



STRATEGIC VISION PROGRESS REPORT

Winter 2014-2015

CHALLENGING STUDENTS TO **THINK** EXPANSIVELY | **ACT** ETHICALLY | **LEAD** RESPONSIBLY



The Senior School campus in winter

PROGRESS REPORT • WINTER 2014-2015

Since formally adopting the Strategic Vision “Challenging Students to Think Expansively, Act Ethically and Lead Responsibly” in May 2012, Shady Side Academy has made great strides towards accomplishing its strategic goals.

STRATEGIC VISION

2012

2017

This report provides an overview of the progress made by Shady Side Academy toward fulfilling the objectives of its Strategic Vision from September 2013 through November 2014. The report lists the six goals of the Strategic Vision and their corresponding strategies, with notable achievements or progress listed as bullets beneath each strategy.

Note:

Achievements noted in the Fall 2013 Progress Report are not repeated in this report.



GOAL

01

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Deliver a rigorous academic experience renowned for preparing students to excel and lead in a complex, rapidly changing global society.

STRATEGIES

Ensure an integrated PK-12 curriculum that is meticulously sequenced, pedagogically consistent and developmentally appropriate.

- Teachers are doing **cross-divisional peer visits**, and department leaders are working with their counterparts in the other divisions to ensure **curricular continuity**.
- The PK-12 Integration Committee created a new **course adoption protocol**.
- A **balanced literacy approach** using small groups in grades PK-1 has yielded enormous growth in students' reading assessments, and the **Wilson Foundations** program has helped to build phonemic awareness and phonics skills in grades PK-2.
- The **Writing Workshop** curriculum was successfully implemented in grades K-5 in 2013-2014 to develop young students' writing skills. Students are learning to write in three genres – narrative, informational and persuasive.
- The *Math in Focus: Singapore Math* curriculum, implemented in grades K-5 in 2012-2013, has since been expanded to grades 6-7.

- After three years of the **Flex Language Program**, the Middle School sent three classes of Chinese learners to the Senior School in 2014-2015, and many students placed into Level 3 classes.

Strengthen the science curriculum and the use of technology at all three divisions to inspire and prepare more students to pursue the STEM disciplines of science, technology, engineering and math at the university level.

- The **K-2 science curriculum** is being reworked to include genetics, botany and maker faire units.
- The **sixth and eighth grade science labs** at the Middle School were renovated in summer 2014, creating more flexible spaces that support an interactive, collaborative, project-oriented approach to teaching.
- The Senior School Science Department is providing documentation to parents and students regarding **SAT Subject Test** expectations, indicating what areas are covered in class.
- The Senior School has hired **five new science teachers** in the last two years, including Ph.D.s in physics and molecular biology.

- The faculty has revitalized the **Senior School Science Olympiad program**, and in 2014 the team won regionals and placed sixth in the state.
- The cozy new **Junior School Idea Lab** is a space where technology fosters creativity and collaboration with iPads, laptops, a SMART Board and whiteboard walls.
- Fifth graders created **videos on their iPads** for Junior School admissions tours, to show activities that a family would not see on a tour, such as assembly.
- The **Middle School 1:1 iPad program** was successfully implemented in grade 6 in 2013-2014 and expanded to grade 7 in 2014-2015.
- The **grades 7-8 computer courses** were reworked to have a programming focus.
- In 2013 the Middle School participated in the **Hour of Code**, in which every student spent an hour engaged in coding activities. In 2014 both the Junior and Middle Schools participated.
- **Robotics education** continues to expand across all three divisions, and students in grades 3-12 have the opportunity to join SSA robotics teams.

Develop an intentional global focus in our PK-12 curriculum and engage students in meaningful, age-appropriate opportunities to develop global awareness and competency.

- Eight **Chinese exchange students** from Beijing School No. 4 attended the Middle School for three weeks in January 2014 and stayed with SSA host families.
- The Middle School held the first annual **Global Action Conference Day** in December 2013, educating students about issues facing different areas of the world. The second annual GAC Day was held in December 2014.
- The Senior School's new full-time **director of global and off-campus opportunities** coordinates all experiential learning opportunities, including international exchange, study abroad, off-campus semester and gap year programs. A new web page makes this information accessible to families.

Expand the College Counseling curriculum to begin in ninth grade and emphasize a “Best College, Best Fit” culture that encourages students to stretch themselves and apply to the best schools that fit their skills and interests.

- The College Counseling Office (CCO) has worked to make its programming **developmentally appropriate and constituent-wide**.
- A new “**college boot camp**” program for seniors, launched in August 2014, addresses readiness by providing students with necessary information sooner.
- The **class meeting structure** was changed to be more thematic in approach, talking about leadership and building an application over time.
- The CCO is hosting five “**Coffee and Conversation**” events for ninth and 10th grade parents in 2014-2015.
- In September 2014, **four college deans** came to SSA to present to juniors and their parents about the college process.



- **College mini-fairs** were implemented in 2013-2014 per the recommendation of the strategic plan committee; however, the outcome was far less successful than expected. The CCO is taking a more **strategic approach to college visits** in 2014-2015, both for visits to SSA by college admissions officers and visits by SSA counselors to college admissions offices.
- Academic departments are providing more information to parents and students about **standardized tests** in advance.

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GOAL 01 | ACADEMIC PROGRAM *continued*

STRATEGIES

Introduce advanced course options across the disciplines at the Senior School to allow capable, passionate, motivated students to “take off.”

- In 2014-2015, **Physics I and II were split into two levels** based on mathematical ability. Students are placed into Physics I or Physics I Quantitative based on placement in Math I or II. Likewise, placement in Physics II (Algebra) or Physics II (Calculus) is based on math placement.
- The newly reworked **Topics in Advanced Physics** course allows top science students to explore 21st century physics, such as quantum mechanics.
- **Three new single-term chemistry electives** (Chemical Bonding, Chemistry of Metals, and Quantitative Chemical Analysis) were added.



Achieve the right balance and commit to excellence in our academics, arts and athletics programs at each campus.

- Options for **athletic and non-athletic exemptions** are now transparently codified in an exemption policy. In 2013-2014 a total of 32 non-athletic and 7 athletic exemptions were granted at the Senior School. This allowed a greater number of students to participate in the theatre and Science Olympiad programs, with no effect on the number or quality of the athletic teams. The new exemption policy also worked extremely well at the Middle School.

Improve our technology platform and support across all three campuses and add an educational technology team that will provide vision and leadership for integrating technology in our classrooms in meaningful ways.

- In summer 2014, all Novell systems (including directory services and email) were replaced with **Microsoft systems**, providing better reliability, scalability and support.
- In March 2014, the entire PK-12 faculty was immersed in educational technology professional development at the first annual **SSA Technology & Learning Day**, featuring 39 hands-on workshops. Many were led by teachers and experts from across the country who joined remotely via Skype or Google Hangout.
- Junior School teachers are holding “**Tech Wednesdays**” once a month – a forum for faculty members to share expertise and encourage the effective use of technology in the classroom.
- Several SSA teachers participated in **iPad-focused conferences** in Boston and Harrisburg in 2013 and 2014.

- SSA's new director of educational technology ran regular **workshops with the sixth grade faculty** in 2013-2014 in conjunction with the launch of the 1:1 iPad program. Beginning in March, sessions with the seventh grade faculty were added to prepare for the program's expansion in 2014-2015.
- Senior School teachers received **new laptops** in 2014-2015. The faculty is in the early stages of preparing for the arrival of the current seventh graders, who began the 1:1 iPad program in fifth grade and will expect a higher level of technology integration and engagement.
- **Several outside speakers** came to SSA to speak to students, teachers and parents about technology. Child development expert Dr. Leonard Sax spoke to parents and students about social media and video game use, UPMC's Ryan Klingensmith spoke to the Middle School faculty about adolescent Internet issues, and Dr. Michael Rich spoke to parents about children's technology use.

Revise Senior School graduation requirements to allow students more flexibility in course selection and a degree of academic specialization.

- After considering the pedagogical value of department-specific restraints on scheduling, the **English genre requirement was eliminated** and upper-form electives were unlocked to rotate through all schedule blocks. This gives students more flexibility to take other electives without conflict.
- Health I and II were replaced by a new two-credit, year-long 10th grade course, **Contemporary Issues in Teen Health**. The course meets four of eight days in an unusable schedule block tied to a science course, so it does not restrict enrollment in other electives. The maximum number of credits sophomores may take was increased so no student is denied the opportunity to take additional courses.
- **Summer school course final grades** now count in the overall GPA calculation, beginning with summer 2014 courses.
- **Discussion of graduation requirements** has begun in the APC and faculty meetings, including discussion of requirements for students admitted at later entry points (grades 10-11).

Benchmark our academic program using empirical data from selected top schools around the country to ensure our competitive advantage.

- SSA continues to **benchmark its academic programs** against peer and aspirational schools as part of an ongoing process of self-assessment.



GOAL 02

FACULTY

Invest in faculty and ensure the preservation of the faculty-student relationship that lies at the heart of the Shady Side Academy experience.

STRATEGIES

Recruit and retain a diverse, well-rounded, academically talented faculty that believes in the teacher/coach/mentor paradigm.

- Via the SSA website, Carney Sandoe & Associates, NemNet and word of mouth, SSA continues to **recruit outstanding teachers with advanced degrees** who bring diverse interests, backgrounds and perspectives to our community.
- In 2014-2015, SSA was able to **recruit a more diverse faculty** geographically, experientially and racially. Several teachers relocated to Pittsburgh specifically for an opportunity to teach at SSA.
- 78% of faculty/staff hired in 2014 hold **advanced degrees** (14 of 18), including two doctorates.
- The Senior School has been deliberately hiring **teacher-coaches** to complement teacher-scholars. As of winter 2014, 75% of the full-time faculty is involved in athletics, up from 48% in 2012, and 50% coach two or more seasons, up from 36%.

Advance the continued growth and development of our faculty through: a directed professional development program; the promotion of a culture of constant self-examination; and an enhanced teacher evaluation process.

- A new **faculty professional development liaison** was appointed in 2014.
- All three school heads **visited other schools** in 2013-2014.
- Junior School teachers traveled to **Columbia University Teachers College** in summer 2013 and 2014 to train in the new Writing Workshop curriculum. A staff developer from Columbia visited SSA in fall 2013 and spring 2014 to work directly with teachers in the classroom.
- The Junior School faculty is focusing on the craft of teaching, guided by **Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching**. Teachers will record their lessons and reflect on their practice, and visit mentor schools to observe and learn.
- **Student evaluations of teachers** are formally in place at the Middle School, following the model already in place at the Senior School.

- Parents and students graduating from each division (grades 5, 8 and 12) provided feedback on their experiences via **exit surveys** in 2014.
- The school heads and president were **evaluated in surveys** by faculty and staff.



Improve the school schedule to ensure adequate time for faculty members to work collaboratively with students and colleagues, and to develop professionally.

- The new **Middle School schedule** adopted in 2013-2014, with longer class periods and drop days, has been very successful. Teachers and students report being very satisfied with the way they can focus on topics for more prolonged periods of time.
- Two Senior School teachers participated in a conference on **teacher teams** at Harvard University in spring 2013. In 2013-2014, they led a team of 12 faculty volunteers from across departments. The team met once per cycle to share pedagogical ideas, provide feedback on teaching approaches and offer advice. There are three teacher teams in place for 2014-2015.
- The **Senior School English Department** got release time in 2013-2014 for a lengthy meeting to discuss the genre requirement and modification to the elective program. To prepare for an external departmental peer review in spring 2015, the department was given three half-day retreats.

Promote a culture where excellence in teaching is recognized and teachers know they are highly valued members of the Shady Side community.

- A new **Faculty Blog** showcases SSA's excellent teachers and what they are doing in the classroom.
- Junior School teachers **pass awards along to each other** on a monthly basis to recognize colleagues who are going above and beyond.
- The Winter 2014-2015 issue of *Shady Side Academy Magazine* will focus on faculty, spotlighting six of SSA's outstanding teachers and two alumni who have chosen careers in education.

Ensure greater faculty collaboration across disciplines and divisions.

- **Interdivisional peer visits** began last year and continue in 2014-2015. Middle School faculty are observing classes at both the Junior and Senior Schools with the intent of facilitating conversation between divisions and ensuring curricular continuity in each discipline.
- Several **in-service days** were utilized for interdivisional departmental meetings.
- Middle School learning area coordinators in social studies, English and science have been developing common expectations for **writing across the curriculum**, and are working towards a larger conversation with the Senior School.

Support and recognize innovative thinking and teaching in and out of the classroom.

- Teachers with innovative ideas are encouraged and financially supported to **present at professional conferences**.
- Innovative teachers and class projects are featured on the **website, Faculty Blog and magazine**.

GOAL

03

STUDENTS

Provide a distinctive student experience that develops outstanding scholars, ethical leaders and global citizens.

STRATEGIES

Increase meaningful leadership development opportunities at all three schools, culminating in a required leadership experience at the Senior School.

- Through the **fifth grade curriculum**, students evaluate their strengths and skills and match them with available leadership positions, for which they apply and interview each term. All fifth graders serve as assembly leaders, morning greeters and admissions ambassadors.
- Middle School student leadership is rooted in a **committee structure** rather than class officer elections.
- After exploring the idea of a required Senior School leadership experience, the faculty believes it will be more effective to **promote a culture of leadership within existing structures** than to add a graduation requirement. Discussions about intentional development of leadership skills are ongoing, as are efforts to unify and streamline the selection process for student leaders, and to strengthen leadership workshops and trainings.
- The second Senior School **leadership fair** was held in spring 2014 for rising student leaders. The fair is linked to two required leadership workshops in the fall and spring.

Foster the development of a strong moral compass in students by fully incorporating our Guiding Principles into a well-coordinated character education program that is taught by word and example at all grade levels.

- At the Junior School, a new **wellness course** in grades PK-5 is taught by the guidance counselor and learning specialist utilizing the Second Step social-emotional learning program.
- The Middle School **advisory program** incorporates targeted activities, speakers and planned themes that support a strong character education ethos.
- The new **10th grade health course** incorporates character education, decision-making and social media awareness topics relevant to this age group.
- The October 2014 faculty in-service program featured **David Streight of CSEE**, whose mission is to help schools create climates that foster social/emotional growth and develop intrinsically motivated young people.

Foster an Academy-wide culture of service by engaging students at all grade levels in meaningful, ongoing service learning projects and adding a community service component to graduation requirements.

- The Academy continues to **expand service opportunities** for students both on and off campus.
- **Global Action Conference Day** exposed Middle School students to important global issues, and follow-up service activities kept students engaged with these topics throughout the year.
- A Senior School community service requirement was discussed at length among faculty, administration and the Community Life Committee of the Board. Based on benchmarking research and the belief that **a culture of service should be fostered, not mandated**, it was decided not to pursue such a requirement. Each advisory group has been asked to participate in a service project this year. The director of service learning, administration and CLC continue to brainstorm ways to expose every student to service prior to graduation.

Provide academic and personal counseling and support to students with a consistent staffing model and approach on all three campuses.

- A **consistent staffing model** for student support is in place at all three schools.
- Learning specialists from the three divisions have developed common policies regarding record-keeping and the creation of a formal accommodation plan for students with learning needs, ensuring a **consistent continuum of support** and **seamless transition** between divisions.

- Junior and Middle School learning specialists created a **study skills curriculum** for grades 3-6 that develops skills such as organization, planning and test-taking strategies.
- The learning specialists and school counselors from all three divisions **meet regularly** to work collaboratively, share information and discuss best practices.
- Information about students with learning differences or support needs is **shared with the faculty** as needed.
- **Presentations to the faculty** are given by student support staff and outside professionals to address the needs of all students.

Ensure that parents are actively engaged as partners in their child's Shady Side Academy experience.

- A **Parent Education Programs Committee** was formed and hosted three events in fall 2014: a Lunch & Learn on children's media use with Dr. Michael Rich, an evening lecture by David Streight on raising kids with character, and an evening presentation on distracted driving by Joel Feldman. SSA also has partnered with WQED's iQ: SmartParent series.
- The Junior School has a number of on-campus **community events** planned for 2014-2015 to further build a sense of community among families.
- **Parent exit surveys** were conducted in grades 5, 8 and 12, and results are being analyzed to identify additional parent engagement opportunities.

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STRATEGIES

Recognizing the value of cultural and socioeconomic diversity in our community, ensure a diverse student body by: enhancing our financial aid program to provide more socioeconomically diverse students with access to a Shady Side Academy education; expanding the five-day boarding program and pursuing the introduction of seven-day boarding at the Senior School to attract students from outside the Pittsburgh region and internationally; and developing new feeder networks in non-traditional source neighborhoods in and around Pittsburgh.

- Two significant gifts from alumni in 2014 will **endow three new scholarships**: A \$1 million gift by Phil Rouse '64 will endow two scholarships in honor of his parents, and a \$500,000 gift by Nick Coslov '92 will endow a scholarship in memory of late Middle School teacher William DeTillo.
- **Five-day boarding program hours were expanded** in 2014-2015, so that students can stay in the dorms until Saturday morning and return earlier on Sunday.

- **Seven-day boarding** was thoroughly researched at the faculty, administrative and board level. In October 2014 the board approved a proposal to reinstate seven-day boarding at the Senior School beginning in 2015-2016. The goal is to enroll a modest but not insubstantial number of seven-day boarders who will reside alongside five-day boarders in the two residence halls.
- Admissions is developing relationships with **new feeder schools**, including Pennmont Academy in Hollidaysburg/Ebensburg, which will feed the boarding program.
- The **Junior School population** has become increasingly international, with families hailing from 15 different countries and speaking nearly 20 different languages.





EVERY
DUSTALK

COLE
FRISCHMAN

ZOE
CONOMIKES

CAMERON
CASEY

ANDREW
ZEBBY

MEGHAN
QUAID

ALEX
REUTER

EVERY
DUSTALK

EVERY
DUSTALK

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DUSTALK

GOAL 04

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Leverage our robust alumni and parent network to establish meaningful connections and collaborative relationships locally, nationally and internationally that enhance the value of the Shady Side experience.

STRATEGIES

Purposefully engage alumni and parents to become actively involved in the life of the Academy by sharing their diverse experience, expertise and access to opportunities.

- The second annual **Career Connections** event was held in May 2014 featuring parent and alumni speakers. The event was expanded to include freshmen and sophomores as well as juniors and seniors, and showcased a broader array of fields. A third event is planned for January 2015.
- The **SSA Alumni mobile app** was launched in fall 2013 and downloaded 467 times in its first year.



- **Alumni, parents and professionals visiting SSA** as guest speakers or performers included: lawyer Jeff Pollock '80, U.S. Air Force Lt. Chip Mosle '88, U.S. Naval Academy graduate Jordan Foley '07, financial advisor Mac Lynch '01, OneVoice program assistant Jamie Kessler '07, Tony Award-winning actor Christian Borle '91, *Entertainment Weekly* writer Hilary Busis '06, investment professional Abhishek Mehta '01, college dean Margaret Hazlett '84, musician Matt Ferree '13, Supreme Court fellow Dr. Zachary Kaufman '96, Fulbright Scholar Becky Tisherman '09, science writer Ann Gibbons, archaeologist Dr. Gabriel Barkay, documentary filmmaker Dan Susman, Pitt professor Jingtao Wang, veterans Dr. Rory Cooper, Robert Baird, Mike McCarthy and Trevor Onest, author Robert D. Kaplan, movie producers and an art director, Attack Theatre dancers and Pittsburgh Symphony musicians.
- During the annual **Board of Visitors** retreat in May 2014, several BOV members participated in a career panel during Senior School assembly.
- **Regional alumni events** in 2013-2014 included a new event in Miami.
- The SSA Alumni Council has added **student members** in an effort to bridge the connection between students and alumni.

Create a board-level community connections committee to assist school leaders in identifying and connecting SSA with key constituents and external contacts.

- The board-level **Community Connections Committee** began its work in 2013-2014, assisting in planning the Career Connections event and exploring other experiential learning opportunities for students.

Partner with area universities, businesses and arts organizations to further strengthen our program and create engaged learning experiences for students.

- SSA has forged a **strong relationship with the local film industry**, as three major motion pictures utilized our campuses in 2014. The movies *Fathers and Daughters* and *Southpaw* filmed scenes at the Middle and Senior Schools, while the film *Concussion* utilized a Senior School parking lot as its basecamp. During *F&D* filming, the executive producers and art director spoke in Senior School classes, and several students served as film set interns. Junior and Middle School students were cast as extras in both *F&D* and *Southpaw*.

- The **Hillman Center's 10th anniversary celebration** in 2014 featured performances by student and community groups, including the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Hill Dance Academy Theatre and Afro-American Music Institute.
- Junior School **After School Explorers students** partnered with the Pittsburgh Center for Creative Reuse to create artwork that was displayed at the East End Food Co-op.
- At the Middle School, the **modern dance group Attack Theatre** worked in residence with students for the second straight year, the Science Olympiad team worked with **Carnegie Museum entomologists** to prepare for state and national tournaments, and students attended the **Israeli Film Festival Teen Screen**.
- The Senior School Jazz Ensemble and Jazz Combo were invited to perform alongside professional saxophonists in a **holiday jazz show** at the club Latitude 40.



- Several Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra musicians visited Senior School music classes.
- As part of A Cappella Week, the **Kenyon College Kokosingers** performed at all three campuses. At the Senior School, they sang with SSA's own Chamber Choir.
- Two Senior School students serve on the board of **The Beckwith Institute**, which focuses on patient care and innovation in the health care industry.
- SSA hosted two **FIRST regional robotics tournaments** at the Middle and Senior Schools in 2013-2014, drawing a combined 450 students from across Western Pennsylvania.

Build relationships with service and nonprofit organizations to support our PK-12 service learning program and commitment to giving back to the community.

- SSA continued its partnership with several local service organizations for the 2014 **MLK Day of Service**.
- For **Global Action Conference Day**, the Middle School invited several local nonprofits to educate students about issues facing specific areas of the world and to partner on related service projects.
- The Hillman Performing Arts Series has extended its reach into the community through reading programs at the **Cooper-Siegel Library** and **Oakmont Library**.
- The baseball program has forged a relationship with the **Miracle League of Southwestern PA** and holds an annual clinic for special needs players.
- The girls basketball and boys and girls lacrosse programs organized **tournaments to benefit cancer research** in 2013-2014, raising a combined \$12,000.

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GOAL 04 | COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS *continued*

STRATEGIES

Establish partnerships with “sister schools” around the world and utilize technology to connect SSA students with international students and experts via virtual classrooms.

- SSA strengthened its relationships with **Beijing School No. 4** and **Wuhan Foreign Language School** in China through a spring 2013 visit by President Tom Cangiano and a visit by Beijing No. 4 students to the Middle School in 2014.
- As part of their unit on Canada, first graders **Skyped with a Canadian school** to learn more about the country from their peers. They also **Skyped with 2012 Olympic torch bearer John Tait** as part of their unit on the Olympics.
- The third grade’s interdisciplinary study of the U.S. has been enriched by the **Mystery Skype program**, where students virtually connect with another school via Skype and use map skills, geography skills and teamwork to guess its location.
- Eighth grade Chinese students spent two months in 2013 connecting with peers in China through the **ePals Sharing Cultures project**. Students shared information about their cultures through presentations, emails and Skype via an online virtual classroom.

Join local institutions at the forefront of the “greening” of Pittsburgh as part of our commitment to environmental sustainability and excellence in science.

- SSA has partnered with **AgRecycle to compost food waste** from dining halls and school events.
- The Middle School won a **\$2,000 school garden grant** from the Whole Kids Foundation that was used to install rain gutters and cold frames in the garden. Whole Foods Market Pittsburgh has been an important community partner for the garden.
- The Hillman Center partnered with several sustainability-focused organizations for a **lecture by author Michael Pollan** in May 2014, including Slow Foods Pittsburgh, Grow Pittsburgh and the Chatham Food Studies graduate program. Before the show, Pollan curated a farm-to-table reception at SSA with five local award-winning chefs.

Create opportunities that foster meaningful connections between students at all three campuses to enhance the student experience and build community.

- Students from all three divisions performed at the **Hillman Center 10th anniversary celebration**.
- After planting lettuce seedlings in pots in class, **PK students traveled to the Senior School** in the spring to plant them at the SSA Farm.
- Sixth graders returned to the Junior School for a **yearbook signing party** for the first time, giving them the chance to reconnect with their former teachers.
- As part of **A Cappella Week 2014**, the Senior School Chamber Choir sang at the Middle School, and third graders sang at Senior School assembly and participated in a choral workshop with faculty member Dr. Dan Brill.
- **Junior School students cheered** alongside the varsity cheerleaders at the Homecoming game in 2013 and 2014.



GOAL 05

PHYSICAL RESOURCES

Leverage our extensive physical assets on each campus to support and enhance programmatic goals in an efficient and environmentally responsible manner.

STRATEGIES

Continually invest in the Junior School renovation program to ensure the facility and its grounds support the delivery of 21st Century Learning skills.

- The **pre-kindergarten building was expanded** in summer 2014 to accommodate increased enrollment demand and allow for programmatic enhancements. The 1,200-square-foot addition created a third classroom and increased program capacity from 30 to 40 students.
- **Four classrooms were renovated** in summer 2014: both fifth grade homerooms, a first grade homeroom and the Spanish classroom.

Build a new science and technology center at the Senior School that supports our newly enhanced science program and is right-sized, architecturally compelling and as close to carbon neutral as possible.

- Planning for the building moved forward in 2014 as **two architectural firms were invited to bid** on the project. Both met with SSA trustees, administrators, faculty and students during a discovery process in spring 2014. In September 2014, both firms gave presentations to a steering committee, and in November, the Buildings & Grounds Committee of the board voted to select **Fred Fisher and Partners** of Los Angeles as the project architects.

- **The Board of Trustees passed a resolution** in October 2014 to move forward with a capital campaign that includes raising funds for the new science center.

Build a new residence hall at the Senior School to support expansion of the boarding program.

- The **two existing residence halls** are expected to meet the needs of five- and seven-day boarders for the next few years. Both buildings will undergo renovations in summer 2015 to support the boarding program's expansion.
- After the rollout of seven-day boarding, a determination will be made as to what new residential structures may be needed in the future.

Expand the number of campus faculty housing units to help attract talented teachers, support an expansion of the boarding program and build a stronger campus community.

- After the rollout of seven-day boarding, a determination will be made as to faculty housing needs for the future.



The newly expanded PK building



The J. Michael Grzymkowski '90 Terrace

Expand the capacity of McCune Dining Hall to provide added scheduling flexibility at the Senior School.

- In spring and summer 2014, the dining hall received some **upgrades**, including fresh paint and carpet, a new sound system, and new accessible men's and women's restrooms.
- Plans to expand McCune Dining Hall are in the **investigatory stages with architects** and include increased dining space as well as possible renovations to the kitchen and service areas.

Improve the energy efficiency of the physical plant on all three campuses to yield significant reductions in energy costs.

- A **new boiler and heating system** at the Middle School will make the building more energy-efficient and less costly to operate.

Utilize the luxury of our 170+ acres of outdoor space on all three campuses to maximize curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities.

- Patio tables, chairs and umbrellas were added to the **Mary Hillman Jennings Plaza** in summer 2014 to enhance it as an outdoor gathering space.
- The **J. Michael Grzymkowski '90 Terrace** was built at the Senior School in 2014 thanks to a generous gift from the family of the late alumnus. The outdoor classroom and gathering space, which was dedicated at Homecoming 2014, includes benches and a stone fire pit.
- **Two egg-laying hens** resided as guests on the Junior School campus for seven weeks in fall 2014 as part of the SSA Farm initiative. PK-5 students helped to care for the hens, and the chickens were integrated into the curriculum in science and other subjects. The chickens, which were rented, will return in spring 2015.
- A **well** was installed at the Senior School SSA Farm as a primary water supply, thanks to a gift from a donor. Electricity was run to the farm as well.

GOAL 06

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Develop a financial master plan to support the mission of the Academy and the goals of this strategic vision.

STRATEGIES

Operate the school at full capacity, enrolling approximately 970 students PK-12.

- The Junior School currently boasts its **largest enrollment since 2008** with 230 students. The newly expanded PK program is at full capacity with 40 students, and grades K-1 are full as well.
- SSA **enrolled more new students** for 2014-2015 than previous years; however, enrollment gains were offset by an unusually high number of students departing due to family moves. PK-12 enrollment for 2014-2015 is 928.
- **New financial assistance options**, including a merit scholarship program and alumni legacy award program, were approved for the 2015-2016 school year to make an SSA education accessible to more families.

Build the endowment to \$70 million, en route to a longer-term goal of \$90-\$100 million, to reduce pressure on the operating budget.

- Two generous **alumni gifts** were made to the financial aid endowment totaling \$2.5 million.
- **Increased reunion giving** in 2013 and 2014 has further bolstered the endowment.

Increase annual giving participation levels of all constituent groups to meet or exceed NAIS standards and participation rates at peer schools.

- The **annual giving participation rate** for faculty in 2013-2014 was 65%, exceeding the NAIS benchmark of 60% for day/boarder schools. Parent participation rose from 48% to 49%, approaching the 52% NAIS benchmark. Alumni participation rose from 18% to 19%, exceeding the 13% NAIS benchmark.
- **Annual giving totals** reached a new high in 2013-2014, with \$1,254,558 raised for the Blue & Gold Fund.
- The first-ever **“Duel of the Academies”** alumni participation challenge vs. Sewickley yielded 225 alumni gifts in two weeks, or 150% of the challenge goal.

Explore and expand opportunities to bolster revenues from auxiliary programs and facilities rentals.

- The **Junior School After School Explorers** program enrollment and revenue rose 23% in 2013-2014, and 70% of PK-5 students participated at some point during the year. In-service and break programming was offered for the second year, and enrollment rose 19%.
- **Summer Programs** added an East End Explorers camp at the Junior School and new weeklong focus and sports camps at the Senior School. Summer enrollment grew 8% from 2013 to 2014.
- The **PGA Constellation Senior Players Championship** provided auxiliary revenue for the fourth straight year through the rental of parking space on the Senior School campus. The golf tournament also continued as an Untucked and Hillman Series sponsor.
- **Three movies** rented space on SSA's campuses in 2014 to film scenes and/or host basecamp, creating an additional revenue stream for the Academy.

Design a capital campaign to support the school's strategic vision and priorities.

- The Campaign Planning Committee engaged the services of Campbell & Company to conduct a **philanthropic market study**, and a report was presented to the board in July 2014.
- In October 2014, the **board passed a resolution** to move forward with the leadership phase of a capital campaign focusing on raising funds for science and technology facilities, growing endowment for faculty support and financial aid, and growing the Blue & Gold Fund.

Develop marketing and communications strategies to support the school's strategic vision and priorities.

- Marketing and communications strategies continue to be **centered around the strategic vision**. For example, feature stories for the website and magazine are purposefully selected to illustrate strategic priorities. The Summer 2014 issue of the magazine focused on science, while the Winter 2014-2015 issue will focus on faculty.
- **A bold new admissions marketing campaign** launched in 2013-2014, featuring an online viewbook and advertisements focused on academic rigor, faculty-student mentorship and college outcomes, among other themes. The campaign was tweaked for 2014-2015 to include a new video component featuring "Day in the Life" videos for all three schools and boarding.
- An **increased admissions advertising budget** in 2013-2014 gave SSA a stronger year-round multimedia presence.
- A new **President's Blog and Twitter account** was launched in 2014, providing a new way for the president to communicate directly to the community about strategic priorities and accomplishments.



STRATEGIC VISION

2012

2017

STRATEGIC VISION PROGRESS REPORT TEAM

2014-2015

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Katie Mihm '83

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