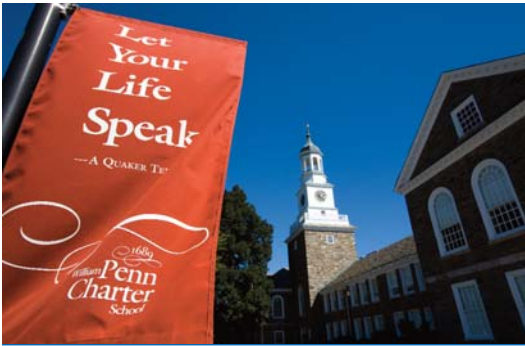


EDUCATING STUDENTS
TO LIVE LIVES THAT
MAKE A DIFFERENCE

**A Strategic Vision for the Future of
William Penn Charter School**

Presented to the Overseers, Dec. 6, 2011





VISION

WE WILL EDUCATE STUDENTS
TO LIVE LIVES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Penn Charter’s strength – in our educational program, leadership, faculty, facilities, finances, and ethos – stands out even in a region with excellent independent schools. Our school is distinguished by **a history of access and diversity; a balance of academics, arts and athletics; the Quaker moral compass** we provide students; and the **timeless skill set** we develop in graduates, a set of skills that includes self-reliance, resilience, healthy risk-taking, leadership and collaboration.

As we approach our 325th anniversary, Penn Charter faces a challenge and an opportunity. We must recognize the demands of the 21st century global community and **the skills our students need to thrive and to make a difference**. That difference could be globally significant or personally profound – a scientific discovery of great import or a quiet life characterized by a thousand acts of kindness.

It is time to tap the talent and knowledge of our own community, as well as the thinking of leaders in educational theory and innovation, to refine our curriculum and reshape our campus – perhaps even the notion of “classroom” – into a new educational program that will prepare students not only for college but for life in a complex and changing world.

It is time to shape a new educational program that will prepare students not only for college but for life in a complex and changing world.

We move forward in this strategic planning process guided by our commitment to **excellence and innovation** and our foundation in **Quaker thought and practice**. We have a history of **honoring tradition** and **embracing change**. We will do both as we develop and implement a vision for Penn Charter’s future.

EXCELLENCE • INNOVATION • COLLABORATION

MISSION STATEMENT, 1999

Quaker principles and practice guide Penn Charter, a Friends school by birthright and conviction. Within a diverse community, we engage students in a stimulating and rigorous educational program. We foster academic discipline, intellectual curiosity and spiritual growth to prepare our graduates for higher education and for life. We develop students to act in a moral, civil and responsible manner.

CORE PRINCIPLES AND VALUES STRATEGIC PLANNING, 2011

The work of the Strategic Planning Committee identified three core principles and values essential to Penn Charter's past and future success. In surveys, forums and interviews, these principles and values were mentioned time and again by our constituents – alumni, parents, teachers, students, staff and administrators – as attributes of their Penn Charter experience and as goals against which we should test this strategic vision. They are:

EXCELLENCE • INNOVATION • COLLABORATION

THE FOLLOWING SIX GOALS WILL DIRECT OUR
TRANSFORMATIONAL WORK TO ACHIEVE THIS VISION.

Goal 1

Deepen **our identity and actions as a Friends school**, and our students' understanding of **Quaker values**, to prepare our graduates to live lives that make a difference.

Goal 2

Advance our **educational program** to provide students with the knowledge and skills they will need to thrive in a complex and changing world.

Goal 3

Promote **excellence in teaching** by supporting faculty to develop and advance their professional practice.

Goal 4

Reimagine the **use of time**, structuring the day to provide flexibility as we work to create a school experience that focuses on meaningful content and recognizes the importance of pace and balance for students and teachers.

Goal 5

Develop and repurpose **space** to serve the changing needs of the Penn Charter program and mission.

Goal 6

Provide for **financial sustainability** and support the mission of the school and the goals of this innovative strategic plan.

Core Principles and Values

- **EXCELLENCE**
meaningful content
distinctive
vigor
disciplined
financially sustainable
- **INNOVATION**
student-centered
skill-based
differentiated
project-based
- **COLLABORATION**
community
self-directed
relationships

“Mind shifts do not come easily, as they require letting go of old habits, old beliefs, and old traditions. There is a necessary disruption when we shift mental models. If there is not, we are probably not shifting. Growth and change are found in disequilibrium, not balance. It takes some getting used to.”

Curriculum 21: Essential Education for a Changing World
Edited by Heidi Hayes Jacobs



Goal 1

Deepen our identity and actions as a Friends school, and our students' understanding of Quaker values, to prepare our graduates to live lives that make a difference.

Strategies

- Raise up the centrality of “that of God” in each person and of Meeting for Worship, and the value of reflection, the habit of silence, and continuing revelation; integrate the Quaker testimonies into the educational program; plan for balance for students, teachers and staff in the school schedule and curriculum.
- Model and teach integrity, truth-telling, conflict resolution and ethical choices.
- Achieve a diversity of people; increase the presence of families, students and faculty who are Quaker or graduates of Quaker schools and colleges.
- Integrate service learning into the curriculum, pre-K to 12; as a private school with a public mission, create a Center for Peace and Justice, a place where our students and the wider community would advance issues of equity, social justice and peace.
- Prioritize environmental stewardship in the daily life of the school and in longer range decisions about building and remodeling projects.
- Seek opportunities for collaboration that enhance student and faculty global competency through a commitment to Philadelphia and the world.

EXCELLENCE • INNOVATION • COLLABORATION

“Walk cheerfully over the world answering that of God in everyone.”

George Fox, 1656



Quaker Testimonies

Community
Equality
Integrity
Peace
Service
Simplicity
Social Justice
Stewardship

“Quaker Meeting is an important facilitator of thought and community. Everyone sits down as equals; we are all together – and it is powerful.”

Strategic Planning
Stakeholder Interview



“Though all scholarship is in one way or another collective in nature ... the Quaker truth seeking process tends to include a wider range of perspectives. More importantly, it takes moral principles, or testimonies as a starting point.”

by Nancy Starmer
“Toward a Quaker Pedagogy”
(from “Readings on Quaker Pedagogy”)

“Quakerism is a wonderful opportunity for society and for a school. It embraces all different religions. It creates opportunities to explore values and spiritual experience.”

Strategic Planning Stakeholder Interview

Goal 2

Advance our educational program to provide students with the knowledge and skills they will need to thrive in a complex and changing world.

Strategies

- Identify **core content and skills**; integrate what students know and do across divisions, grades and disciplines; and create **assessment tools** to measure whether students are learning what we intend to teach.
- Incorporate the use of **multiple platforms for content delivery, including new technologies**, in order to maximize student engagement and success.
- Utilize current brain research about how children learn best to develop more strategies for **individualized learning**, within the curriculum and through **learning support services**.
- Embrace and deliver a broad-based educational program in which all areas, including **the visual and performing arts and physical education and athletics**, are of the highest quality and consistent with the school mission.
- Define and develop a **distinctive identity for each division** that is built around an age-appropriate experience.
- Collaborate **locally, nationally and internationally** to enhance learning and leadership opportunities for Penn Charter students.
- Educate students for **global competency through classroom experience, service, student exchanges and travel**.
- Teach environmental awareness and develop advocacy for **environmental sustainability**.
- Braid **service learning** throughout the pre-K to grade 12 curricula.



“... we now live in a ‘flat’ world, or ‘global village.’ As residents of this global village, what do we need to make this a happy and prosperous place for all its residents? The answer is simple: global citizenship.”
Catching Up or Leading the Way
 by Yong Zhao

“As we consider changing our curriculum so that it focuses on process as well as content, we need to attend to three major decisions: (1) what should be taught—goals and outcomes; (2) how to organize and teach toward these goals—instruction; and (3) how we might know if those goals are being achieved using these instructional strategies—assessment.”
Curriculum 21: Essential Education for a Changing World

EXCELLENCE • INNOVATION
 • COLLABORATION

Skills and Dispositions

These three educators and opinion leaders are often cited in discussions about the future of education and competencies required in the 21st century global marketplace.

Seven Survival Skills. Tony Wagner, *The Global Achievement Gap*

- critical thinking and problem solving
- collaboration across networks
- agility and adaptability
- initiative and entrepreneurship
- effective oral and written communication
- accessing and analyzing information
- curiosity and imagination

The Five Cs + One. Patrick Bassett, *president of the National Association of Independent Schools*

- critical thinking
- communication
- collaboration
- creativity
- character
- cosmopolitanism (cross-cultural competency)

Habits of Mind: Howard Gardner, *Five Minds for the Future*

- the disciplined mind
- the synthesizing mind
- the creative mind
- the respectful mind
- the ethical mind

Goal 3

Promote excellence in teaching by supporting faculty to develop and advance their professional practice.

Strategies

- Build a **faculty of lifelong learners** who **collaborate with students** in a process of continuing revelation and joyful learning.
- Refine **faculty evaluation** so that it better aligns with desired student outcomes, and encourages and rewards innovation, leadership, and strong teacher-student relationships.
- Enhance **faculty development** to include faculty mentoring, leadership coaching and other meaningful experiences.
- Support **professional development, including summer work** (see VITAL, below), focused on transformational teaching.
 - Provide structured opportunities and ample time for the development of **cross-divisional and interdisciplinary work** as well as collaboration among teachers and between students and teachers.
 - Strengthen faculty **use of technology** to support excellence in teaching and learning.

EXCELLENCE • INNOVATION • COLLABORATION

VITAL: A New Professional Development Plan for PC

In the tradition of the William Penn Charter School’s Statement of Philosophy, the Valuing Innovative Teaching and Learning program (VITAL) allows educators to be **lifelong learners and reflective practitioners**. VITAL’s mission is to provide faculty with substantial funding during the summer months to allow for the transformation of their craft through **research, collaboration, and innovation**. The ultimate goal of VITAL is to provide students with an outstanding, current, and meaningful education.

“The capacity within each of us for continuing revelation dictates that learning must be ongoing and endless.”

William Penn Charter School, Statement of Philosophy (1992)



“ We need people who can read and write. But what we really need is people who cannot only read the instructions but change them. They need to be able to think outside the lines.”

Richard Gurin, CEO and President,
Binney & Smith Crayola Products

“ ... our vision of the teacher’s role needs to shift from that of the information provider to one of a catalyst, model, coach, innovator, researcher, and collaborator with the learner throughout the learning process.”

*Curriculum 21:
Essential Education for a
Changing World*

“ I love it because of the teachers. I honestly couldn’t imagine those people not being in my life. Even now I really do stay in touch.”

*Strategic Planning Stakeholder Interviews
PC Graduate*



Goal 4

Reimagine the use of time, structuring the day to provide flexibility as we work to create a school experience that focuses on meaningful content and skills, and recognizes the importance of balance for students and teachers.

Strategies

- Develop a **school-day schedule** that will facilitate innovation in teaching and learning, including project-based work, interdisciplinary work, cross-divisional work, and flexibility as the classroom expands to include the Internet, outdoor campus spaces, internships and other learning opportunities and resources in metropolitan Philadelphia.
- Rethink and refine **learning outside school hours** – “homework” – to engage students in **meaningful work**.
- Plan time for **reflection and mindfulness**.
- View a student’s day and year holistically, supporting **balance and a healthy pace**.
- Support tradition of strong **student-teacher relationships**.



EXCELLENCE • INNOVATION • COLLABORATION



“To support personalized learning, schools need to be redesigned so that they no longer are organized around age cohorts, classes, and classrooms. Instead, schools should be organized around the learning needs of students.”

*Curriculum 21:
Essential Education for a
Changing World*

“... Are we working on the right work? Am I just memorizing? Are we learning more? Are we thinking more critically?”

*Upper School student,
Strategic Planning Forums*

Terms: Online Learning Models

Technology-Infused Traditional Schools: ... students learn primarily from teachers in classrooms, but they may also go to computer labs or use programs such as Skype or Blackboard.

Blended Learning in Traditional Schools: ... traditional schools that allow students to take a few of their courses online.

Hybrid Schools: Students go to a physical school

but spend much of the day working at their own pace using online curricula that can be highly individualized. Teachers work with students one-on-one or in small groups to reinforce skills or extend learning using projects, activities.

Virtual Schools: Students typically work at home, supervised in the lower grades by a parent or adult; teachers, who also work at home, may be in another state. Instruction may be synchronous, or asynchronous, with students working online and e-mailing or talking to teachers by phone at a later time.

Goal 5

Develop and repurpose space to serve the changing needs of the Penn Charter program.

Strategies

- Develop a **facilities plan** that is fully integrated with the strategic plan and supports our educational programs; the facilities plan would include a state-of-the-art Lower School and explore more effective ways to utilize our campus.
- Create an **environmental plan** that fosters a culture of environmental stewardship and develops systems and processes to ensure all decisions are evaluated in light of their environmental effect, with consideration of affordable and sustainable alternatives.
- Expand educational opportunities beyond this 44-acre campus to include **off-site learning with academic, cultural and corporate institutions** in metropolitan Philadelphia.



“ Who seriously believes that locking 25 students in a small room with one adult for several hours each day is the best way for them to be ‘educated’? In the 21st century, education is about project-based learning, connections with peers around the world, service learning, independent research, design and creativity, and, more than anything else, critical thinking and challenges to old assumptions.”
Don't Just Rebuild Schools—Reinvent Them
by Prakash Nair

Emerging Questions About Technology

Can online learning expand our course offerings and student base?

How can video conferencing be used to support collaborative studies with people from other countries?

Can game design inform instructional design to help sustain student attention and deepen engagement in learning?

How can adults and children benefit from the use of technology and maintain their balance in this new, 24/7 technological world?

Strategic Planning Conference Binder, Technology Overview 2011

“ A dynamic look at what needs to be new and essential in curriculum necessitates a corresponding, bold reconsideration of “the place called school.” Four key program structures affect curriculum: the schedule (both long and short term); the way we group our learners; personnel configurations; and the use of space (both physical and virtual).”
Curriculum 21: Essential Education for a Changing World



EXCELLENCE • INNOVATION • COLLABORATION

Goal 6

Provide for financial sustainability and support the mission of the school and the goals of this innovative strategic plan.

Strategies

- Develop a **financial master plan** for this strategic vision; examine our reliance on major revenue sources, including tuition, endowment and fund-raising; evaluate current and future budget policies and resource allocation; develop a more entrepreneurial approach to create new and alternative sources of revenue.
- Design a **capital campaign** to support the financial master plan, the innovations of our strategic plan, and the school's mission of socioeconomic diversity.
- Expand **financial aid** as a strategic means of fulfilling our mission and achieving our enrollment goals, with particular attention to our desire to enroll Quaker students and to meet the financial need of admitted students we desire to enroll.



Access and Affordability

“ The cost of independent school tuition is the biggest barrier to converting inquiries to applicants and applicants to enrolled students. In the last decade, tuition increased annually between 5 and 7 percent, while the cost of living rose at an average of 2.3 percent a year.”

*Strategic Planning Conference Binder,
Marketing Communications Report*

“ The school needs to think long and hard about the escalating costs of tuition and where the breaking point is. ”

Strategic Planning Stakeholder Interview



EXCELLENCE • INNOVATION
• COLLABORATION

The Five Keys to Sustainability in the 21st Century

Financial

More efficient, less costly

Environmental

More green, less wasteful

Global

More networked internationally, less parochial

Programmatic

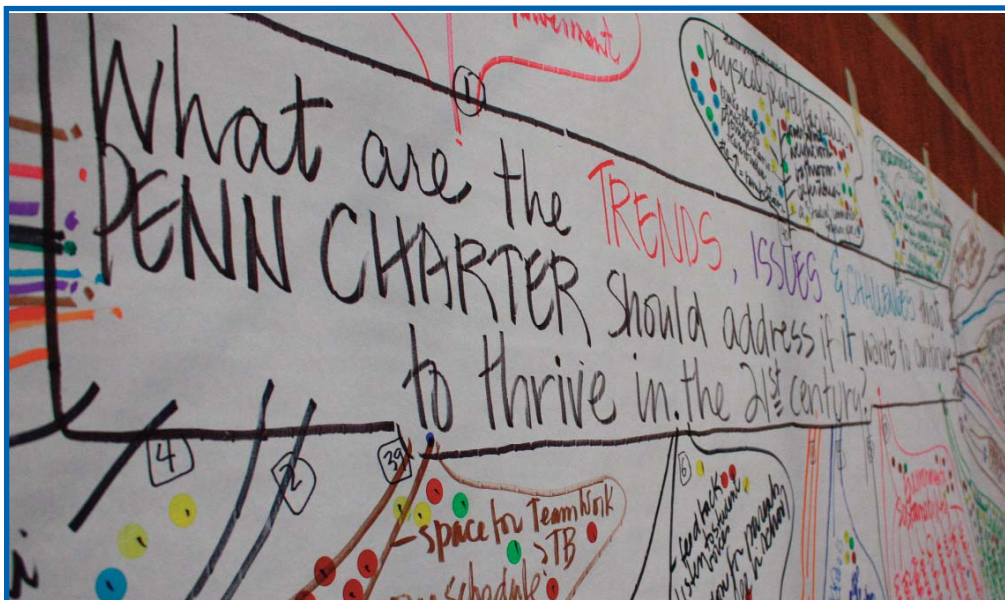
More skills and values for the 21st century marketplace, less traditional content

Demographic

Inclusive, not exclusive



*Opinion Leaders Survey,
National Association of
Independent Schools*



Next Steps

This document is a **vision** for the future of William Penn Charter School. During a daylong session on Sept. 23, 2011, Overseers met to review and begin to revise the strategic vision presented to them (version 4). This document (version 5) has been revised to reflect that feedback.

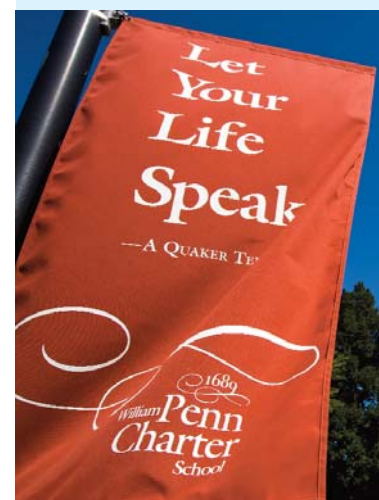
Overseers will meet Dec. 6 to review this latest version of the vision statement and decide whether to approve it as a **final strategic plan**. Then, the faculty and administration will work together on an **implementation plan**, which will include action steps and a timeline, to realize the goals and strategies of this strategic vision.

Dec. 6, 2011 Overseers Meeting
Overseers consider approval of final strategic vision.

January through December 2012 Implementation Plan
Faculty, administration and Overseers develop an implementation plan, with action steps and a timeline, to implement the strategic vision as approved by Overseers in December 2011.

Core Principles and Values

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community
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relationships



Why It Matters

Strategic Planning, Stakeholder Interview:

“Put it out there: We are a Quaker School. God is within each of us and what does the God in us want to be? That’s powerful and connects to independence and taking on responsibility.

“[We] have this piece about honesty and speaking their mind and honoring others embedded into the mission and philosophy that will get amazing outcomes. It is also compatible with other critical skills such as teamwork and staying competitive while still valuing those with whom you compete.”

Strategic Planning, Parent Survey:

“I see these principles almost daily, in large and small ways. I see it when we drop my daughter off to school in the morning, as the children hold the door for one another, greet each other in the parking lot, and bound up the stairs. I see it at the dinner table, when my daughter talks about the literature she is reading and the science projects she is preparing — she talks with the enthusiasm and confidence of a young adult whose spirit and view are valued.

“She also speaks with the humanity of a person who is learning to view the world with an appropriate mix of curiosity and awe. It literally fills my own heart with joy.”