

# 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

prepared for the Board of Trustees

*Western Michigan Christian School*

January 2020



Prepared by the Futures Task Force

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## **A Vision for the Future of Western Michigan Christian School 2020-2025**

### **Our Mission**

Western Michigan Christian School's mission is to educate with excellence, integrate faith with knowledge, equip students to work and serve Christ in their communities.

### **Our Core Values**

1. Christ-Centeredness: We shall forever remain committed to God's truth and seek to keep Christ at the center of all we do. We will nurture our students to become ambassadors for Christ in this world.
2. Stewardship: We shall use the gifts that God gives us wisely and teach our students and community members to do likewise. We will not incur any new debt as a school.
3. Academic Preparedness: Graduates of Western Michigan Christian will be prepared for their calling. This will include success in college and beyond.
4. Depth and Breadth: Western Michigan Christian will serve a broad Christian constituency and maintain rich programs that recognize God's creativity and the variety of gifts He has given our students.

### **History of Strategic Planning at WMC**

2004-2005	MANS Accreditation
2006	Board and Constituency Strategic Planning sessions with Bruce Hulst.
2008	Integrated Marketing process with Fluid completed.
2008	January Strategic Planning Meeting.
2008	Fall: Marketing Committee develops integrated plan.
2009	Winter: School improvement meetings
2009	May: Strategic Plan approved by school board.
2013-14	2020 Strategic plan process and approval by board, August 2014
2017-18	Development of strategic plan with Collaborative School Partners

## KEY STRATEGIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2010-2013

- Better Together Board Established.
- Leveraged opportunities of the Collaborative: Dibs! Resale store founded; ESS staff, Curriculum coordination and development
- Continued Enrollment Growth.
- Addition of Middle School to Ellis Campus.
- Development of Stewardship Campaign. Paid off \$3M bond.
- Financial Communication with Community.
- Establishment of International Student Program.

## PROCESS FOR 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Beginning in July 2019, the listening phase of strategic plan development began, with a meeting with the board and the Futures Task Force, followed by meetings in August with the faculty and staff, and focus group with these key stakeholders. Over the next three months, we've met with the high school student council, a group of key stakeholders, and three schools in the Consortium that send children to the high school: Grand Haven, Fremont, and Muskegon Christian Schools.

The board-appointed Futures Task Force met each month to review the results of these focus groups and to begin identifying key themes.

In October, November, December, and January, the Futures Task Force began the hard work of developing and revising the strategic plan document, completing its work at a meeting on January 15, 2020.

## **Strategic Issues and Goals for 2025**

# Better Communication

## **Mission:**

Bolster WMC's position as the leading and premiere private Christian education institution for 7 through 12<sup>th</sup>-grade in the Lakeshore region of Western Michigan through 2025.

## **Objectives:**

People within the WMC's existing community are the #1 source to introduce the school to new families, so it seems prudent to place more focus and energy on nurturing these relationships. If we work on creating deeper relationships with existing families, they likely will share their experiences with friends and family via word-of-mouth marketing.

- Convince families in the WMC elementary feeder schools to continue their child's education at WMC for middle and/or high school.
- Do more to cultivate community and ownership with existing families at WMC so they will be retained at WMC year after year.
- Attract and encourage new families in the Lakeshore region to move their children to WMC for middle or high school.

## **Goal #1**

Define audiences and tailor the message to each of them. Engaging and consistent communication with all audiences without creating message fatigue. With so many communications tools available, and different tools being used by teachers and the schools it's easy to overwhelm parents to the point where they start tuning out key school communications.

## **Strategies:**

**Define WMC's 7 audiences (by priority):** Current families and students (grandparents); WMCS Collaborative Feeder Schools Current Families (Spanish Immersion Students who will be completing at feeder schools); Donors/supporters; Teachers/Staff; New families in the area; alumni

Communications Vehicles

To reach these audiences we need to leverage multiple communications vehicles as each individual has her/his communications preferences.

Assigned to: Kimberlee Mitchell, marketing team.

Date(s): on going.

**Establish protocols** for both internal and external audience and each medium

Assigned to: Kimberlee Mitchell, Admissions Director, marketing team.

Date(s): on going

**Tell the Story.** Mine WMC for stories of academic excellence, award-winning arts, championship athletics and Christ-centeredness (TfT nuggets). Enlist teachers to collaborate and share their work so the event can be promoted before-hand as well as reported on in a timely manner afterward.

Assigned to: Kimberlee Mitchell, marketing team.

Date(s): on going

## **Goal #2**

Look the Part

**Strategies:**

**Signage** – Make WMC look the part by consistently branding the school.

- a. Exterior Digital Signage
- b. Interior Monitors in office and main lobby area
- c. Wrap gym interior and exterior
- d. More signage in the parking lot and leading to lots

Responsible: Marketing team, operations.

Date(s): tbd

**Mascot** – Explore the creation of a Warrior Mascot graphic

Responsible: marketing team

Date(s).tbd

## **Word-of-mouth campaign**

Encourage audiences to engage in word-of-mouth campaign where they refer WMC to friends and family and share their joyful testimonials of being a WMC family. Establish incentives for referrals.

Responsible: Marketing team

Date(s)

## **Listen**

### **1. Surveys:**

Each year the WMC Communications team should conduct surveys among the WMC community. Having a voice is key to building community and ownership but it's also integral to building a plan that reflects what people want, in determining their interests, and deciding how they like to receive information.

Specifically targeted surveys for these three audiences should be drafted up:

1. Staff
2. WMC families
3. Feeder schools.  
Assigned to marketing team

### **2. Face Time:**

1. Enrollment – Head of School and Admissions Director should meet with each feeder school not less than once a year.
2. Sports – Athletic Director encourages with coaches to meet with feeder schools' teams to conduct clinics.
  - a. Donuts with Champions - Consider sending the State team and trophy to each feeder school and pray with them at chapel.
  - b. Varsity Pepper - Girls' VB team visits the schools during PE time and teaches them to Pepper. They could bring their regional championship trophy and Trent's photo album to share memories.

## **Clubs - "MEET WMC"**

Assigned to: Mark Hill, Haley Langejans, David Miedema, Kyle, Matt Smith to meet with feeders to talk about clubs at WMC. Galvanize other teachers who head up clubs.

Date(s) tbd

## **Academics**

Explore sending SI students at WMC to feeders to share how they are continuing their Spanish education in HS. May 5th - Warrior Cinco de Mayo Celebration.

Assigned to: Marketing team

Date(s): tbd

**Town Hall:**

WMC to host two town halls every school year. This is a structured date and time for WMC leadership to meet, connect, reconnect with WMC constituents both to update the community about specific items and hear from them. WMC will build these dates into the annual calendar and share with parents as early as the enrollment process and ask for their support and commitment to attend.

Responsible: Head of School

Date(s): tbd

**Goal #3**

**Assemble the team**

Suggest a full-time marketing person to manage all of this. Kyle is part time and will continue to support; however, the school would benefit greatly from having a gifted person manage this full time.

Assigned to: HOS, Operations, Board

Date(s): 2021

**Staff**

**Goal:** Continue to recruit and retain highly qualified staff.

**Strategy #1:** Establish a mentor program for all first-year staff

Assigned to: Audrey Markel, Dick Brook; Finance Director, Operations

Start date: September, 2020

End date: Program to be in place by August 2021

Estimated cost: \$1000 annual stipend per mentor

**Strategy #2:** Audit and Improve Communication and transparency with staff

*Including areas such as pay scale, teacher handbook, opportunities for staff involvement on Board committees.*

Assigned to: Administration

Start Date: January, 2020, on-going

**Strategy #3:** Explore the Creation of a Parent/Teacher Fellowship (PTO/PTF)

Assigned to: Kyle Kempster, Kristy Taylor

Start date: August 2020, on-going.

**Strategy #4:** Create opportunities for connections and community building. *Including pairing board members with staff, mixers, dinners, prayer partners, staff retreat*

Assigned to: Sara Koetsier, Robin Tyink

Start date: April, 2020. On-going

## **Student Leadership.**

**Goal:** Explore ways to leverage student leadership at the high school.

**Strategy #1** Create a process for student input in student handbook and a process for voicing its opinion to the board.

Assigned to: Dean of Students and Instruction and Student Government Advisor

Start: March 2020; on-going.

**Strategy #2** - Starting younger with ambassadors for feeder schools

Assigned to Charissa Abel

Start: March 2020; on-going



# Financial Sustainability and Facility Management

## Finances

**Goal #1:** WMC will improve the current financial position. Strengthen the operational budget to advance the mission of the organization is needed and necessary. In addition to current practices and diligent management, WMC needs to continue seeking sources of revenue in addition to tuition and gifts.

**Strategy #1** Seek additional revenue generating opportunities. Assigned to: Head of School, Board, Finance Manager - on going

**Goal:# 2** WMC will grow the school's endowment fund and consider repayment of the money borrowed from the fund.

**Strategy #1** Create a plan for raising funds for the endowment fund.

Assigned to: - Director of Advancement.

Start: February 2020.

**Strategy #2** Endowment repayment schedule developed and put in operating budget.

Assigned to: Board, Head of School, Finance Manager.

Start: July 2025

## Facilities

**Goal #1.** Have and maintain world class facilities, from top to bottom, front to back. The WMC campus will be neat, organized, and well maintained.

**Strategy #1** Develop facilities checklists for weekly, monthly, and quarterly walk-thrus.

Assigned to: Facility Manager, Board Committee, Head of School.

Start: March 2020; on-going.

**Strategy #2** Complete weekly, monthly, and quarterly evaluations of the condition of the WMC campus.

Assigned to: Facilities Manager, Head of School.

Start: April 2020

**Strategy #3** Respond to any campus needs or deficiencies based on the information collected from walkthroughs and correct.

Assigned to: Facilities Manager

Start: April 2020

**Strategy #4** Develop a comprehensive list of facility needs.

Assigned to: Facilities Manager, Board Committee, HOS

Start: April 2020

**Goal #2:** WMC will strengthen the campus through the Campus+Community Campaign.

Assigned to: Director of Advancement, Board, Head of School

Started: November of 2019; on-going.

**Strategy #1** Launch the campaign.

Assigned to: Board, HOS, Director of Advancement.

**On-going.**

**Strategy #2** Secure major gifts.

Assigned to: Director of Advancement; Head of School

## **Academic and Extracurricular Programs**

### **Goal #1**

Students will own their faith through intellectual practices and truth-seeking behavior. Curricular programs will be created that implement Teaching for Transformation Throughlines, without compromising academic rigor.

Assigned to: Director of Curriculum and Instruction. TBD in coordination with TtT.

**Strategy #1** Each educational department will work to develop projects and programs that connect curriculum to community.

Assigned to: WMC department heads.

On-going

**Strategy #2** WMC will develop programs relative to existing feeder school programs as possible when we are looking at curriculum-specific projects. This will build sustainable relationships with our WMC schools and families.

Assigned to: WMC department heads.

Start: March 2021.

**Strategy #3** WMC will involve feeder schools in extra-curricular programs whenever possible to allow elementary schools to feel like WMC is their high school.

Assigned to: WMC coaches, directors and mentors.

Start: March 2021.

**Strategy #4** The WMC Spiritual Development department will take leadership and ownership of faith development and work directly with educational staff to have curricular and extra-curricular programs be used to advance faith.

Assigned to: Spiritual Development Coordinator.

Start: March 2021.

**Strategy #5** Provide the resources necessary to support TtT, extra-curricular, and Spiritual Development programs including prep time, funding and leadership. Explore the possibility of hiring a full time Spiritual Development staff member.

Assigned to: Board, HOS, Operations

Start: January 2022.

## **Goal #2:**

Continue to expand the Spanish Immersion program through all four years of high school.

Assigned to: Director of Curriculum and Instruction, HOS, Operations, On-going.

