

STRATEGIC PLAN Initiated March 2003

I. STRENGTHENING THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

A. Time

The Time/Schedule Committee will consider how the school assigns priorities and time schedules to the life of the community and develop a plan to facilitate an appropriate balance of demands and activities.

Actions

- 1. Review the daily schedule and the division of time.**
- 2. Investigate creative scheduling for the school day and week, in conjunction with expanded community service and extracurricular opportunities.**
- 3. Review the academic year calendar – the number of school days, instructional days, vacations, opening and closing dates.**

B. Curriculum

In keeping with our mission, VES is committed to strengthening the educational program to produce students who are well rounded while honoring the unique gifts and talents of each individual student and faculty member.

Actions

- 1. Use curriculum map to improve communication among departments in regard to curriculum scope and sequence and consider possible interdisciplinary educational opportunities.**
- 2. Study potential for new and revised course electives with special attention to a revamped Life Issues curriculum.**
- 3. Consider off-campus learning opportunities for students to include fieldtrips, internships, summer programs and employment.**
- 4. Assess academic expectations for students in regard to homework load and grade level transitions.**
- 5. Evaluate effectiveness of current writing curriculum across all grade levels and in all fields of study.**

C. Athletics

Athletics play an important role for every VES student. Providing the best opportunity for team sports and individual growth are goals that support the school's mission and benefit the entire school community.

Actions

- 1. Review the athletic requirements and afternoon options in light of school tradition and mission statement.**
- 2. Evaluate league affiliations for boys and girls teams in terms of traditional rivalries, travel time demands, travel expenses, and missed academic time.**

II. SUPPORTING THE PROGRAM

A. Information Technology and Computer Science

The VES Information Technology and Computer Science Departments support the educational mission of VES through the appropriate application of information and communications technologies. We provide information and communications technology support for each individual, department, and program by ensuring a robust network infrastructure, maintaining regularly updated computer hardware and software replacement cycles, investigating and implementing leading edge instructional technology tools, and offering a responsive and customer-focused training and support program.

Actions

1. **Continually monitor, maintain, and upgrade a secure and reliable VES computer network infrastructure accessible by anyone from anywhere on campus.**
2. **Evaluate the need for expansion and/or integration of network (voice, video, and data) resources.**
3. **Identify and test new technologies with the potential to improve learning and enhance personal productivity.**
 - a. Investigate two new technologies per year and test them for possible use by faculty.
 - b. Develop a tablet PC evaluation program for student and faculty use.
4. **Collaborate with faculty to improve integration of technology into the VES curriculum.**
 - a. Assist a minimum of three faculty members per trimester in utilizing instructional technology.
 - b. Evaluate the impact of this instructional technology on learning.
5. **Develop training opportunities for non-teaching staff to acquire and develop technological skills that increase productivity and facilitate achieving goals in all areas of the strategic plan.**
6. **Continually monitor, maintain, and upgrade Blackbaud administrative software systems in support of VES' mission.**

B. Buildings and Grounds

VES is committed to improving the physical facilities of the campus to support the programs and mission of the school. Several projects have been identified as top priorities.

Actions

1. **Research and develop plans to fund capital projects.**
2. **Construct a fine arts center – a building to support the instruction and presentation of the arts.**
3. **Renovate Johnson Field and the surrounding outdoor track.**
4. **Construct a new road south of the football field that will make possible the closing of the section of VES Road that divides the campus.**
5. **Construct additional classrooms and renovations of existing buildings and teaching areas.**
6. **Construct combination faculty family residence and girls' small dormitory (10-12 girls).**

C. College Counseling

The mission of the College Counseling Department is to introduce VES students to the broadest possible range of colleges, to match students with the school best suited for their talents and interests, and to assist students with the application process.

Actions

1. **Investigate new ways to provide information to students.**
 - a. Start the college process earlier by meeting with 9th and 10th grades in fall and spring.

- b. Structure built-in college meetings fall of senior year.
 - c. Structure built-in college meetings spring of junior year.
 - d. Train advisors about colleges' expectations so that advisors can better guide advisees.
 - e. Investigate creating a college counseling center to encourage exploration of the college process.
 - f. Build college days into the VES calendar by using PSAT day to schedule college trips.
 - g. Revise traditional college tour for juniors by offering the trip during the first few days of Spring Break.
 - h. Educate students about technology in the college process by offering workshops on the college search and applying on-line.
 - i. Develop a College Counseling Day to include speakers and opportunities to work on college essays and applications.
 - j. Require 9th and 10th grade students to complete the common application to highlight the importance of grades and activities in a student's profile.
- 2. Improve communication with public (parents).**
- a. Begin college process during the admissions visit by meeting with prospective students and parents.
 - b. Communicate with parents earlier by sending letter of introduction home to parents of 9th and 10th grade students.
 - c. Communicate effectively with parents of juniors and seniors involved in the college search.
 - d. Introduce college process to local parents by speaking at James River Day's parent workshop.
 - e. Invite a college admission representative to speak to parents each fall.
- 3. Improve communication with public (trustees and colleges).**
- a. Revise college counseling profile to match other VES publications.
 - b. Update website information.
 - c. Investigate more ways to report data.
- 4. Consider innovative focus for College Counseling Department.**
- a. Investigate curricular issues: What can VES do to improve PSAT scores, SAT scores and AP scores? (2 year timeline)
 - b. Create joint marketing strategies. (1 year timeline)
 - c. Assess the VES College Counseling Department and compare with similar schools. (1 year timeline)
 - d. Continue to partake in professional development opportunities.

D. Admissions

The VES Admission Department strives to increase enrollment of qualified students to reach a maximum of 275 students, comprised of a 65% minimum of boarding students.

Actions

1. Increase boarding enrollment.

- a. Utilize all constituent groups (students, parents, trustees, alumni, faculty and staff) as a network of contacts to spread the word through letters, visits, calls, etc.
- b. Create a list of prospective students from local schools in target areas utilizing all constituents.
- c. Hold tuition increases to inflation rate or less.
- d. Maintain adequate budget for advertising, research and development.
- e. Re-ignite and maintain "hot" pockets for VES activity (i.e. Raleigh, Greensboro, Winston-Salem, Rocky Mount, Beckley).
- f. Continue to educate faculty and students about the admission process as well as the follow-up process (including phone calls to prospective students).
- g. Work with housekeeping to maintain cleanliness and appearance of campus and facilities.
- h. Continue to develop and foster good working relationships with key educational consultants across target areas.

- i. Maintain a selective process of the Alpha Order and formalize their training program.
- j. Keep reception area clean, neat and inviting to prospective visitors.
- 2. Maintain strong day student enrollment up to 35% of the total student body.**
 - a. Maintain strong relations with James River Day School.
 - b. Continue to foster relationships with other public and private local middle schools.
- 3. Increase diversity in our student body.**
 - a. Recruit a diverse student body to create a minimum of a 5% minority population during the 2004-05 school year.
 - b. Continue efforts to build a diverse school population with a minimum minority enrollment of 10% of the student body over the next five years.
- 4. Increase prospective student visits to campus.**
 - a. Host a special overnight visit for current siblings during Fall Parents' Weekend.
 - b. Host special alumni children overnight for alumni children on campus.
 - c. Host a special "Invite Back" Weekend for all accepted students during the first weekend of April.
 - d. Encourage all prospective families to visit as soon as possible after their initial inquiry.
- 5. Increase the ratio of serious applicants to inquiries.**
 - a. Encourage students to apply for admission as quickly after initial inquiry as possible through frequent follow-up procedures.
 - b. Continue to utilize activity letters and communications from coaches, Fine Arts Department and faculty members.
 - c. Utilize current and past parents, trustees and alums to contact families in their areas in order to encourage application to VES.
- 6. Identify and develop new markets for boarding students.**
 - a. Research and travel to new market areas such as Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas and Georgia.
 - b. Expand international marketing effort to Mexico.
- 7. Cultivate contacts with Episcopal churches.**
 - a. Research ties to Episcopal clergy and encourage tapping clergy children scholarship fund.
 - b. Hold gatherings at Episcopal churches in areas where appropriate.

E. Marketing and Public Relations

The Marketing/Public Relations Department's goal is to support and assist the school in meeting its mission statement.

Actions

- 1. Communicate effectively both internally and externally the essence of VES.**
 - a. Promote the school's mission to everyone in the community.
 - b. Increase and systemize information to VES community about people, news, and events on campus.
 - c. Educate the VES community about public relations program.
 - d. Increase student/faculty involvement in all publications.
 - e. Cultivate existing media contacts.
 - f. Increase involvement of parents, alumni, and trustees through cultivation and participation.
- 2. Maintain a unified and consistent presentation of the school.**
 - a. Maintain and communicate a consistent school image.
 - b. Strategically align the school's community image with non-profits and community service projects that match our values and culture.
 - c. Use website to increase school image recognition as well as consistent method of communication.

F. Development and Alumni Relations

The VES Development and Alumni Relations Department endeavors to increase financial resources and foster strong relationships with all constituents.

Actions

1. **Increase the Annual Fund in dollar amount and participation.**
 - a. Establish a strong annual fund team and program.
 - b. Place greater emphasis on top giving clubs, reunion giving, and personal asks.
2. **Pursue Capital Gifts.**
 - a. Identify leaders for the next campaign.
 - b. Research and identify donor prospects for leadership gifts.
3. **Increase membership in the Loyd Society.**
 - a. Establish greater visibility for the planned giving program through articles on current Loyd Society members in the *Old 160*.
 - b. Promote the planned giving page on the VES website.
 - c. Encourage members of the Old Guard to consider the school in their estate planning.
4. **Increase foundation support.**
 - a. Explore possible connections of trustees and former trustees with foundation boards.
 - b. Submit an increased number of proposals to a wider range of foundations especially those interested in the arts.
5. **Maintain current relationships and explore new relationships with all constituents.**
 - a. Establish a comprehensive stewardship program.
 - b. Expand on regional gatherings to bring constituents together to keep them informed about the school and its programs.
6. **Target new prospects and minimize the number of lost constituents.**
 - a. Expand the research of new donor prospects
 - b. Develop a system of tracking lost alumni utilizing volunteer help.

III. BUILDING COMMUNITY

A. Community Life

VES is a community that is focused on the well being of every individual and is committed to teaching the virtues of honor, respect, personal responsibility, and Christian love. The foundation of the community is the faculty, a majority of whom lives on campus. VES strives to offer students a sense of home and parental support during the school year. Indeed, many of the most valuable educational moments occur outside the classroom or athletic fields and take place during meals, on dorm, or in the many moments of shared life that occur on campus. VES strives to empower students to make the best choices by providing examples of living based upon sound values, high moral integrity and patience. The hope is that our students will leave VES with the ability to deal with the myriad of choices, opportunities, and dilemmas in life in a rational and positive fashion.

Actions

1. **Focus on Character Development.**
 - a. Appoint a Leadership Program Coordinator and develop a comprehensive program for all grades.
 - b. Resurrect some form of the Campus Cleanup Committee in response to disciplinary actions.
 - c. Through the REACH Committee, develop a monthly theme for character development and have a chapel speaker to address that theme. After the chapel program, students can break into advisor/discussion groups.

- d. Investigate ways to help students grow spiritually, beyond the VES campus.
 - e. Restructure the Life Issues course into more “age-appropriate” sections.
- 2. Enable stronger campus relationships.**
 - a. Build advisor/advisee meetings built into the academic schedule at least once each week to discuss current issues at school or with individuals.
 - b. Assess current methods of addressing student concerns on current or controversial issues.
 - c. Change role of duty personnel from “cop” to “parent.” Shift mindset to always looking at students as if they were your own children, making every decision through that filter first. Begin by restructuring weekend duty. Intentionally engage students on the weekends.
 - 3. Review dress code and explore uniforms.**
 - a. Investigate uniforms for the 2004-2005 school year.
 - b. Consider changing dinner attire to casual dress every night. Have same faculty member responsible for dress code check every morning (and evening) to offer consistency. Have Day Student Coordinator check day student dress during morning sign in. Senior boarders who are consistently out of dress code will be required to attend breakfast in the mornings.
 - 4. Develop a comprehensive community health plan.**

B. Community Service

A community service program should challenge our students to be part of a wider world than they may have experienced previously. Benefits from this type of experience include helping them see their place in the world more clearly, allowing them to discover new skills and talents, and creating graduates who take seriously their responsibility as citizens of a community.

Actions

- 1. Assess current situation.**
 - a. Assess current community service programs including the afternoon program, class activities, dorm activities and school clubs.
 - b. Survey students to determine what community service they already do on their own, both at school and at home, and how much time they devote to these projects.
- 2. Look for new ideas.**
 - a. Conduct a study of prep schools comparable to VES to see how many of them have community service programs. Evaluate their community service programs.
 - b. Research potential community service projects in our area for groups of varying size and for individuals.
 - c. Gather creative ideas from faculty, parents and students.
- 3. Consider the challenges of implementing an expanded community service program.**
 - a. Determine how much flexible time students and faculty have in their schedules. Decide how much time we will require of students and faculty. Look for ways to accommodate time for community service in the school schedule. Coordinate this decision with the Calendar Committee.
 - b. Consider the ramifications of providing transportation.
 - c. Estimate the potential costs of a community service program and decide how we will pay for it.
 - d. Decide how to administer an expanded community service program. How much accountability will we build into the system?
 - e. Consider making community service requirements necessary for graduation.
- 4. Encourage support for a new community service program.**

C. Student Life and Campus Relationships

Develop well-rounded individuals and build strong and healthy relations in the community.

Actions

1. **Form ad hoc committee to address student life and campus relations.**
 - a. Improve avenues of communications within the school.
 - b. Review effectiveness of the Advisory Program.
 - c. Assess day/boarding relationships and consider ways to improve cohesion of community.
 - d. Consider feasibility of intramural competitions.
 - e. Investigate the return to seated meals in the dining hall.
2. **Act on new ideas generated by ad hoc committee in its efforts to build strong and healthy relations in the community.**

D. Faculty and Staff

VES desires to attract, retain and reward a talented, diverse and dedicated teaching and support staff by developing programs to improve the quality of campus and professional life.

Actions

1. **Develop a plan to continue to improve compensation.**
2. **Continue efforts to recruit minority faculty members.**
3. **Expand the professional growth and faculty grants opportunities.**
4. **Continue the program of improving faculty housing.**
5. **Investigate ways to improve the intern program and new teacher mentoring.**
6. **Evaluate equity of and compensation for duty hours.**
7. **Investigate in-house childcare.**

IV. SECURING THE FINANCIAL FUTURE

VES is committed to providing the necessary financial resources to fully support this strategic plan. On an annual basis, the school will plan on achieving a balanced budget. In addition, to preserve the principle of the endowment, the annual payout to the operating fund will be reduced in the following manner: 5.2% (2003-04), 4.8% (2004-05), 4.4% (2005-06), and 4.0% (2006-07).

Actions

1. **Support the new initiatives from the Development Office regarding growth of endowment and prudent management to identify the funding for major projects, such as the fine arts center and the renovation of the lower athletic field.**
2. **Ensure the proposed annual tuition increases are in line with our major competitors and sensitive to prevailing economic conditions.**
3. **Monitor the performance of the school's endowment funds and make re-allocations of capital as dictated by market conditions and the guidance of the school's Investment Committee.**