



October 2018

Strategic Planning: Discovering and Following God's Agenda

Dear Parents:

Strategic planning is vital to our continued success, and mature schools like ours traditionally undertake this process every three to five years following a reaccreditation cycle. Why we undertake this strategic planning process and what comprises it is the topic of this month's *Link*.



Prince's relatively recent accreditation by the Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS)/Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)/AdvancEd, the most rigorous accreditation standard for any independent school, private secular or Christian in the Southeast, included a robust self-study that examined the strengths and challenges of the four pillars in our mission statement: discipleship, scholastics, fine arts, and athletics. During that self-study process, we collected a large amount of quantitative and qualitative data from our five main constituent groups: the board of trustees, parents, alumni, students, and faculty/staff, and that source data is being used in the formulation of our school's strategic plan. This is a common, traditional practice in the independent school world. We plan to release our five year strategic plan this December.

Strategic planning reports for independent schools of our size are typically published in a concise twelve to fifteen page format and reveal the primary discoveries made during the planning process. While this document will set our trajectory, true strategic planning is dynamic in nature; it is a mindset, not a report. For

“Many are the plans in the mind of man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.”
Proverbs 19:21

successful schools like Prince who understand and embrace the importance of consistently seeking self-improvement, we realize it is the journey and not the destination (a report) that is the most important aspect of this undertaking. Practically speaking, while several goals and objectives from our strategic plan will be incorporated into our School Improvement Plan (SIP) as a part of a continuous monitoring process for our next reaccreditation cycle, we must, and will, continue to uphold strategic planning as a fluid and dynamic process. Part of our continued growth and success depends on this important mindset.

We engage in strategic planning for several reasons: to define who we are and seek God's will for the direction of our school; to define our core, nonnegotiable principles as a Christ centered school; to develop a sound financial plan for the present and the future; to identify building projects; and of course, to set goals and objectives in support of our mission and vision statements. As we undertake this strategic planning process, we anchor our decision-making to the sound biblical foundation that has guided our school to 40 years of continuous growth.

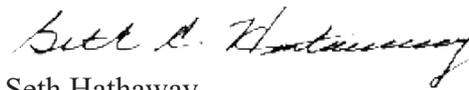
Good intentions and hard work are not enough to lead and run a quality Christian school today. I wish that were not so, but the complexity and subtleties of

society's secular, progressive agenda necessitates we consistently reevaluate how we "do school" to ensure *His agenda* for our school is in fact *our agenda*. Years ago my wife, Tracy, purchased a plaque that hangs above our family's car key rack and reads, "We plan, God laughs." Now many of you, like me, are Type A personalities who battle, daily, with the desire to be in control, even with the knowledge that God's plan for our lives is sovereign. In strategic planning, we must understand the critical importance of maintaining a balance between His sovereignty and our obligation to make decisions with wisdom and discernment. In a desire to emulate Him, the importance for us to think strategically and brainstorm the possible second and third order effects of our decisions three to five years from now cannot be overemphasized.

Our covenantal triad among family, church, and school (a cord of three [Ecc 4:12]) makes us missionaries who connect education and discipleship to not only prepare students for college, but also equip them with the tools necessary for sound decision making

during the brief, volatile window of youth. I once read something to the effect that society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they will never sit under; likewise, we are investing and preparing the next generation of leaders for Christ to impact lives of non-believers in a time many of us will never see. Similarly, our strategic planning process helps ensure our school remains on a solid foundation spiritually, financially and scholastically so that the traditions that have been born here can endure here. We are a cradle, of sorts, which provides a safe harbor to grow, equip, and empower the next generation through God's grace and the Holy Spirit to continue the Great Commission. Now that is a *true* strategic purpose.

In His service,



Seth Hathaway
Head of School