



**2018 - 2023 Strategic Plan**

***College, Career, and Life Success for All***

***Adopted by the Board of Trustees on June 20, 2018***



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# Executive Summary

Salem Academy Charter School (SACS) opened its doors to sixth and seventh graders in September 2004 with the promise to serve the diverse population of Salem. Through a unique integration of college preparatory classes with service to the community, SACS has realized that promise. Today, Salem Academy is approved for 480 students in grades six through twelve, and these students will graduate ready to succeed in college.



|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>Goal 1</b> | To <i>deliver</i> rigorous educational programming that promotes college and career success for all and supports students following graduation.   |
| <b>Goal 2</b> | To <i>nurture</i> a positive, respectful school culture that engages and supports students, faculty, staff, and families.   |
| <b>Goal 3</b> | To <i>promote</i> and share best practices in secondary education from within the SACS community, while building partnerships to increase the collective understanding of current issues and needs. |
| <b>Goal 4</b> | To <i>ensure</i> that SACS remains fiscally sound with a positive cash flow and resources to support the mission.   |
| <b>Goal 5</b> | To <i>ensure</i> that resources, operations and infrastructure are sustainable and can support Salem Academy in carrying out its mission and realizing its vision.                                  |

Given the school’s rapid growth and the changing landscape in education, the Board of Trustees decided to undertake strategic planning to guide the school’s coming five years. Building on the momentum of several years of growth in enrollment, facilities expansion and transitions in leadership, the school is looking forward to being able to set new goals as it looks to the future. With a track record of strong community support, academic success and fiscal viability, Salem Academy is well-positioned to achieve even greater things in the coming years.

The strategic planning process sought input from all stakeholder groups of the Salem Academy community, from supporters and parents to students at every grade level. Their

combined wisdom informed the analysis of current strengths and challenges, and their shared aspirations became the basis for this plan.

Inside this document is Salem Academy's plan for future investment in mission critical areas: educational programming, the school community and operations/facilities. The values, vision and goals will provide support and guidance for the school's leadership as they navigate the challenging terrain of strategic options in complex environments. A clear focus on college preparation, character development, and service learning are evident throughout, as these components are at the core of Salem Academy's unique identity and offering within the region.

# Introduction

Salem Academy Charter School is an independent public school chartered by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in 2003 and opened for the 2004-2005 school year in Salem, Massachusetts.

Widely known as the site of the Salem witchcraft trials of 1692, Salem is a colorful, coastal city with much to offer - a culturally diverse population, a rich maritime heritage, an impressive display of historic architecture, and amazing stories that span almost four centuries. Salem has a population of 42,000 in an area of only eight square miles.

There are 3,694 students enrolled in the district schools. With five elementary schools (K-5), two K-8, one middle school and three high school programs in the district, Salem Academy provides the opportunity for a choice of public schools at the middle and high school levels in the city. Salem Academy occupies a 35,000 square foot building at Shetland Park, a waterfront industrial and commercial complex flanked on one side by the residential Point Neighborhood and on the other side by the tourist attractions of Pickering Wharf, the historic downtown area, and the more affluent residential area, all a fairly easy walking distance for many students.

Salem Academy's mission, as defined in its charter, is to educate the City of Salem's diverse student population. Through a unique integration of college preparatory classes with service to the community, Salem Academy graduates informed, articulate, and proactive individuals of strong character. Salem Academy prides itself on a strong school culture defining the school as a learning community where students and adults interact with mutual respect and collectively value the school's norms embodied in the acronym REACH - Responsible - Empathetic - Assertive - Cooperative - Honest. Salem Academy's goal is to set high standards and expectations and to raise students' aspirations. Salem Academy believes that with structure, support, and consistency, every student can become a successful learner. SACS's essential vision is for any student who chooses to come here, regardless of social, ethnic, or economic background, to find academic success and to develop the skills, the habits of mind, the attitudes, the strength of character, and the sense of civic responsibility to become successful in college and to become an active and constructive participant in our society.

Salem Academy offers a standards-based, college preparatory curriculum. Every student takes math, science, English language arts, history or social studies, and with few exceptions, Spanish. In addition, students take multiple electives in fine arts, performing arts, music, health, physical education, technology and other academic offerings. The school encourages students to challenge themselves with open access to AP classes and support for taking PSAT, SAT and AP exams. Students have access

to a wide range of accelerated offerings, including dual enrollment at Salem University. Students at risk of not graduating also have access to early college programming in partnership with Gateway to College at North Shore Community College.

Salem Academy's curriculum is grounded in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, and student progress is purely performance based, measured by internal and external assessments. Service Learning is an integral part of the curricular program allowing students to apply their learning in context while contributing in real ways to the community around them. Projects are group oriented in Lower School, leading up to an individual project in Junior and Senior year. Students are encouraged to innovate and manage all aspects of their project as they devise solutions to problems that they identify and address.

After school programs include competitive athletics, with nine varsity sports, at both the middle school and high school levels; programs in art, music, drama, and dance; Maker Space and technology; activities such as Destination Imagination, Yearbook, and Student Government; as well as tutoring and Homework Club. Tutoring programs extend beyond the school day and year including vacation school and summer school. Additional enrichment activities include programs such as We the People, Geography Bee, and History Bowl.



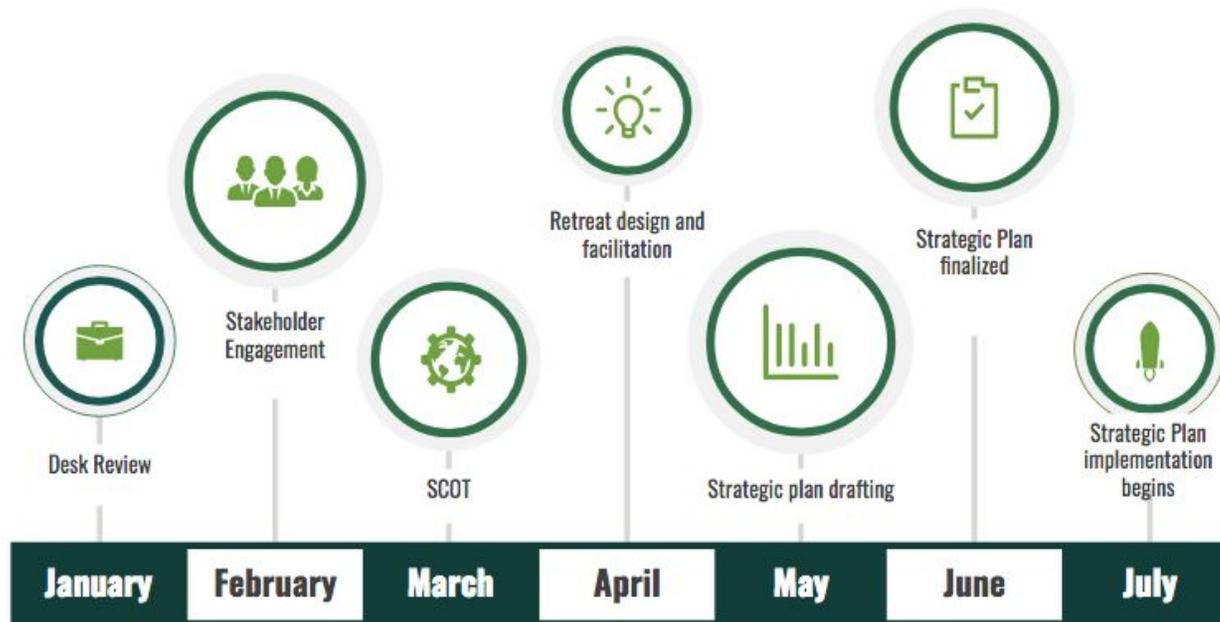
In the past two years, the school has made significant investments in facilities to support education and achievement in areas beyond the traditional classroom, including the new Nile Albright Center for the Arts with studios for art, music and dance programming, as well as the 180-seat Meche Theater and the Norman H. Read Gymnasium, offering 11,000 square feet of student athletic space, a regulation size basketball and volleyball court, locker rooms, and offices for the athletic staff.

# Methodology

## Overview of the Planning Process

The strategic planning process began with the formation of the *Process Management Team* (PMT). The Salem Academy PMT comprised a cross section of the School’s leadership, and was tasked with supervising and coordinating the planning process with the consulting team. During early meetings, the PMT and consulting team worked together to develop and refine goals for the planning process, including identification of the various stakeholders to be engaged, and how best to engage them.

The PMT also offered guidance in the form of review and revision of agendas and meeting designs for a series of meetings with faculty, staff, Board members, and the steering committee. In addition, they assisted in and offered approval for interview and focus group protocols, and survey designs. The PMT worked closely with the Steering Committee and consulting team to identify priorities and strategies for the plan.





## Stakeholder Engagement And Data Gathering

In order to plan for an organization's future, it is first essential to develop an informed view of that organization's present.

*At what does this organization excel? What major challenges does it face? And with what circumstances in the world must it contend in order to be successful?*

These are all questions to address during the stakeholder engagement and data collection phase of a project. There were a variety of relevant public data sources to which the consulting team also referred during the strategic planning process. These included information from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary education, state and national demographic trends, and sources covering trends in teacher training and retention. Some of the most important data, however, came from the community of Salem Academy stakeholders.

The stakeholder engagement process began with several interviews with key informants. These initial interviews assisted the consultants in fine-tuning the areas for focus in subsequent surveys and focus groups.

Upon completion of these interviews and identification of a collection of important themes, the team developed surveys for electronic distribution to several stakeholder groups: parents, board members, and community members (111 responses); faculty and staff (49 responses); and students (351 responses). The consultants also conducted additional interviews (19) and focus groups (6, with multiple groups of students, teachers, staff, and parents). The PMT and Steering Committee used the resulting findings to inform the development of overarching goals and to design strategies to meet them.

### Observations from Initial Interviews

**Salem Academy excels** in providing highly personalized approaches to education, meeting each student where they are, and tailoring instruction to each student's needs.

**Salem Academy faces challenges** associated with its rapid growth. This includes logistical challenges, such as securing adequate space for teaching and conferences, and programmatic challenges, such as scaling service learning to meet the demands of larger cohorts.



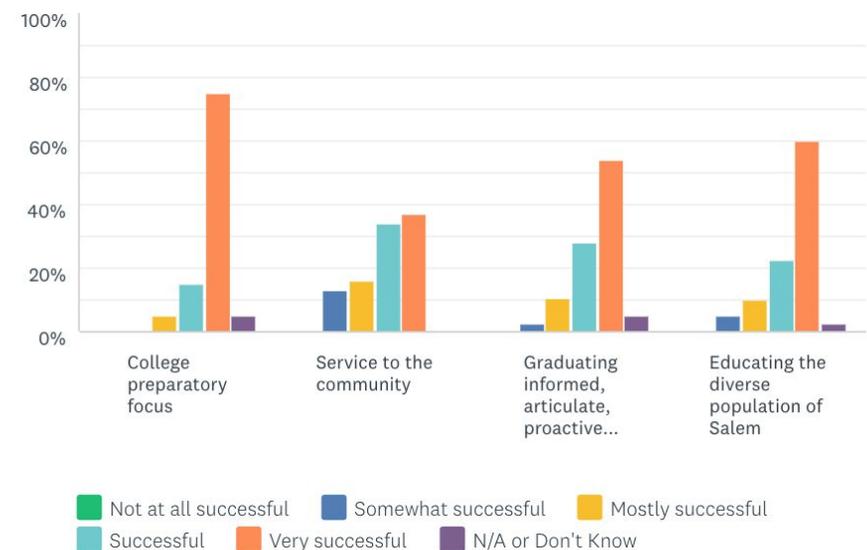
## Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Threats

This analysis of Salem Academy Charter School's strengths, challenges, opportunities, and threats is derived from stakeholder engagement and background research into trends, policies and emerging factors in education, the economy, demographics and other areas likely to impact the school in the coming years.

### Strengths

#### Academic Achievement

One of Salem Academy's most readily visible strengths, Academic Achievement, can be seen in the success of its students. While its population largely mirrors that of the public school district, the school boasts higher Next Generation MCAS average scaled scores than the district as well as those of the state<sup>1</sup>. With 92.3% of students graduating in 4 years and 97.6% of graduates completing the MassCore curriculum<sup>2</sup> bolstered by a rigorous college preparatory curriculum, Salem Academy students are leaving the school prepared for their subsequent academic and career pursuits. Families (students, and especially parents) rate the school highly in these mission-based areas, with 90% of parents reporting that the school is Very Successful or Successful in its college preparatory focus, and 82.06% reporting the school is Very Successful or Successful in graduating informed, articulate, and proactive individuals of strong character<sup>3</sup>. The school seeks to have 100% of students receive a college acceptance before graduation. (See full parent response at right.)



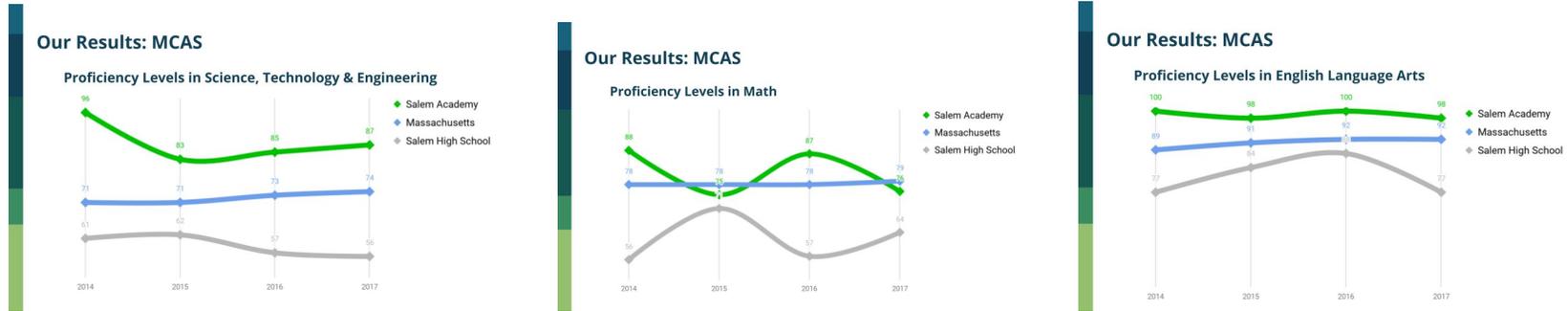
<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts DESE, [Salem Academy Charter School profile](#)

<sup>2</sup> Massachusetts DESE, [Graduation Rate](#) and [MassCore Completion Report](#)

<sup>3</sup> Salem Academy Charter School Strategic Planning Survey 2018

Salem Academy is a school of choice for many North Shore families; and the school's excellent results are a consistent reminder of the wisdom in that. Below, see results from the last few years comparing the Salem Academy high school grade 10 student performance on MCAS to that of the District and the state overall.

### Grade 10 MCAS Scores 2014 - 2017



### Salem Academy Academic Program, Achievements and Dissemination efforts

Salem Academy offers a standards-based, college preparatory curriculum. Every student takes math, science, English Language Arts, history or social studies, and with few exceptions, Spanish. In addition, students take multiple electives in art, music, health, physical education, and other academic offerings. The school supports an extended day and an extended year. There are 195 days in the school year. Classes begin at 8:30 a.m. and continue to 4:00 p.m. followed by homework center, tutoring, and a variety of activities and athletics until 5:00 p.m. ELA and math classes in our Lower School are 80 minutes in length; other classes are 54 minutes. Multiple levels of each discipline allow the school to respond to students' individual learning styles, levels of skill, and achievement. The curriculum is grounded in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, and student progress is purely performance based measured by internal and external assessments. Salem Academy Charter School has been ranked a Level One school for all years in which schools have been ranked through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's accountability system. Salem Academy's MCAS scores consistently outperform the district in almost every subject at every grade level by 10 – 20 points, and Salem Academy outscored the statewide averages in English Language Arts in our Upper School and Math in our Lower School. Salem Academy was among 10% of the schools in the state commended by the Governor in 2011 for high growth as measured by MCAS and in 2012 for narrowing the achievement gap between traditionally high performing and lower performing sub-groups. Boston Magazine ranked Salem

Academy the best charter school in Boston in 2012, and for the past three years U.S News and World Report and the Washington Post have ranked Salem Academy among the top 10% of high schools in the State and the top 5% in the Country.

For the three-year period 2011-2014 Salem Academy was one of only three charter schools in Massachusetts chosen to participate in the Massachusetts Math and Science Initiative Advanced Placement Training and Award Program (APTAP). Following a highly competitive application process, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in partnership with Mass Insight Education and Research Institute, secured one of the first-ever awarded grants from the National Math and Science Initiative, Inc. (NMSI) for the Massachusetts Math & Science Initiative, an Advanced Placement® training and award program.

Salem Academy was chartered originally with an enrollment cap of 308 students. In 2011, that cap was increased to 372. Due to the continued demand for spaces here, Salem Academy applied for a charter amendment increasing the cap to 480 students. The amendment, however, was subject to Salem Academy being defined as a “Proven Provider.”

In order to determine if a current charter school qualifies for Proven Provider status, the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education considers affirmative, credible evidence of the existing school's success in each of the three accountability areas: academic program success, organizational viability, and faithfulness to the terms of its charter.

Salem Academy Charter School qualified as a “Proven Provider,” and in January 2015, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education granted Salem Academy Charter School another charter amendment, allowing enrollment up to 480 students. In addition to accommodating the increased demand for spaces here, Salem Academy’s intention was to expand enrollment, primarily in the Upper School grades 9 through 12, in order to provide a more varied and robust program at that level. In addition, the school has expanded facilities to accommodate the expanded enrollment and to ensure facilities sufficient to serve the programs essential to the school’s mission.

In July 2014, Salem Academy was awarded a \$364,400 federal dissemination grant to disseminate its’ standards-driven instructional practices to Salem Public Schools (SPS). The purpose of this collaboration was to strengthen the instructional leadership capacity in SPS leaders to guide standards-driven work and raise student achievement. This approach includes planning, instruction, assessment, grading, analysis and adjustment to practice. Throughout the 2014-15 school year, leaders from Salem Public Schools engaged in a series of Study Tours and Think Tanks with nationally known speakers including Robert Marzano and Thomas Guskey in which they learned about SACS’s standards-driven instructional practice, received documentation of practices and curriculum, and observed ways in which SACS leaders support targeted practices.

## **Norman H. Read Science Discovery Center**

Salem Academy Charter School's science program embraces Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) in recognition of the interdependency of these disciplines as well as in recognition of the national movement toward a unified science curriculum. With support from the Read Trust over the past several years, Salem Academy has added honors and advanced placement level courses in the traditional sciences to the curriculum as well as electives in areas including environmental science, ecology, marine biology, computer technology, and coding. With encouragement and the necessary funding from the Read Trust, Salem Academy has been able to add a teaching position to the science department staff and has invested in sufficient computers to achieve a one-to-one student to computer ratio from 6th grade through the 12th grade. The results of our STEM focus have led us to achieve higher percentages of proficient and advanced (P/A) scores on the Science MCAS in both our Upper and Lower School, than the district and the state. For example, in SY 16-17 the 10th grade science scores came to 87% P/A which is significantly higher than the average state ( 74%) and local high school scores (56%) respectively.

## **Humanities and Arts Programs**

Collaborative planning in the ELA and history departments around Common Core and the C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards creates strong vertical alignment from sixth grade to twelfth and promotes many opportunities for interdisciplinary work. As a result of this planning process, humanities courses at Salem Academy deliberately cultivate students' critical thinking skills, curiosity, and voice. In humanities classrooms, students engage with rigorous texts and make arguments defending their analysis. Students are also invited to participate in competitive and challenging statewide opportunities. As they explore literature and the past, students also have many opportunities to learn and engage with the arts. With offerings in classes ranging from Jazz Dance to Ceramics to Photography, all students can explore and develop their interests and passions. Students proudly display their progress at popular events and activities like Arts Alive and Poetry Out Loud. At these events and others, students use their knowledge and skills to amplify their voices, ones needed for positive change and leadership in civil society.

## **Salem Academy, a Demonstration School for Trauma Sensitive Practices**

Since 2016, Salem Academy has worked in partnership with the Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative (TLPI) as one of four safe and supportive demonstration schools in the state. Using TLPI's Flexible Framework, an inquiry-based process, the school worked to further strengthen our school environment to better meet the social and emotional needs of all of our students. It is

a cycle of continuous learning and growth that involves assessment, analysis, goal setting, implementation, reflection, and adjustments to practice. We learned that a whole staff approach that weaves trauma sensitive practices into all aspects of our school environment is the most sustainable way of supporting all students holistically. By providing staff with ongoing training on the impact of trauma on learning and by developing and implementing safe and supportive action plans in both the upper and lower schools, our staff gained a shared understanding that positive relationships and a strong sense of community can alleviate the impact trauma has on learning. In the second year of this work, both the Lower School and Upper School staff continued focusing on actions developed last year, as well as creating new action plans based on the pre-identified priority areas: family engagement, professional development around consistency, and building community. In addition to the aforementioned work, the Lower School staff did additional work around organizing an activities fair, creating teacher consistency videos, and instituting quarterly peer observations with many of the new actions focused on parent engagement. One group of teachers created a series of parent workshops, while another group created teacher constructed websites for families. The Upper School continued to use the parent communication process while creating new actions to strengthen community. The Upper School staff split into five subgroups, with a plan for each group to focus on one area: developing academic pride, enhancing ways to use student voice, peer mentorship, school spirit, and restorative practices.

## **Faculty**

Salem Academy's ability to support such high student achievement is a function of exceptional instructional design, a highly committed and hard-working faculty and staff and a long history of strong leadership. The school is committed to a full implementation of standards based education and transparency in all operations. School culture is formed around a set of shared values embodied by the REACH framework which reminds all in the school community to strive to be Responsible, Empathetic, Assertive, Cooperative, and Honest at all times. There is little doubt in the minds of parents that the committed faculty and staff are central to this success, and many parents citing these as the school's greatest strength. This leadership is rounded out by an engaged, active and supportive Board of Trustees, community partners and volunteers, many of whom have long term and deep engagement with the school.

In addition to top-notch academics and high performance, there are many other aspects of the school that create a real draw for families. Specifically, faculty, staff, students, and parents cite the commitment and ability of faculty and staff to meet students' basic, learning, and social/emotional needs in a highly individualized manner, with adults at the school often going above and beyond the call of duty. A family-like atmosphere, often attributed to the school's small size and intentional culture,

is identified as a core strength by many stakeholder groups. When asked about the school's greatest strength, parents (32%) and faculty and staff (65.63%)<sup>4</sup> most often identified the people and/or relationships at the school.

## Challenges

Many of the challenges that Salem Academy experiences are related to its recent expansion. The structures and design choices that were optimal for a small school are now in need of updates to address the needs of a much larger school that now also includes a larger high school population. Embedded in these growth challenges is the question of how to ensure that the aspects of Salem Academy that make it unique and strong are thoroughly disseminated to the larger school community.

For example, as the school has grown, it becomes increasingly important to ensure that all faculty and staff are aligned in their management of important areas like discipline, attendance systems, grading practices, homework, etc. Faculty turnover in the past few years has increased the need for an on-boarding system which promotes a clear understanding of the mission, core practices and values of the school. Building relationships between long term staff and new staff is important to keeping the culture which Salem Academy values. Growth also poses new challenges logistically, as space limitations become more significant, and scheduling becomes much more complex.

While the diverse offerings of the school exceed the typical range for a school of this size, it is still important to note that "improving and expanding extracurricular programs and activities" remains among the top priorities for students and families.

As Salem Academy works to ensure that the design elements and mission of the school are enhanced rather than diluted by growth, this planning process centered on identifying the strategies for meeting these and related challenges head on and in enhancing priority areas identified by stakeholders.

## Opportunities and Threats

Identifying external factors likely to affect future success is a crucial component of planning. Like other charter schools, Salem Academy must consider the relative instability of per pupil funding when planning for growth or development. The algorithm which determines the annual school budget can result in significant changes as Salem approaches the charter tuition cap. Teacher workforce shortages, a problem across the state and the country, also pose a threat to planning and continuity from year to year. Charter school teacher retention rates are often lower than traditional public schools, and Salem Academy is no exception. While the school has a solid core of teachers who have been at Salem Academy for five

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<sup>4</sup> Salem Academy Strategic Planning Survey 2018

or more years, there have been challenges. Retention at the school hit a low of 60.5% a few years ago, lower than the District's 77.5% (and the statewide average of 86.8%)<sup>5</sup>. In 2016-17, the school reviewed the salary offerings and made changes to become more competitive with local school districts. Additionally, recruitment of science and math teachers is an issue at Salem Academy as it is elsewhere. Salem Academy is committed to creating a diverse community of educators while increasing the rate of teacher retention.

There are many state and national trends that have the potential to open new and exciting doors for Salem Academy. For example, Massachusetts is home to one of the world's most active and fastest growing startup ecosystems, resulting in a disproportionately large future demand for workers with skills in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields. With its excellent college preparatory work in these areas, Salem Academy may be the best vehicle for connecting low and moderate income first generation college goers to high-paying career pathways in these fields. Additionally, these fields are seeking to increase racial and ethnic diversity in their workforces, another area where Salem Academy could play an important regional role.

With respect to the core function of charter schools to become laboratories for educational innovation and vehicles for dissemination of best practices, Salem Academy is well poised to remain a strong contributor. While Salem Academy's demographics are similar to those of the Salem District student population, Salem Academy students consistently perform higher on standardized tests, graduation, and college-going rates. As a result, Salem Academy is already a valued thought partner and leader in best practices. The school had a successful and productive dissemination project in 2014 and will consider more of these opportunities in the future. The school recognizes that many of its practices in building community and supporting students can be shared with others.

On a local level, Salem Public Schools has recently completed a strategic planning process that resulted in goals aimed at improving outcomes for their students. As a result, the district is in the process of, or already has developed, new programming, some of which mirrors that which is offered at Salem Academy. The potential for collaboration and shared learning is exciting.

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<sup>5</sup> Massachusetts DESE, [2015 Staffing Retention Rates](#)

# Strategic Plan

## Vision

**Salem Academy Charter School** envisions equitable access for all learners to an education that inspires community engagement, supports college and career success in a diverse society, and nurtures personal well-being.

## Mission

**Salem Academy Charter School** is a small 6th through 12th grade public school designed to educate the City of Salem's diverse population. Through a unique integration of college preparatory classes with service to the community, the school graduates informed, articulate and proactive individuals of strong character.

## Values

- ❑ **Engagement with the whole student:** fostering the development of social, emotional, physical and intellectual lives of students. Developing a caring community as a key element of school culture that supports faculty, students and staff and works with parents for the benefit of all students
- ❑ **Diversity:** recognizing the importance of understanding issues of diversity and inclusion and celebrating the diversity within the SACS community as key in preparing students to be global citizens
- ❑ **Equity:** building an inclusive and equitable community where each individual is valued; where student voice is encouraged and proactive responses to issues that arise are affirmed
- ❑ **Academic rigor:** holding high expectations of all students and inspiring them to see themselves as capable learners, willing to risk taking a challenge and able to apply what they know in their civic role through service learning
- ❑ **Empowerment:** encouraging proactive thinking, independent voice, and student ownership of learning

## Goals

SACS has five goals around which the school community will align in the coming five years. Student success is at the center of each, and in turn, these goals address the most critical forces influencing student growth, progress, wellness, opportunity and advancement toward success in college, career and life.

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>Goal 1</b> | To <i>deliver</i> rigorous educational programming that promotes college and career success for all and supports students following graduation.   |
| <b>Goal 2</b> | To <i>nurture</i> a positive, respectful school culture that engages and supports students, faculty, staff, and families.   |
| <b>Goal 3</b> | To <i>promote</i> and share best practices in secondary education from within the SACS community, while building partnerships to increase the collective understanding of current issues and needs. |
| <b>Goal 4</b> | To <i>ensure</i> that SACS remains fiscally sound with a positive cash flow and resources to support the mission.   |
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**Goal 1:** *To deliver rigorous educational programming that promotes college and career success for all and supports students following graduation.*

**Rationale:** The SACS community has student success in college at the heart of its founding and at the core of all of the work the faculty and staff do each day. While the national conversation about pathways to college access continues to explore new solutions, the SACS team knows the secret of its strong, nearly 100% college acceptance rate each year: the rigorous preparation that they offer every single student. While the school is proud of its success, it is time to raise the bar and seek to move to the next level of academic achievement. This plan offered an opportunity for SACS parents, students, faculty and staff to reflect on what drives that remarkable success in this area, and then build from that strength for even greater future impact.

| Goal 1 Objectives  | Strategies  | Benchmark  |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>A) Increase academic performance by building on SACS strengths in the academic program</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase capacity for the use of inclusive teaching practices to meet the needs of all learners, closing achievement gaps</li> <li>● Increase support and professional development around math instruction and assess needs of current program</li> <li>● Provide additional support for AP courses and integration of SAT and AP preparation into curriculum and instruction</li> <li>● Continue to align instruction with Next Generation Science standards</li> <li>● Enrich and increase STEM offerings and programming as possible; increase opportunities for young women and minority students to be exposed to science and math careers and role models.</li> <li>● Explore the use of internships and apprenticeships for college and career preparation, especially in science and medicine</li> </ul> | <p>Salem Academy Next Generation MCAS scores will meet or exceed state targets.</p> <p>Next Gen science alignment will be complete by fall 2020.</p> <p>By spring 2020, all teachers will have received professional development on inclusive teaching practices. Observations will provide evidence of use of inclusive teaching practices by SACS staff.</p> |

| Goal 1 Objectives   | Strategies   | Benchmark  |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>B) Integrate social emotional learning into SACS safe and supportive practices and become a model of best practice</b></p>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Implement a school wide self-assessment of practices and develop training modules</li> <li>● Provide professional development opportunities on social emotional learning</li> <li>● Provide time and opportunity to Student Support Services team to lead the process</li> <li>● Continue with our work as a demonstration school for Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative (TLPI)</li> </ul>   | <p>By 2022, 100% of teachers and staff will have been trained in safe and supportive services and trauma sensitive responses. Observations will provide evidence of teacher implementation of TLPI practices.</p>  |
| <p><b>C) Revise and review the implementation and goals of the service learning element in order to facilitate successful execution</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Define the role of and consider hiring a service learning coordinator to facilitate the process and practice</li> <li>● Create an ad hoc group to work together to assess the current program and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work on vertical alignment of SL</li> <li>- Consider whether it is possible to leverage external service-based programs and partners (like Project Citizen) to integrate into our vertical planning</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Explore time-boundedness of SL -potentially integrating it as cross-curricular projects, embedded in curriculum map</li> </ul> | <p>By fall 2019, recommendations have been made and are implemented to revise the program.</p> <p>By spring 2021, both faculty and student survey results will show that the changes are effective and ensure fidelity to Service Learning element of our mission.</p> |

| Goal 1 Objectives   | Strategies   | Benchmark   |
|---|--|---|
| <p><b>D) Foster innovation and creativity in teaching and learning to increase student engagement</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide professional development opportunities focused on innovative methods to engage all students; learning how to create the kind of “structure” for unstructured activities that promotes creativity and rigor at the same time</li> <li>● Consider and encourage creativity in teaching strategies</li> <li>● Encourage peer observations to look for creativity, innovation and engaging strategies already in use</li> <li>● Consider interdisciplinary aspects of service learning</li> <li>● Determine if a STEAM approach can drive this</li> <li>● Identify experts internal and external</li> <li>● Determine how to measure this learning</li> </ul> | <p>By spring 2019, in a faculty survey, 80% of teachers will affirm that they have tried a new approach to specific lessons or units and will reflect on that experience.</p> |

**Goal 1 Rationale, continued:** SACS students are college-bound; this is baked into the school’s mission. The goal of the school is that students will succeed in college. SACS is committed to ensuring that all of its students understand the college financing options and process, can find a new cohort of peers and study groups once they’ve matriculated, and know how to seek help when needed, whether for academic, social or health concerns in their new schools. Once students graduate, SACS anticipates a change - not an end - to its relationship with them, specifically, they will become members of the emerging SACS Alumni Network and SACS will invest in their continued success.

| Goal 1 Objectives   | Strategies  | Benchmarks  |
|---|---|---|
| <p><b>E) Build a strong support system for alumni that facilitates and enhances their success through college and/or career</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establish a robust alumni network and conduct periodic check-ins to assess needs</li> <li>● Develop data collection and analysis capability to capture alumni activity and experience after graduation and throughout college or start of their careers</li> <li>● Research potential role for mentorship program; explore the possibility of alumni mentoring each other</li> <li>● Expand current resources to allow for more individual support than is currently possible</li> </ul> | <p>By 2020, we will have a name, a staff coordinator and our first 100 members of the SACS alumni network in place.<br/> By 2021, the network will have developed a menu of support services for alums, which are either provided by SACS staff or by members within the network<br/> By 2022, we will be tracking on-time / 7 year rate of college completion for SACS graduates</p> |

**Goal 2:** *To nurture a positive, respectful school culture that engages and supports students, faculty, staff and families.*

**Rationale:** Building a culture to support success has been part of Salem Academy's success since its founding. With clear shared values, the SACS commitment to the REACH norms (Responsible, Empathetic, Assertive, Cooperative, and Honest), the faculty and staff will maintain a culture that enables all of the aspects of their work to come together in support of the whole student.

| Goal 2 Objectives   | Strategies  | Benchmarks   |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>A) Promote consistent expectations in discipline and instruction across all grade levels through training and support</b></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review, revise and clarify discipline expectations, systems and implementation in the upper school</li> <li>● Provide ongoing staff training around expectations, systems and implementation of behavior management and discipline policies</li> <li>● Mentor, coach and support teachers about strategies for engaging all students, including challenging students</li> <li>● Continue to build an effective initial training on behavior management for teachers new to SACS; as well as focus on first and second year teachers</li> <li>● Continue developing and using Restorative Practices throughout the school in response to discipline events</li> </ul> | <p>By December 2018, expectations for both students (behavior) and faculty/staff (enforcement and modeling) are clarified and communicated to all.</p> <p>By Spring 2019, 80% of students in the upper school will affirm that there is a consistency of expectations by faculty</p>   |
| <p><b>B) Provide consistency in values and norms across all grade levels through implementation of the REACH norms strategies</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review and define REACH norms for Upper School that appropriately correlate with stages of adolescent development</li> <li>● Implement revised and updated REACH norms in the Upper School</li> <li>● Develop a system in the Upper School to support positive feedback for student growth and accomplishments</li> <li>● Provide Increased opportunities for interactions between students, grades 6 - 12; building relationships across grades through projects, peer mentoring, peer mediation, national honor society tutors, lower school TAs, special events, etc.</li> </ul>  | <p>By September 2018, definitions for REACH norms will be established and communicated to all.</p> <p>By June 2019, revision to the REACH norms and related expectations will be modified to meet developmental needs of Upper School students.</p> <p>By Spring 2020, 80% of upper school students will confirm that the REACH norms are relevant and are implemented in the Upper School</p> |

| Goal 2 Objectives  | Strategies   | Benchmarks   |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>C) Promote practices that build a respectful, positive, caring community</b></p>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue staff/faculty training in culturally relevant pedagogy and practices</li> <li>● Increase opportunities for the school community to celebrate diversity and culture</li> <li>● Continue efforts to give families a variety of opportunities with which to be engaged</li> <li>● Continue increased communications with families</li> <li>● Recognize and reward positive behavior</li> <li>● Continue building community through Restorative Community exercises and team building</li> </ul> | <p>Faculty/staff surveys, parent surveys and student surveys will reflect their experience of a positive, caring culture within SACS with 80% affirming positive responses regarding school climate.</p>                                   |
| <p><b>D) Ensure a smooth transition from grade 8 to grade 9 (for current and new students)</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In 2018-19 implement a Freshman seminar</li> <li>● Provide additional academic supports for incoming Freshman to address gaps or below grade level skills</li> <li>● Increase team building activities to welcome and orient new 9th graders</li> </ul>   | <p>In SY18-19 and ongoing, end of year student surveys will reflect 9th grade students' feeling of belonging and understanding of the role and meaning of REACH norms in the SACS community, regardless of where they spent 8th grade.</p> |

**Goal 3:** *To promote and share best practices in secondary education from within SACS with the broader community, while building partnerships to increase the collective understanding of current issues and needs.*

**Rationale:** As a Commonwealth Charter School, SACS has a duty and a deep commitment to innovation and dissemination of best practices. In addition, the SACS team has a track record of successful partnerships for development and dissemination of best practices in teaching and student support. The promise of the school is only partially realized through the success of its own students; and in this strategic planning goal, SACS confirms and recommits to exploring new ways to bring the SACS formula for success to a broader audience of colleagues, partners, and students.

| Goal 3 Objectives   | Strategies  | Benchmarks   |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>A) Salem Academy will take a leadership role in bringing together the community around educational issues and best practices that can be shared</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify additional areas of strength in the school that can be disseminated and shared</li> <li>● Identify faculty and staff who will benefit from a leadership role in this task</li> <li>● Explore platforms for sharing, i.e. symposium style meeting convening statewide participants or inviting schools to visit SACS; presenting at major conferences</li> <li>● Explore possibilities of becoming a lab school or beginning a teacher training program</li> </ul> | <p>Beginning in SY19-20 SACS will convene/launch 1-3 events or research projects and share regionally (e.g. speaker series, participatory research, symposia, etc.).</p> |

**Goal 4:** *Ensure that SACS remains fiscally sound with a positive cash flow and resources to support the mission*

**Rationale:** All schools struggle in a world of finite, and often shrinking, resources. Charter schools are funded based on a formula on the number of students they are serving who otherwise would enroll in traditional District schools. However, the precise allocation is based in part on the performance status of the originating student’s district, with limitations on higher performing districts tuition reimbursements and number of seats. Given that Salem will hit the 9% sending district tuition cap within a few years and Salem Academy is currently approved for the maximum number of students allowed by its Charter, the school must determine what the future brings financially in the context of improvement within Salem’s district schools. This analysis is both complex and based on rapidly changing policy and data, requiring a deep and careful look at options before SACS can plan to either expand regional recruitment, stay at its current size with the likelihood of significant funding reductions, or decrease enrollments for financial stability.

| Goal 4 Objectives   | Strategies   | Benchmarks   |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>A) Develop a smart, strategic and financially sound response to the changing and complex conditions affecting SACS school financing</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop a smart, strategic and financially sound response to the changing and complex conditions affecting SACS school financing that ensures fiscal health, based on a clear understanding of all the factors affecting state funding, and considering the full array of options open to the school regarding size and geographic reach</li> <li>● Understand the per-pupil regulations and which responses are financially most positive for the school</li> <li>● Understand how recruitment of students will be impacted</li> <li>● Develop a long term plan for growth</li> <li>● Utilize board leadership to review options and possibilities</li> <li>● Research and understand impact of recruiting students from outside of Salem</li> </ul> | <p>We will have positive cash flow and increase our assets year over year.</p> |

| Goal 4 Objectives                           | Strategies   | Benchmarks   |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>B) Build fundraising capacity</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consider hiring fundraising personnel, part time or contracted.</li> <li>● Explore the opportunity to build an endowment or run a capital campaign</li> <li>● Expand the donor base and build the alumni network</li> <li>● Increase use of grants opportunities</li> <li>● Cultivate major donors</li> <li>● Expand corporate giving opportunities</li> <li>● Build awareness of the school's accomplishments and unique place in the region using the website and communications</li> <li>● Maximize rental of space for revenue</li> </ul> | <p>In SY18-19, the Board will create a development plan to increase donor base.</p> <p>In SY 19-20, the school will raise \$200,000 above and beyond the Read trust through grants and individual donations and increase individual donor participation by 10% annually.</p> |

**Goal 5:** *To ensure that resources, operations and infrastructure are sustainable and can support Salem Academy in carrying out its mission and realizing its vision.*

**Rationale:** SACS has made major gains in developing its facilities over the past five years, opening new facilities dedicated to the arts and to athletics. The Board and leadership will continue the aggressive pursuit of the facilities and resources needed for learning for a changing tomorrow. The future focus will be on the development of the science labs, and operationally, on managing its spaces, systems and finances for strength and continuous improvement.

| Goal 5 Objectives                                       | Strategies   | Benchmarks   |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>A) Create a plan for improving facilities</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase science laboratory space in 2019</li> <li>● Assess current and future space needs for all aspects of school program: classroom, flexible space, work space for teachers, food service, special education needs, ELL needs, administrative, conference and meeting, storage</li> <li>● Determine whether adequate space can be provided through reimagining current use of space, or whether more space is needed</li> <li>● Explore and increase environmentally sustainability of SACS spaces</li> <li>● Explore Registry of Deeds space if it becomes available.</li> <li>● Seek capital funding for space improvement.</li> <li>● Match space needs to any growth plan needed</li> <li>● Maintain focus on safety and security as a campus</li> </ul> | <p>By 2020, SACS will have adopted a long-term facilities plan which is sustainable and is financially viable.</p> |

| Goal 1 Objectives  | Strategies  | Benchmark   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>B) Maintain consistently high quality faculty and staff</b>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintain competitive salary levels, add benefits as possible, continue to provide smooth delivery of benefits</li> <li>● Increase rate of teacher retention</li> <li>● Build a pipeline to increase applications from candidates from diverse groups</li> <li>● Join organizations that promote diversity in educational organizations</li> <li>● Increase professional development opportunities</li> </ul> | <p>SACS will maintain an 80% retention rate.</p> <p>SACS will see increasing numbers of applications for open positions from diverse candidates year over year.</p> |
| <b>C) Continue to strengthen SACS board capacity to serve current needs of Salem Academy</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue to recruit members to fill and diversify the Board of Trustees, including parents</li> <li>● Create a strong Board orientation program for new members</li> <li>● Continue to be aspirational about the goals of the school</li> </ul>  | <p>The Board is able to continually fill openings in a timely manner.</p> <p>The Board is growing more diverse in membership.</p>                                   |

# Implementation Timeline

| Goal 1: Deliver innovative educational programming that ensures college and career success for all       |      |  |   |   |        |  |      |  |        |      |        |        |      |        |
|--|------|--|---|---|--------|--|------|--|--------|------|--------|--------|------|--------|
| 2018   |      | 2019   |   |   | 2020   |  |      | 2021   |        |      | 2022   |        |      | 2023   |
| Summer   | Fall | Spring   | Summer  | Fall  | Spring | Summer   | Fall | Spring   | Summer | Fall | Spring | Summer | Fall | Spring |
| <i>Identify P.D. needs</i>   |      | Increase support and professional development around math instruction (Fall 2018), innovation methods, inclusive teaching practices., social and emotional learning. Individualize P.D. experiences. |   |   |        |  |      |  |        |      |        |        |      |        |
|  |      | Provide additional SAT and AP preparation for students and support for AP instruction  |   |   |        |  |      |  |        |      |        |        |      |        |
| Enrich, increase STEM offerings and programming  |      |  |   | Explore internships and apprenticeships, especially in science and medicine. Build relationships with higher education and industries in these areas. |        |  |      |  |        |      |        |        |      |        |
| Join diversity orgs or associations  |      | Develop external pipelines with colleges and universities  |   |   |        |  |      |  |        |      |        |        |      |        |
| <i>Assess current communication strengths/needs</i>  |      |  |   | Develop and implement a plan to improve communication from leadership to staff and faculty  |        |  |      |  |        |      |        |        |      |        |
| Implement assessment of social emotional learning practices. Develop training.                           |      |  |   |   |        |  |      |  |        |      |        |        |      |        |
| Convene service learning committee, assess current program status  |      |  | Develop a plan and explore funding to administer service learning |   |        | Implement plan and hire service learning coordinator                             |      |  |        |      |        |        |      |        |
| <i>Explore best practices in alumni network building; recruit critical mass for establishing network</i> |      |  |   |   |        | Establish a robust alumni network and conduct periodic check-ins to assess needs |      |  |        |      |        |        |      |        |
|  |      |  |   |   |        |  |      | Develop alumni experience data collection and analysis capacity; identify areas to expand individual support |        |      |        |        |      |        |

**Goal 2: Lead a school culture that inspires community engagement and nurtures personal well-being.**

| 2018                       |      | 2019  |        |      | 2020  |                              |      | 2021   |   |      | 2022   |        |      | 2023   |
|----------------------------|------|---|--------|------|---|------------------------------|------|--------|---|------|--------|--------|------|--------|
| Summer                     | Fall | Spring  | Summer | Fall | Spring  | Summer                       | Fall | Spring | Summer  | Fall | Spring | Summer | Fall | Spring |
| <i>Identify P.D. needs</i> |      | Continue faculty/staff training in culturally relevant pedagogy and practices; ongoing training around behavior management, discipline policies, and dealing with challenging students. |        |      |   |                              |      |        |   |      |        |        |      |        |
|                            |      | <i>Assess current diversity /culture offerings and partnerships</i>   |        |      | Increase opportunities for school community to celebrate diversity and culture. Periodically assess our efforts in this area. |                              |      |        |   |      |        |        |      |        |
|                            |      | <i>Establish diverse REACH norms committee to explore updates; Introduce proposed updates</i>   |        |      |   | Finalize updated REACH norms |      |        | Develop and implement Upper School system for supporting positive feedback for student growth |      |        |        |      |        |

**Goal 3: Promote and share best practices in secondary education with our community.**

| 2018   |      | 2019   |        |      | 2020   |        |      | 2021  |        |      | 2022   |        |                               | 2023   |
|--------|------|--------|--------|------|--------|--------|------|---|--------|------|--|--------|-------------------------------|--------|
| Summer | Fall | Spring | Summer | Fall | Spring | Summer | Fall | Spring  | Summer | Fall | Spring   | Summer | Fall                          | Spring |
|        |      |        |        |      |        |        |      | Identify school areas of strengths that can be disseminated |        |      | Identify staff best matched for sharing our work |        | Explore platforms for sharing |        |

**Goal 4:** Develop a financially sound response to the changing and complex conditions affecting our school financing.

| 2018   |  | 2019   |        |      | 2020  |        |      | 2021   |  |      | 2022   |        |      | 2023   |  |
|--|--|--|--------|------|---|--------|------|--------|--|------|--------|--------|------|--------|--|
| Summer   | Fall   | Spring   | Summer | Fall | Spring  | Summer | Fall | Spring | Summer                                 | Fall | Spring | Summer | Fall | Spring |  |
| Understand per pupil regulations   |  | Decide on response to per pupil regulations that is most beneficial to school. |        |      | Implement course of action based on that response   |        |      |        |  |      |        |        |      |        |  |
| <i>Identify potential donors, and cultivate relationships</i>                  |  |  |        |      | Nurture donor relationships, cultivate a strong cohort of donors  |        |      |        |  |      |        |        |      |        |  |
|  | <i>Work with fundraising committee to create work plan for building capacity</i> |  |        |      | <i>Implement work plan, including exploring best practices, grant opportunities, corporate giving, and cultivating networks</i> |        |      |        | Continue to build fundraising capacity |      |        |        |      |        |  |
| Improve website and external communications                                    |  |  |        |      | Explore creating a new website  |        |      |        |  |      |        |        |      |        |  |
| <i>Explore best practices in cultivating school donor networks and culture</i> |  |  |        |      |   |        |      |        |  |      |        |        |      |        |  |
| Nurture a culture of giving among friends of Salem Academy                     |  |  |        |      |   |        |      |        |  |      |        |        |      |        |  |

**Goal 5:** Our operations and infrastructure will support our ability to carry out our mission and realize our vision.

| 2018                                 |   | 2019                                 |        |      | 2020  |        |      | 2021   |        |      | 2022   |        |      | 2023   |  |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--------|------|---|--------|------|--------|--------|------|--------|--------|------|--------|--|
| Summer                               | Fall  | Spring                               | Summer | Fall | Spring  | Summer | Fall | Spring | Summer | Fall | Spring | Summer | Fall | Spring |  |
| Assess current facility/ space needs |   | Seek funding for meeting those needs |        |      | Space updates, including meeting STEM needs, accommodating special education students, and office space |        |      |        |        |      |        |        |      |        |  |
| Recruit, diversify board             | Create a strong board orientation program for new members |                                      |        |      |   |        |      |        |        |      |        |        |      |        |  |

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Key Informants

| <b>Faculty &amp; Staff</b>  | <b>Parents</b>   | <b>Students</b>   |
|---|--|---|
| Alex Dean<br>Alicia Arendt<br>Anna Kogos<br>Christian Foster<br>Chyna Onembo<br>Diego Fellows<br>Drew Betts<br>Elizabeth Reickert<br>Jennifer Lebzelter<br>Keara Jones<br>Kim Stanhouse<br>Krissy Sgambellone<br>Linda St. Pierre<br>Megan Bowen<br>Melissa Lassen<br>Robert Pelletier<br>Sean Gass<br>Stephanie Callahan<br>Taylor Wright<br>Zoe Weems | Alexa Ogno<br>Barbara Matteau<br>Bessie Marashi<br>Carrie Francis Cabot<br>Fawaz Abusharkh<br>Gene Thomas<br>John Keenan<br>Julie Manninen<br>Kara McLaughlin<br>Lisa Fruggiero<br>Marina Guzman<br>Mark Meche<br>Michael Bridgman<br>Nina Bridgeman<br>Pam Rochna | Beatrice Njuguna<br>Brianna Guerrero<br>Cameron LeClerc<br>Cameron Letien<br>Hendry Balla<br>Jessica Atwood<br>Jordy Luna<br>Lilly Parker<br>Natalia Fila<br>Natalia Grishin<br>Raviel Carrasquillo<br>Ryker Taguam<br>Summer Abusharkh<br>Freshlyn Garcia-Gonzalez<br>Yadeli Espinal |

| <b>Other Stakeholders/Partners</b>   | <b>Process Management Team</b>  | <b>Steering Committee</b>  |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Bill Garr, Consultant<br/> Alfonso Perillo - Chair, Finance Committee<br/> Peter Copelas - Former Board Member &amp; Board Chair<br/> Dr. Nile Albright - Supporter<br/> Alyce Davis - Former Asst. Superintendent; Former Board Member; Former Leadership Coach<br/> Robert LePage, Assistant Secretary, Executive Office of Education, Commonwealth of Massachusetts<br/> Sarah Morrill, Former Parent; Dissemination Grant Project Manager</p> | <p>Steve Palmer, Chair, Strategic Planning Committee<br/> Nina Cohen, Chair, Board of Trustees<br/> Sean Gass, Upper School Principal<br/> Stephanie Callahan, Head of School<br/> Kathy Egmont, Executive Director<br/> Leni De los Santos, Administrative Assistant</p> | <p>Nina Cohen<br/> Steve Palmer<br/> Kathy Egmont<br/> Stephanie Callahan<br/> Sean Gass<br/> Chyna Onembo<br/> Linda St. Pierre<br/> Christine Wynne<br/> Leni De los Santos<br/> Christian Foster<br/> Diego Fellows<br/> Keara Jones<br/> Ana Brea<br/> Christopher Beaver<br/> Rob Pelletier<br/> Kim Stanhouse<br/> Matt Chuchul<br/> Alex Dean<br/> Patricia Cepeda<br/> Alicia Arendt<br/> Melissa Lassen<br/> Carrie Cabot<br/> Alexa Ogno<br/> Rosabel Obrero<br/> Rick Winter<br/> Brenda Mackey<br/> Melissa Lassen</p> |

## **STRATEGY MATTERS, LLC**

Strategy Matters, LLC is a consulting group working with organizations to develop creative solutions to complex problems. Expert at working across issue areas, our consultants work with businesses, nonprofits, government agencies, collaboratives, and public-private partnerships to address organizational and societal challenges.

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