



Strategic Plan 2016

Vision for the Strategic Plan 2016

To deliver excellence in education, Seattle Waldorf School's path forward must advance new initiatives while renewing existing programs, as renewal is essential to the health of our school. As the 35th anniversary of Seattle Waldorf School approached, the Board of Trustees embarked on developing a new strategic plan, continuing where the previous plan, *Toward SWS in 2020*, left off.

Strategic Plan 2016 will begin the school's next 35 years by invigorating and strengthening our community through consistently and confidently fulfilling our mission and living our values. Guiding the decisions and actions of Seattle Waldorf School for the next three to five years, *Strategic Plan 2016* is designed as a living document that will be evaluated and updated annually by the Board.

Our Mission

Daily we strive to inspire learning, courage and joy in the developing human being.

Our Values

1. We are an educational community working out of cooperation and mutual respect.
2. We are guided by the educational philosophy and understanding of the developing human being articulated by Rudolf Steiner.
3. We believe artistic activity is essential to the education of the human being.
4. We cultivate wonder and curiosity through engagement with the natural world.
5. We celebrate the innate reverence and joy of an unhurried and naturally developing childhood.
6. We actively engage the striving adolescent in order to promote the unfolding of the free and confident adult.

Looking Back

Seattle Waldorf School was founded and accepted its first class in 1980. In the last 15 years, we have developed and implemented three strategic plans:

- **2002** – The first five-year strategic plan identified three initial challenges: creating and sustaining relationships; establishing, developing and maintaining a permanent site; and providing adequate financing.
- **2006** – The 2002 strategic plan was renewed by reflecting and refocusing on the school mission.
- **2009/2010** – *Toward SWS in 2020* focused on three areas: site planning; developing a sustainable finance plan; and relationships.

Many of the goals articulated in these earlier strategic plans have been achieved, including the addition of the high school and implementing a campus master plan. Those initiatives that are still in progress, such as accreditation by the Northwest Association of Independent Schools (NWAIS), or are ongoing objectives, such as improving the wider awareness of Waldorf education, have been incorporated into our new plan.

Planning Ahead

Seattle Waldorf School has just completed an eight-year period of rapid growth and expansion marked by the addition of the high school in 2008, a major remodel of the grade school in 2013, and the move of the high school to a newly remodeled building in 2014. In addition, within the school, our programs reflect varying stages of development, including evolving early childhood and high school offerings, as well as expanded enrollment from 268 to 376 students, ranging in age from 18 months to 18 years.

The merger with Three Cedars Waldorf School in late 2015 presents an array of challenges and opportunities. As the largest Waldorf school in the country, Seattle Waldorf School stands poised to be a leader in the Waldorf movement regionally and nationally. We are forging new ground as we develop a business and educational model that now supports four campuses serving more than 550 students, and employs over 100 faculty and staff. Ensuring that all community members feel connected in meaningful ways to the spiritual life and work of the school will be crucial.

We recognize that the life cycle of a school brings unique challenges depending on the phase of development and circumstances facing the institution. As a relatively mature school, Seattle Waldorf School is called to embrace the opportunity for continual renewal and growth by:

1. Building an updated and deeper understanding of the principles of Waldorf education and achieving a renewed commitment to excellence in the classroom

2. Consciously awakening to the true needs of society, to the needs of children, parents and the community the school is serving
3. Overcoming the limitations often inherent in mature administrative structures, through the continued development of greater social-spiritual insights and consciousness

With these intentions in mind, the Board has developed the *Strategic Plan 2016*.

We will embrace the opportunity to offer an exceptional Waldorf education on four unique campuses as we live into the joining with Three Cedars Waldorf School. We will develop structures and systems that support operational efficiency while honoring the distinctive programs and cultures at each site. We will strive to maintain the “small school feel” while managing a large institution effectively and thoughtfully.

We will strengthen our commitment to Waldorf education as a leader in the community at large. We will “walk our talk” by first living these principals of Waldorf education as a community. Within the school community we will strengthen our roots by deepening pedagogical understanding through parent evenings, festivals and other educational events. We will bring our commitment to the greater community by taking a leadership role in the Northwest region of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWNSA) and strengthening our relationships with regional and national Waldorf schools.

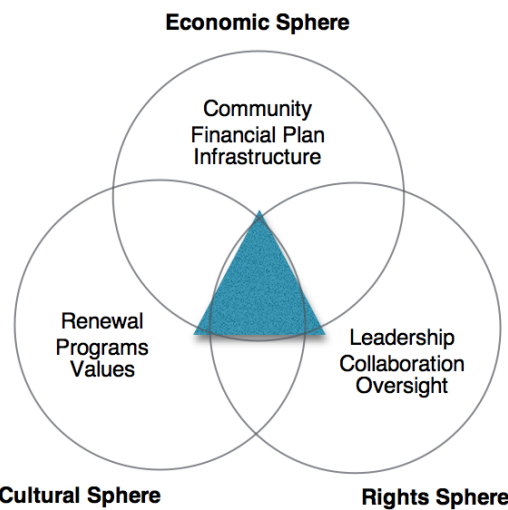
We will promote Seattle Waldorf School by cultivating an increased awareness of Waldorf education. First, we must articulate and demonstrate the unique features and positive outcomes of Waldorf education. Then, through coordinated marketing of Waldorf education with area Waldorf schools, we will enhance understanding and support. Within Seattle Waldorf School, we will improve neighborhood outreach and community engagement throughout the school community.

We will review and reflect upon our school programs to ensure we live the values of Seattle Waldorf School and prepare our students to meet the modern world with initiative, creativity, and compassion. At the high school, we will look at opportunities for students to learn outside the classroom and engage in the world through technology, service learning, internships, exchange and leadership programs. We will engage the school community at large in dialogue about diversity and develop a program to foster an inclusive and healthy learning environment. Finally, we will review our early childhood, grade school and high school offerings, including specialty, and extracurricular programs, to ensure relevance, quality and consistency.

We will prepare for planned and unforeseen change by strengthening our infrastructure and building a strong foundation for Seattle Waldorf School's continuing success. Strong houses are built on solid foundations, and we will work to strengthen our foundation in two major areas. First, we will implement a succession plan for school leadership and master teachers, including mentoring of future leaders and teachers, thus facilitating knowledge transfer between generations and laying the groundwork for continued teaching excellence. Second, we will assess and enhance emergency preparation and management systems to ensure the ongoing health and safety of our community.

We will secure the financial health of our school to ensure long-term sustainability.

With a strong foundation in place we need sound economic resources to sustain and grow our programs. Updates to our campus master plan, prudent long-term financial plan revisions, innovative enrollment strategies and strategic use of financial aid will align our financial strategies to support the school's mission. We will increase charitable giving to the school through contributions to the Community Fund, and by establishing major-gifts and planned-giving programs. Our goal is to engage the full spectrum of community: friends, parents, grandparents, and alumni families in supporting the mission of the school.



Strategic Plan within the Threefold Commonwealth
Based on Rudolph Steiner's threefold social organism

A previous strategic plan aptly observed, "As we take stock of the progress we have made, we acknowledge the challenges ahead." This *Strategic Plan 2016* is the result of a thoughtful collaboration between faculty, school leadership, and the Board on how best to prepare Seattle Waldorf School for the opportunities and challenges of the next 35 years. The renewal and strengthening outlined in this vision will prepare Seattle Waldorf School for the future by building on our many accomplishments and the strong foundation already in place.

Goals and Actions

1. Goal: Develop and implement a thoughtful, comprehensive plan to integrate the programs and campus of Three Cedars Waldorf School into SWS operations, honoring the unique communities and cultures of both schools.

Actions:

- a. Create operational efficiencies and policies to ensure consistent practices across all campuses (Kinderhaus, Grade School, High School, TCWS)
 - b. Develop strategic initiatives addressing program and facility needs at TCWS
 - c. Articulate and promote the unique cultures and program features of all four campuses
 - d. Ensure institutional stability through an administrative structure that supports program and operations at all sites
 - e. Create opportunities for professional collaboration across all campuses to support faculty development and student learning
 - f. Develop tools and structures to strengthen faculty trust and support of one another
2. Goal: Strengthen the role of SWS as a leader in Waldorf education in the community at large.

Actions:

- a. Maintain AWSNA accreditation
 - b. Actively demonstrate and practice the Seattle Waldorf School values in the greater community
 - c. Deepen pedagogical understanding through parent evenings, festivals, and other events to engage the entire school community
 - d. Explore opportunities to expand outreach and education to young adults, including prospective and expecting parents
 - e. Take a leadership role in the Northwest AWNSA region and work to improve networking of area Waldorf schools
 - f. Explore greater collaboration with Sound Circle Center and other organizations with shared values and missions
 - g. Develop an "apprentice program" to provide new teachers with relevant classroom experience and cultivate a new generation of teachers for Seattle Waldorf School
 - h. Engage alumni in supporting and promoting the school
3. Goal: Promote Seattle Waldorf School by cultivating a greater awareness of Waldorf education.

Actions:

- a. Develop and implement a strategic marketing plan for the school
- b. Articulate and demonstrate the positive outcomes of Waldorf education

- c. Provide relevant and compelling promotional tools for use externally by the school community
 - d. Improve neighborhood outreach and engagement in the community
 - e. Increase collaboration with area Waldorf schools to facilitate common marketing and promotion and other possible partnership opportunities
4. Goal: Review and reflect upon school culture to ensure there is active practice of Seattle Waldorf School values; ensure that programs prepare students to emerge equipped to meet the modern world with initiative, creativity, and compassion.

Actions:

- a. Conduct a comprehensive financial and facilities feasibility study for implementation of an Early Childhood Education Center plan that offers a continuum of care from Parent and Tot through Kindergarten
 - b. Continue to strengthen specialty classes and extracurricular programs to assure relevance, quality and consistency
 - c. Assess existing learning support systems and develop a long-term strategy based on extent and type of resources the school can realistically offer (for example, a Tobias classroom serving children on a different developmental path)
 - d. Expand opportunities for high school students to learn outside the classroom and engage in the world through service learning, internships, exchange and leadership programs, technology, etc.
 - e. Engage the community in dialogue about diversity, including articulating our definition, developing our goals and actions to foster diversity at the school
 - f. Review and reflect on the curriculum and classroom experience to determine possible enhancements that will ensure students are equipped to meet the modern world while still keeping within our Waldorf tradition
 - g. Strengthen curricular, social and community connections across the branches in meaningful and appropriate ways
 - h. Explore the value and feasibility of establishing a high school boarding program
5. Goal: Further stabilize Seattle Waldorf School and ensure the health of the organization and its community members by strengthening infrastructure and anticipating change.

Actions:

- a. Prepare for and receive NWAIS accreditation

- b. Implement a succession planning program for administrative and pedagogical leadership and master teachers that includes identification and mentoring of future leaders/teachers and knowledge transfer between generations
 - c. Continue to renew Board and committee membership, seeking relevant skills and experience, as well as planning for leadership transitions
 - d. Align, as much as possible, the various aspects of the school that are in different phases of maturation, including Three Cedars Waldorf School, most recently merged with Seattle Waldorf School
 - e. Continuously improve the quality and efficiency of systems for operation of the school including faculty/staff recruitment, performance assessment, development and retention of faculty and staff
 - f. Regularly evaluate and update the school's emergency plan to ensure student and school safety; upgrade systems and respond to emerging risks as appropriate
6. Goal: Secure the financial health of the school to ensure long-term sustainability.

Actions:

- a. Further develop enrollment management systems and practices to improve student recruitment and retention at key transition points, and ensure strategic use of financial aid in alignment with the school's mission
- b. Continue to strengthen the school's commitment to socio-economic diversity and financial aid
- c. Increase charitable giving to the school through contributions to the Community Fund, establishing major gifts and planned giving programs and preparing for a capital campaign to further engage parents, grandparents, alumni families, and friends in supporting the mission of the school
- d. Update the long-term financial plan to include debt reduction, increased reserves, depreciation and increased fund raising
- e. Revise the long-term facilities plan to ensure that program expansion, capital needs, and property maintenance projects are planned for and adequately funded
- f. Review and revise the campus master plan, in anticipation of future program needs