A STRATEGIC PLAN TO LAUNCH THE SCHOOL'S SECOND CENTURY
We are a school that places problem-solving at the center of our classrooms. How do we continue to connect our everyday academic studies to urgent, complex, and world-based questions? ....... PAGE 4/5

Envisioning our future, The Park School community has asked thoughtful questions and delved deeply into philosophy and practice to create a strategic plan that will set our priorities and inform our actions in the years to come.

We believe we have an ethical responsibility to listen to, and learn from, each other. How do we continue to foster and build a compassionate and welcoming community? ................. PAGE 8/9

We are a school that respects the freedom to teach and the freedom to learn. How do we use that freedom to prepare our students to meet the future with inventiveness and flexibility? ............ PAGE 6/7
From its founding, The Park School developed a new and bold vision of what education could be. Drawing on the best of what had come before, the school promoted a view of children as innately curious, powerfully capable, and actively engaged in their world. Such a view was groundbreaking in 1912, reflecting our founders’ determination to look forward. Today, as we build on our remarkable legacy, we too look forward to what our students need for a new century.

We remain committed to three defining principles of excellence that shaped the school’s founding and development: Inquiry, Innovation, and Inclusivity. By honoring these fundamental tenets of progressive education, we celebrate our historic beginnings and affirm these components as the essence of 21st century learning.

In 1912, Park’s founders imagined a school that would offer new approaches to learning by embracing the groundbreaking philosophy of progressive education. One hundred years later, the success of their early vision is clear. Park School has grown and thrived. It has earned recognition for its distinguished programs, the achievements of its faculty, and the accomplishments of its graduates. In this Centennial year, there is indeed much to be proud of and much to celebrate. In the Spring of 2011, the Board of Trustees committed to the creation of a strategic plan that would launch Park School’s second century. From the outset, the year-long process acknowledged and sought input from diverse constituents—parents, employees, students, alumni, and trustees. Through focus groups, surveys, and committee meetings, hundreds of people were engaged in sharing information, opinions, and suggestions. The intent was to insure that we look forward with purpose and careful thought, build on the school’s considerable strengths, maximize its financial stability, and honor its founding precepts. This strategic plan both affirms our core values and reminds us to “strive on,” as our school song implores. Great schools reflect, think critically, and work diligently to attain their goals—as they motivate their students to do the same. With this plan as our guide, Park will continue to make history and will create a very bright future.

Dan Paradis, Head of School
Jim Wyda, President, Board of Trustees
CRITICAL INVESTIGATION IS CENTRAL TO OUR VISION AT PARK. Students and teachers have always asked real questions, investigated authentic problems, and arrived at complex understandings, both in the classroom and beyond.

In the early years, our students mastered algebra, studied Latin, and read the classics; they also planted gardens, constructed buildings, and made full-length motion pictures.

Today, our students still seek the richest, deepest disciplinary understandings, and they still garden, build structures, and produce videos. They present their scientific research at international conferences and publish plays that garner national recognition. They build houses, construct arguments, design robots, and posit mathematical theories. And they engage in this work with democratic spirit in their classrooms, at assemblies, and in the greater community. By learning and doing, students understand that they are involved in significant, real-world work that matters.

Park prepares students to ask complex questions, pursue solutions, and view themselves as active learners and powerful thinkers. Confident in their abilities and skills, recognized and honored for their contributions and achievements, Park graduates transform disciplines, advance their fields, and challenge the "known."

Education in Park’s second century must continue this tradition of inquiry, in every classroom, in every discipline, and beyond the confines of Park’s campus. Recognizing that our students today will tackle problems that require deep scientific knowledge and creative thinking—and acknowledging that the world needs, perhaps more than ever before, people who can turn inquiry into action—we commit to a focus on scientific understanding and informed and responsible citizenship.

RECOGNIZING THE RAPID CHANGES IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE NEED TO DEEPEN SCIENTIFIC LITERACY THROUGH A PROGRESSIVE APPROACH TO LEARNING, PARK COMMITS TO ADVANCING OUR SCHOOL-WIDE PROGRAM OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS BY:

- Fostering a school culture that emphasizes scientific literacy.
- Positioning our students to participate with confidence in the scientific world.
- Studying and using current trends in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education.
- Achieving greater K-12 science coordination.
- Emphasizing cross-disciplinary interactions between the liberal arts and STEM.
- Promoting independent study, student and faculty internships, and school-community partnerships to further integrate and expand program offerings.
- Creating opportunities for civic engagement through curriculum development, parent involvement, and teacher partnerships with local, national, and international educational institutions.
- Expanding existing partnerships with communities locally, nationally, and internationally.

CONTINUING OUR PROGRESSIVE BELIEF IN ACTIVE PARTICIPATION BEYOND THE CLASSROOM, PARK COMMITS TO PROMOTING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AT STUDENT, FACULTY, AND INSTITUTIONAL LEVELS BY:

- Dedicating staffing to coordinate and support all service learning, public-private partnerships, and new Baltimore-focused initiatives.
- Creating opportunities for civic engagement through curriculum development, parent involvement, and teacher partnerships with local, national, and international educational institutions.
- Emphasizing cross-disciplinary interactions between the liberal arts and STEM.
- Promoting independent study, student and faculty internships, and school-community partnerships to further integrate and expand program offerings.
- Expanding existing partnerships with communities locally, nationally, and internationally.
SINCE THE SCHOOL’S FOUNDING, TEACHERS HAVE CREATED A CURRICULUM BOTH RIGOROUS AND RESPONSIVE TO STUDENTS’ INTELLECTUAL NEEDS AND EMOTIONAL GROWTH. We know that students flourish in an atmosphere that affirms their voices, interests, and ideas. Park teachers foster demanding, dynamic classroom cultures where they and their students are challenged to think, question, and create.

Locally and nationally, Park continues to lay claim to groundbreaking curricula and programs. The F. Parvin Sharpless Faculty and Curricular Advancement program (FACA), a pioneering concept for professional development, provides faculty time, space, and resources to engage in meaningful work. This endowed summer program allows teachers to incorporate new ideas into their lessons, pursue independent work to keep current in their fields, review the scope and sequence of curriculum, and refine their practice. Outcomes include an enhanced language arts program in the Lower School, differentiated instruction in the Middle School, a novel ninth through eleventh grade mathematics curriculum, and the development of a Chinese language program in the Upper School.

Teachers have also focused on the affective realm of learning, pursuing projects that address the school environment, peer-to-peer relationships, and students’ physical, ethical, and emotional health. In the last ten years, Park teachers have equipped themselves to meet a wide range of student needs by reviewing new research on the brain, cognition, and intelligence. They have participated in workshops to better understand learning styles as well as structured conversations regarding race, gender, class, and sexual orientation. Students often join in these discussions, talking about how they learn best, about how to support a friend, or about diversity in its many forms. They talk with parents at school gatherings about peer pressure and social networking. Older students mentor younger students. At Park, young people understand their responsibility to create and maintain the supportive culture that defines our school.

It is because we promote learning, research, and innovation among our faculty that our students thrive. The results of professional development activities are seen in every classroom and every division, as students study the migratory patterns of butterflies, build shelters, deliver monologues, advocate for change, write speeches, publish essays, perform on stage, display their art, construct and test hypotheses, compete athletically, and tutor and mentor each other across grade levels and across divisions. As we address the needs of each new generation of Park students, we seek to provide even greater opportunities for professional development and affective programming.

SUPPORTING OUR DYNAMIC AND INNOVATIVE CURRICULUM, PARK COMMITS TO EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING THROUGH EXPANDED OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BY:

- Inspiring learning by enabling teachers to pursue new avenues of professional development.
- Creating and supporting more opportunities for teachers’ growth and education, with a special focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
- Encouraging teachers to share their practices with other public and independent school educators through electronic media, summer institutes, and regional and national forums.

HELPING STUDENTS TO BALANCE ALL DIMENSIONS OF THEIR LIVES, PARK COMMITS TO CONTINUED PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT THAT FOSTERS THEIR INTELLECTUAL, SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND ETHICAL LEARNING BY:

- Articulating a K-12 health and wellness curriculum.
- Emphasizing lifelong health, fitness, and nutrition in the curriculum, particularly in physical education classes and on teams.
- Incorporating athletics as an integral part of the learning experience by promoting communication between athletes, coaches, and teachers.
- Continuing to host speakers, schedule gatherings, and offer programs to help students and parents address and understand important developmental issues.
PARK’S FOUNDERS TOOK A PRINCIPLED AND GROUNDBREAKING STAND AGAINST DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES IN EDUCATION BY INSISTING THAT THE SCHOOL BE NON-SECTARIAN. For one hundred years, Park has continued to challenge and refine its own definition of what an inclusive community is and must be, if it is to honor the legacy of the founders. Just as the school was the first in Baltimore to admit students of all faiths without quota, it was later the first independent school to admit African-American students.

Inclusivity is integral to our philosophy and pedagogy. We know that diversity is essential to a dynamic classroom and a healthy school. Learning at Park is not simply about acquiring content knowledge; it involves listening to, and working with, all members of the community, considering multiple points of view, and understanding different perspectives and experiences.

A diverse classroom creates a wholly educated individual, one who has the openness, confidence, and compassion to engage others, who understands that we have an ethical responsibility to listen to, and learn from, each other. Our community must reflect the diversity of our world, both visible and invisible, and insure a welcoming, safe, and stimulating environment.

It is the objective of the school to be a place where each person is respected and valued, and plain speaking, honesty, and authenticity govern all relationships. By striving to create and maintain a community of diverse perspectives and experiences, the school encourages its students to question their assumptions, develop empathy, and achieve a richer understanding of the world.

The Park School Philosophy

INCLUSIVITY

PROMOTING THE SCHOOL’S HISTORIC PLEDGE TO BUILD EXCELLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY AND OUR CLASSROOMS, PARK CommITS TO DIVERSITY INITIATIVES BY:

- Publishing a diversity mission statement and sharing it with the community.
- Continuing Park’s long-standing commitment to the broadest and most encompassing definition of diversity.
- Advancing the role of a school-wide diversity coordinator as a full partner with students, parents, faculty, and administrators in support of their work.
- Addressing multiple perspectives in curricular and co-curricular offerings and school culture.
- Expanding efforts to recruit, support, and retain families and employees of diverse and international backgrounds.
- Incorporating diversity education and training into professional development programs for all employees.
- Fostering a culture where each person connected to Park feels valued by, and fully part of, the school.

PARK CommITS TO DEVELOP A COORDINATED LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND GLOBAL EDUCATION PROGRAM BY:

- Continuing to expand the ways our classrooms interact with an increasingly interconnected world.
- Supporting and building upon existing connections with other schools.
- Employing technologies to communicate beyond our campus.
- Creating opportunities for students to learn about, and interact with, peers around the world.

- Incorporating diversity education and training into professional development programs for all employees.
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