

Ridgewood School Strategic Plan

2014-2015 through 2016-2017



the light of learningSM

Letter from the Headmistress

Ridgewood School has developed outstanding citizens and leaders for nearly 100 years. Today members of the Ridgewood School family are preparing to celebrate our centennial anniversary and embark on our second century of providing outstanding education. To ensure we remain strong and relevant in our second century, we developed this strategic plan.

We assessed relevant internal and external data; analyzed current local and national trends; and conducted wide-ranging discussions with all constituencies. Using the information from the assessment, analysis, and discussions, we set aggressive and measurable goals.

This strategic plan builds on our strengths. We expect it to guide us into the future to enable us to continue to educate the whole person; to continue preparing our alumni to excel in high school and college; to continue developing artists, scientists, and business leaders; and to continue Ridgewood's long tradition of award winning student achievement.

I invite you to join us on the journey to our even more successful future.

Dr. Anne-Evan Williams
CEO and Head of School

Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

Ridgewood School creates a vibrant and personalized learning environment that cultivates the intellect, creativity, and character of our students.

Vision

Ridgewood alumni excel in learning, achieve in life, and engage in the global community.

Values

Ridgewood creates its vibrant learning environment through the teamwork of committed students, staff, and parents. Our learning environment:

- » Inspires the joy of learning and discovery
- » Encourages academic excellence
- » Celebrates diversity
- » Fosters respect
- » Expects integrity
- » Embraces responsibility
- » Promotes leadership
- » Instills citizenship
- » Engages the whole child

Vision of the Future

Ridgewood board and planning committee members described the following vision of the ideal future to work toward.

In 2023, as Ridgewood celebrates its 105th anniversary, the future is bright.

The quality of Ridgewood's education is recognized and appreciated throughout the community. Ridgewood's students demonstrate the proof of the outstanding education with every academic award they receive, every organization they lead, and every time they give back to the community. Ridgewood's Vision statement that our alumni excel in learning, achieve in life, and engage in the global community is demonstrably true.

Ridgewood's long standing dream of opening a pre-school was realized, which provides the strongest possible foundation for learning at Ridgewood.

The Ridgewood curriculum and extra-curricular activities contribute to outstanding student learning, within the classroom and outside the classroom. Our writing intensive education ensures that alumni are able to express their ideas clearly in every high school and college class and in their work life. Our hands-on science program, participation in Science Olympiad, and participation in Science Fair ensure that Ridgewood alumni continue to enter science careers in large numbers. Ridgewood's active approach to learning ensures that students are engaged and will remember what they learn. Our commitment to the whole person remains an integral part of our education. We provide music, art, physical education, and foreign language in every grade level; we enable every student to participate in service projects and service learning; and we focus on understanding cultures around the world. The Ridgewood education goes beyond simply learning facts; we give students opportunities for experimentation and inquiry to develop critical reasoning abilities.

Our alumni start high school ahead of their peers in every subject and capitalize on their preparedness by successfully completing advanced classes throughout their high school years. What they learned at Ridgewood not only benefits them in high school, but also provides an outstanding foundation for college.

Ridgewood has full classes in every grade, with waiting lists of students who want to join the Ridgewood family. The outreach and marketing activities are systematic and effective, and result in strong community awareness of Ridgewood and strong parental interest in sending their children to Ridgewood. Although Ridgewood is best known in Clark County, we have successfully reached into Champaign and Greene Counties to find families who value the Ridgewood education.

Our faculty members continue to be our most important assets. They create the vibrant learning environment that engages our students so well; they provide the individualized attention that brings out the best in every student; and they support the extra-curricular activities that are essential elements of the Ridgewood education. Ridgewood attracts and retains the best teachers in the community because of the teaching and learning environment, the commitment of our students and parents, and the robust compensation.

Diversity continues to be an asset at Ridgewood where every child is welcomed and appreciated. The multi-cultural festival celebrating our diverse backgrounds remains the most popular event of the year and regularly attracts alumni to participate. Students learn of the differences and connectedness of people at a young age and carry this knowledge throughout their lives.

Ridgewood alumni are outstanding supporters of the school in many ways. They give their time and expertise to serve as role models or mentors to our students and as board members. Recognizing that their current success is due in part to what was learned at Ridgewood, they contribute financially to support the Ridgewood education tradition and to enable future generations to benefit from Ridgewood. They participate in service activities and in reunions. They contribute new ideas that later become traditions such as the now annual high school graduation party to recognize high school achievements and send the graduates off to college with strong memories of Ridgewood.

The Ridgewood facilities include new classrooms and dedicated space for sports and arts. We have reduced our carbon footprint through green technologies. Our property will continue to maintain the beautiful grounds surrounding the buildings that provide space for science, play, privacy, and relaxation.

The Ridgewood parents and extended family members remain vital contributors to the success of Ridgewood, freely sharing their time and expertise to support school activities, serve as mentors to Ridgewood students, and raise funds.

Ridgewood's location in Springfield provides it the unique opportunity to establish close relationships with Wittenberg University and Clark State Community College. These partnerships give Ridgewood access to student mentors, global studies and foreign language expertise, educational leadership expertise and student teachers, and much more. We have a partnership with the Springfield Regional Medical Center to nurture our young scientists. Springfield's rich cultural opportunities ranging from the Springfield Symphony Orchestra and Springfield Museum of Art to the Boonshoft Museum and the annual Fair at New Boston provide a wealth of hands on learning opportunities for Ridgewood students.

Financially, Ridgewood will be stronger than ever. Full enrollment will contribute to the operating budget and to our ability to compensate faculty and staff fairly. Our multi-million dollar endowment contributes significantly to the operating budget and to the ability to provide need-based scholarships. Alumni and foundation support are strong, reflecting commitment to the quality education provided by Ridgewood. We successfully completed the capital campaign for the facilities and endowment.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

1. Fill every class with qualified students.

We actively seek students throughout Clark and surrounding counties who will benefit from the vibrant Ridgewood learning environment. Through our admissions process we strive to enroll students who love learning.

Objective 1: Revise entrance testing requirements.

Objective 2: Revise contracting to include family-community commitments benchmarked against peer institutions.

Objective 3: Establish and sustain contacts with local HR departments.

Objective 4: Revise and improve website.

Objective 5: Expand recruitment efforts to Champaign and Greene Counties.

Objective 6: Launch Ridgewood Ambassadors program.

Objective 7: Achieve full classes in all grades with students from Clark, Champaign, and Greene Counties.

2. Develop and implement a sustainable financial model to enable Ridgewood to achieve its long-term vision.

As we move from reliance on tuition and begin addressing capital needs, our budgeting is becoming more complex. This goal calls for us to increase the sophistication of our financial modeling to enable us to plan for the future we have defined in this plan.

Objective 1: Develop and maintain a strategic budget plan that drives fundraising targets/goals.

Objective 2: Achieve \$100,000 in unrestricted income from Annual Fund and Hearts & Hands auction.

Objective 3: Increase faculty salary.

Objective 4: Secure grants for improving or expanding existing programs.

Objective 5: Develop Capital Campaign Plan.

Objective 6: Establish Annual Fund Committee.

Objective 7: Launch Capital Campaign (spring 2016).

Objective 8: Establish Scholarship endowment fund and secure first target of donations.

Objective 9: Secure capital gifts and commitments toward new building.

3. Continuously improve operations.

We are taking the opportunity of this strategic plan to examine every part of our operations. We want to ensure our operations will support our ability to thrive in our second century of operation.

Objective 1: Revise board responsibilities to meet current Ridgewood needs.

Objective 2: Revise board governing documents to meet current Ridgewood needs.

Objective 3: Formalize and implement the ISACS accreditation cycle.

Objective 4: Ensure ongoing board, staff, and head of school involvement in independent school movement.

Objective 5: Improve parent volunteer training.

Objective 6: Conduct an enterprise risk assessment and develop appropriate policies and practices to address risk

Objective 7: Add a full time classroom aide to support instructional needs.

Objective 8: Add a part time Admissions Director.

Objective 9: Add a part time Marketing Director.

4. Strengthen and sustain relationships with our outstanding alumni.

We have accomplished alumni living and contributing to their communities throughout the United States. The success of our alumni is a strong testimonial to the quality of the Ridgewood education. We are enhancing our ability to connect with alumni and to benefit from what they have learned and accomplished since leaving Ridgewood.

Objective 1: Identify key alumni for close relationships.

Objective 2: Establish Alumni Council.

Objective 3: Publish Ridgewood Times.

Objective 4: Host 2 alumni centric events.

Objective 5: Increase sponsorship by alumni and alumni businesses of scholarships and special programs like Science Olympiad.

Objective 6: Begin cultivating Major Gift Donors.

Objective 7: Support Continued Alumni engagement via materials, events, and participation in student learning.

Objective 8: Achieve regular and systematic engagement with alumni & alumni families.

Objective 9: Increase participation in events and Alumni Council.

5. Ensure the facilities contribute to the high quality education.

Ridgewood is fortunate to have sufficient land to support not only our buildings and recreation, but also our hands-on learning programs. However, we are currently out of space in our building for all of the different classes we offer. Faculty workrooms have become classrooms, the library does double duty as a classroom, and our gym does quadruple duty as the home for physical education classes, music classes, lunch, and student performances. Our faculty make the best of what we have available, but after 50 years in this building, it is time to expand and renovate.

Objective 1: Improve external and entrance appearance.

Objective 2: Secure grants and partnerships with businesses to sponsor improvements.

Objective 3: Refine the comprehensive facility plan to reflect anticipated usage and needs.

Objective 4: Improve current building to address critical needs.

Objective 5: Prepare to break ground for new construction in 2018.

6. Add a pre-school to the Ridgewood learning environment.

We believe so strongly in the Ridgewood learning environment that we want to expand our ability to reach young people. Establishing a pre-school will enable us to reach students at an earlier age to ensure they are eager, active learners when they enter kindergarten.

Objective 1: Conduct study to determine feasibility of launching the Ridgewood pre-school.

Objective 2: Develop a business plan to guide the work of the pre-school.

7. Continuously improve the overall learning experience to ensure ongoing relevance as we develop alumni who excel in learning, achieve in life, and engage in the global community.

Ridgewood is dedicated to helping students excel in learning, achieve in life, and engage in the global community. Our curriculum is comprehensive, well rounded, and relevant to an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. We enable our students to discover and develop their strengths and interests.

Objective 1: Formalize and implement the curriculum evaluation cycle and procedures in conjunction with the accreditation cycle.

Objective 2: Provide continuing professional development for faculty.

Objective 3: Annually evaluate extra-curricular activities to ensure all contribute to the desired outcomes of the Ridgewood education; improve as needed.

Objective 4: Incorporate student extra-curricular achievements in student record.

Objective 5: Establish a Club athletic program.

Objective 6: Establish Artist/Scientist/Expert In Residence program.

Objective 7: Establish faculty technology committee to evaluate and recommend educational technology.