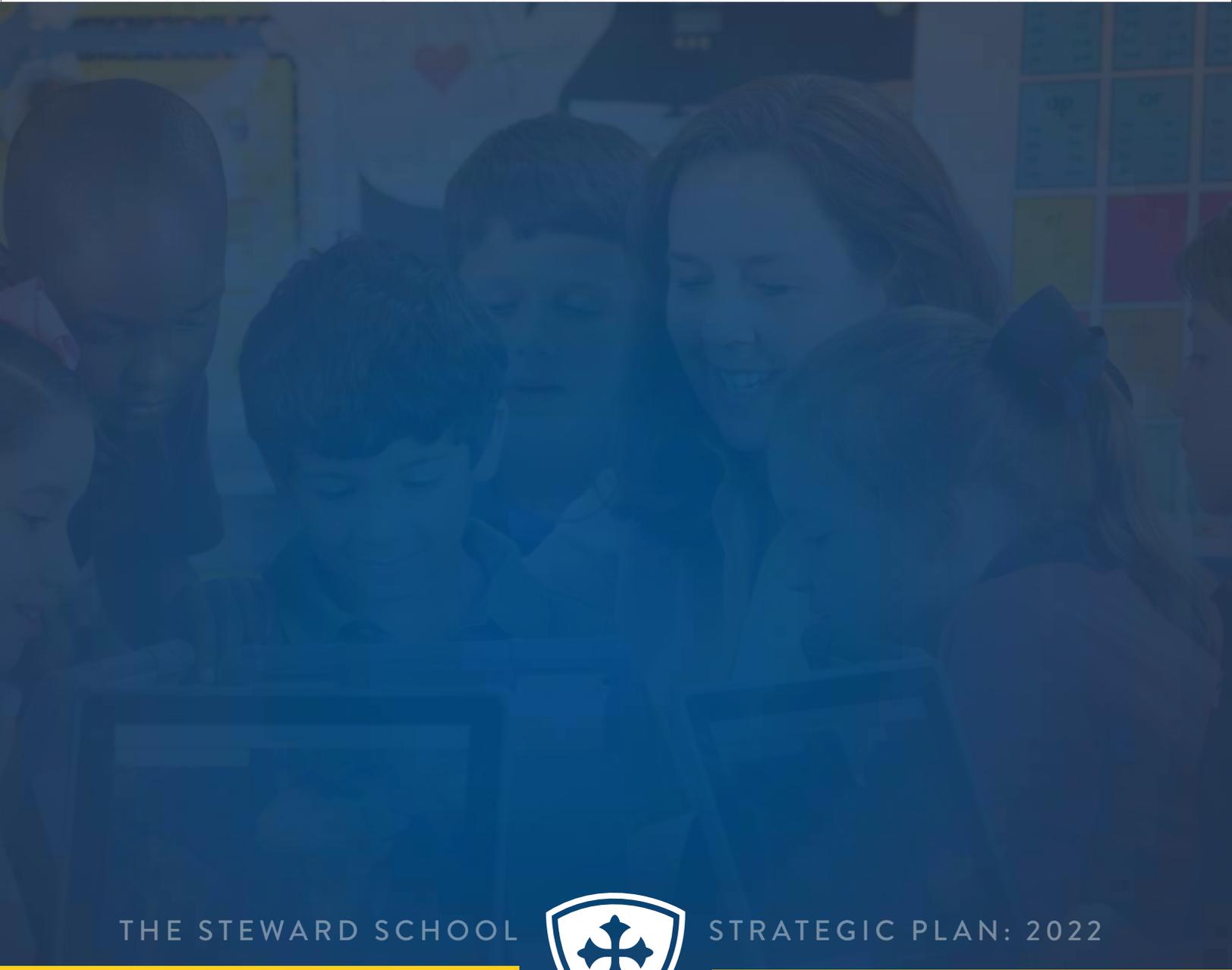




COMPASS 2022
Charting Our Course



THE STEWARD SCHOOL



STRATEGIC PLAN: 2022

CONNECTING PAST AND FUTURE

Leading up to this moment in the life of The Steward School, we have developed a reputation not just for high-quality academics and high-value programs and services, but also, and perhaps more importantly, for being fearless. Fearless not in the sense of being reckless or intemperate, but in the sense of being fear-less. We are respectful of tradition and of the values and mores of our families and the greater Richmond community, but at the same time, we have been inventive and willing to take the first step before others. We have been willing to jump out of line, to experiment, and to create.

Our approach will honor passion and engagement, and our school community will inspire pride and commitment now and for generations to come.

This ethos has long benefited our students, who have thrived in an environment that celebrates the individual, allowing them to become the best versions of themselves. As we approach this strategic plan, it is our challenge and our opportunity to take that ethos and translate it from how we approach education of the individual and broaden it to include how we regard our place in the Richmond and global community. How might we celebrate what Steward is now and also evolve to become the best versions of ourselves? What strengths do we recognize that we have to share? What are the unmet needs of our Steward community, and what resources and partnerships can we develop to fill them? How might we continue to purposefully build an educational environment and community that addresses our students' needs in a changing world?

So, let's imagine what we will look like in the next five years, as we carry out the work of this plan and secure its strategic benefits. We will have explored new ideas and traveled new paths the school has not walked before. In doing so, we will forge new ways of honoring the distinctiveness of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni, and meeting more of the needs of our families. Our Steward family members will be celebrated as balanced and healthy, caring and complex, passionate individuals. Our intent is not to make the students fit the mold of the organization; the Steward community has and will continue to reflect its membership. At Steward, we live and breathe; we adapt and change; we thrive with different perspectives.

The greater Richmond community, itself a rising star, will recognize us as a valued partner and resource. We will assist non-profits throughout the area and work closely with both large corporations and entrepreneurial start-ups to learn and collaborate. Richmond and The Steward School will gain prominence hand in hand.

Having just surpassed the graduation of 1,000 alumni, this group will be indispensable to Steward's future, as we are to theirs. We will create an environment where our alumni are Spartans for life. We will continue to serve our alumni through career networking, social engagement with other alumni, and generally deepening their opportunities to connect with the greater Richmond region. We believe, too, that they will mentor current students, network with other alumni and parents, and be our brightest ambassadors in the community; through enrolling their own children and philanthropic giving, they will become key to our sustainable future.

Our program will model innovation and creativity. Our approaches will honor passion and engagement, and our school community will inspire pride and commitment now and for generations to come.

Initiatives, Milestones, and Guideposts

Below are the five specific initiatives of our strategic plan, accompanied by milestones (discrete goals) and guideposts (directional objectives to move us toward each milestone). We are intentionally using the milestones as interim destinations as opposed to final stops. We believe that in exploring the feasibility and design of each milestone, we may find that it is exactly the right outcome, or, we may find in our study a similar but different direction that better meets the needs of students and our mission. It is critical that we incorporate flexibility into the process.

In exploring these initiatives, you will see redundancies, overlaps, and synergies. This, too, is intentional. Each initiative is designed to work in sync with the others, one feeding the other in the greater service of the school community. (Of note, not reflected in this document are our ongoing priorities, such as hiring, retaining, and developing the best faculty, staff, and coaches; managing our finances ethically and efficiently with an eye toward sustainability; improving the quality of our athletic program; and continuing the work we have begun in innovative teaching and learning, including design thinking, coding, and making.)



INNOVATION: STEWARD IN THE COMMUNITY

Steward is poised to be **the** forward-thinking school in Richmond, known amongst independent schools as a pioneer in human-centered design, educational technology, curriculum, cutting-edge physical space, and hands-on, real-world learning. In the past three years, Steward has put time and resources into showcasing an innovative spirit and out-of-the box thinking that has transformed the school's program and pedagogy.

Steward will bring its innovative and forward-thinking mindsets and practices into the city of Richmond and build relationships with innovative companies, non-profits and community leaders that will inspire greater innovation at Steward and also contribute to what is happening in Richmond.

Milestones

In the next three years, we will have tested the feasibility of

- Formal relationships with local, regional, and/or international partners that will provide ongoing opportunities for students to gain real-world experience at innovative organizations.
- Structured programs (e.g., internships or curriculum requirements) that facilitate access to innovative organizations and result in broad participation by students, whether during the school year, summer, or post-graduation.

Major Guideposts

- By September 30, 2018, the faculty will be divided into self-study groups to outline programs associated with each milestone above.
- By September 30, 2019, each self-study group will report results of its design work to the administration, faculty, and Board of Trustees.
- By December 15, 2020, study groups will test feasibility of initiative vis a vis personnel, budget, and market viability.
- By June 30, 2021, feasible initiatives will launch.

Supporting Guideposts

- By the end of each year, at least two local business leaders will speak with students by invitation from the Entrepreneurship Studies Program, Bryan Lab team, and/or divisional administrations.
- By the end of each year, the Diversity and Inclusion Council and/or divisional administrations will offer at least one combined student/family community service opportunity.
- By June 30, 2020, the school administration will have secured educational partnerships with at least two colleges and universities and at least two businesses and corporations in the greater Richmond area.
- By June 30, 2020, administration and academic technology faculty will design an on-campus educational program to serve a minimum of six youth-oriented non-profits in the greater Richmond area.

Strength in Diversity

Diversity - of all kinds - is an asset to communities and organizations and certainly to Steward. Research shows that diverse teams outperform more homogenous teams in solving complex problems. We also know that our graduates will head out into colleges and a workforce that is increasingly diverse and global in nature. Nurturing diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, culture, religion, and family structure, as well as diversity of perspectives, skills, learning styles, and expertise, is central to preparing students for college and for life.

Steward will create a truly diverse, inclusive, and equitable community that showcases diversity as a hallmark and core strength of the school, and we will be action-oriented about what has been put on paper in order to live our diversity statement.

Milestones

- By June 30, 2019, the administration will have measured the engagement of our diverse students and families (as defined above) through instruments such as the Mission Skills Assessment, AIM, HSSSE, ISM tools, etc.
- By December 30, 2019, the faculty will have conducted a complete audit of curricula and programs to ensure inclusivity and equity.
- Each year we will strive to have at least 20 percent of new hires racially or ethnically diverse.
- By 2021, students will graduate demonstrating cultural competence in their portfolios.

Major Guideposts

- By October 30, 2018, the Program Steering Committee will select the best instrument to measure engagement and to establish benchmarks.
- Each year, the Program Steering Committee and divisional academic committees will review benchmarks in order to confirm successful programs and identify areas for growth.
- By December 30, 2018, through in-house training and partnership with the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities, faculty will be provided with tools to increase awareness and pedagogy in order to evaluate curricula and programs.
- By June 30, 2018, a group of faculty will have studied best practices and curriculum in cultural competency, with pilot programming to be introduced by June 30, 2019.
- By June 1, 2022, students will include evidence of cultural competency as a requirement toward graduation.

Supporting Guideposts

- By November 30, 2018, the Diversity and Inclusion Council and the administration and Board of Trustees will determine the feasibility of hiring a Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion on a full- or part-time basis.
- Each year, the Bryan Innovation Lab team will intentionally include visiting innovators who are representative of our greater community composition.
- By February of each year, the faculty will select a theme based on inclusion and diversity for the following year for which to plan the appropriate programming.
- By December 2018, the Office of Human Resources will research and implement best practices for hiring and retaining racially and ethnically diverse faculty and staff.

Complexity and Creativity

In a rapidly changing world, where content is abundant and new and extensive brain research informs our understanding of how students learn, Steward can reimagine teaching and learning for a modern education, one that produces empathetic, entrepreneurial, globally minded citizens with the skills to lead in their communities. Hands-on, real-world problem solving and differentiated teaching supported by both low- and high-tech tools and flexible learning spaces are at the center of a new model for teaching and learning.

With the rapid advancement of intelligent machines, a more global workforce, a different set of skills needed for the workforce, and the fact that college is no longer the only pathway to a meaningful career, the future of skills, habits, and mindsets and our relationship to content knowledge are less clear. The World Economic Forum's list of top 10 skills needed for the workplace of the future includes: complex problem solving, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, judgment and decision making, creativity, service orientation, people management, negotiation, coordinating with others, and cognitive flexibility. Steward seeks to prepare students not just for college but for life beyond an academic setting.

We have made significant headway in modernizing and innovating our curriculum (what we teach), our pedagogy (the way we teach) to meet these new realities, and the learning spaces. In addition, the school has supported these changes with solid professional development, enabling teachers to grow and deliver the vision.

Steward will build on the current program and provide more real-world and experiential learning opportunities for students to develop the skill sets and knowledge that will prepare them for what comes next. Likewise, we will develop and support the current faculty and staff and continue to attract a professional community that can support this vision.

Milestones

In the next three years, we will have tested the feasibility of

- A multi-week or semester-long off-campus program for students to work with businesses, research institutions, or non-profits
- A summer institute on innovative teaching and learning
- A membership in the Mastery Transcript Consortium

Major Guideposts

- By June 30, 2019, the faculty will be divided into self-study groups to outline programs associated with each milestone above.
- By June 1, 2020, each self-study group will report results of their design work to the administration, faculty, and Board of Trustees.
- By June 30, 2021, study groups will test feasibility of initiative vis a vis personnel, budget, and market viability.
- By June 30, 2022, faculty will receive professional development related to chosen initiatives.
- By August 30, 2022, feasible initiatives will launch.

Supporting Guideposts

- Based on feasibility determinations, faculty in each division will be trained in assessment techniques for student portfolio creation by June 30, 2019.
- Based on feasibility determinations, the Program Steering Committee and divisional academic committees will design and implement student portfolios to demonstrate mastery at each grade level by June 30, 2020.
- By June 30, 2019, the Bryan Lab will have secured at least one Innovator-in-Residence to conduct long-term research with groups of students.
- By June 30, 2020, Upper School faculty will have designed and piloted at least one blended learning class with minimal face-to-face time scheduled, and by June 30, 2021, the school will have a dedicated blended learning space and at least one paraprofessional staff member.
- By June 30, 2020, academic committees in each division will have researched the availability of virtual reality programs relevant to their classrooms, and by June 30, 2021, the school will fund the purchase of the necessary equipment and programs.

Attending to the Whole Person

Social media and technology, a divisive political climate, the pace of our lives, and an ambiguous future are contributing to an increasing level of stress and anxiety in young people, and Steward students are no exception. Nationally, we have seen increased levels of depression in high school and middle school students, and higher rates of cheating, self-harm, and sleeplessness. Over-emphasis on grades, test scores, and outward evidence of academic achievement lead to the devaluing of many other aspects of a healthy and successful life, including balance, physical fitness, ethical decision making, self-knowledge, and independent thinking.

Steward, a generally joyful learning environment for students and teachers, sees this strategic goal as proactive and increasingly essential. The school has already begun to take steps towards providing students with tools for mindfulness, character education, and healthy choices around nutrition. Small enhancements to the schedule, including longer class periods, special speakers and professional development about health and wellbeing, and bringing puppies to school during exam time, are making a difference.

Steward will enable students to develop qualities of resilience and grit, self-knowledge, and the ability to make good, ethical decisions that contribute to both physical and mental wellbeing. We will prepare students to navigate an ambiguous future, engage in civil discourse with peers and adults who may come at problems from different perspectives, and develop a strong sense of personal integrity that they carry with them beyond Steward.

Milestones

In the next five years

- All students and faculty will practice mindfulness several times each week.
- All common spaces and outdoor learning areas on campus will be converted into positive, inspiring wellness-related spaces.
- The school will have a documented JK-12 health and wellness program to include speakers, community partners, relationship building, decision-making, exercise and nutrition, non-violent communication, and mental health education.

Major Guideposts

- By June 30, 2019, all faculty members will have received mindfulness training via partnerships in the greater Richmond area.
- By June 30, 2019, the Program Steering Committee, health and wellness coordinator, and divisional deans will review the health and wellness program for continuity and gaps.

- By June 30, 2019, a group of faculty and administrators will determine the best means of converting spaces into wellness-oriented centers, with budget allocations starting in AY2019-20.
- By June 30, 2020, faculty will incorporate mindfulness practice throughout the JK-12 curricula.
- Spaces will be converted by June 30, 2022.

Supporting Guideposts

- By June 30, 2018, the divisional academic committees will examine and revise homework policies to ensure balance and high quality, substantive work.
- By November of each year, the school administration, health and wellness coordinator, and Parents Association will determine which parent programming and outside speakers should return on an annual basis and which new speakers should be brought in for the following year.
- By June 30, 2019, formal health and wellness programming will be introduced to the junior and senior classes by the health and wellness coordinator, with budgeting to start in AY2019-20.
- By June 30, 2019, the Program Steering Committee will reach consensus on the qualities of grit and resilience that we are seeking our students to demonstrate, with faculty training to follow in AY2019-20.
- By June 30, 2020, Upper School faculty will design and test the feasibility of an elective life skills class or required grade-level seminar.
- By June 30, 2020, faculty in divisional academic committees will seek to integrate ethics, social media literacy, outdoor education, and cultural competence into existing curricula.

Building an Alumni Movement

In 2016, Steward graduated its thousandth student—a marker of the size and maturity of the alumni community. With many of these alumni in Richmond, Steward has the ability to re-engage them and develop lifelong Spartans and Steward enthusiasts. Reconnecting with alumni from all decades of Steward’s history could benefit both alumni and the school to meet goals and to build important connections in Richmond and other areas of the country.

We will make Steward a lifetime lifestyle, connect older alumni with the new Steward, and help current families/students and alumni work together to convey the benefits of a Steward education and ongoing affiliation.

Milestones

In the next four years, the administration, Alumni Board and Advancement team will design, test, and launch:

- A student, alumni, and parent mentoring program
- An online venue for those seeking and offering internships
- An online alumni multi-service portal

Major Guideposts

- By December 30, 2018, the stakeholders above will be divided into self-study groups to outline services associated with each listed milestone.
- By December 1, 2020, each self-study group will share results of its design work with the other stakeholders.
- By June 30, 2021, study groups will test feasibility of initiative vis a vis personnel, budget, and market viability.
- By June 30, 2022, feasible initiatives will launch.

Supporting Guideposts

- By March 30, 2019, the Admissions team will hold an alumni event for those with school-aged children.
- By November 25, 2019, the Finance Committee, Advancement Committee, and Advancement team will determine the feasibility of offering a tuition discount to the children of alumni.