



Davis Waldorf School

STRATEGIC PLAN

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3100 Sycamore Lane, Davis, CA 95616

(530) 753-1651 Office
(530) 753-0944 Fax

(530) 400-1116 June Bug Aftercare
(530) 400-1118 Sunflower Aftercare

www.daviswaldorf.org

A. Introduction

The Davis Waldorf School (DWS) was founded in 1986 by a group of parents interested in providing a Waldorf education for their children. The first kindergarten opened in Fall 1986 in the living room of a parent's house in Dixon, CA. The school moved to a temporary site west of Davis where it grew for five years into a young community with an expanding program. Through a generous gift of land from John and Judy Whitcombe, the school moved to its current 5-acre site in 1992. The campus and buildings were carefully designed, with community involvement, to harmonize with the ecology of the landscape and the principles of Waldorf education.

In 2005, the middle school wing was added to provide separate classrooms for each grade. In 2009, the DWS Board and faculty formed the 2010 Committee to guide the expansion of the school. This work allowed the next phase of growth for the school by adding new wings for both the kindergartens and administration.

Over the years, DWS has expanded its program offerings such that it now includes: a licensed Early Childhood program of two preschool and two kindergarten classes, grades 1-8, eurythmy, strings, band, Spanish, handwork, woodwork, games, and gardening programs.

Highlights from the 2012-2017 strategic plan include relaunching the DWS website, creating a gardening program from grades 1-8, expanding Eurythmy into grades 7 and 8, re-introducing Parent Council and our parent-child program, adding two new playgrounds, an adult bathroom and remodeling the Lavender Preschool room. In addition, in 2016, the school was accredited as a full member Waldorf school by the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA).

At the January and August 2018 Faculty/Board/Staff/Parent confluences, input was gathered from all the constituent groups to develop the DWS 2018-2023 Strategic Plan. The actions created and presented within this plan will guide the planning and decision-making for the board, the faculty, administration, various committees and the parent body for years to come as we strive to uphold the following

Vision, Mission and Values:

Our Vision is to create a community to educate our children with love and care, with imagination and in freedom, to allow them to realize their full potential as free human beings who will serve humanity through their deeds.

Our Mission – through a balanced and developmentally-aligned curriculum, the Davis Waldorf School builds a strong academic, artistic and social foundation in which each student cultivates a capacity for independent thinking, compassionate feeling, and responsible action.

Our Values – the DWS community nurtures a reverence for life and hope for humankind as we endeavor to bring healthy change into the world. We value...

- **An Understanding of Human Development:** We respect the indications from Rudolf Steiner for the developmental phases of childhood and curriculum that

strengthens each individual child's natural capacities to discover, learn, and grow at each phase.

- **Holistic and Healthy Education:** We endeavor to bring a curriculum that balances academic rigor with a striving to educate the whole child through art and practical skills, music, movement, and social and moral development. We support the children in finding meaning and purpose in life with confidence and a sense of responsibility.
- **Inspirational Teaching:** We engage dedicated, reliable, and artistic teachers who, with enthusiasm, are capable of enlivening education and inspiring each student.
- **Respect for the Natural World:** We cultivate an understanding and experience that nature sustains life and nurtures, heals and inspires us.
- **A Healthy and Vibrant Community Life:** We cultivate meaningful relationships between our teachers and students, creating a supportive and engaging environment of Waldorf community members. We strive to work collaboratively and cooperatively with one another in a supportive school community. Additionally, we strive, through our multicultural education, to teach respect and an understanding of diversity within our community and our world. In doing so, we endeavor to extend trust, compassion, respect, and understanding to one another without judgment. We encourage and foster all to communicate in a direct, yet thoughtful manner, which promotes confidence, connection, and trust. We offer opportunities for education, enrichment, festival celebration, social connections, and meaningful work within our community.

The intent of this Strategic Plan is to outline a path forward that will allow DWS to realize the vision of the school we aspire to be. It identifies shared goals and specific actions that allow our school to move in a cohesive and unified manner toward this vision. The Visioning Committee will oversee the implementation of this DWS Strategic Plan and carry out regular review of the implementation plan and progress reporting.

B. The Strategic Plan Vision for 2018-2023

- Re-develop our campus to meet the pedagogical, administrative and community needs of our school and enhance its natural beauty
- Increase financial sustainability of DWS: through increased fundraising and maintaining a strong enrollment and retention of our students, faculty, and staff
- Maintain accreditation from The Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) attained in 2016

Seven broad topics are addressed in this Strategic Plan:

1. **Employee Retention:** Retain and support exceptional employees and teachers dedicated to our community by providing attractive benefits, work life balance and recognition of all employees
- 2 **Enrollment/Family Retention:** Increase enrollment by attracting and retaining a student body within a community where children thrive and families are engaged
3. **Development:** Develop a committee dedicated to educating the community on the value of financial giving and implement strategic fundraising
4. **Site:** Re-develop and enliven our campus to meet the pedagogical and community needs of our school while enhancing its natural beauty
5. **Overall Program Strategy:** Ensure a quality program that aligns with AWSNA principles and supports our students in becoming heart-centred critical thinkers who will work in the service of humanity
6. **Parent Council/Community:** Provide a successful organization for the parent community that (1) supports the school, teachers, staff with its time, talents and financial resources; and (2) fosters a sense of community that, among other benefits, also increases family retention; and (3) supports its welfare and education regarding Waldorf education
7. **Board:** Ensure DWS Board has a strong process and members with a diverse skill-set who actively support the strategic planning and financial sustainability of DWS, including supporting the development of governance, enrollment/retention, programs, campus capital improvements, and fundraising

C. DWS Strategic Plan

I. Employee Retention

Goal: Retain and support exceptional employees and teachers dedicated to our community by providing attractive benefits, work life balance and recognition of all employees

Actions:

- Develop a survey to understand what attracts employees to DWS and why they stay
- Review employee salaries and benefits every 5 years to ensure they are competitive vs. other schools in the local area
- Bridge the gap between different realms of the school and improve employee recognition for faculty, staff, and subject teachers
- Support subject teachers as colleagues in all aspects; classroom space, communication with full-time teachers regarding the students, training, participating in committee work, and increased income
- Increase remission for employees working 1/2 to full-time hours from 25% to 50% remission for all children
- Increase the training budget by 30% to offer development opportunities to all employees and training at confluences **
- Increase remuneration for Early Childhood (EC) Assistants so they are better aligned with market rates **
- Provide remuneration for subject teachers and EC Assistants for time spent at faculty meetings *
- Continue working with neighboring Waldorf schools for networking, resource sharing and job share arrangements for like positions *

2. Enrollment/Family Retention

Goal: Increase enrollment by attracting and retaining a student body within a community where children thrive and families are engaged

Actions:

- Develop and implement a marketing plan to increase student attraction
- Increase student and family retention *
- Increase enrollment and retention in middle school to achieve class sizes of 18 or more
- Expand parent-child program from 4 classes, 2 days a week to 3 days a week
- Continue website update to meet community needs including enrollment and TAP online
- Create and provide training for a Trust Group comprised of 2 faculty members, 1 Board member, and 1 staff member to resolve conflict within our community *

3. Development

Goal: Develop a committee dedicated to educating the community on the value of financial giving and implement strategic fundraising

Actions:

- Establish a fundraising committee to support annual giving campaign and auction and help source and manage donors/sponsors *
- Develop a cadre of donors whose values are in alignment with DWS and who can donate at the level needed to support the school
- Increase fundraising goals by 20%
- Assess capital campaign feasibility
- If feasible, plan and execute a capital campaign to support site redevelopment project
- Nurture relationships with alumni and alumni families to provide long-term support of the community and track DWS/SWS graduates

4. Site

Goal: Re-develop and enliven our campus to meet the pedagogical and community needs of our school while enhancing its natural beauty

Actions:

- Work with the DWS community to develop a vision for our campus
- Expand the capacity of the site committee through increasing participation from parents with skills and knowledge in areas relevant to the work of the committee
- Develop a master plan to guide the development of the campus to implement the vision of our community
- Assist with the execution of the projects identified in the master plan

5. Overall Program Strategy

8. Goal: Ensure a quality program that aligns with AWSNA principles and supports our students in becoming heart-centred critical thinkers who will work in the service of humanity

Actions:

- Achieve class sizes of 18, or more, for the grades and 208 FTE students for the entire school
- Maintain accreditation from the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America *
- Evaluate and strengthen Early Childhood to ensure the program is sustainable and provides a strong pathway to the grades *
- Review gardening curriculum to ensure it can be taught effectively **
- Review the number of contact hours for grades/subject teachers to see if the program could be structured more efficiently
- Review Sunflower and Junebug Aftercare programs to include more pedagogically relevant and developmental activities
- Research diversifying revenue generation by offering pre-birth classes and enrichment classes for home-schooled children

6. Parent Council/Community

Goal: Provide a successful organization for the parent community that (1) supports the school, teachers and staff with its time, talents and financial resources; and (2) fosters a sense of community that, among other benefits, also increases family retention; and (3) supports its welfare and education regarding Waldorf education.

Actions:

- Maintain Parent Council leadership team with positions filled
- Establish a parent education committee to research needs and plan events such as Waldorf 101, book study, composting classes, curriculum, etc.
- Educate parents on 30 hours of volunteer commitment per family or parent (TBD)
- Establish a welcoming committee to connect new families to the school *
- Establish an events committee to help plan and hold community-building events (oversee shed)
- Support board development/fundraising committee
- Support board visioning committee

7. Board

Goal: Ensure DWS Board has a strong process and members with a diverse skill-set who actively support the strategic planning and financial sustainability of DWS, including supporting the development of governance, enrollment/retention, programs, campus capital improvements, and fundraising.

Actions:

Board Advancement Committee

- Ensure board has members with legal, HR and finance skills, as well as development, site, and marketing, and includes individuals outside of our parent body
- Develop a DWS board manual for DWS that orients board members to the organization and its mission; serves as the board's "operating manual" providing information on the board's structure and operations; outlines the board member's roles and responsibilities *

Visioning Committee

- Oversee and drive the implementation of 2018-2023 strategic plan actions *
- Establish an enrollment committee to develop enrollment strategy and support student/family retention *
- Review the DWS governance structure on a periodic basis to ensure it best supports, represents, and engages the DWS community

Site Committee

- Develop a master plan for DWS
- Redevelop the campus

Board HR Committee

- Establish processes to ensure the current governance structure with three directors reporting to the board is sustainable in the long-term

Finance Committee

- Ensure the financial sustainability of DWS through careful and consistent evaluation of the budget for each given year *
- Evaluate the need for and recommend a reasonable and necessary tuition increase each year *
- Assess the right time for including campus capital improvements
- Review desired programming to evaluate if it is financially feasible
- Increase the amount of tuition assistance granted for low income families

Diversity Committee

- Foster and realize a diverse DWS community, including racial, economic, and gender indicators.

*** Action in progress**

**** Action complete**