

STRATEGIC PLAN



**ST. PAUL ACADEMY AND
SUMMIT SCHOOL**

October, 2009

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The following strategic plan has been developed by the Head of School, in conjunction with the Board of Trustees and numerous members of the St. Paul Academy and Summit School (SPA) community. The strategic plan is structured as follows:

1. Background on the strategic planning process and its objectives
2. Context within which this strategic plan was developed
3. A vision for SPA over the next decade
4. Specific initiatives to support the strategic plan

BACKGROUND ON THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS AND ITS OBJECTIVES

In 2008, the Board of Trustees launched a strategic planning process with two broad objectives:

1. To create a vision to which SPA should aspire over the next decade
2. To prioritize a set of initiatives that can be launched or enhanced in order to help the school achieve this vision.

For more than a year, parents, faculty, administrators, students, Trustees and alumni/ae have participated in a series of discussions about the future of the school. In broad terms, these discussions have occurred in two phases:

1. An initial set of discussions, primarily among Trustees and the Head of School, to provide a framework and preliminary set of ideas for shaping the direction of the school.
2. A six month dialogue among a broader group of constituents that built on the initial framework. This work was conducted in seven task forces:

Task Force	Chair
Communications	Lucy Polk: faculty member, parent of SPA alum
Culture/Community	Andrea Sachs: faculty member, current SPA parent
Curriculum	Tim O'Brien: alum, current SPA parent
Faculty	Shannon Whitaker: trustee, alum, current SPA parent

Finance	Ran Miner: trustee, retired faculty member, parent of SPA alum
Governance	David Murphy: alum, current SPA parent
Students	Charlotte (Shotsy) Johnson: trustee, alum, parent of SPA alums

During these two phases, hundreds of members of the SPA community provided input by participating on the task forces, completing surveys, joining town hall discussions, and offering feedback in many other forms. This report synthesizes all of these ideas into an overall plan.

This strategic planning work complements and supports the master planning process that focuses on the renovation of the Upper School and the athletic facilities on the Randolph Campus. The original home of St. Paul Academy, the Randolph Campus includes academic facilities that date to the early twentieth century, Briggs Gymnasium built in 1954 and Drake arena which opened in 1967. These facilities, which served SPA well over the decades, supported a school that was smaller than the SPA of today and an educational culture and a curriculum very different from the program described in this Strategic Plan. Recent improvements (e.g., rebuilding of the Middle School in the last 10 years) were the first steps to reconfigure existing facilities to meet the needs of the school today and into the future.

The Master Plan defines a vision for enhancing the aging facilities on the Randolph Campus. SPA is committed to making these improvements—the construction of new classrooms and other education spaces, a performing arts center, a field house, a new arena, community gathering spaces and a thoroughly renovated Upper School—in the next decade. In fact, the school expects to make considerable progress on executing this Master Plan in the next year. Simply put, SPA cannot achieve the vision of the school described in this Strategic Plan without enhancing its facilities in a manner consistent with the Master Plan.

This Strategic Plan does not attempt to describe every aspect of how the school will evolve, nor does it list all of the important initiatives that the school will support in the next several years. In fact, SPA, like any large and complex institution, will initiate numerous efforts that are essential to the effective pursuit of its mission; many of these efforts are not detailed in this plan. This strategic plan describes in general terms the broad efforts that must be launched or enhanced to help the school achieve its vision.

CONTEXT WITHIN WHICH THIS STRATEGIC PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

Every strategic plan is developed within the context of macro-economic and other broad trends that to some degree shape the plan. The purpose of this strategic plan is to articulate a vision for SPA over a decade, so the plan cannot be inappropriately constrained by short-term conditions. At the same time, several forces at work will affect the school over many years, and these were considered as part of the dialogue. They include:

- 1. Challenging economic conditions:** SPA has thrived for a century through economic booms and busts, and most members of the SPA community expect the

school to respond similarly through this downturn. However, the recent decline in wealth levels, and the expected slow recovery will affect the school in several ways—for example, through a decreased endowment, a more challenging environment for the annual fund, and continued caution among families, and especially those contemplating enrolling in SPA for the first time, to the extended financial commitment inherent in an independent school education. These effects are likely to be felt for many years.

- 2. The increasing tenure of the faculty:** A superb faculty has been and must continue to be one of the distinctive elements of SPA. Very simply, without this outstanding group of teachers, the school cannot provide students with an exceptional educational experience. At the same time, within the next decade, as many as a third of the existing faculty will likely retire. This will require the school to recruit, acculturate and support a far larger number of faculty members new to SPA than has been the case in the past.
- 3. The continued evolution of the student body:** For many years, SPA was considered a “neighborhood school,” educating large numbers of students primarily from St. Paul. In recent years, the students have come from a much more diverse set of communities across the Twin Cities; today, many come from Minneapolis, Woodbury, Eagan and other surrounding areas. Going forward, SPA will need to continue to attract and retain students from many different geographic areas in order to sustain the quality and quantity of students that are required for the school to thrive. Over the past decade, SPA has worked diligently to recruit students who reflect various kinds of diversity. Today twenty five percent of the students come from diverse backgrounds. If SPA is to thrive in the future, it must continue to recruit, enroll and support students who reflect the changing demographic face of the Twin Cities.
- 4. An expanding set of options for families:** While pressures on the public school system continue to drive up class sizes and encourage many parents to consider other options, an increasing number of excellent alternatives are available. SPA and its traditional competitors, Blake, Breck, Mounds Park Academy and other private schools, face significant competition from more attractively priced parochial and public options provided by specialized programs and charter schools.
- 5. An increasingly interdependent and global world:** More than ever, the activities of the SPA community are affected by, and help shape, the global community. The application of technology and the need to focus on the environmental impact of the school community are but two examples of this interconnectedness. The school will, over the next decade, need to determine where to respond and where to lead on pieces of this connectedness.

A VISION FOR SPA OVER THE NEXT DECADE

Strategic plans are fundamentally aspirational documents. This strategic plan outlines a path for the next seven to ten years; it describes a bold and appropriately ambitious vision that draws organically on the school's history and traditions while describing evolutions and changes in institutional culture that will enable SPA to master the challenges of schooling in the 21st century.

What will the SPA of 2020 look like if we successfully implement the strategic plan of 2009? The following is a description of what the school community might look like:

“Consistent with the school’s mission, students at SPA will pursue a rich and rigorous education in a caring, supportive environment—one that values and celebrates their individual gifts while helping them to appreciate and benefit from the talents of others in the SPA community. In doing so, they develop a quiet self-confidence, a keen and nimble intellect, a profound respect and concern for others, and a deep understanding of themselves that enables each student to determine how they will make a unique, positive contribution to their world at SPA and beyond.

First and foremost SPA will continue to be regarded as a first rate college preparatory school, as it has been for more than a century. Selective colleges and universities, private and public, will continue to welcome SPA graduates, who are justifiably known for their deep grounding in the liberal arts, and their skills as critical thinkers. SPA will maintain this exceptional stature both because of its outstanding academic offerings, and because it maintains a set of values and a culture that have been nurtured for more than a century (e.g., respect for others, kindness, intellectual curiosity).

SPA students of 2020 will be extraordinarily capable academically, will be model citizens, and will be emerging leaders. SPA students will be known for their ability to work collaboratively, for their quantitative and technological skills, and for their capacity to integrate ideas from a variety of disciplines. They will know how to stretch traditional disciplinary boundaries in their thinking and analysis. At the same time, they will have a full range of co-curricular experiences: nearly all will have long-term, substantive involvement in some combination of fine arts, athletics, student government and other co-curricular activities like the newspapers or yearbooks. And as important as their intellectual skills, students will be developing a set of values that help them understand their responsibilities to others, and recognize their opportunity and responsibility to help build a better world at SPA and beyond.

SPA’s curriculum will be carefully ordered to provide students with the skills, habits and aptitudes to succeed in the new and unpredictable world of the 21st century. The notion of interdependence or interconnectedness

is more than an intellectual artifact or style for SPA students; it captures students' understanding of their immediate community and the world around them. The students of 2020 will benefit from SPA's recognition that the greatest opportunities and successes will come to those who can synthesize knowledge and information from a variety of sources, and can identify connections and patterns that are not easily detectable to the traditional thinker.

The students will be who they are in large part because of SPA's exemplary faculty—teachers who understand and appreciate each individual student. Over the previous decade, a wave of retirements has changed the faculty—eminent senior teachers have given way to a cohort of new hires. This potentially disruptive transition was eased by careful and deliberate planning and the assiduous recruitment of instructors from around the country bringing with them a breadth of perspectives. Teachers want to come to SPA and the recent appointments include new graduates and experienced instructors, a blend of native Minnesotans and those who have moved to the Twin Cities for the expressed purpose of joining the faculty at SPA.

The faculty of 2020 will also reflect the diversity of the Twin Cities. They will be attracted to SPA by the challenges of teaching the best students in the country in small classes, an inspiring curriculum, and a unified approach to instruction from K-12. At the same time, they will benefit from a high degree of autonomy and independence accorded all teachers. They will also be attracted by the salaries and benefits, and a supportive and collaborative administration and administrative structure. Teachers at SPA understand and embrace the ethos of renewal and improvement, and they take full advantage of an impressive array of professional development opportunities, from regular support for conferences to sabbaticals. To be a teacher at SPA has always been more than just a job, and all instructors will know that they are part of a community that asks much of them but supports them with equal vigor and enthusiasm.

If there is one word to characterize the students, faculty, families and alumni/ae of SPA in 2020, that word will be *engaged*. Over the last ten years, SPA will have cultivated a strong and compelling communal ethic. Students will eagerly engage in the pursuit of their own education. Like their sons and daughters, parents will be encouraged to find satisfying and meaningful ways that they can participate in the life of the school. The styles and choices vary by division, but with an award-winning communications program and an active parent association, SPA will be renowned for its vibrant and spirited community. People will know and understand what SPA stands for and how they can best support their school and its programs, and this strong sense of identity will give SPA an enhanced profile throughout the Twin Cities. This sense of community will

also encourage alumni/ae to maintain strong connections to the school and to one another and many will enjoy life-long, active relationships with SPA and their fellow alums.

Students and faculty will thrive because the school will build academic, arts, and athletic facilities to support the school's educational objectives. As an example, students in the Upper School will study and learn in state-of-the-art classrooms and laboratories specifically designed to support the curriculum. The fine arts programs will have a performing arts center on the Randolph Campus that enhances the quality of productions and concerts, and inspires new courses on stage production, set design and costuming. The performing arts center will also serve as a space for larger community-wide celebrations and meetings. For athletics, a capital campaign will culminate in a new field house, a rink to replace the Drake Arena, a new outdoor practice rink and the installation of artificial turf fields, one of which has lights.

The new facilities will allow SPA to provide an exceptional education and balance that education appropriately with co-curricular activities. With a lighted, artificial turf field, teams can practice in inclement weather and schedule games in the evening. Soccer and football games in the fall will be school-wide events that start on weekends at 7:00 pm, and parents and students from all divisions will fill the stands. The new Fine Arts facility will showcase the artistic, musical, theatrical and technical talents of the SPA students in a welcoming and professional venue. With larger and improved athletic facilities, students will be able to finish their practices during the week no later than 6:30 pm. This will enable them to be home for evening meals and still have plenty of time to attend to their homework. As a result, student participation on athletic teams will increase, as will support and enthusiasm for the Spartans from the SPA community.

Demographically, the SPA of 2020 will have evolved on many fronts. There will be 900 students in the school and wait lists for most grades. Fifty percent of the students will come from St. Paul while the other half will come from communities throughout the greater metropolitan area; 30% will receive some form of scholarship support. SPA, dating back to the early 2000's, is known for its commitment to multiculturalism and diversity and in 2020, more than 30% of the students will represent some aspect of diversity, whether racial, ethnic or religious. Through an innovative middle income scholarship program, SPA will become known nationally for its commitment to socio-economic diversity. The school will have earned a reputation for working with families and students to retain students through graduation from the Upper School, despite academic, social and economic challenges that may arise during a student's career.

SPA will have achieved this vision because it prospered through the fiscal uncertainty of the last decade. In spite of the financial tumult and unlike other independent schools, SPA will have more qualified applicants than openings, a result of the clarity of its purpose and a particularly effective admission office. With its clear commitment to a lean administrative model, careful budgeting, and thoughtful Board leadership, SPA will have consistently sought to keep tuition increases in line with inflation (and generally succeeded). Stable and high enrollments and revenue from summer athletic camps, a direct outgrowth of the new athletic facilities, will contribute to annual surpluses. Even with its culture of fiscal vigilance, SPA will continue to offer compensation and benefits in line with other top independent schools throughout the Midwest.

Students and parents will be drawn ineluctably to SPA by the challenging and innovative curriculum, SPA's demonstrated history of excellence and the successes of its alumni/ae. A robust and growing annual fund will vividly reflect the satisfaction and devotion of alumni/ae and current families to this exceptional institution."

Schools are driven by contradictory impulses. They are fundamentally conservative institutions charged with transmitting the accumulated wisdom of their culture. Schools are also responsible for preparing their students for the future, a mission that may well pull the curriculum and the entire community in a decidedly different and less traditional direction. SPA has been remarkably successful in satisfying these potentially antagonistic strains and the strategic plan of 2009 represents another phase in the school's institutional maturation. The SPA of 2020 points to the future but is clearly and appropriately anchored in traditions and principles that have informed and animated the school for more than one hundred years.

This is an exciting vision, and one that is eminently achievable. The following set of initiatives outline many of the critical steps required to help achieve these aspirations.

INITIATIVES TO ACHIEVE THE VISION

The vision of SPA described above builds on the current strengths of the school. Many initiatives described below build on those currently underway; others are largely new.

This plan does not seek to detail all of the innovative initiatives currently in process at SPA, but that should not be construed as any comment on the importance of those not mentioned. The policy suggestions in each section are examples of the types of actions that could support the broader recommendations; they are not intended to be an exhaustive list.

Additionally, much work is already underway in each of the areas identified below, and new efforts will be launched soon. As a result, the vision of SPA in 2020 is not simply a long term aspiration, but rather a goal that the school is working toward now. This ensures that all students, current and future, will benefit from the ever increasing levels of excellence that the school offers.

1. **Maintaining an exceptional, diverse and continually renewed faculty:** The purpose of this initiative is to ensure that SPA over the next decade continues to have an outstanding faculty. The demographics of the faculty suggest that within next ten years, SPA will need to replace as many as 50 teachers (of about 150) who retire, in addition to those who leave for other reasons. The school has never in its history faced the challenge of replacing so many exceptional teachers in such a relatively short time. Thus SPA must prepare for this significant change while continuing to support and nurture faculty who are at the beginning or middle of their careers at SPA. The recommendations include:

- Ensuring that SPA continues to offer competitive compensation, including salaries and benefits.
- Developing a plan for managing the retirement process that will balance the interests of those who are at the end of their careers with the need for the school to minimize the disruptions that can occur with significant changes in personnel.
- Establishing a more intentional hiring process. This will involve:
 - Proactively seeking candidates (particularly from diverse backgrounds) whom the school believes could be exceptional faculty members, and developing relationships with these high potential candidates
 - Clearly communicating the benefits of teaching at SPA and living in the Twin Cities. As an example, this could involve the preparation of a document that articulates the “case for SPA.”
 - Ensuring that the recruiting process is “candidate friendly,” rapid, and involves frequent communication, and excites all applicants.
- Continuing to refine the program of orientation and acculturation that helps new teachers learn about life as an engaged and active member of the faculty. This includes a year-long orientation program that provides guidance on how to succeed at SPA. This program should also include a specific, divisional component, and sessions that bring together new teachers from all divisions to learn about wider institutional issues.
- Continuing to offer ongoing opportunities for professional development and formal evaluation, including:
 - Providing all faculty members with a clear definition of those attributes that characterize an outstanding faculty member (with the expectation that all faculty members will work to achieve this)
 - Offering structured opportunities for faculty to learn from one another across divisions and disciplines

- Creating opportunities to celebrate those faculty members who are exceptional, and taking clear actions on those faculty members who fail to meet SPA standards
- Connecting the use of professional development funds and sabbaticals more directly to institutional and classroom needs
- Creating a culture of leadership among the faculty while offering opportunities for younger and mid-career teachers to serve in positions of leadership

2. **Continuing to adapt and enhance the curriculum.** In the last year, SPA has started an exhaustive curriculum mapping exercise that will serve as a very good foundation for making additional enhancements to the curriculum. There is a variety of ideas worthy of consideration:

- Creating a curriculum governance process that effectively includes all divisions. The curriculum across the divisions will—appropriately—evolve each year. The school is currently developing a K-12 Academic Council which will play an important role in overseeing the integration and development of the curriculum. In refining the composition and function of the new council, it is vital to ensure that the interests and needs of all divisions are thoroughly represented.
- Clarifying the critical content, skills and attitudes that an SPA student should develop, and mapping how the curriculum (across all divisions) prepares students to meet these objectives. It will be particularly important to understand how each division is pursuing this mix of skills, and how the divisions are ensuring that students have the skills required to effectively transition to a new division.
- Creating a curriculum that teaches our students the skills and habits to respond to the changing conditions of living and working in the 21st century. The graduates of the next decade will enter a world that stresses our “connectedness” or interdependence whether technological, cross-national, environmental or interdisciplinary. The lessons and habits that flow from the serious study in the liberal arts, a mainstay of SPA’s curriculum, will continue to be important, but future graduates will need more than that. They will be called upon to integrate styles of thinking and analysis from different disciplines and to work collaboratively with colleagues from cultures very different from their own. They will also be asked to analyze and synthesize data from a variety of sources which will require mastery of technology and a carefully cultivated sense of discernment.
 - The challenge for SPA is to determine how to modify the curriculum to ensure that our graduates are sufficiently creative and flexible to succeed in this new and evolving environment. This could also involve changes to how instruction is provided (e.g., using more online resources to enrich classroom learning).
 - With the completion of the curriculum mapping, the introduction of an integrated technology program in the Upper School and an ISACS accreditation visit scheduled for 2011-12, the time is right for SPA to embark on a major and careful

examination of the curriculum. In weighing revisions and changes, the faculty should consider, among other topics, the integration of collaborative learning in all divisions, a sustained and coherent approach to quantitative or statistical analysis, and the role of environmental stewardship.

3. **Appropriately engaging the full SPA community, including parents and alumni/ae.** The engagement of all members of the SPA community creates numerous benefits. The purpose of this initiative is to ensure that all members of the community, particularly parents and alumni/ae, are engaged at a level that is appropriate to their interests. Specifically, this will involve:

- Creating an exceptional communications capability within the school that uses a wide range of media to keep all important internal and external constituencies—students, faculty, parents, alumni/ae, prospective families and other members of the broader Twin Cities community—appropriately aware of, and involved with, various aspects of the school. These capabilities could include:
 - Developing a clear articulation of the SPA “brand” so that all members and potential members of the community understand what makes the school distinctive
 - Prioritizing information that is communicated to the community so that it is appropriately timed, and critical information is readily accessed
 - Looking for opportunities to use communications tools to link members of the SPA community to one another
 - Creating opportunities to listen to the needs and interests of various constituents in the community to ensure that their needs are understood and being addressed
- Finding opportunities to engage all parents in an appropriate way, including:
 - Describing for families the ways that they can be involved with the school (e.g., active supporter of their child, in-classroom support, formal roles in parent associations, guest speakers, etc)
 - Continuing to refine orientation programs (i.e., entry into the school, movement into a new division) that help the families through these transitions.
 - Evaluating the implementation of efforts like the Student Ambassador Program across the Upper School (to assist students who are new to SPA), and determining if a similar model could be developed for the Lower and Middle Schools.
 - Broadening the base of parents involved in the Parents’ Associations and creating new, more flexible ways for them to engage that also help to build connections within the community (e.g., virtual meetings, a parents blog on children’s books or summer activities)

- Significantly expanding the school’s outreach to alumni/ae. This could include:
 - Taking aggressive steps to reestablish relationships with large numbers of alums (not initially for fund-raising purposes)
 - Ensuring that significant reunion events (e.g., 5, 10, 25 year, etc) are high quality and well-attended
 - Finding appropriate opportunities for alumni/ae to interact with students in the course of the curriculum, such as participating in elective courses, supervising Senior projects, visiting classes to teach about their areas of expertise, or consulting with faculty on the curriculum
 - Identifying and making more intentional the sometimes serendipitous and haphazard connections between the school and alumni/ae
4. **Ensuring that the culture remains strong and consistent with the values of the school:** The purpose of this initiative is to ensure that the school continues to nurture a safe and supportive environment. When all individuals are known and valued, the community is truly healthy and can accomplish the academic mission. Efforts could include:
- Creating opportunities to strengthen relationships within the community by, for example:
 - Expanding opportunities for student interaction across the three divisions (e.g., traditional senior-kindergarten pumpkin carving, broader attendance at Senior Speeches). Each of the divisions rightly has its own customs and culture, but students highly value cross-division contact
 - Reconsidering how we publicly recognize students’ achievements, whether academic, athletic, or extracurricular, to ensure these celebrations honor individuals while affirming school values, building school spirit, and making a meaningful impact on those not recognized
 - Reinforcing with adults in the community the important role positive and respectful communication plays in building trust and modeling appropriate behavior for children
 - Integrating non-teaching staff more intentionally into the broader community, so that they feel fully valued and included
 - Deliberately framing co-curricular programs and community-wide activities so that they reinforce the vision and values and foster a sense of connection:
 - Supporting the ongoing effort to ensure that the athletics program is aligned with the broader school vision

- Expanding and fully integrating the service learning program to build connections with the broader community and instill an ethic of community service
- Highlighting important programs at the school (e.g., the Senior Speech program, the kindergarten Hawaii play) as celebrations of SPA’s values and culture.
- Ensuring that the school continually assesses and attempts to minimize its overall impact on the environment
- Positioning community-wide events such as Hats Off to the Arts and the book fairs so these gatherings celebrate the vision and values and build connections across the community
- Ensuring that the new facilities (arts, athletic, etc.) are constructed in such a way as to foster the value and culture of the community. Athletic facilities, for example, should be constructed so that they are attractive and inviting gathering spaces for all members of the SPA community. The performing and fine arts facilities should provide opportunities to celebrate the works of students with diverse skills and abilities.

5. Maintaining a vibrant and diverse student body that is the optimal size for the school: In the last three years, the school has taken considerable steps to enhance the admission program and to clearly communicate the benefits that students and families receive from being part of SPA. Going forward, the school will continue to amplify these efforts in admission, as well as continuing to concentrate on the retention of families that are currently enrolled in the school. The goal of these efforts is to maintain a student body in the range of 880-910 across the three divisions (about the same number the school had in the late 1990’s). A larger school creates a more varied and robust environment for students while generating additional tuition revenue that will fortify the school’s financial position. Specifically these actions will include:

- Adopting an even more proactive view about identifying potential students (e.g., “We are going to aggressively seek out students who can benefit significantly from being part of the SPA community,” as opposed to a traditional view of “The students will find us.”). This will include:
 - Establishing additional strong relationships with “feeder schools” (e.g., pre-schools) in the St. Paul, Kenwood, Eagan, Apple Valley, Woodbury, and Mendota Heights communities
 - Developing a comprehensive program for ensuring that the school maintains a diverse student body
 - Enlisting the help of existing families in identifying new families for SPA (potentially as part of the “Engagement” approach described above)

- Developing an admission program designed specifically to attract students to the Middle School
- Adopting innovative approaches to financial aid to attract families who might not otherwise consider SPA
- Developing strong, personal relationships with families as soon as they express interest in SPA (e.g., with members of the admission staff, other SPA families, etc.)
- Developing, in conjunction with the project on clarifying SPA's brand, a compelling message about benefits of being part of the SPA community
- Considering the expansion of transportation options (building on the success with the Kenwood bus system) to ensure that families in other communities have easy access to SPA

6. Conducting a comprehensive capital campaign to build facilities consistent with those outlined in the Master Plan and required to support this Strategic Plan:

Achieving the vision for SPA in 2020 required new facilities, particularly in the Upper and Middle School. Much of these new facilities have been outlined in the Master Plan. Progress is expected to be made in the next year on conducting the feasibility study for the capital campaign, and on refining the Master Plan to reflect the SPA 2020 vision. As has been described in the Master Plan, these new facilities will be constructed with a keen view of their impact on the environment.

New facilities currently anticipated by the Master Plan include:

- New athletic facilities that will be used by SPA team and can also support a vibrant summer camp program
- New performing and visual arts facilities
- Significantly improved space for core academic pursuits, including laboratories and spaces for the humanities

7. Providing exceptional Board governance for SPA: For many years, the Board of Trustees has provided wise stewardship for the SPA community. The strategic planning process has identified opportunities to enhance the Board's effectiveness and facilitate additional dialogue between the Board and the many SPA constituents. These changes include:

- Revising the bylaws to:
 - Clarify number of and length of terms for Trustees and officers
 - Create position of "President-elect" who would become President of the Board after one-year ramp up.

- Clarify that the Committee on Trustees (the governance committee of the Board) is also charged with annually appraising the Trustee selection process, in addition to its ongoing responsibility for periodically evaluating Trustee performance
- Take steps to clarify the process for selecting Trustees by:
 - Formally adopting the NAIS (National Association of Independent Schools) principles of Good Practice for Board of Trustees, adapting them where appropriate to fit within SPA's culture
 - Ensuring that the Committee on Trustees shall periodically, at such intervals to be determined by the Committee on Trustees, consult with the full Board (and other members of the school and greater community to be chosen by the Committee on Trustees) about candidates to join the Board and about the process through which such candidates are identified
- Working directly with the Principals in the three divisions to identify a series of activities in which Board members can be involved in order to ensure that they have sufficient understanding of the school's activities
- Taking steps to facilitate communication with the broader SPA community, including experimenting with posting at least portions of the Board meeting minutes on the school's web site

8. Managing the school's financial situation to ensure long-term health: SPA is weathering these most challenging times because it has been financially strong for many years. The strategic planning process has identified several steps that can be taken to maintain this strong position going forward:

- Working to limit tuition increases over time to the rate of inflation
- Aggressively managing costs (by taking steps each year to improve productivity and reduce out-of-pocket expenses). In particular, this will involve exploring ways for SPA to reduce expenses while simultaneously reducing the school's impact on the environment (e.g., looking for opportunities to reduce energy usage, increase recycling, all with the goal of reducing costs and reducing environmental impact)
- Developing programs (e.g., summer athletic camps) as alternative sources of revenue to supplement income from tuition payments, annual giving and the endowment draw.
- Using scenario planning (e.g., the creation of six different scenarios to describe the school's financial position) and long term budgeting (i.e. maintaining a five year model of the school's finances) in order to assess the implications of various revenue and expense outcomes. Moving toward zero-based budgeting would also improve fiscal discipline.
- Taking steps to increase giving to the annual fund by 5-10 percent each year for the next five years

- Increasing the overall size of the endowment to ensure a strong financial foundation for the school

To support implementation of this strategic plan, the Board of Trustees will create a Strategic Planning Task Force that will meet quarterly with the Head of School and staff to discuss the various initiatives, as well as others that may be developed. The Head of School will report to the full Board on the implementation process twice each year.

To facilitate communication with the broader SPA community about progress on the strategic plan, the Head of School will annually convene a “town hall” meeting to discuss developments. The Head of School will also report regularly using other media (e.g., web site, newsletters, etc.) to discuss specific aspects of the plan.

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The vision for the school is clear—SPA will educate a diverse set of students who will be highly skilled academically and will be good and engaged citizens and emerging leaders. The faculty will continue to be superb while building on a tradition of excellence that has been fostered for more than a century. Parents and alums will be deeply engaged in the ongoing life of the school and the entire community will benefit from extensive renovations of the upper school and the athletic facilities. The community will be bound by the same enduring values and principles that have served SPA so well for so many years.

The task now is for members of the SPA community to make that vision a reality.

October 6, 2009