



HALIFAX INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

Strategic Plan
2013-2018



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Purpose

The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to set the direction for the Halifax Independent School for the next five years, and to ensure that we continue to be successful in fulfilling our mission over the longer term. The Strategic Plan is designed to provide a broad framework, while specific activities will be determined by the Board, committees, Headteacher, and staff.

Mission Statement

We are a diverse community of enthusiastic educators, students and their families striving for academic excellence. Children learn in a co-operative and respectful environment through theme-based studies in multi-age classrooms.

Vision Statement

HIS is a **vibrant, sustainable** and financially **strong** school community that is **recognized** for its excellent learning environment, and is **attractive** to students, parents and teachers.



Vibrant

Over the next five years we will maintain and nurture our vibrant HIS community, through continued teacher, student, parent, and alumni engagement, as well as school involvement in the wider community. HIS is a diverse community with a wide range of interests and expertise. Drawing on the idea, “It takes a village to raise a child,” we want to continue to involve the entire community in our school – and to involve our school in the wider community. To meet this goal, we will actively encourage participation, and provide flexible opportunities for participation.

Active encouragement

We will continue to encourage parents, teachers, alumni, and the broader community to participate in the school through membership on committees, assisting with class activities, involvement in social events, sharing expertise in the classroom, and participation in school governance. For example, we will organise a new parent orientation in order to help new families be aware of the opportunities to participate.

Flexible opportunities

We recognise that there are differing constraints on an individual’s availability to participate. As such, we will provide a range of opportunities to allow for flexibility in their involvement – short-term, task oriented commitments, or longer-term ongoing work.



Sustainable

Educational Experience

The engaging and inspiring educational environment at HIS depends on our unique staff. HIS is fortunate to have had a very stable staff group. In the near future, however, it is likely that senior staff will retire. As such, newer staff members will need opportunities to develop, to ensure that the school continues to operate seamlessly, and to maintain the HIS culture and experience. Salaries and benefits must also remain competitive in order to attract and retain the very best teachers and support staff.

We want to continue to ensure that teachers have access to professional development, as well as current technologies by which to enhance the learning environment. We are committed to supporting and expanding professional development opportunities. We have also created and will continue to maintain a technology fund, and will adopt a thoughtful and systematic approach to managing technology resources.

Facilities

Our school building is now ten years old and the likelihood of major repairs has increased. In anticipation of increased maintenance, we will assess the potential costs, and continue to maintain and invest in the Capital Expenditures reserve to grow the funds needed for such events.

We will continue to invest in developing the building, making sure that we have the best educational environment possible. For example, over the next five years we plan to purchase a portable room that will expand programming possibilities.



Strong

Over the next five years we will continue to build on our current financial strength, by sustaining sufficient revenue, increasing financial reserves, and improving our management systems.

Tuition Revenue

The financial strength of HIS depends almost exclusively upon tuition income. It is vital that we have sufficient revenue whilst ensuring that tuition remains affordable. This is a difficult balance; as costs increase each year, so must fees. It is therefore important that we continue to offer bursary opportunities for families that may struggle with increasing fees. Most importantly, we will endeavour to maintain our target enrollment levels through a focus on student recruitment and retention.

Reserves

HIS has established financial reserves for Maintenance & Capital Expenditures, Information Technology (IT), and Staff Retirement. For example, these reserves are designed to protect the school community from large infrastructure costs such as roof repairs, to develop the facilities, and to ensure that we have the funds to renew equipment. These reserves are funded from the surplus that we are required to have by our mortgage provider.

Management Systems

HIS is a growing community, with over 185 students and staff; it is essential that we have the management systems commensurate with a school of this size. The Board will continue to review financial, risk management and human resources systems to ensure that they are efficient and effective.



Recognized

Over the next five years we will actively promote HIS to ensure that it continues to be recognized for its excellent learning environment, and to be better known within the broader HRM community. This will include increasing our profile in the community, and among prospective families and teaching staff. As well, the Board will work to ensure that as a community we share a deeper awareness of what we do, and a better understanding of the school as an educational institution and not-for-profit society.

Outside Community

A core element of our programming involves relationships with local experts, universities and community groups, who contribute to our students' hands-on learning through field trips, guest presentations and outdoor educational experiences. While this encourages our students to understand the significance of their active participation in the world, it also offers opportunities for the community to better appreciate our students and understand our school. We will also strive to increase our profile through our associations with known and new institutions, such as universities as well as other like-minded schools and organizations.

We will also continue to be a positive presence in our school's neighbourhood.

In order to connect with the broader HRM community, we will continue our focus on public relations initiatives, advertising, and other traditional avenues of communication to connect with prospective families. We will also seek to increase our use of social media where appropriate.

Within Our Community

HIS is a diverse and enthusiastic community of educators, students, and families. We will look for ways to celebrate and foster our connection within our own community, to ensure that we are all aware and proud of our philosophy and values. We will encourage involvement in school traditions and events. We will also seek to strengthen our connections with alumni, by fostering and encouraging their continued engagement with the school beyond graduation.



Attractive

Intentionality, high academic standards and strong relationships, grounded in respect for others, and the sharing and consideration of multiple viewpoints are important HIS values. Over the next five years, by continuing to support and promote these values through our focus on the whole child, we will work to ensure that HIS remains attractive to both current and prospective students, teachers, and parents.

Academic Excellence

High academic and personal standards define the HIS experience. Our flexible and personalized approach to learning helps cultivate student strengths while addressing their challenges, and building respect and responsibility for one's self and others.

Classroom technology will be kept up to date and functional, and will continue to be incorporated into the curriculum in an appropriate manner.

A Cooperative and Respectful Environment

HIS is a respectful, safe, and secure environment for students, parents, teachers and staff. We will ensure that there is teacher involvement at all levels of the school, continued parental involvement, and clear evidence of student engagement. This will be manifest in multiple levels of relationships: among students, among teachers, and among parents, with clear links to the community.

An attractive physical environment is also fundamental; hence the facilities and grounds (including playgrounds) will be enhanced and maintained.

