



The Greenwich
Country Day School

Strategic Plan 2012

Leadership in 21st Century Education



Strategic Plan 2012

The Greenwich Country Day School is at the forefront of elementary and middle school education in America. Our balanced curriculum, vibrant community spirit, and commitment to the ideal of a coeducational family school create an exceptional environment for intellectual growth and the development of character.

GCDS Today

- Knowledgeable and dedicated administration, faculty and staff of over 200.
- Exceptional faculty who are challenged and compensated for their experience and expertise.
- State-of-the-Art, Gold LEED certified new Upper School and Performing Arts Center.
- 80-acre campus permitting us to house approximately 60% of our faculty and staff, which has been a key factor in our ability to recruit and retain talent.
- Enrollment is robust (892 students in 2011–12) and diverse (17%).
- Our endowment and financial balance sheet are enviable.
- Recently completed a ten-year accreditation assessment (2009–10) by the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) and received exemplary marks in 14 out of 14 applicable categories (Mission, Governance, Enrollment, Program, Experience of the Students, Resources to Support the Program, Early Childhood Program, Faculty, Administration, Evaluation and Assessment, Health and Safety, Communication, Infrastructure, the Accreditation Process).

In the spirit of continuous improvement and with an eye toward the future, we are focused on sustaining excellence through innovation, while preserving the time-honored traditions that make The Greenwich Country Day School the remarkable school that it is.



Our Strategic Goals

In the fall of 2010, we embarked on a strategic planning process to determine specific goals that will support and enhance Country Day's excellence in elementary education, focusing on the strategic time horizon of three to five years.

The school held a long-range planning retreat in November 2010, at which administration, faculty, staff, current parents, alumni, and trustees considered a range of important issues. These discussions, along with our continuing work and input from students, faculty, staff, parents, and alumni, form the basis of our strategic vision for Country Day.

We have established three strategic goals:

1. Educational Leadership in the 21st Century
2. Culture and Character—Continuing GCDS Traditions
3. Financial Stability

Educational Leadership in the 21st Century



GOAL ONE: Strengthen our highly-respected educational program to ensure our students have the skills and integrity to excel in the 21st century.

Today, more than ever, we face incredible challenges, opportunities, and responsibilities in elementary and middle school education. The world has changed, and continues to change, quickly and dramatically. New ideas and technologies are reshaping our lives, increasing global interconnectivity, and accelerating the pace at which information is updated and shared.

As a school, we recognize the importance of preparing students for the 21st century. Achieving this goal requires adeptly blending innovation and tradition: refining and improving our educational program, while preserving our school's enduring values. Encompassing changes in curriculum, pedagogy, and faculty performance, this effort will enhance our commitment to enable all GCDS students to achieve their full potential, discover an innate love of learning, and grow in mind, body, and spirit.

Students

Prepare students for secondary school and for success in today's rapidly changing world.

At GCDS, we understand that numerous factors and trends will significantly influence the lives of our students, including:

- Global environment. Global competition
- Technology
 - Exponential increase in available data
 - Connectivity
- Job mobility
- Increasing specialization, increasing interdisciplinary collaboration
- Transformation of organizational structures: flatter, more decentralized
- Rapid pace of change

For today's graduates, knowing the right answer will not be enough. These societal and technological changes place a premium on the skills that put knowledge to use, such as the ability to innovate, solve complex problems, and work collaboratively. As a school, our learning and our teaching have to keep pace. The development of 21st century skills requires a new approach both to how we teach (pedagogy) and what we teach (curriculum).

While adapting our program, we will uphold our school's commitment to educating the whole child, recognizing that strong character and a balance in study and play are as important for the current century as they were at our school's founding.

Faculty

Attract and retain a knowledgeable and talented faculty committed to the educational and community values of the school, including a commitment to continuous professional growth.

Country Day's efforts to better prepare students for the 21st century rely not only on the proven talents of our faculty but on their willingness to embrace new ideas and rigorously pursue improvement in their skills and methods of teaching. To support this culture of continual learning, GCDS will develop a new faculty evaluation process to ensure that all faculty members receive meaningful, on-going feedback designed to guide further growth and improvement. In addition, GCDS will complement this evaluation process with increased opportunities for job-embedded professional development, enabling our faculty to pursue high standards and continuous growth in ways that have an immediate, positive impact on student learning.

Culture and Character of Country Day

Continuing GCDS Traditions



GOAL TWO: Uphold the GCDS traditions that create a strong community, support learning, and help instill values that prepare our students to make a positive contribution to society and our planet.

Our traditions foster connections that endure, uniting us in the common cause of enabling all students in our care to discover and develop what is finest in themselves. The emphasis on honesty, respect, and understanding encourages students to take intellectual risks and learn from viewpoints and experiences other than their own. At GCDS, students come to expect high standards of behavior from themselves and others. They graduate prepared for lives of leadership and service.

These values and traditions continually shape our choices and decisions, promoting responsible practices and a deep commitment not only to the wellbeing of our school community but to the greater good.

Family School

Continue our commitment to the ideal of a coeducational family school.

A strong relationship between GCDS and our families is a cornerstone of the Country Day experience. Our community is continually enriched by the remarkable talents and energies of our parent body through the Parents

Association, where every parent is a member. At GCDS, educating brothers and sisters together reinforces the bonds within families and within our school. Joined by the common goal of providing the best education, this vibrant and caring community creates an exceptional environment in which each student can learn and develop confidence.

Diversity

Sustain our commitment to a diverse learning community and to preparing students for leadership in a global world by creating an environment of fairness and respect, and attracting diverse students and faculty members who contribute valuable perspectives and talents.

The importance of learning in a more diverse, global environment increases as the world becomes more interconnected. At Country Day, a strong emphasis on trust, equity, and understanding encourages all members of our community to learn from and respect viewpoints, experiences, and backgrounds different from their own, including differences of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, age, physical abilities, religion, culture, and political ideology.

Sustainability

Maintain our commitment to environmental stewardship in planning, practices, and educational direction.

Country Day's environmental efforts are grounded in our tradition of responsible practices and commitment to the greater good. Building on our recent efforts—including the construction of a Gold LEED certified new Upper School and Performing Arts Center, the creation of rain gardens and biofiltration systems to protect the environmentally sensitive wetland habitats on campus, and the introduction of electrolyzed water technology for safer, more effective, chemical-free disinfecting and cleaning in the dining hall and classrooms—we will continue to actively evaluate and reduce our environmental impact. By modeling responsible stewardship and integrating the topic of sustainability into the curriculum, we will encourage students to take an active interest in protecting the planet's natural resources.

Financial Stability



GOAL THREE: Maintain financial stability to sustain the resources that underwrite our educational mission and program.

Financial stability is essential to Country Day's leadership in elementary and middle school education. We have a history of success and plan on continuing this pattern. Our success in maintaining financial stability is due to the following:

1. Balanced budget
2. No long-term debt
3. Successful endowment management
4. Successful Annual Fund outreach
5. Supportive parent body

We have four sources of revenue, and they will continue to be our main sources moving forward.

1. Tuition
2. Annual Fund
3. Endowment
4. Capital Campaigns

In order to take on any new initiatives, the financial sources must be analyzed and priorities established. To date, our financial stability is primarily the result of effective finance and endowment management, and we will continue the same strategies that have proven successful in the past.

Finance/Endowment

Maintain our strong financial position by conservatively managing the balance sheet and increasing the endowment over the long term.

GCDS is fortunate to be in a strong financial position. As we have consistently seen, the majority of our revenue is generated by current families via tuition and the Annual Fund. In 2010–11, 92% of revenue was generated by current families. As a result, it is critical that we conservatively manage the income statement and balance sheet; it is also necessary to increase the endowment over the long-term, thereby reducing reliance on tuition and allowing greater investment in intellectual capital (faculty, financial aid, programs).

Development

Continue to invest in growing our coverage and talent in the area of development.

Annual and sustained development activities, including the Annual Fund, capital campaigns, planned giving, and general development initiatives, are a key component of our financial model.

Buildings and Grounds

Maintain highly functional, motivational, and sustainable spaces in which to learn and play, and invest in faculty housing as necessary to meet our needs.

Country Day's exceptional buildings and grounds play an important role in our ability to challenge students in mind, body, and spirit by making possible crucial aspects of our program from small class size to extensive academic, athletic, and arts offerings. Additionally, Country Day's ability to house 60% of our faculty and staff has been a key factor in our ability to recruit and retain talent.

Faculty Compensation

Provide faculty compensation and benefits that reflect the high value GCDS places on teaching as a profession.

Country Day's talented faculty and staff are the heart of our school. We endeavor to hire the best teachers for a nursery through grade 9 school and expect exceptional performance and commitment.

Our Challenge

To remain true to our mission, we must embrace change. GCDS is currently at the forefront of elementary and middle school education. Yet the world our graduates will enter is not the world their parents or grandparents encountered as young men and women. It is faster, more global. We are hyperconnected, with facts at our fingertips and a growing ethos of collaboration.

A school that fails to adapt will fail to prepare its students. The strategic goals set forth in this plan reflect our determination to offer an exceptional education that remains relevant to the needs of today's learners.

To maintain Country Day's leadership position, we will set a new standard in educating students for the 21st century. This effort calls upon all members of our community. It requires both relentless dedication and patience. It depends upon sound management of our financial resources. Above all, it requires a willingness to learn.

As a school, we embrace this effort with the hope that, in years to come, today's graduates, like generations of alumni before them, will choose Country Day for their own children, knowing our school continues to offer the best education, bringing the traditions of family, community, excellence, and integrity into the 21st century.





MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of The Greenwich Country Day School is to enable all children in our care to discover and to develop what is finest in themselves—to achieve the highest standards in their studies, in their play, and in their character.

We are committed to the ideal of a coeducational family school. We recognize that every child is an individual who possesses unique talents and abilities. We promote consideration of others, value diversity, and teach respect for all people and our world.

The Greenwich Country Day School maintains high academic standards, a broad and balanced curriculum, and time-honored traditions. We encourage children to take intellectual risks. The school prepares students for rigorous secondary school studies and endeavors to foster a love of learning that endures.

We believe the quality of our faculty and staff is essential to the achievement of our mission.

The Greenwich Country Day School challenges students in mind, body, and spirit—for their personal growth and for the common good.

Many thanks to the members of the GCDS community who participated in the Long Range Planning Retreat, held in November 2010.

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