

Pacific Crest School



Strategic Plan
2018 – 2021

Dear Pacific Crest Families and Friends,

The Board of Trustees and I are excited to share with you Pacific Crest School's 2018 Strategic Plan and Framework. Adopted by the Board in September of 2018, this plan will guide decision making in five key areas of our school over the next three years: program excellence, facilities improvements, communications, parent engagement, and community vibrancy. This document culminates a year long process of community participation, reflection, and analysis, with prioritization by a team of dedicated faculty and board members. Informed by the insights of faculty, students, parents, alumni and staff, this plan both captures the essence of our school and illuminates a clear path forward, allowing us to better achieve our mission and vision in support of the fullest development of every one of our children.

Thirty three years ago Pacific Crest School founder, Jacquie Maughan, established our school upon the conviction that when children are given the opportunity to grow and learn with joy in a beautifully prepared Montessori environment, with talented AMI trained Montessori guides and an engaged parent community, then the children's curiosity about and love for humanity, culture and all of nature will grow exponentially. Within this community, a sense of personal agency will grow within each child, driving the fullest personal development throughout life.

Pacific Crest School has grown tremendously since that first Primary classroom of 21 children, now welcoming 223 children each morning. On our sunlight-filled main campus and a 19 acre farm on Vashon Island, we provide optimal and unique educational opportunities for children 2 1/2 years old through their early adolescence. Our children enter each new phase of their youth with confidence because they are growing up in a cohesive Montessori program that values **community, work, self-discipline and joy**, and that respects, nurtures and delights in the individual contributions and potential of each and every child.

Our Mission and these long held values of Pacific Crest School continually guided our work as we identified goals, objectives and specific actions to enhance our Montessori Program Excellence, Community, Communications and Facilities. Continual refinement in all of these areas opens up the vital opportunities our children need to thrive.

We look forward to moving forward together to bring all of this to fruition.

With great excitement,

Dorrie Knapp Guy
Director and Head of School

Tiffany Volosin
Board President

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Mission

Our mission is to provide a dynamic learning environment that exemplifies the principles of Montessori education. We foster independence, self-discipline and joy in our students so that they are prepared to participate with confidence as citizens in a changing world.

Pacific Crest School provides the foundation from which students explore their wider community through service and extensions to the land at the Pacific Crest Farm Campus.

Opportunities to fully integrate their experiences are provided through our visual arts programs, creative writing, research, oral and written presentations. As a result, students leave their Montessori education with a sense of personal vision and a belief in their ability to make the world a better place.

Vision

The vision of Pacific Crest School is that our urban and rural programs and campuses merge into a unified program with both components guided by the mission.

Our vision is to continue to refine our role as an exemplary Montessori program that is recognized as a model of Montessori education, past, present and future.

Introduction

Our community is passionate about meaningful applications of Montessori philosophy and practice, in service of the development of the whole child. In 2018, Pacific Crest Montessori and its community initiated an update to the school's 2007 strategic plan. Plan preparation was informed by extensive community engagement and outreach to faculty, staff, PCS board members, current/former parents, alumni and other community members.

Pacific Crest School's 33 year legacy of Montessori practice, reflection and refinement served as the primary foundation for this strategic plan. This plan also benefited from the school's completion of the 2017 Accreditation Report and Work Plan, prior strategic plans and annual reports and most importantly, our deeply committed faculty and community. The collaborative process that informed preparation of this plan illuminated our school's many strengths and opportunities that will enable us to better achieve our vision, support our mission and leverage our school's professional and physical assets, its vitality and community.

The 2018 Pacific Crest Strategic Plan is a forward facing and pragmatic three-year roadmap that accounts for current conditions and establishes clear actionable goals to advance Montessori program excellence in- and outside of the classroom, while inspiring an informed, vibrant and engaged community.

Community input received early during preparation of the plan revealed four strategic themes that comprise the framework for this strategic plan:

- Montessori program excellence
- Community
- Communication
- Facilities and infrastructure

Each of the plan's four strategic themes address the Pacific Crest Farm, a beloved educational and community asset. In the interest of continuing to unify the Farm and Urban Campuses and associated programs, the Farm is purposefully woven throughout the fabric of the 2018 Strategic plan, rather than identified as a stand-alone strategic theme.

The school is in a stable and sustainable financial situation. Pacific Crest Montessori operates with a balanced budget and is building reserves while keeping tuition and costs as low as possible. The school's solid financial health is projected to remain consistent, through the strategic plan's three-year planning horizon of 2018 - 2021.

The Board approved this strategic plan in July 2018 and it reflects our school's priorities and intentions for 2018-2021. The urban campus purchase opportunity that arose in September 2018 is addressed below.

A Collaborative Planning Process

A hallmark of Pacific Crest School is its caring community. Accordingly, a substantive approach to community engagement informed strategic plan preparation.

This plan was informed by over 150 online surveys completed by Pacific Crest community members, a strategic plan advisory group, four strategic plan thematic work groups, multiple working meetings with teachers and staff, numerous consultations with the Head of School and the Board's Executive Committee. Four thematic work groups comprised of faculty, parents, alumni and other community members drafted clear definitions for each strategic theme, generated goals and a set of recommended strategies. The Board screened all work group proposed strategies using the following criteria:

- Alignment with the PCS Mission and Vision
- Highest impact within the three-year strategic plan time frame (2018-2021)
- Cost is aligned with the school's current and forecasted financial model
- Non-monetary school resources are available to support completing the action
- Action can be completed within the three-year strategic plan horizon of 2018 - 2021

Five strategies were selected by the Board for implementation that are anticipated to individually and collectively advance progress towards achieving this plan's strategic goals and objectives established for Montessori Program Excellence, Community, Communications and Facilities/Infrastructure

A comprehensive list of the strategies evaluated by the Board and Head of School but not selected for inclusion within this plan will inform preparation of the school's next strategic plan, anticipated to be initiated in 2021, in support of a five-year strategic planning cycle (2022 - 2026).

This strategic plan is a living document that is subject to updates over time, to reflect changed conditions, challenges and opportunities. Strategic plan implementation will be transparent to the school community and the school's annual report will serve as the mechanism to summarize accomplishments and challenges. Annual reporting will also serve as a time to check and adjust this plan's strategies.

Integration of School Purchase into Strategic Plan

In September 2018, following approval of this plan, the Board voted to move forward with explorations to purchase the entire Bright Street urban campus. The Board's work on the urban campus acquisition is successfully moving forward and the Board will continue to inform the community about its progress independent of this strategic plan and its annual reporting process. Once the urban campus acquisition is accomplished, the strategic plan will be updated, likely as part of the 2021 strategic plan update process.

How this Plan is Organized

This plan is organized to first present the four themes that serve as the strategic framework. Each strategic theme is defined, including related goals and objectives. Next, this plan presents the five priority strategies that the Board selected for implementation during this plan's three-year time frame. Each strategy is presented with an accompanying set of resource requirements as well as a preliminary work plan that defines anticipated tasks and milestones.

Strategic Themes

Four strategic themes form the framework that supported preparation of this strategic plan. Each theme was identified through substantive community outreach, dialog with staff/faculty, and other foundational information, such as the school's recently completed Montessori accreditation. Each strategic theme benefited from the deep thinking and work of thematic work groups, convened with representatives from across the Pacific Crest community including: teachers, staff, Board members, parents, alumni and alumni parents. Each thematic work group generated a set of recommendations that included a strategic theme definition, goal, objectives and candidate strategic actions. This set of recommendations was presented to the Board for consideration and approval in 2018. This chapter shares each strategic theme and accompanying goals and objectives.

Theme 1: Montessori Program Excellence

This strategic theme focuses on Montessori program excellence in-and outside of the classroom and is intended to complement the ongoing implementation of the recently completed Montessori accreditation work plan.

Questions asked through the strategic planning process included: How can the school strengthen the unification of urban and farm programs? How can before school and after school care best support families with working parents? How can summer programming supplement school-year programming? What additional enrichment opportunities are possible during and after school? Educational and speaker programs for adults, to foster deeper awareness and connection to Montessori principles and Pacific Crest?

Goal

Pacific Crest School delivers exemplary Montessori programming, both in and outside of the classroom, for the entire school community and beyond.

Objectives

1. Merge urban and farm experiences and curriculum into a unified program.
2. Enhance and augment indoor, outdoor and farm environments to serve PCS program excellence.
3. Develop and retain well-trained and inspired program staff and volunteers.
4. Ensure that our programs work together to support the development of the whole child within family, school, and community.
5. Formalize a PCS administrative approach to program management.

Theme 2: Community

This strategic theme focuses on who we are, the strength of our relationships between people within the school, as well as the school's relationship to the broader community and world. A definition of community was created through the work of the Community Work Group, convened as part of plan preparation. Pacific Crest community is comprised of:

- Students
- Parents/Guardians/Extended family members
- Alumni and alumni family
- Montessori community
- Neighbors and local community
- Independent school community
- Agricultural community
- Government/The world at large

Questions asked during the strategic planning process: How can we improve student retention at all levels? What factors need to be in place to sustain a healthy, vibrant, diverse community of engaged families, alumni and faculty members who joyfully contribute to the success of our students, community and school? What is the school's relationship to Seattle and its changing demographics? How can we reach new families, increase diversity and improve retention across levels?

Goal

Together we work to build a welcoming, informed, inspired and engaged community in support of our children.

Objectives

1. Foster belonging and connectedness among PCS students, families, alumni and staff.
2. Create the space for children to remain open hearted, curious and courageous.
3. Inspire service and collaboration within the school and its broader community.
4. Provide warm and welcoming community interactions and gatherings.
5. Seek innovative ways to connect with and improve access to Montessori for traditionally underrepresented communities.
6. Prepare students to be thoughtful members of the global community.

Theme 3: Communication

This strategic theme focuses on the many ways in which information is shared within the school community and from the school to its broader community.

Questions asked through the strategic planning process included: How can teachers improve communication with parents to better serve the child? How can communications between the administrative / business offices and parents be improved? What technological tools are available to improve parents' PCS experience and are they appropriate? How can PCS strengthen its public relations and promotional voice to broader Montessori communities, prospective families, alumni and other interested groups?

Goal

People throughout the Pacific Crest Montessori School community feel informed, inspired, welcomed and engaged.

Objectives

1. Share what makes Pacific Crest Montessori School special.
2. Foster an inspired and informed community of Pacific Crest Montessori families, alumni, faculty and staff.
3. Communications that orient the parent to the child's development and the life of the classroom.
4. Leverage technological and online tools on behalf of adult educational enrichment and administrative efficiencies.
5. Formalize an administrative approach to communications, marketing and access to information.

Theme 4: Facilities and Infrastructure

This strategic theme addresses the physical spaces and environment needed to support the school's programs and includes the spaces and places at both the urban and farm campuses.

Questions guiding this theme included: What are the attributes needed for our physical spaces, both interior and exterior, to support Montessori program excellence? What is the current and desired future condition of the buildings and infrastructure that comprise the farm and urban campuses? This theme also includes the rural and urban landscapes that house these campuses.

Goal

PCS urban and farm campuses are sustainable and provide prepared interior spaces that are connected to outdoor environments that support exemplary Montessori programs.

Objectives

1. Coordinate the design and maintenance of farm and urban facilities, so they function together in support of land and classroom-based programming.
2. Improve and maintain indoor/outdoor spaces at the farm campus to support the comfort, safety, development of the child, their teachers, staff and the school's broader community.
3. Upgrade and maintain indoor spaces and their prepared environments at the urban campus in support of the comfort, safety, development of the child, their teachers, staff and the school's broader community.
4. Improve the functionality of the campus' outdoor spaces to foster community, inspire learning and enhance safety.

2018–2021 Strategic Actions

This chapter summarizes the five strategic actions that the Pacific Crest Board has prioritized for implementation, as part of the three-year plan horizon. A preliminary set of resource needs and work plan is provided for each strategic action and this information will serve as the basis for reporting progress, over time, to the Pacific Crest community. These strategic actions will individually and collectively advance progress towards the goals and objectives established for each strategic theme.

	Strategy	Montessori Program Excellence	Communication	Community	Facilities + Infrastructure	Anticipated Short and Long Term Outcomes
1	Complete a PCS Farm Strategic Plan Identify and prioritize the improvements needed to facilities, farming, community and natural spaces to support exemplary Montessori programs across all levels.					Short-term: Farm Plan advisory group convened to define the critical improvements needed, at the farm and urban campuses, to fulfill farm specific program goals associated with each program level. Long-term: Maximizing the Farm Campus as a PCS program asset, based upon level-specific pedagogical goals, optimizing Return on Investment as a working farm in support of these pedagogical goals, and integrating the farm as a school marketing asset.
2	Enhance our new parent/family orientation and mentorship program Building upon our commitment to a strong community we will formalize a program to expedite the process by which our new families feel informed and engaged.					Short-term: Reach all new parents by November of each year, establish ongoing mentoring engagement over time, understand program successes and challenges. Long-term: More immediate community engagement and feelings of inclusion from new families; increasing positive feedback and retention of new families.

	Strategy	Montessori Program Excellence	Communication	Community	Facilities + Infrastructure	Anticipated Short and Long Term Outcomes
3	<p>Strengthen our school-wide volunteer program that promotes a culture of impactful volunteerism and joy</p> <p>Inspire all families to participate in volunteer and service opportunities in support of our school, thereby preparing our students to be thoughtful members of our local and global community. Leverage technology and online tools in support of this program.</p>					<p>Short-term: Establish a baseline of current volunteer activities/outcomes across the community and program levels; Identify and obtain the database software needed to optimize the school's volunteer programs.</p> <p>Long-term: Increased number of parents/guardians/family members who are engaged through volunteering; improved knowledge regarding volunteerism at all program levels and throughout the community; annual reporting of community service hours and outcomes.</p>
4	<p>Develop and implement a new Outreach, Recruitment and Retention Plan</p> <p>Share more effectively what makes our school special. We aspire to attract the interest of all who value the highest quality Montessori education, so that our school community is more reflective of the broader Seattle community.</p>					<p>Short-term: Increased number of applications from families who seek the highest quality Montessori education.</p> <p>Long-term: Retain families, who seek the highest quality Montessori education, from Primary through Middle School levels; a Pacific Crest Community that reflects the diversity of the broader Seattle community.</p>
5	<p>Complete a Communication Plan that engages current parents, families, alumni and the broader school community</p> <p>Foster an inspired and informed community through consistent communication regarding the child's development, the life of the classroom and the broader richness and lifelong outcomes of a Montessori education.</p>					<p>Short-term: Our entire community feels engaged and informed; Increased participation in community events.</p> <p>Long-term: Engaged and informed community contributes to maximum student retention rates; School operates at full capacity; Alumni families remain engaged and committed members of our community.</p>

Strategy 1: Complete a PCS Farm Strategic Plan

Identify and prioritize the improvements needed to facilities, farming, community and natural spaces to support exemplary Montessori programs across all levels.











Resource Needs

1. Farm Strategic Plan Advisory Group, comprised of farm manager, head-of-school, board member, parents from each level, faculty/staff from each level. This group to meet monthly in support of the plan preparation process.
2. A project manager to facilitate and coordinate preparation of the plan
3. Consultant support, as needed, to support targeted technical tasks, such as: facility condition assessment, permitting/compliance, etc. Parent volunteer/trade opportunities can be explored as well, for specific disciplines (land survey, wetland delineation, forest/orchard management, facility management)
4. Program-level information, including goals, pedagogical outcomes and other information as relates to the farm, including use of the urban campus in service of achieving broader farm campus goals
5. Board and Head of School to provide leadership input and confirm progress

Outcomes

Short-term: Farm Plan advisory group convened to define the critical improvements needed, at the farm and urban campuses, to fulfill farm specific program goals associated with each program level.

Long-term: Maximizing the Farm Campus as a PCS program asset, based upon level-specific pedagogical goals, optimizing Return on Investment as a working farm in support of these pedagogical goals, and integrating the farm as a school marketing asset.

Strategy 1 Work Plan Task	2018/ 2019	2020	2021
Each program level creates a mission and vision statement, as well as goals, to define how the farm and urban campuses may be enhanced in service of achieving pedagogical outcomes for each developmental plane			
Draft project work plan and project schedule, solicit approval from PCS Board + HOS			
Solicit technical assistance, as needed (consultant, parent technical expertise, volunteer)			
Gather existing technical info, studies, Jones & Jones site plan, etc.			
Convene advisory group (monthly meetings)			
Prepare and finalize strategic plan (unify farm and urban campuses; optimize working farm; enhanced program opportunities; marketing etc)			
Prepare and solicit Board approval for a funding strategy that supports phased implementation of the Farm Strategic Plan; Submit and secure grant funding according to the work plan			

Strategy 2: Enhance our new parent/family orientation and mentorship program

Building upon our commitment to a strong community, we will formalize a program to expedite the process by which our new families feel informed and engaged.











Resource Needs

1. Project manager to complete program plan (evaluate existing approaches and refine new family orientation and mentorship program)
2. Coordinator and administrative staff to administer this program and ensure that materials are up-to-date/relevant, mentor families are matched to existing families, and to coordinate activities

Outcomes

Short-term: Reach all new parents by November of each year, establish ongoing mentoring engagement over time, understand program successes and challenges.

Long-term: More immediate community engagement and feelings of inclusion from new families; increasing positive feedback and retention of new families.

Strategy 2 Work Plan Task	2019	2020	2021
Draft program plan; solicit approval from head of school			
Engage parent coordinators, teachers, focus group of current new parents, school administrators - to scope program elements			
Develop enhanced program materials (FAQs, resource materials for new families, mentor guidelines, web content, calendars)			
Present program plan, materials and typical annual schedule of activities to the Board: Strategic Plan Implementation check In			
Implement program with incoming families to the school (2019/2020 school year); Check and adjust over time, to reflect lessons learned			
All program levels develop and implement a plan for how each teacher meaningfully connects with parents that are new to the level within first 6 weeks of school year			

Strategy 3: Strengthen our school-wide volunteer program that promotes a culture of impactful volunteerism and joy

Inspire all families to participate in volunteer and service opportunities in support of our school, thereby preparing our students to be thoughtful members of our local and global community. Leverage technology and online tools in support of this program.

Resource Needs

- A volunteer program coordinator with experience in community engagement, event planning and information management
- A Volunteer Advisory Group comprised of parent coordinator chairs , select faculty/staff, Head-of-School
- Business tool resources may include: graphic communications software/expertise; database software, social media and online PCS website support

Outcomes

Short-term: Establish a baseline of current volunteer activities/outcomes across the community and program levels; Identify and obtain the database software needed to optimize the school's volunteer programs.

Long-term: Increased number of parents/guardians/family members who are engaged through volunteering; improved knowledge regarding volunteerism at all program levels and throughout the community; annual reporting of community service hours and outcomes.

Work Plan Task	Strategy 3	2019	2020	2021
Convene the Volunteer Advisory Group to draft and finalize a Volunteer Program plan. The PCS volunteer program shall result in greater leveraging of adult skills/expertise on behalf of the school and the development of the child.		●		
Identify and develop a centralized database solution to track volunteer activities, across program levels, the community, urban and farm campuses. Database specifications include a need for teachers, staff and administrators to access the database.		●		
Maintain a centralized volunteer database that tracks skills, expertise and other possible non-monetary contributions to the school. This catalog of skills/expertise will have controlled access view, no community view. Incorporate annual volunteer skills/expertise spreadsheet into this database, including current and alumni families			●	●
Make use of multi-modal approaches to communicating volunteer opportunities to the school community			●	●

Strategy 4: Develop and implement a new Outreach, Recruitment and Retention Plan

Share more effectively what makes our school special. We aspire to attract the interest of all who value the highest quality Montessori education, so that our school community is more reflective of the broader Seattle community.

Resource Needs

- A project manager (with marketing and recruitment expertise) to coordinate preparation of a PCS outreach/recruitment/retention plan and subsequent implementation
- A Marketing and Recruitment Advisory Group comprised of parents with expertise, select faculty, board member and Head of School
- Business tool resources may include: graphic communications software/expertise; database software

Outcomes

Short-term: Increased number of applications from families who seek the highest quality Montessori education.

Long-term: Retain families, who seek the highest quality Montessori education, from primary through middle school levels; a Pacific Crest Community that reflects the diversity of the broader Seattle community.

Strategy 4 Work Plan Task	2019	2020	2021
Identify project manager	○		
Convene outreach, recruitment and retention advisory group and engage existing families with marketing/recruiting/diversity/inclusivity experience in the advisory group	○		
Complete a marketing, recruitment and retention plan. This plan shall identify the process, timeline, communication modalities and approach to performance measurement over time.	○		
Ongoing analysis and update of the school's approach to outreach and recruitment to reflect lessons learned, with a focus on achieving diversity and inclusivity goals	○	○	○
Ongoing analysis of admissions/retention data	○	○	○
Develop project manager professional expertise in diversity/inclusivity, marketing and recruitment	○	○	○
Ongoing staff/faculty training in diversity, inclusivity and communications	○	○	○

Strategy 5: Complete a Communication Plan that engages current parents, families, alumni and the broader school community

Foster an inspired and informed community through consistent communication regarding the child's development, the life of the classroom and the broader richness and lifelong outcomes of a Montessori education.























Resource Needs

- Communications specialist to complete an action plan that optimizes use of improved tools, materials, parent education events and other approaches.
- Communications coordinator to administer the action plan and ensure that materials are up-to-date for all modalities (web, print, presentations, social media)
- Business tool resources may include: graphic communications software/expertise; database software

Outcomes

Short-term: Our entire community feels engaged and informed; Increased participation in community events.

Long-term: Engaged and informed community contributes to maximum student retention rates; School operates at full capacity; Alumni families remain engaged and committed members of our community.

Strategy 5 Work Plan Task	2019	2020	2021
Identify communications specialist			
Identify communications coordinator			
Develop communications coordinator professional expertise			
Compile, assess and make use of AMI research and marketing tools to define our communication action plan			
Complete a teacher/staff communication training needs assessment, by program level.			
Complete Communication and Engagement Plan. This plan will outline specific tasks, roles, tools and needs in support of enhanced communication and engagement			
Complete teacher/staff training to enhance communication expertise			
Evaluate and implement improvements to parent educational events: engaging relevant speakers and enhancing the Montessori framing of interactive parental education			
Pedagogical committee publishes an annual message to the community on the areas of refinement, reflection and response in our continuous advancement of Montessori excellence			
Regularly update, maintain and optimize use of alumni database			
Create and maintain calendar for engaging Alumni in school events			

Appendix A.

Strategic Plan Work Group Members

This strategic plan is a result of the combined efforts of countless individuals from across our school community. A special thank you is extended to the members of four strategic plan work groups who contributed time, expertise and energy in support of preparing the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan. Work group members included current and past parents, alumni, teachers, staff, board members and the head of school.

Facilitator

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