

Elgin Academy

STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

Introduction

Elgin Academy annually articulates its strategic plan through a *Strategic Plan Summary* (presented herein) and a series of “goals and action plans” that are continuously revised. This summary represents an overview of the key strategies of the Academy beginning with the Fall Semester, 2009.

1. Mission, Program Distinctives, and Initiatives

The Academy program is focused and coordinated to accomplish each element of its mission.

ELGIN ACADEMY MISSION STATEMENT

Elgin Academy is a preschool-12th grade, college preparatory, coeducational day school committed to developing the full potential of each of its students. Through a proactive partnership among faculty, parents, and students in a nurturing, dynamic, challenging, and diverse community, the Academy creates an environment where students acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to become intellectually engaged and confident about their place in the world.

A detailed statement of the Academy’s educational philosophy and methods is contained in *Elgin Academy Philosophy and Goals*.

The Academy boasts distinctive programs and initiatives that position it as the best well-rounded, liberal arts education in the Northwest and West Suburbs of Chicago. Quantitative measures of student test scores, teacher background, college placement, and other factors consistently place the Academy among the top five schools—whether public, private, or parochial—in the region. The Academy provides the most complete academic experience and most effective character education available. Elgin Academy is a close-knit and caring community where students, parents, and teachers have a real and meaningful voice in creating a safe, supportive, and positive environment.

The Academy’s motto is “Tradition, Innovation, Excellence.” It maintains many distinctive qualities, compared with other educational options:

- * Small Class Sizes
- * Academic Excellence
- * Exceptional Teachers and Talented Students
- * Outstanding Facilities
- * History of Leadership
- * Unique Community

Periodically, the Academy implements special program initiatives in a variety of areas. Recently these areas of emphasis have included: writing across the curriculum, building a community of character, active learning based on sound brain research, global awareness, and technological innovation.

2. Recruiting, Developing, and Retaining an Outstanding Faculty and Staff

The Academy identifies and hires faculty and staff members who are uniquely qualified to serve in the demanding roles required by independent schools. These individuals receive thorough orientation, mentoring, and continuing development. The performance review system is based on close supervision by a Division/Area Director and the careful analysis of formal/informal, as well as empirical/non-empirical factors. Frequent feedback is invited from faculty and staff; among the areas of special focus are: salaries, benefits, professional development, computer/technology support, and open communication.

3. Enrollment Growth and Responsiveness to Constituents

The Academy anticipates steady enrollment growth for the coming years while maintaining high admission standards and continuing to improve the retention of current students. Enrollment growth targets will be agreed upon annually by the Board and Administration to better support the needs of the institution and in conjunction with the adoption by the Board of the *Preliminary Budget* for the coming year. Growth in tuition revenue (full-pay equivalency) and equity and efficiency in the distribution of financial aid funds will complement these enrollment growth goals.

The Academy recognizes the value of constituent feedback and incorporates into its strategic plan constructive suggestions from regular surveys of parents, students, alumni, faculty, staff, and others. The Academy is committed to excellence in constituent service. Family concerns about a student's progress and other areas of service will be solicited regularly and those concerns will be addressed in a timely fashion.

4. Effective Governance

The Academy's Board of Trustees actively applies the principles of sound non-profit boardmanship to the particular challenges of independent schools. The Board is well known in the region for modeling best practices in nonprofit governance. It uses a variety of sources for research and recommendations concerning governance, including the National Association of Independent Schools and BoardSource.

5. Fundraising and Development

The Academy maintains an outstanding record of successful annual giving through the Annual Fund, the Extravaganza dinner/auction, the Golf Classic, and other special events. In addition, the Academy recently concluded a successful capital campaign, “Building the Future,” to support its facilities plan. Through “The 1839 Society,” the Academy is currently expanding its efforts to secure planned gifts for the long-term needs of the school

6. Facilities Plan

The Academy’s facilities plan is designed to provide the quantity and quality of space that well befits the high-quality, independent-school education that the school offers. The Academy is using a combination of capital campaign giving and long-term, tax-free financing to implement a facilities improvement plan in three phases.

- Phase I: Media, Science, and Fine Arts Center and Renovations to Sears Hall, North Hall, and Edwards Halls (construction of the Media, Science, and Fine Arts Center was completed in October 2008, many renovations to other buildings have already been completed)
- Phase II or III: Gymnasium Expansion
- Phase II or III: Sears Gallery Renovation

Recent improvements include: additional “green space” throughout campus, relocation of parking areas, and installation of a campus-wide security camera system. While pursuing an aggressive and imaginative plan to improve campus facilities, the Academy will continue to maintain existing campus buildings and grounds, with special care given to preserving the heritage of this 170-year-old campus. The Academy devotes particular attention to “greening the campus,” i.e., making all aspects of maintenance and operations as environmentally responsible as feasible.

7. Business Systems and Finance

The Academy acquires, upgrades, and maintains its technological resources and business systems in order to attain a more efficient, integrated operation and fully support the diverse functions of the school, its faculty, and staff. Periodic technology assessment reports are evaluated and appropriate recommendations are implemented.

The Academy follows best practices in its management of the financial resources of the school. This includes emphasis on effective spending controls in both the compensation and non-compensation areas of the operating budget. The Academy is

committed to increasing the size of the endowment through contributions and successful investing, while maintaining efficient operations and implementing an aggressive capital improvement plan.

Conclusion

This strategic plan addresses the building and development of Elgin Academy both physically and educationally. Through this process the key elements of the independent school experience are preserved and strengthened.

Approved by the Board of Trustees, October 19, 2009