Board and validated through community meetings among the greater DWS community.

The SPDC would also be tasked with accommodation of any seasonal or permanent Waldorf Teacher Training program. Such a program should be integrated into all studies concerning the programming and assignment of spaces in new or existing facilities. Given the critical importance of establishing and cultivating a pipeline of well-trained teachers for an expanded student program, any space requirements for such training should be one of the factors in the selection of the appropriate development path.

By the end of 2019, the SPDC is expected to have enough data and information to chart a development path and begin the process of development. Along with the creation of a funding model, the SPDC should commission an architectural feasibility study from an architect experienced in historic buildings, urban environments, and K-12/early childhood school design, along with sensitivity to environmental, aesthetic and pedagogical elements sought by a Waldorf school. The goals and expected deliverables of an architectural feasibility study should include, but not be limited to:

- A technical assessment of the current building's architectural, structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, including fire suppression and alarm.
- Full building code, zoning, historic preservation, landscape, civil, and ADA analysis; including requirements and recommendations for our existing facilities.
- Similar technical assessment and code analyses of any adaptive reuse candidates identified by the SPDC as potential long term solutions as an ECC or high school.
- An architectural programming component that incorporates SPDC, faculty, staff, parent and administrative input into a formal facilities program document that lists all needed spaces, areas, adjacencies, and occupancies necessary to fulfill an expanded program for current and future uses.
- A conceptual plan based on the technical assessment, code analysis, and facilities program that incorporates an expanded ECC and/or high school curriculum into the already existing curriculum, with respect to the current building, a possible new building on the Fischer Lots, or any existing adaptively reused buildings identified by the SPDC.
- A conceptual set of plans, renderings, and elevations suitable for inclusion in marketing or capital campaign materials.
- A conceptual timeline illustrating phases of work coordinated with expected capital campaign or expansion plans.

- A conceptual cost model incorporating construction phases and annual escalation that is based directly on the conceptual plans and timeline.

In tandem with an architectural feasibility study, the SPDC should investigate the availability of public, private, or foundation-based grants or loans that may support development plans. Review of tax credit programs, brownfield redevelopment programs, and other programs to help defray costs should be undertaken with assistance from the city, state, or private consultants.

As part of the facilities analysis, the SPDC should be cognizant of the opportunity to leverage any current DWS spaces for revenue purposes or in potential support of evolving community partnerships. In particular, expanded opportunity to lease or use space for community meetings or use by compatible groups, organizations, or businesses during the evenings, on weekends, or during recess periods should be studied. This strategy is meant to integrate DWS even more fully into the community, earn revenue to support the core mission, cultivate potential capital campaign relationships and activate opportunities for additional community partnerships that may help us fulfill other goals of the Strategic Plan. Such alternate use of space, if possible, should not conflict with the already urgent need to expand current teaching and learning spaces in support of our primary mission.

By summer 2020, it is expected that conceptual and feasibility studies will be complete. The SPDC will work with the DWS Board to launch a capital campaign effort in fall 2020 based on the cost model and development plan for the school. Based on the success of the campaign or the availability of early committed funds or loans, it is recommended that a detailed design process move forward in tandem with the capital campaign, allowing a set of formal architectural and engineering construction plans to be ready by such time that funding allows construction to commence. Based on timeframe, there may be an opportunity to gain additional publicity, community support, and funding streams by hosting a public design competition for the new facility, from which the winning design could be awarded the construction design contract.

Depending on the chosen development path, a detailed design process may be expected to take between 9-12 months, to be complete by fall 2021. Should funding be in place immediately, construction and ground-breaking for a new facility (or rehabilitation of an existing building) could proceed as early as the spring 2022 construction season. Dependent on the size and complexity of a new facility, and the continued success and availability of a funding campaign, it is conceivable that a new building could be ready for use by academic year 2023-2024, concluding the period of this Strategic Plan.

While the above process is ongoing, the Strategic Planning Committee determined that it is important to show positive activity occurring at the Fischer Lots. Such activation would be consistent with improving and developing relationships with the City, its Land Bank and our community. The Strategic Plan thus recommends that the

SPDC, on a separate track, work in early 2019 to immediately identify and implement one or more appropriate uses for the Fischer Lots. Such uses should be compatible with the community, with Waldorf philosophy and curriculum and with the active cooperation of our parents and stakeholders. At a minimum, it is recommended that the SPDC work with the Board to attractively fence and plant the parcels similar in character to our existing site and include them in any Building & Grounds volunteer days. It is further recommended that the parcels be actively used by students through a potential cross-alley connection to Quietland. Such use may include gardening, sporting fields, or other activities that supplement, support or enhance our curriculum. Outreach to our parent community should be conducted through multiple channels, including direct contact, social media, newsletters, and mailings.





FINANCIAL STRENGTH AND SECURITY

Context:

Providing quality education is a challenging task in both the public and private levels and is especially challenging in the private sector for independent schools like DWS. Having survived a difficult economic climate within the past ten years, DWS is now experiencing historic enrollment numbers, operating at capacity with over 250 students. With this increase in enrollment, and growing interest in the importance of a Steiner pedagogy, new challenges inevitably arise. DWS is now faced with a need to expand in physical space, faculty and staff, while remaining devoted to supporting high quality programs and curriculum.

Tuition and fees make up a large portion of the working budget. It is not enough to fully meet the range of existing, emerging or long-term needs. Additional funding sources are needed to make up the difference and to meet the immediate and long-term challenges of growth and sustainability. It is important to the DWS community that we maintain the AWSNA Principles for Waldorf Schools that guide our beloved school, and to expand and grow without losing the Steiner educational philosophy that brings us together. In order to meet the demands of growth and sustainability, we need to increase our financial strength and security. We are proposing a review of the current revenue streams and development of new mechanisms and strategies to build a basis to support the top priorities identified in the strategic planning process.

Goal:

Expand the DWS revenue model to accommodate current and future needs.

Future Vision:

- Development of and on-going support for 100% alumni participation in time, talent and treasure.
- Extended community partnerships in place to engage and cultivate the wealth, wisdom and workers required to support a thriving school community.
- Implementation of a detailed strategy to leverage all resources at hand with new sources of revenue to strengthen and sustain future security.

Strategies:

1. Increase teacher and staff retention rates by expanding compensation and benefits.
2. Ensure the financial viability of the Accessible Tuition for All (ATA) program through assessment and pursuit of new opportunities to sustain the program.
3. Support development of a stratified funding system that incorporates diversified funding mechanisms that fit into overall financial strategies.
4. Create a new, expanded development plan.
5. Assure financial health to allow for a thriving school while enhancing pedagogy and programming to support students, families and staff.

1. Increase teacher and staff retention rates by expanding compensation and benefits.

Findings:

In order to support the hiring, retention and growth of qualified staff it is critical that teachers and staff be better compensated.

Pathways:

1. Research and compare teacher and staff credentials and compensation rates at comparable Waldorf/Steiner schools, Detroit Public and area private schools. Collaborate with staff on current plans already in development in this area.
2. Based on best practices, recommend increments of increase or compensation packages that are competitive and sustainable, along with a timeline for implementation.

Metrics:

1. Research and evaluation to be completed within 1 year.
2. Evaluation to include comparative description of levels of compensation and range and types of benefits, as well as any qualifying credentials associated with employment or related to compensation and benefits.
3. Development of recommendations for a graduated plan that includes compensation rates and benefits package, and associated credentials, and a timeline for implementation for all faculty and staff.
4. Findings report, and recommendations to be created in collaboration with and submitted to appropriate committees for consideration and further development. Committees to include, Personnel, College, Administrative Council, In-House Finance and Board Finance.

Budget:

Volunteers for research projects and standing committee time.

2. Ensure the financial viability of the Accessible Tuition for All (ATA) program through assessment and pursuit of new opportunities for school funding.

Findings:

The Accessible Tuition for All (ATA) program is highly valued by parents and staff as a source for creating income diversity at DWS. There is however, confusion and a lack of information about the overall program. There is also significant paperwork, time, labor and training required that impact the operation of the program, particularly when the school is operating at full capacity.

Pathways:

1. Develop a working team designated to design and implement clear, accessible, written information on the policies and procedures for the ATA.
2. Educate the DWS community about the ATA program.
3. Develop steps to streamline the process of the ATA program for the families requesting to participate and to lessen the labor intensity of managing and running the program.
4. Share guidelines and policies governing the ATA program operation. Review and assess annually for effectiveness and approval by the governing board.

Metrics:

1. Within one year establish a working team to produce written informational materials for ATA.
2. Develop plan for community education opportunities once the informational material is finalized.
3. Concurrent with the development of informational materials, review and streamline the application process.
4. Compile the current guidelines and policies governing ATA.
5. Establish an annual review of the guidelines, policies, and program operations.
6. Reports and other materials to be created with implementation committee members in collaboration with members of relevant standing committees and submitted to appropriate committees for consideration and further development. Committees to include, AdCo, College, ATA committee, In-House Finance and Board Finance.

Budget:

Volunteer committee in collaboration with College, ATA committee, In-House Finance.

DWS budget may be impacted by changes in the ATA plan.

3. Support development of a stratified funding system that incorporates diversified funding mechanisms that fit into overall financial strategies.

Findings:

It is important to be able to offer Waldorf education to anyone who seeks it. This value is core to DWS and supports a diversified student body. In order to maintain stability and accommodate growth, new outside funding sources will need to be identified. Grants will be needed to support the budget impact of ATA adjusted tuition and fees. This will expand the capacity of the budget to more fully and comprehensively meet the true cost of operations and funnel additional monies to needed areas of the school, i.e., salaries and grounds improvements.

Pathways:

1. Team devised of Development, Finance and Board, and volunteers with knowledge or contacts in this area, will research funding resources that target not only general fundraising, but also scholarship or accessibility grants or other funding for which the school may be eligible that support a diverse student body and goals for increasing diversity.
2. This team will work to seek a balanced finance sheet that reduces dependence on tuition revenue and is also aligned with the overall diversity goals, development strategies and budget priorities.

Metrics:

1. Form a working team by the end of school fiscal year 2018-2019.
2. The following year, 2019-2020 the team will research and recommend an action plan with a timeline to meet targeted strategies and avenues for the following school year and subsequent years as applicable in the overall long-term strategy.

Budget:

The development budget will incorporate funding for expenses related to meetings and development materials, as well as technical database and clerical support for research or donor cultivation activities.

4. Create a new and expanded development plan.

Findings:

A comprehensive development plan is needed to generate new, increased grant revenue and overall fundraising strategies to meet the need to support growth and ensure sustainability, to expand the donor base and cultivate additional long-term giving relationships.

Pathways:

1. Develop short and long-term fundraising strategies and implement them.

- a). Reduce the burden of DWS community fundraising.
- b). Set annual goals.
- c). Create a coordinated plan for Marketing, Advertising, Development and Administration to reduce redundancies.

2. Create an alumni development campaign.

- a). Develop a team dedicated to updating alumni list.
- b). Reach out to alumni for donations and support that utilizes their skills, talents and networks to support financial, development and educational program goals.
- c). Identify and utilize Alumni for speaker series and education events.
- d). Research past levels of financial support provided by alumni and use the results as a benchmark to set annual goals.
- e). Determine annual goals for increasing levels of support based progressive percentage scale for alumni giving.

3. Provide detailed financial report in print and make available online annually.

Metrics:

1. Within one year of the adoption of the Strategic Plan finance strategy and timeline for development and fundraising priorities; implement alumni campaign; create, print and publish financial report that is also available on the school website.

Budget:

Staffing (see below), event or campaign costs to be determined in development plan, along with design and printing costs for financial reports.

5. Assure financial health to allow for a thriving school while enhancing pedagogy and programming to support students, families, and staff.

Findings:

While DWS is currently enjoying its highest level of student enrollment and financial security, the continual need for financial support to expand to its fullest potential will require a development staff to generate grants and implement fundraising strategies and activities to build and sustain the financial health of the school now and into the future.

Pathways:

1. Research current budget sources, uses of funds and ramifications on the annual budget and additional needs to create a new full time development director position and recommendations for the structured implementation of a development director and support staff commensurate with activities.
2. Hire development director to undertake development of a comprehensive development plan including grant writing and capital campaign.
3. Hire development support staff.

Metrics:

1. A proposal for hiring development director and support staff is developed before or by the end of fiscal year 2018-2019.
2. Hire Development director based on research outlined above and within a timeframe that is based on the resources in the current or next year's budget with planning for subsequent years.
3. Include performance metrics for the position of the Director and development department.

Budget:

Cost of annual support of development director position and support staff and new development activities.



FINANCIAL STRENGTH AND SECURITY NEXT STEPS:

A Financial Strength And Security Implementation Team (FSAS) will be established within three months of adoption of the Strategic Plan. A call for committee members will be posted to the DWS parent Facebook page, Through the Gate Newsletter, and via class emails. The FSAS team will be comprised of a designated current Board member, parent of a current student, faculty and a staff member. The FSAS members will create a living charter with roles, responsibilities, and length of membership for adoption and implementation. The FSAS Board member will be responsible for providing monthly updates to the Board of Trustees and College.

The FSAS team will take up each of the 5 strategies within the following timeline:

1. Increase teacher and staff retention rates by expanding compensation and benefits.

- a). Within 6 months after the creation of FSAS, a comprehensive report will be created with recommendations to increase salary and benefits of teachers. The report will include comparisons of the following educational systems: Waldorf/Steiner schools within the United States; the Detroit Public School system and at least 3 surrounding metro Detroit suburban systems. It will also collaborate with the Personnel Committee and the College of Teachers to incorporate plans already in development, education and training criteria specific to Waldorf Schools and DWS.
- b). Within 3 months after the completion of the compensation and benefit comparison, a solid recommendation, including a timeline will be presented to the College, In-House Finance and Board Finance and then the Board of Directors for approval of implementation.

2. Ensure the financial viability of ATA through assessment and pursuit of new opportunities to sustain ATA.

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- a). Within 6 months of the creation of the FSAS, a comprehensive review of DWS Accessible Tuition for All will be conducted and a report of findings prepared for comparison with 2b.
 - b). Concurrent but within 4 months of the establishment of FSAS, research will be conducted and a report generated to compare other non-Waldorf educational systems, and other Waldorf/Steiner schools' student financial assistance programs.
 - c). Within 9 months, proposed modifications, if warranted, to ATA will be presented for approval to the College, In-House and Board Finance.
 - d). Within 18 months, a DWS ATA written policy and timeline for implementation based on recommendations generated through the review process will be created. Staff and ATA volunteer training and updates will be implemented and a schedule for education programs for the community will be planned.

3. Support development of a stratified funding system that incorporates diversified funding mechanisms that fit into overall financial strategies.

- a). Within 3 months of Strategic Plan adoption the FSAS will begin to explore new revenue sources, which will include community foundations, grants and ongoing fundraisers.
- b). Within 6 months report on results of research for short-term revenue sources and long term strategies, next steps and future activities.

4. Create a new, expanded development plan.

- a). Within 2 months of hiring of a Development Director, collaborate with the Development Director and Development Committee to draft a plan and timeline for development strategies with marketing campaigns targeted to increase awareness of the presence of DWS and educational outreach on the importance of the Pedagogy of Steiner methods.
- b). Within 12-24 months develop an Alumni campaign with a goal of tracking 100% of previous graduates and a plan to ensure long-term updating plan and tracking activities and staffing to implement.
- c). Within 1 year identify and implement a system to provide DWS community a comprehensive finance report with updates on receipt of donations and grants.

5. Assure financial health to allow for a thriving school while enhancing pedagogy and programming to support students, families and staff.

- a). Within 1 year of approval of DWS Strategic Plan, an experienced Development Director will be hired.
- b). The FSAS will collaborate with the Board and current Development Committee for drafting Benchmarks prior to hiring a Development Director. The Board and Development Director will review and confirm the benchmarks following hiring.

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