The Caedmon School Strategic Plan
The Caedmon School Mission Statement

At The Caedmon School, we honor the individual and foster each child’s natural curiosity, which is the foundation of academic achievement. We nurture empathy in our students to value perspectives other than their own. Our graduates are creative, capable, and courageous, ready to make their place in the world.

Creative, Capable, Courageous

Framing our Future

Igniting the curiosity to learn in a young child is the most satisfying, humbling, and exciting endeavor that one can pursue. In New York independent schools, The Caedmon School fills a unique and vital niche, because we focus exclusively on young children. These years are the window for a child to fall in love with learning. Further, we are driven by the philosophy of Maria Montessori, who knew that children need to be provided the space and guidance to develop the innate learner that is present within them. She inspires Caedmon’s challenging program and rich palette of offerings, including Latin, Spanish, and violin. “Our graduates are creative, capable, and courageous,” as stated by our Mission Statement, and upon leaving our doors, they are ready to succeed in the finest independent and public middle schools.

Having recently celebrated Caedmon’s half-century of existence, and looking forward to one of the most exciting and innovative eras in education, the community wisely embarked upon a strategic planning process, seeking the questions that would guide the school’s vision and growth over the next several years. In the following pages, we introduce the five areas of focus that will best serve the next phase of Caedmon’s future. We will tell the distinct and unique story of Caedmon. We will ensure Caedmon’s financial sustainability, long beyond all of us, building upon our culture of largesse and philanthropy. We will dig deeply in the never-ending pursuit of an overall program that is the “gold standard” of Early Childhood and Elementary education. We will seek tangible evidence of our commitment to the rich diversity afforded us by this great city in which we live. And, we will seek to determine and fulfill the ongoing crucial and optimal needs for our school, in space, in size, and in program.

Such an undertaking requires inspired and steadfast leadership, and untold hours of hard work. Honor Taft, the Assistant Head of School and Anna Winderbaum, Caedmon Trustee and parent, provided this leadership, collecting information from the Parent Vision Meetings that took place in the 2012-13 school year, working with our consultant, Edes Gilbert, and guiding the Task Forces, made up of Trustees, administrators, faculty, staff, and parents, as they met last year to research, debate, and propose a vision to guide the school’s priorities. The results of their efforts culminated in the writing of the document you now hold. To express appreciation seems somehow inadequate, given the time, intelligence, and devotion to the school that all of these people provided, but we thank all of you, nonetheless, from the bottom of our hearts.

It is a thrilling time for our children and their world of education. Thank you for your support of this great institution, as we build upon the school’s legacy, which was founded by six New York parents in 1962, seeking something special for their children.

Matthew Stuart
Head of School

John Evans
President of the Board of Trustees

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The Goal

We will successfully communicate The Caedmon School’s distinct identity and the attributes that set us apart from other schools. We will expand our outreach and increase awareness of our school.

Rationale

Caedmon’s Montessori-inspired early childhood and elementary program provides a distinctive and powerful experience for children. We have established a culture, community, and an academic program that prepares children to succeed in their ongoing schools and in life. It is essential that internal and external communities understand the strength and value of the Caedmon experience.

Recommendations

- Define the attributes that contribute to Caedmon’s unique identity and brand through internal research and community outreach.
- Think broadly about all external constituencies that are important to Caedmon, our students, and our future.
- Develop a coordinated and comprehensive internal and external marketing plan to ensure that our identity is understood by all of our constituencies.
- Develop a system to evaluate the effectiveness of our outreach and communication efforts.
The Goal

We will enrich our program to ensure that teaching and learning at Caedmon set a standard of excellence in elementary education and that our children are confident, resilient learners who are prepared for their ongoing schools and beyond.

Rationale

In the world of New York independent schools, The Caedmon School provides a unique early childhood and elementary school focus, where character and good citizenship are fundamental. We offer a relevant and challenging program grounded in the teachings of Maria Montessori and informed by the best practices in elementary education. Our supportive and safe environment promotes collaboration and integration of diverse ideas. Our program prepares graduates who are capable, creative, and courageous learners, ready to take their place in the world.

Recommendations

Academic Excellence /Evaluation and Process
- Design and implement a process to define and evaluate academic excellence at Caedmon.
- Evaluate our program to ensure that we meet the developmental needs of our children at each level and that Caedmon’s curriculum fortifies our students with the relevant skills to be successful in on-going schools and as lifelong learners.
- Develop a plan to consistently inform our families about Caedmon’s academic program so they are empowered to successfully support and engage with their children in the learning process.

Innovation and Technology
- Create a technology mission statement and set of standards for evaluating the skills and knowledge students need to learn effectively and live productively in an increasingly global and digital world.
- Integrate 21st century learning standards, subject matter, and teaching methods into the school’s curriculum to inspire exploration and deepen learning across the curriculum.
- Invest in the necessary infrastructure and support to ensure that teachers and students are inspired and empowered to take risks and innovate.
- Ensure that technology is implemented in an appropriate and relevant manner and is consistent with core Montessori principles.

Montessori
- Define and articulate how our commitment to the Montessori philosophy is integrated across our entire program.
- Devise a system for continuously assessing our effectiveness at incorporating relevant elements of Montessori philosophy into our program and create the necessary infrastructure to support our faculty and staff.
Intentional Diversity

The Goal

We will define and implement meaningful strategies to ensure success in meeting our commitment to intentional diversity within our school community and the broader world.

Rationale

Diversity is a core value of our school that is infused throughout our community and program. Since Caedmon’s founding, our school has embraced the breadth and diversity of New York City’s rich ethnic, racial, and socio-economic population, and has always included a vibrant international community. In support of its mission, the Caedmon community celebrates differences, places a special value on a diverse student and faculty population, and is committed to promoting empathy, global thinking, social awareness, and responsibility.

Recommendations

Leadership

- Create strong leadership to ensure cohesive organization and implementation of diversity initiatives.
- Clarify our diversity mission and define the core values that guide our diversity initiatives.

Hiring and Enrollment

- Formulate and implement a comprehensive plan to ensure that our hiring and admissions processes reflect our commitment to diversity. Clarify our diversity mission and define the core values that guide our diversity initiatives.
- Broaden our outreach to ensure that we recruit a diverse applicant pool for both students and faculty.

Community

- Clarify the roles of the parent and faculty diversity committees to coordinate efforts and maximize impact.

Academics

- Examine our curriculum to ensure that our commitment to diversity is infused throughout all subject matter and grade levels.
- Design a plan that fosters empathy and understanding in our students and empowers them to be leaders/active citizens of the world.

Professional Development

- Prioritize issues of diversity, equity, and social justice in professional development.
- Create a process to ensure that personal growth and curricular initiatives are incorporated into the classroom and community.

- Broaden the engagement of our community members and increase opportunities for dialogue and education around issues of diversity, equity, and social justice.
Philanthropy

The Goal

We will develop a philanthropic culture and build the financial foundation necessary to enable Caedmon to advance the mission of the school and enhance the daily lives of students, faculty, and the entire community.

Rationale

As Caedmon enters its second half-century, it is imperative that we continue to build our resources to ensure our school’s sustainability. An enhanced culture of giving will enable us to continue to develop Caedmon’s educational program and facilities, and realize our mission to offer a program that combines both our Montessori roots with the best thinking about elementary education.

Recommendations

- Evaluate our development efforts to ensure that we have the resources and process to maximize participation and generosity at Caedmon.
- Broaden philanthropic leadership and participation in our community by strengthening our cultivation and stewardship efforts.
- Ensure that our development office has the appropriate resources to execute its mission.
The Goal

We will optimize our current environment and proactively assess future alternatives, always ensuring that our space and scope decision-making is guided and driven by our mission and programmatic needs.

Rationale

Early Childhood and Elementary Education are at the center of Caedmon’s heritage and strength. Our school’s scope and space must optimally meet and anticipate the ongoing and ever-changing needs of our children. Our program, curriculum, and physical plant must ensure that we foster each child’s natural curiosity and develop capable, creative graduates.

Recommendations

• Define the elements of a contemporary school building and successful learning environment, and develop a plan to modernize the current facilities, consistent with those characteristics.
• Explore opportunities to improve our environment and the health and wellness of our community through upgrades to the physical plant and the operation of our facilities.
• Explore contiguous space opportunities to expand as availability permits.
• Establish a committee to monitor and guide the long-term (5-10 year) space and scope vision for the school, including remote space opportunities.
Strategic Planning Committee

Josy Alcindor, Faculty
Marvina Brewster, Trustee & Alum Parent
Holly Carter, Trustee
Roberta Chevlove, Parent
James Dawson, Trustee
Greg DiFelice, Trustee & Parent
Kathryn Dunham, Parent
Tasha Elsbach, Trustee
John Evans, Board President & Parent
Edes Gilbert, Consultant
Jim Halpin, Parent
Maria Howard, Administration
Elena Howell, Faculty
Tyler Jennings, Faculty
Andrew Kagan, Faculty & Administration
John Kim, Trustee & Parent
Moon Kim, Trustee & Parent
Matt Lamphier, Parent
Linda Larkin, Trustee
Mia Mastrangelo, Faculty
Jelecia McGregor, Faculty
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Alissa Riccardelli, Administration
Cindy Rodriguez, Administration & Alum Parent
Jeremy Rosenberg, Trustee & Parent
Elizabeth Salem, Parent
Yessenia Scheker, Parent
Brad Slepian, Faculty
Nancy Smith, Trustee & Parent
Jerry Smith, Parent
Christine Spinelli, Trustee & Alum Parent
Honor Taft, Assistant Head of School & Strategic Plan Co-Chair
Allison Trinkle, Faculty
Nadia Wedding, Faculty
Kristina Wels, Administration
Pam West, Parent
Anna Winderbaum, Trustee, Strategic Plan Co-Chair, & Parent
Lloyd Zuckerberg, Board Vice President & Parent
Betsy Zuppone, Trustee & Alum Parent