

# **The Mountain Community School Strategic Plan**

## **Adopted March 30, 2010**

Beginning spring 2009, a group of Mountain Community School (TMCS) faculty, parents, and board members, along with principal Chad Hamby, began a strategic review to develop a plan for the future direction of the school. The intent was to provide a framework to enable school leadership which will prepare for the school's future in an environment involving rapidly changing demographics, politics, educational policy, and economic conditions. It is important to note that the strategic planning process is an ongoing process. This is not simply a project that will be completed with the adoption of a document entitled "TMCS Strategic Plan". Adoption of a plan will simply be an affirmation of the general intent and direction of the school. Progress toward achieving strategic objectives of the plan will be assessed annually by the School Board. This Strategic Plan will be updated as objectives are met and as the needs of the school, students, teachers, parents, and community evolve.

### **TMCS Mission:**

*To create an educational environment where students are inspired to academic excellence and discovery. Teachers, parents, students and the community will work together to honor individuality, and diversity, nurture respect for self and others and foster a lifelong love of learning*

### **TMCS Vision:**

The Mountain Community School, as chartered by the state of NC, seeks to become an exemplary and innovative public school that can serve as a model for other public schools. The School intends to be true to its mission as a small K-8 school, where students become self motivated learners, receive personal attention, and form strong relationships with teachers, administrators, and peers. The School seeks continuous improvement in its quest to become the best school.

TMCS will continue to maintain a close and supportive community of students, teachers, and families. The School expects its students to exceed all relevant state and national academic standards, while seeking to build and nurture confidence, academic curiosity, integrity, community spirit, environmental awareness, teamwork, a spirit of volunteerism, an appreciation for diversity, and a tolerance for divergent viewpoints. Enhancing self-esteem is a by product of the close community experience students experience. TMCS wants its students to gain a strong, healthy sense of self, purpose, and to strive towards living their lives so that they can reach their highest potential, and ultimately contribute to the betterment of society.

TMCS graduates should have the skills to make healthy living choices, the ability to lead, the confidence to follow, and the desire to give back to others. By fulfilling these goals, The Mountain Community School believes that not only Henderson County and the state of N.C., but our world will be a better place.

## **SIX AREAS OF FOCUS AND GOALS**

1. Finance – continue to improve financial stability and increase fundraising.
2. Campus - evaluate needs, maintain existing facility, and build new facilities to enhance the educational experience.
3. Staffing - attract and retain world class faculty and administrators, and be the K-8 school of first choice for talented faculty in western North Carolina.
4. Curriculum and Academic Program –integrate and sequence the Core Knowledge Curriculum with an experiential and hands on approach which will invite, encourage, and supplement the achievement of academic excellence.
5. Community – Be a central part of the Henderson County community, an example for other schools, and a laboratory for cutting edge ideas in education.
6. Technology –update Technology and teach our students and teachers to use current K – 8 appropriate educational technologies.

### **1) FINANCE**

TMCS will create and maintain a level of financial stability that will ensure excellence in its current programs and allow it to continue to attract the most qualified teachers and administrators.

Under the guidance of the Financial Committee, TMCS will:

1. Develop and maintain a balanced budget based on enrollment and expected state funding, ensuring that the budget is realistic and transparent.
2. Maintain an adequate and transparent reserve to support periodic funding gaps from the state. This should be at minimum 10% of the annual budget
3. Maintain segregation of temporarily restricted funds. (e.g. - building fund) And clearly communicate to the entire school family the use of these funds.

4. Strive to balance the budget without relying on fundraising to bridge the gap between revenues and expenses.
5. Continue to pay competitive salaries to teachers and staff, and guarantee a supplement for National Board Certification.

Understanding that an improved financial position will enable the school to expand academic offerings (Art, Music, Drama, and Spanish), expand the physical facilities, and adopt leading educational practices for the next generation of students, TMCS will strive to continuously improve its fundraising efforts.

Finances permitting, The Finance Committee will supervise and direct a Director of Development to lead a comprehensive fundraising program focusing on an annual fund, a capital campaign, and key fundraising events that involve students, alumni, and the community. The DOD will continue to cultivate possibilities for significant enhancements to TMCS and its students through a strategic focus on planned giving, grants, public relations, and through cultivation of angel donors.

## **2) Campus Planning**

Recognizing that the interaction between faculty and students can be enhanced through creative and structured design of the classroom, and outdoor and common space, an ongoing needs assessment will take place during Spring, 2010. This will result in the creation of a Campus Master Plan. Utilizing green design will be a priority.

Goal #1 Complete a space needs assessment by June 1, 2010, based upon current programs while considering new programs that could be added (Spanish, Art and Drama).

Goal # 2 Create a five year campus master plan by October 1, 2010 based on the space needs assessment, and TMCS' projected financial position.

Goal # 3 Keep all building repairs current. Maintaining and keeping the existing facility in outstanding condition remains the top priority.

The Space Needs Assessment and resulting Master Plan should include but not be limited to the following:

1. Meet with faculty, administrators, and the School Board to determine current and future faculty space needs. Prioritize these needs in conjunction with any projected future programming directions of the school.
2. Determine how the Barker Heights Building fits into future programming plans. Establish a plan to renovate Barker Heights to meet projected needs. (Transforming it into a Middle School Building that will meet the needs of the teacher / teachers, and provide an atmosphere which will entice learning. A library and technology building, or general classrooms and science laboratories are some of the uses that should be considered.)
3. Establish a plan to create a common space where the entire Mountain Community School student and faculty community (along with parents) can come together in a single space.
4. Establish a plan to provide indoor physical education, music, and drama opportunities for the student body through construction of a Gymnasium or similar structure.
5. Create an ongoing maintenance plan to insure facilities are maintained and kept in excellent condition.

The Campus Planning committee will work closely with the curriculum, faculty, and finance committees to insure that the facilities best meet the needs and financial position of the Mountain Community School as it reaches out and embraces the future.

### **3) Faculty**

The quality of education at TMCS is directly related to the excellence of its faculty and staff. TMCS believes this begins by setting up a caring, respectful atmosphere in the classroom, and fostering school unity where long term relationships are formed with students and their families. To maintain its environment of excellence, it is imperative that TMCS seek, hire, train, and retain the finest teachers possible from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences. It is also essential to provide superior opportunities for teachers' professional growth and development.

- Prospective teachers should have the personal qualities and skills in place to deem them superior teachers. Using their own academic experiences and professional achievements, they should also demonstrate or model, the rewards of scholastic success and the importance of upstanding citizenship that the School expects from their students.

Goal: Continue to attract and retain outstanding faculty and enhance their professional development and career opportunities.

1. Actively recruit, hire, train, and retain outstanding faculty from diverse backgrounds and cultures, seeking balance in terms of years of experience, breadth of extracurricular skills and interests, and diversity in educational and geographic (local, regional and national) background.
2. Implement a faculty evaluation process that will be incorporated as a component of the school's professional development and personnel management strategies.
3. Encourage and support faculty to pursue professional development activities focused on curriculum based continuous quality improvement, including periodic attendance at targeted workshops and conferences.
4. Encourage, support, and reward faculty who pursue the advancement of their education and licensure through advanced degrees and national board certification.
5. Develop and implement a formal survey instrument for assessing faculty/staff climate and community.

Goal: Improve school knowledge of educational trends, innovations, and ideas in order to make the school a more cutting edge educational institution. Do this by expanding funding for teacher and administrator development in these areas. The curriculum committee should visit and bench mark with other schools and study current and leading thinking knowledge and experience in education and education reform. Faculty representatives should attend at least one national conference annually and manage training, faculty development, and a faculty mentoring program at the school.

## **4) Curriculum and Programming**

The Mountain Community School's mission is to instill in their students a life-long love of learning. TMCS will continue to maintain a vibrant curriculum, drawing from the Core Knowledge sequence, the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCS), and the multi-faceted knowledge and talents within our school community. Small class size, location, and parent involvement will enable TMCS to stand out among its peers as a school that offers an individualized education with exciting and experiential learning opportunities beyond the norms of regular public schooling. Field trips, hands on learning activities incorporated into the

lessons, and outdoor education are encouraged as a way to bring abstract concepts to life.

Goal: Strengthen our core curriculum, creative programs, and opportunities for experiential learning while still following NCSCS's curriculum

1. Integrate differentiated learning in each classroom through comprehensive faculty training and accountability statements.
2. Develop a continuous evaluation and improvement plan for our adopted curricular programs ,and allocate adequate annual funding to keep curriculum and materials current.
3. Support and expand upon our elementary foreign language program.
4. Evaluate new learning technologies and update existing technologies.
5. Through the Curriculum Committee, evaluate, explore, and expand volunteer and community resources to keep experiential learning and creative programs vibrant.
6. Evaluate and improve healthy living programs utilizing staff, parents, and community volunteers. Included fields may be: health and science education, physical education, nutrition and food options, gardening, and presentations by health professionals.

Goal: Integrate curriculum between grades through the institution of a School Improvement or Curriculum Committee. The committee will consist of school faculty and administrators who will look at the overall Core Knowledge Curriculum, specifically reading and math programs, to insure that each grade builds on and integrates knowledge from previous years while still allowing teachers the freedom to customize their educational subjects.

## **5) Community**

TMCS should shine in the community as an example of effective and innovative public education and as a model of a professional, ethical, and caring organization.

TMCS should have a dynamic profile in Henderson County. Students should use their learning to benefit a diverse world that includes the local community. The intentionally small size of the school and the autonomy given to dedicated and creative teachers will help to create a unique community that seeks knowledge, betterment, and unity together. TMCS service clubs through their relationships with local organizations will also help realize this goal. The contributions of parent

and community volunteers will be improved through the volunteer management system created by the school's DOD.

Goal: Improve relationships with school families through social functions that increase opportunities for family interaction and tie families closer to the school.

Goal: Identify outstanding members of the community who can become involved in the school as mentors, guest lecturers, and volunteers.

## **6) Technology**

In order for TMCS to move forward, a concentrated effort must be made in the area of technology. TMCS will seek to integrate the latest technology into its curriculum. In 2010 the technological capabilities of the TMCS computer labs, the classrooms, and administration functions were deemed inadequate. Every effort will be made immediately, with respect to budget constraints, to equip TMCS with state of the art technology. Upgrading technology will become an annual budget line item. A standing technology committee comprised of faculty, board members, and parents will create a plan to search out the most updated and effective needs in school technology, replace technology on a regular cycle, and make annual recommendations for upgrading technology. This will keep technology current and serving educational and curriculum goals.

Immediate Goal Spring 2010

For the Computer Lab: Purchase and install during summer 2010 an up to date server that serves educational and administrative functions. Install 20 new computer stations with licensed software. Install a Smart Board.

For each Classroom: Install mounted projectors/laptops along with three computer stations. Install three Elmo's – one each for K-2, 3-5 and 6-8. Investigate use of flip videos.

Technology Curriculum Goal for 2010 – 2011 school year. Begin typing instruction in all grade levels. Teach use of email, blogs, and wiki's. Develop classroom websites.

Goal: Set up maintenance and support strategy as well as a replacement strategy to keep the computer equipment current and well maintained.

Goal: Set up a special teacher technology training to be held during summer 2010, prior to the start of the 2010 – 2011 school year. This training will familiarize teachers with the new technology installed over summer 2010. This training will be designed to assist teachers in adapting their lesson plans to best utilize the newly installed technology.

Immediate Goal for spring 2010: The school will institute bi-monthly technology training to insure all teachers are comfortable with and able to implement new technology into their lesson plans.