



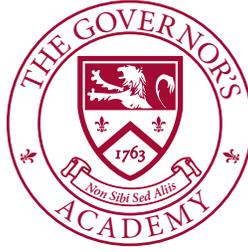
THE GOVERNOR'S ACADEMY

STRATEGIC PLAN

JANUARY 2015

1 Elm Street
Byfield, MA 01922

thegovernorsacademy.org



OFFICE OF THE HEADMASTER

January 5, 2015

Members of The Governor's Academy Family:

Over the course of the last three years the Academy community has been engaged in a wide-ranging planning effort. Through surveys, conversations with alumni and parents, and through the focused effort of the Academy's faculty, staff, and board of trustees, we have examined the independent school landscape, assessed our strengths as an institution, and sought to identify and capitalize on opportunities to enhance the quality of the education we offer to our students and their families. The results of those efforts are represented in a comprehensive strategic plan that will guide the Academy for the next decade and beyond.

In 1913 Headmaster Charles Ingham described Dummer Academy as a family school. He recognized that from the school's earliest days, when Master Moody lived with his charges in the Mansion House, relationships between students and faculty members have been at the heart of the Academy's ethos. This defining quality of our school has endured. Our responsibility, like that of successive generations before us, is to address the challenges and opportunities of the present and future while remaining true to this and other qualities that distinguish The Governor's Academy. In that tradition, this strategic plan focuses the time-honored purpose of our school community for the next decade.

We hope that you will share our excitement about the possibilities for the Academy's future. Having recently celebrated our 250th anniversary, it is time now to work together to ensure that the Academy's future is as bright as its past.

With best wishes,

Peter H. Quimby '85 P'14
HEAD OF SCHOOL

James M. Pierce '72 P'08
PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD



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INTRODUCTION

Education has always mattered, but the kind of education we provide to our children now matters more than ever. Parents and grandparents face more challenges in imagining the world their children and grandchildren will live in than in almost any other generation. Change is constant, as the Greek philosophers observed, but never before has change come as fast as now. We are drawn now, irrevocably, into a new frontier of accelerating change: technological, economic, social, political, ecological, and global. How are we to prepare today's students to work, to serve, to thrive, and to lead in an unpredictable world beyond much of what is familiar and known to us? How are we to equip them for unforeseeable changes that will transform their world many times over and evermore fast? How do we prepare them for revolutions?

The Governor's Academy rises to this challenging imperative, confident in our unrivaled heritage of educational excellence, innovation, and success for more than 250 years and inspired perhaps most of all by the example of the school's first 25 years, when its teachers and students saw their world transformed from British colonies to a new American nation; and when many of those first heirs of the Governor rose to *shape* that revolution. We, too, are heirs of the Governor, and we are called now to a project worthy of the challenges that faced that first generation of "Governors" and many more following them.

Our project is to pass on the values enduring for more than 250 years in this historic American academy, tried and true values that time has not changed although some of the ways those values have been imparted have been wisely and effectively modified over time by generations of great educators here. If 25 years is the measure of a generation, that 250-year-old legacy of tradition and innovation is now ours to pass on, not only to the Academy's eleventh generation but to the world this next generation of secondary-school students will inhabit and shape. Thus it falls to us, heirs of the Governor, to evaluate most carefully the values that are constant in the Academy's heritage and to dedicate ourselves to a strategic plan for bequeathing those timeless values to a world needing them more than ever.

Rooted in four Enduring Qualities at the core of 250 years of education at this Academy, our strategic plan aims to cultivate Seven Essential Skills in the school's 21st-century graduates. Although adapted to suit challenges peculiar to the present and immediate future, these Seven Essential Skills are modified versions of skills and values that have always been cultivated in the Academy's students.



Thus, in our Strategic Plan, we will:

- launch innovative educational programs inside and outside the classroom;
- diversify our student body, faculty, and staff;
- attract and support the very best faculty by providing more on-campus housing options and professional development resources that they need and deserve to sustain themselves, their families, and their indispensable dedication to the Academy's mission;
- enhance the campus's pastoral landscape and historical architecture, carefully updating infrastructure, building new facilities, and renovating historical ones with keen appreciation for our unique place and past while also keeping current with state-of-the-art advances;
- realize more sustainability programs and environmental studies initiatives that capitalize on the school's distinctive location on the banks of the Parker River and the great Atlantic salt marshes;
- re-dedicate ourselves to the ethic of service and philanthropy that moved Governor William Dummer to bequeath his home and farm for the founding of this now most venerable American school; and
- rally ourselves, altogether as a family-like community – students and parents, faculty and staff, alumni and their parents – to bequeath the best possible Governor's education to the next generation and those to follow.

THE ACADEMY'S ENDURING QUALITIES

As we innovate and plan for the future, we build on prized qualities that endure as the hallmarks of a Governor's education:

- **FAMILY-LIKE ATMOSPHERE**, cultivating life-long relationships among students and between students and faculty members
- **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**, challenging students to achieve their full potential in a rigorous curriculum
- **DEDICATED FACULTY** mentoring students in all areas of school life: academic, arts, athletics, service, and residential community, and
- **BALANCE**, fostering students' development as intellectually, emotionally, and morally healthy individuals.



OUR MISSION

The Governor's Academy, founded in 1763 on New England farmland, combines centuries of tradition with a dedication to educational innovation. Students flourish in a diverse community distinguished by enduring relationships with teachers and defined by a commitment to learning and a thoughtful balance of academics, athletics, arts, and service to others. Academy graduates are life-long learners who embrace their civic duty and global responsibility.

The four elements vital to our mission:

This Strategic Plan, grounded in the school's mission, will leverage and advance four elements vital to the Academy's mission:

PROGRAM – ensuring that The Governor's Academy remains a leader in secondary school education by implementing an educational program that supports development of the Seven Essential Skills

PEOPLE – attracting and enrolling the most talented students who will benefit from and contribute to the Governor's community; attracting and enlisting faculty members committed to living and working in an environment that fosters the holistic development of young people; and supporting faculty and staff members in their professional development

PLACE – curating our distinctive environments (ecological, architectural, and social) in ways that are ecologically and fiscally sustainable, and

ENGAGEMENT – building and sustaining meaningful relationships with alumni, parents, and friends; effectively communicating the distinguishing qualities of The Governor's Academy and its remarkable alumni to our community and beyond; and building stronger partnerships with our surrounding communities.



SEVEN ESSENTIAL SKILLS OF ACADEMY GRADUATES

Guiding purpose:

- To prepare students to be life-long learners, successful college students, responsible citizens, and productive adults.
- To encourage students to embrace the joys, challenges, and rewards of a life of the mind and of a life guided by ethical considerations.

Governor's graduates will be able to:

1. Think critically and solve problems.

Students will think broadly, deeply, and creatively. They will learn to ask good questions and to pursue answers to those questions via their mastery of verbal, quantitative, and visual reasoning informed by their command of core content knowledge. This knowledge will enhance students' appreciation for aesthetics and artistry. They will be flexible and tenacious, innovative and resourceful, engaged and objective.

2. Collaborate effectively with other people to achieve common goals.

Students will develop the many skills and approaches needed for successful collaboration, including respect for everyone, effective listening, intellectual generosity, open-mindedness, diplomacy, persuasion, accountability, and candor while valuing diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

3. Communicate effectively in written, oral, digital, and graphic formats.

Students will learn to write, speak, and present effectively across the range of forms in a variety of settings while taking their audience into consideration. Students will be comfortable using numbers, equations, data, visual representations, and models. Students will respect the rights and sensibilities of others.



4. Be thoughtful and engaged readers.

Students will discern meaning from various texts and offer interpretation and analysis. They will apply their understanding of content to important questions and particular contexts. Cultivation of these skills will encourage in students a life-long interest in reading.

5. Access and analyze information.

Students will develop strong research skills that reflect a keen understanding of how to locate, evaluate, use, and cite sources in order to manage and interpret data and content in support of arguments and solutions.

6. Adapt readily to new situations and information.

Students will develop strong executive function skills, including setting goals, organizing ideas, and managing time. They will be creative, resourceful, flexible, and resilient as they generate new ideas and apply knowledge to existing or novel problems. They will connect disparate ideas and extend their understanding across various domains and disciplines.

7. Understand themselves as members of a larger community and act within a moral and ethical framework.

As students develop a clearer sense of self, they will better appreciate and respect others while coming to an understanding of the world and their own place in it. Students will access a variety of media and texts in order to stay informed about local, national, and world events and will gain a sense of individual responsibility within a larger social context.



PROGRAM

GOAL: *To ensure that The Governor's Academy remains a leader in secondary school education by implementing an educational program that supports development of the Seven Essential Skills.*

Objective 1.1 **Ensure that our educational programs (both in and outside the classroom) are designed to support the development of the Seven Essential Skills.**

Rationale The Governor's Academy is committed to the holistic development of young people, and as a result, our curriculum extends to all areas of student development, including academic skills, character and identity development, and health and wellness. Having considered the kinds of challenges that our students will face in the 21st century, we identified seven crucial skills that will provide our students with a foundation for advancing their own understanding, taking initiative, and collaborating in constructing solutions to challenges. We must engage all aspects of our educational program as we teach students the Seven Essential Skills that we believe will lead to success in life.

Actions

- i. Develop new courses and programs to support development of Seven Essential Skills within a vibrant, interdisciplinary curriculum.
- ii. Design curricula and pedagogical practices that affirm and support student identity development.
- iii. Develop a four-year educational program focusing on health, wellness, character, and leadership that is integrated into all aspects of the curriculum.
- iv. Position the Academy as a leader in leveraging technology effectively to support best practices in teaching and learning.



Objective 1.2 **Ensure that our social and extracurricular activities support the development of the Seven Essential Skills.**

Rationale Much of what happens in a school setting is shaped by formal programs (academic, athletic, or artistic), but in a boarding school environment all students (boarding and day alike) find their lives shaped in important ways by the community in which they spend so much of their time. In fact, it is through this community framework that we teach many of the Seven Essential Skills, particularly collaboration with others, adaptability, and community responsibility. To remain effective in this part of our mission, we are committed to maintaining a rich, vibrant community in which students can learn from each other, create meaningful and lasting relationships with peers and adults, and develop the skills that will help them succeed as adults.

- Actions**
- i. Offer all students an active and engaging seven-day experience.
 - ii. Enhance the community service program in line with our commitment to the school's motto, *non sibi sed aliis* (not for self, but for others).
 - iii. Provide opportunities for every student to have a significant off-campus, cross-cultural, multicultural, or global experience.



Objective 1.3 Capitalize on our distinctive location on the banks of the Parker River and great Atlantic salt marshes by developing academic programs that enhance the educational experience of our students.

Rationale One of the first steps in helping our students to understand the greater world is to enhance their understanding of the physical world in which they live. Our unique and gorgeous setting is not only historically important in the development of the United States but continues to be ecologically important as well. As we seek to provide our students with project-based learning and experiential education opportunities, and as we expand our school's commitment to environmental stewardship, we must reach outside the walls of the traditional classroom to create new learning environments.

- Actions**
- i. Build outdoor classroom facilities, including collection stations, a greenhouse, a wet lab, a boat dock, an outdoor classroom in the campus woodland, and a boardwalk in the marshes.
 - ii. Expand our organic garden and support it through our academic and afternoon programs.
 - iii. Forge partnerships with vast and diverse academic, research, and business enterprises that are located within our reach.
 - iv. Offer more trips to natural areas that will expose our students to the wonders that surround, nurture, and sustain us.



PEOPLE

GOAL: *To attract and enroll the most talented students who will benefit from and contribute to the Governor's community; to attract and enlist faculty members committed to living and working in an environment that fosters the holistic development of young people; and to support faculty and staff members in their professional development.*

Objective 2.1 **Enroll the candidates in our admission pool who have the best balance of academic, co-curricular, character ratings.**

Rationale The fundamental job of any Office of Admission is to seek the most qualified candidates, to encourage them to apply, and to enroll them. We strive to broaden our reach and to be more successful in our yield of those candidates who earn our highest ratings in academics, co-curriculars, character, and leadership potential. In addition to embracing what they learn, our students should bring broad experiences to the Academy that enhance the learning experience for their peers. Our school is recognized across generations for its transformative effect as a nurturing family, and we seek to maintain that transparent yet hard to define community attribute by emphasizing character and qualities of leadership in our assessment of candidates.

Actions

- i. Communicate the connectedness among the Seven Essential Skills and our programs, activities, and outcomes.
- ii. Emphasize, articulate, and regularly review how "character" and "leadership" qualities of applicants are rated in the admission process.
- iii. Encourage faculty, alumni, and current and past families to help communicate our admission priorities with specific and current examples from campus.
- iv. Craft admission materials that articulate our approach to rigor and nurture and our expectation for students to become future leaders.



Objective 2.2 **Expand the socioeconomic, racial, and geographic diversity of our student body.**

Rationale We believe that students flourish intellectually and ethically in a diverse community distinguished by enduring relationships with teachers and peers. We expect that students will be challenged to become intellectually nimble through a rigorous set of course offerings and to develop appreciation for cultural differences through various perspectives represented in an intentionally diverse school community. We believe these skills are essential for our graduates to think critically, to collaborate effectively with other people to achieve common goals, and to understand themselves as members of a larger community.

- Actions**
- i. Expand outreach to academic enrichment programs, artistic and athletics programs, and other organizations in targeted communities throughout the country.
 - ii. Expand international recruiting efforts.
 - iii. Establish admission gatherings of alumni of color and intensify our engagement with school consortiums focusing on students of color.
 - iv. Increase socioeconomic diversity.
 - v. Attain and maintain an overall student population that is 2/1 Caucasian/non-Caucasian.
 - vi. Enroll and maintain a student body that represents at least 25 states and 20 countries.
 - vii. Increase the Academy's endowment for financial aid.



Objective 2.3 **Maintain a vibrant residential community and a school size of 400 students while seeking to achieve gender balance in the residential life program.**

Rationale

With 400 students, the Academy is large enough to provide students with rich opportunities in academics, athletics, and the arts, and to ensure that students will be exposed to a diverse range of peers from whom they also learn. At that size, the school is small enough to maintain the distinctive family-like environment for which the Academy has been known for generations. Maintaining that healthy, vital environment requires finding the right gender balance and the right balance of boarding and day students. We believe that a 2:1 ratio of boarding to day students will enhance the broader goals and expectations of a boarding school, encourage the focus of school social life to remain centered on campus, and allow for a more comprehensive residential curriculum.

Actions

- i. Establish additional dormitory space on campus for girls to achieve gender balance on campus and to achieve our desired boarding/day ratio.
- ii. Enhance our geographic reach in admission efforts to assure a consistent quality of enrolled students from outside the immediate area.

Objective 2.4 **Recruit and retain the very best faculty and staff available.**

Rationale

The faculty and staff of The Governor's Academy are the heart and soul of our school. Our ongoing success as an institution depends on our ability to retain those excellent employees and to ensure that when openings arise we are able to compete for the very best candidates.

Actions

- i. Offer a competitive compensation and benefits package.
- ii. Increase faculty and staff salaries to compete effectively for the best talent available.
- iii. Maintain innovative benefits like the faculty housing mortgage program and extend that benefit to more faculty members.



Objective 2.5 Support excellence in professional development and life-long learning.

Rationale The Academy must encourage faculty and staff members to stay current in their fields of expertise and embrace change and personal growth by fostering opportunities for our faculty and staff to continue to be life-long learners.

- Actions**
- i. Provide professional development funding for members of the faculty and staff at a level that ensures we remain at the forefront of best practices in independent schools.
 - ii. Encourage faculty members to pursue advanced degrees in their disciplines by providing full program funding.
 - iii. Bring to campus speakers and programs that educate the faculty about the latest research on adolescent behavior and development, teaching strategies, and multicultural education.
 - iv. Provide financial support for faculty members to collaborate during the summer on curriculum development, interdisciplinary ventures, and special initiatives.

Objective 2.6 Recruit and retain a faculty and staff that reflect the racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, and gender diversity of our world.

Rationale The faculty and staff serve as educators, mentors, and role models for our students. It is important that all students have an opportunity to interact with and learn from adults who reflect the diversity of the world around us. It is equally important that these adults reflect the diversity found in the student body.

- Actions**
- i. Expand networks to recruit more faculty and staff of color and from diverse backgrounds.
 - ii. Increase the number of faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds.
 - iii. Provide professional development budget to support faculty and staff participation in diversity training workshops and conferences.



Objective 2.7 Offer on-campus housing to all members of the faculty.

Rationale

Governor's is defined by the rich quality of the relationships between faculty members and the students in their care. Our boarding students live with us and our day students are on campus from the early hours of the morning to the late hours of the evening. Having as many faculty members as possible live on campus increases our ability to facilitate the kinds of interactions that create deep and lasting relationships.

Actions

- i. Build enough housing units so that all faculty members can be housed on campus.
- ii. Focus on deferred maintenance in order to ensure that faculty housing is well maintained and honors the commitment that our faculty members make to our residential life program.
- iii. Plan for and provide a variety of housing units to accommodate the needs of empty nesters, families, and single people and to ensure that our hiring process allows us to choose the most qualified candidates.



PLACE

GOAL: *To curate our distinctive environments (ecological, architectural, and social) in ways that are ecologically and fiscally sustainable.*

Objective 3.1 **Begin implementing recommendations from the school's 2014 Campus Framework Plan.**

Rationale

In preparation for this strategic plan, the Academy worked with a team of experts to create a Campus Framework Plan that will guide our decision-making about campus facilities for the next decade and beyond. This comprehensive plan will help us to locate sites for new faculty housing, to preserve and, in some cases, to repurpose historic buildings, and to make recommendations for new or improved facilities that will enhance our ability to implement the Seven Essential Skills. This Framework Plan is grounded in the values of our community and places a premium on collaboration, interdisciplinary work, environmental sustainability, and, most importantly, care for those who call the Academy home.

Actions

- i. Ensure that all campus facilities support the work of teachers and students in the 21st century.
- ii. Ensure that campus roads and green spaces facilitate interaction, encourage connection, and foster close community relationships.
- iii. Seek opportunities to use sustainable building practices, reduce energy consumption, generate energy on campus, and practice environmental stewardship.
- iv. Add new facilities that enhance our students' academic and recreational experiences and ensure that quality faculty housing is something for which our school is known.



Objective 3.2 Ensure the long-term financial health of the Academy.

Rationale As we plan for the future of the Academy, we must ensure that the decisions we make today position us for success well into the future. We must continue the Academy's tradition of fiscal conservatism in the management and spending of the proceeds from its endowment. We must build on our current best practices in water and energy management. And we must seek opportunities to increase investment in the Academy while at the same time controlling costs in an effort to remain affordable.

- Actions**
- i. Maintain prudent investment management and endowment spending policies.
 - ii. Evaluate the possibility of creating a "green fund" that would capture the financial payback from sustainability initiatives that could then be recycled into future sustainability projects.
 - iii. Grow the endowment through fundraising.

Objective 3.3 Preserve and enhance the historical architecture and landscape on campus.

Rationale Founded in 1763, The Governor's Academy is the oldest non-sectarian boarding school in the United States. Many of the landmarks and buildings have historical significance. We strive to renovate existing facilities in ways that are true to the spirit of their original design and to ensure that new facilities complement the historical growth of this school over 250 years.

- Actions**
- i. Maintain and preserve the existing buildings that are worth preserving by virtue of their year of construction or of their aesthetic place on campus.
 - ii. Commit to engaging the most qualified architects in the design of new facilities and renovation of existing facilities.
 - iii. Engage historical preservationists in working with older buildings on campus.
 - iv. Educate the community about the history of our campus so as to cultivate appreciation for the unique qualities of this place.



ENGAGEMENT

GOAL: *To build and sustain meaningful relationships with alumni, parents, and friends; to effectively communicate the distinguishing qualities of The Governor's Academy and its remarkable alumni to our community and beyond; and to build stronger partnerships with our surrounding communities.*

Objective 4.1 Inspire all Academy constituencies to engage in a lifelong relationship with the school.

Rationale A culture of philanthropy at the Academy is critical to meeting the school's educational mission and ensuring its long term financial strength and sustainability. Cultivating and growing a culture that celebrates the importance of making charitable gifts to the school will help guarantee that the Academy attracts and enrolls the most qualified students, faculty, and staff, and that its programs and facilities match its aspirations for excellence. This philanthropic culture must be grounded in authentic engagement and ongoing meaningful relationships with alumni, parents, and friends who are well informed about school news and activities, on and off campus, and engaged in the life of the school.

Actions

- i. Communicate the importance of charitable giving to the life of the Academy by developing and marketing compelling cases for support for all constituencies: current students, alumni, parents, friends, and faculty.
- ii. Act as good stewards of the Academy's endowment, and in so doing, honor all those who have contributed to the livelihood of the Academy.
- iii. Develop new opportunities for alumni engagement based on affinity, career, and/or geography.
- iv. Provide meaningful opportunities for alumni to serve the school.
- v. Plan and execute a comprehensive fundraising effort that supports the themes and objectives contained in the Strategic Plan.



Objective 4.2 Communicate the Academy's brand in a compelling manner.

Rationale Given the increasingly competitive secondary school market and heightened expectations from prospective families about demonstrating the value of an independent school education, it is critical to communicate the benefits of a Governor's education in relevant and impactful ways. Clearly and compellingly demonstrating the value of attending Governor's will help the Offices of Admission and Advancement further their goals.

- Actions**
- i. Monitor trends in communications to ensure Governor's is at the forefront in education.
 - ii. Ensure Admission and Advancement deliver consistent messaging and materials most beneficial for them and their audiences.

Objective 4.3 Recognize our civic responsibility and increase the Academy's visibility locally, specifically with respect to local government, non-profit, and business associations.

Rationale The history of The Governor's Academy is integrally linked to the history of the local area. While our work at the Academy keeps us focused on preparing students for college and beyond, we are conscious of our civic responsibility to be good neighbors and to stay engaged and active in our local communities. In the decade ahead, we look forward to collaborating with local leaders as we increase our own sustainability initiatives on campus and look to identify new ways of giving back to the community.

- Actions**
- i. Volunteer our facilities as often as is practical to other not-for-profits either at cost or no charge.
 - ii. Encourage and provide support to faculty members and students who engage in educational and service activities off campus.
 - iii. Engage with other not-for-profit and business organizations in the greater Boston and North Shore area.
 - iv. Enhance middle school education in surrounding communities through direct partnerships with local schools.
 - v. Maximize summertime use of our campus and facilities in ways that advance the mission of the Academy.