Our Strategic Plan

2017 - 2022
We prepare students with a challenging education that requires them to think critically, communicate effectively and engage fully in their intellectual growth and personal development. In doing so, they become self-confident, ethical citizens of the world who embody our motto, “Live and Serve.”

**Academics**
Through a range of experiences in and out of the classroom, students are immersed in science, mathematics, humanities, language and the arts. Our broad and ever-evolving curriculum challenges and engages students to strive for personal growth and academic excellence.

**Character**
We believe in the importance of developing individuals who are resilient, creative, confident and who persevere. We teach students to be self-advocates and expect them to own their education and actions, preparing them for lives marked by integrity, kindness, respect and fulfillment.

**Community**
Our students are known and celebrated as individuals. Connections are formed with teachers that endure beyond graduation. Multi-age relationships emerge from our JK-12 campus to foster a strong sense of community. And, we leverage knowing each and every student with our active network of faculty, parents and alumni to help students reach their goals and aspirations.

**Diversity**
We embrace diversity and global literacy to build acceptance, strengthen compassion, instill social responsibility and expand competencies that enable students to succeed in a multicultural world. Students are enriched by the inclusion of individuals with varied talents, voices and backgrounds.

**Participation**
Realizing that students discover and develop their talents and passions through action, we require full participation in arts, athletics and service. Engagement in multiple disciplines expands our students’ understanding, commitment, teamwork and potential.

**Resources**
Although people make up the core of our educational experience, we recognize the value and importance of the campus environment and resources. Our thoughtfully designed classrooms, course materials, outdoor spaces and campus facilities provide the resources necessary to maximize learning.
Starting a new school in 1919 was a truly optimistic act, an affirmation of humanity after a brutal war. Perry Dunlap Smith, North Shore Country Day’s founding Headmaster, believed in the central importance of education, but just as important, in the essential goodness of people.

He opened the School with a central belief that continues to define our community today: that a North Shore Country Day education must engage the head and heart in equal measure. Connecting these two and focusing on the development of the whole child, Smith believed, would not only ensure each child’s growth, but also provide the greatest hope for America’s future in an uncertain time. His formula—excellent academics, the conscious cultivation of a kind and generous community, and expected participation in arts, athletics and service—continues to serve us well in our 98th year.

We are early in our century, as Smith was in his, but in this Strategic Plan we strive to honor and affirm Smith’s vision even as we evolve to meet the needs of our day. We face the future with humble pride in our accomplishments, a restless impulse to grow and improve, and an unshakeable faith that our values and mission are as urgently relevant today as they have ever been.

The Strategic Plan that follows affirms these beliefs and is the result of a year of labor by over 100 people. The major topics it engages—North Shore’s curriculum, community and culture—are the warp and weft of the North Shore experience and they connect to form the fabric of the School. These are the fruits of almost 100 years of labor by thousands of people who have believed in Smith’s educational vision.

“Connection” emerges as the unifying theme of the recommendations that follow. At its core, this Strategic Plan challenges us to nurture, sharpen and enhance the academic, administrative, temporal and human connections that make North Shore so special. To do so, we must look backward, around and forward to ensure that we continue to provide our students with the most relevant and inspiring education possible. That is our singular focus and this Plan will guide our efforts over the next few years.

Perry Dunlap Smith probably didn’t have the chance to meet another Chicago luminary, famed architect Daniel Burnham, but he surely would have appreciated the opportunity. Burnham was the man responsible for organizing the famous World’s Columbian Exposition in 1893, celebrating the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus’s arrival in the Western Hemisphere. He was also the creator of the 1909 “Plan of Chicago,” which proposed a comprehensive roadmap for the future growth of the city. Today, Burnham is often credited with a short, powerful statement regarding architectural ambition: “Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood.” The full quote, though, provides crucial and relevant context for North Shore:

Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency. Remember that our [children] are going to do things that would stagger us.

As we approach North Shore’s Centennial in 2019 we work to marry Smith’s educational vision with Burnham’s innate sense that thoughtful planning means constantly evolving and should serve not only the present day, but also generations to follow. We owe our students nothing less.

I encourage you to read the following Plan, to share your thoughts and to follow our progress as North Shore enters its second century. I look forward to updating you periodically on our efforts. An exciting future awaits!

TOM FLEMMA  HEAD OF SCHOOL
OUR PROCESS

North Shore Country Day School has a proud history of thoughtful and effective strategic planning. Indeed, much of the School’s growth and progress over the last quarter century has been guided by a succession of planning processes, each guided by School leaders and focused on making North Shore the best it can be. The outcomes of these labors are clear everywhere on campus: vibrant classrooms, impressive students, thoughtfully renovated buildings, exemplary faculty and staff. As author John Maxwell wrote, “Change is inevitable. Growth is optional.”

North Shore has always chosen to grow.

We began the 2016 process with the School in a historically strong position and the arrival of a new Head of School. The planning process was thoughtful, inclusive, engaging and disciplined. Both the Board of Trustees and the School’s faculty and staff began the school year by reflecting on where North Shore came from, where we are and where we want to be. The frame around that first conversation—and every subsequent one—has been our students: What do they need and what must we provide them to ensure they are exceptionally well-prepared for the world they will enter and lead?

Six committees were formed—led by trustees and composed of trustees, faculty, staff, administrators, parents, alumni and students—to investigate six major elements of school life. These groups were charged to “think big” and the resulting discussions were rich and inspiring. The trustees monitored the work of the committees and asked tough questions of them. A steering committee, led by Trustee Duff Stevenson, Head of School Tom Flemma, and Assistant Head of School and Academic Dean Chris Boyle, began the hard work of distilling and prioritizing the committees’ recommendations. The final version you see in this document, incorporating this work and multiple revisions, was approved unanimously by the Board of Trustees in May 2017.

In the best North Shore tradition, this Plan is the result of a collaborative effort, guided by our Mission and Values. In it, we have worked to honor our heritage and embody the aspirational spirit that has always defined our School. We are proud to present our work to the North Shore community.

TOM FLEMMA HEAD OF SCHOOL
JIM LUMBERG PAST CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MOLLY SHOTWELL OELERICH ’87 CURRENT CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES
DUFF STEVENSON CHAIR, STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
A CULTURE OF INCLUSION, COLLABORATION AND KINDNESS

Ours is an intentional school community founded out of the progressive educational movement, guided by a strongly held belief in our mission and core values, and supported by the careful stewardship of generations of alumni, families, faculty and staff.

While we take tremendous pride in the community ethos and vibrant school culture we have cultivated over the last nine decades, our aspirations for our students and our school demand that North Shore Country Day School always view itself as a work in progress.

We approach our Centennial striving to be more diverse across all identifiers than ever before and engage with the world beyond our campus for both the educational benefit of our students and the opportunity to embody our motto “Live and Serve.” Our goal is an inclusive community where all people are treated with respect and dignity, where multiple perspectives and experiences are welcome, and where students from all cultures and backgrounds can succeed.

With this Plan we redouble our efforts to foster a school culture that reflects and supports who we were founded to be, who we are and who we aspire to become.
Demonstrate our full commitment to equity, inclusion and diversity by implementing the Board Diversity Task Force’s Plan with all necessary resources.

Study financial aid funding and tuition in an effort to ensure the affordability of a North Shore education and grow the socio-economic diversity of our community.

Seek and provide richer opportunities for connection and collaboration across divisions to enhance North Shore’s JK-12 culture.

Develop a coherent JK-12 civil discourse curriculum that supports our students, faculty and staff in building an inclusive school culture and an academic environment that embraces complex issues and fosters deep respect for difference.

Increase access to high quality personal and academic support systems and coordinated social/emotional education across all divisions.
AN INTERCONNECTED, INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Our mission compels us to develop ethical citizens of the world; an increasingly complex, interconnected society makes this charge ever more imperative.

While there are some constants, what the world will demand of the future leaders we educate today shifts with daunting regularity. That reality requires us to approach our work deliberately, intelligently, collaboratively and boldly. In doing so, we will reaffirm and leverage many of our traditional pillars: a challenging and relevant academic program, belief in broad participation, JK-12 connectivity, and most importantly, our teachers’ commitment to deeply know their students as learners and human beings.

We will also embrace innovative educational practice by challenging the silos perpetuated by traditional academic disciplines. Furthermore, we will redefine and expand our notion of “classroom,” adapt to the reality that educational technology advances in fast and unpredictable ways, foster creativity and imagination, and develop essential skills that will produce graduates who thrive in changing circumstances. To succeed, we will engage with collaborative partners in Chicago and beyond to inform our work and advance opportunities for our students and faculty.
Ensure our program—in the classroom and beyond—provides the necessary learning experiences and scaffolding of skills to develop students ready to actively engage the world and embody the School’s mission throughout their lives.

Focus continued curriculum development on building an integrated JK-12 curriculum that:

- intentionally develops skills, dispositions and mindsets that complement content knowledge;
- promotes interdisciplinary and experiential learning;
- demands engagement with multicultural and global issues;
- furthers the concept of “Live and Serve.”

Establish consistent departmental and programmatic assessment processes that prioritize quality delivery, programmatic coherence and regular reflection.

Analyze our Information and Educational Technology programs, including our 1:1 iPad program, and develop a plan to purposefully and strategically integrate technology into our students’ academic experiences and lives.

Design and build a comprehensive JK-12 health/wellness program.

Advance the Chicago Community Partners Program and other local, national and international partnerships as avenues for building intellectual, cross-cultural and interpersonal skills as well as create opportunities to serve our world and forge relationships with individuals outside our school community.

TO DO SO WE WILL:
To be a school of choice for students and families, and a destination workplace for faculty and staff, North Shore must provide all members of our community with the support necessary to fully participate in and be stretched by the wealth of opportunities available to them.

**Students and Families**
This requires a high level of partnership and communication between students, parents and the School. North Shore was founded to develop the whole child by engaging students in a challenging academic program and expecting full participation in the School’s artistic, athletic and service programs. This has remained core to our mission and practice ever since. With this plan we will further this work by translating it to our modern context.

**Faculty and Staff**
The quality of the student experience at North Shore is inextricably linked to the skills, talents and commitment of our faculty and staff. Creating the conditions and opportunities for these esteemed educators to thrive and grow is essential to achieving our individual and institutional ambitions.

Making a distinctive commitment to their development as professionals and providing greater opportunities for both collaboration among and leadership within an increasingly diverse group of colleagues are two key initiatives to invest in our faculty and staff, and increase their impact on the School community and the profession.
Students and Families

Assess and further develop school systems and practices that ensure equitable access to all aspects of the North Shore experience for all students and families.

Continue to evaluate student experiences and the impact of our ongoing commitment to “full participation” in athletics, arts and service learning with an eye to fostering wellness and balance.

Build a summer “bridge” program to support student transitions into and through North Shore.

Advance the School’s partnership with parents by increasing the quality, coordination and timing of our communication practices as well as smoothly acclimating new families to our community.

Expand parent education programs, with particular attention to issues of child development, technology, and equity, inclusion and diversity.

Faculty and Staff

Invest in a best-in-class professional development program that reflects the evolving understandings of teaching and learning, further develops cultural competencies, emphasizes the social/emotional growth of students and supports the continued professional renewal of faculty.

Cultivate greater professional collaboration across departments and divisions for the enrichment of the student and faculty/staff experience.

Hone our hiring practices for faculty and staff to fulfill our mission, advance the School’s strategic vision, and support the development of the innovative and inclusive community we aspire to be.

Prioritize structures and practices that support work/life balance for faculty and staff through disciplined agenda setting and clear communication.
A STRONG, REFLECTIVE, AMBITIOUS SCHOOL

Our Centennial will be a time to look back, within, around and ahead. It will also be a key moment to launch successfully into our second century and capitalize on our institutional momentum through a capital campaign, even stronger work in the areas of school finance and master planning, and greater attention to our place in the Chicago educational market.

As we plan for the future, we will do so deliberately. Key to this endeavor, and to North Shore’s continued success, will be an increased effort to know ourselves better by collecting and analyzing data to inform our work at every stage of the School lifecycle—from applicant to student to alum.

To use this institutional research most effectively will demand an ever more careful coordination of the administrative functions that serve and connect these and other school constituencies. We will always search for more efficient and effective ways to do our work and serve our students.
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<tr>
<th><strong>Finance and Master Planning</strong></th>
<th><strong>Institutional Research, Marketing/Branding and Admissions</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Prioritize a balanced, fiscally disciplined budget approach that ensures our ability to pursue mission-driven programmatic, personnel, compensation and financial aid objectives.</td>
<td>Engage a marketing and branding firm to review and hone our internal and external messaging, using the outcomes to support continued institutional growth and evolution, shaping our Centennial celebrations and defining the parameters of a Capital Campaign.</td>
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<td>Allocate resources to engage all School constituencies in a transformative Centennial Celebration and Capital Campaign focused on raising the endowment and elevating all aspects of our program.</td>
<td>Develop consistent survey practices of applicant parents to better understand perceptions of North Shore and the factors utilized in educational decision-making; as well as surveying faculty, students, parents, and alumni to understand the North Shore experience and its outcomes.</td>
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<td>Align and find efficiencies within our Alumni, Development, Communications and Finance Departments in accordance with best practices.</td>
<td>Evaluate and coordinate communications, marketing, recruitment and admissions strategies in light of North Shore’s increasing desirability and ongoing commitment to equity, inclusion and diversity.</td>
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<td>Develop a plan to build a lasting culture of philanthropy across all School generations and constituencies with particular focus on engaging our young alumni.</td>
<td>Set guidelines to inform admission decisions that reflect our increased selectivity while keeping our focus on admission practices driven by our School’s mission and culture.</td>
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<td>Identify new income streams with an emphasis on expanding the number and range of summer and auxiliary programs.</td>
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<td>Evaluate the appropriate size and role of our endowment in partnership with the School’s Foundation Board.</td>
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<td>Refine and implement a Campus Master Plan that includes enhancing our athletic fields and facilities, library and parking.</td>
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OUR COMMITTEES

TOM FLEMMIA  Head of School
JIM LUMBERG  Past Chair, Board of Trustees
MOLLY SHOTWELL OELERICH ‘87  Current Chair, Board of Trustees
DUFF STEVENSON  Chair, Strategic Planning Committee
CHRIS BOYLE  Assistant Head of School; Academic Dean

CURRICULUM & CO-CURRICULUM
ANNE KELLY  Chair
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SUSAN BONDURANT  Trustee
DREA GALLAGA  Faculty/Parent
MARCY GEISLER  Faculty
QUI BELLOWS MILLER ’04  Trustee/Alum
JEN PFANNERSTILL  Faculty/Parent
DAVE THOMAS  Trustee
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ERIK COOPER  Faculty
BECKY CORRIGAN  Faculty
MULLERY DOAR ’06  Staff
TIM FLANNERY  Trustee/Parent
GINNY GEORGE  Trustee/Parent
SOPHIE HILAND ’18  Student
TOM KOWALCZYK  Faculty
FIROUZ NIAZI ’17  Student
KWESI STEELE  Trustee/Parent
DEBBIE YOUDERIAN  Faculty/Parent
GRACE WOOD  Faculty

FACULTY/STAFF EXPERIENCE
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SHARON GRABOYS  Parent
DAVID GROSSMAN  Faculty/Parent
LINDA KIRACIBASI  Faculty
CHARLENE KITTREDGE  Trustee/Parent
CAITLIN MCLENNAN  Faculty
CRAIG NIEMANN  Parent
DANA SPECHT  Faculty
TINA TROTT  Trustee
TERRI WEBB  Staff
HILLARY WIRTZ ’97  Trustee/Alum

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VAHE DOMBALAGIAN  Trustee/Parent
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BERT GETZ  Trustee
CINDY HOOPER  Staff
TOM MACEJKO  Trustee/Parent
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PATRICK MCHUGH  Staff
MIKE MURDOCK  Parent
ELLEN RASMUSSEN  Faculty
HILARY BISHOP SCOTT ’96  Parent
KEN VIELLIEU  Trustee

EQUITY, INCLUSION, DIVERSITY
NOREEN POTEMPA  Chair
LISA DOI ’09  Alum
SUSAN FORTIER  Trustee/Parent
RASHID GHASI ’85  Trustee/Parent/Alum
JUSTIN HARTLEY ’19  Student
ANGEL JACKSON  Parent
DARLING KITTOE ’13  Alum
JANET LORD  Faculty
KATHY MCHUGH  Faculty
KENNY OLATUNJI  Trustee/Parent
KEITH SKLAR  Faculty
THANDI STEELE ’18  Student
LYNSEY WOLLIN-CASEY  Staff/Parent
JENNA WYMAN ’17  Student

COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING
AMY GRAY  Chair/Parent
TURA COTTINGHAM  Staff
TOM FLICKINGER  Trustee/Parent
JEFF FOREMAN ’80  Trustee/Alum
JASON GIFFEN  Staff/Parent
RAY HYLTON  Trustee
KRISTEN KACZYNSKI  Staff/Parent
ANYA LEIST  Faculty
KIM MORGAN  Parent
SARAH GEIST ROSEN ’86  Trustee/Parent/Alum
SUSANNA VER EECKE  Parent
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