



BRIGHT HOPE

NORTH SHORE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

3-5 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

AS OF MARCH 2023





BRIGHT HOPE

JEREMIAH 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”.

STRATEGIC PROCESS & PLANNING PREAMBLE

North Shore Christian School (hereinafter NSCS) has been an active member of the private independent Christian school educational movement in the greater Boston area for more than 70 years, serving children in Early Childhood through eighth grade. Founded in 1951 by a handful of local parents and pastors, NSCS has remained committed to its mission of meeting the educational needs of students in developmentally appropriate ways during their formative years.

Over the past decade, NSCS has seen significant change within its school community. The most significant changes include the merger with another local Christian school, *Beacon Christian Academy*, which was the result of NSCS's participation in a unity effort of Christian schools on the North Shore. During this time, NSCS expanded its Early Childhood reach with the addition of two satellite campuses, one located in Austin Square, Lynn in the Austin Square Baptist Church at 10 Kesler Avenue (2010), and one located in the Grace Community Church at 17 Pleasant Street in Marblehead (2009). In an effort to focus energies on merger efforts with Beacon Christian Academy, the Board of Directors made the difficult decision to close both satellite campuses. In 2013 the Austin Square location was closed, followed by the Marblehead campus in 2015.

Additionally, NSCS created a partnership with local home-school families, and has been serving home-school children since 2011 through its *Home-to-School Connection Program*.

In 2018 NSCS opened a new preschool location on the campus of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. The NSCS Hamilton campus has been serving children ages 2.9-5 years old for the past four years.

In 2019, Pam Heintz accepted the appointment of permanent Head of School. Pam had served for the prior nine years as Principal overseeing the Beverly and Hamilton campuses. Pam has accelerated the School through some important transitions and initiatives. Among these have been:

- Reorganization of leadership and the development of the School's Senior Administrative Leadership Team (hereinafter SALT), which includes Head of School, Director of Finance and Operations, Director of Advancement and Communications, Director of Admissions and Community Outreach, and our Lead Principal. This also included refining job descriptions to better articulate expectations.
 - Leadership reorganization also has included a bottom-up understanding of leadership, creating a "team" approach, and NSCS has witnessed smarter-working and greater gains from our SALT.

- While navigating the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, NSCS completed its self-study and was granted accreditation through the *New England Association of Schools and Colleges*.
- NSCS completed a full communication audit with Blodgett-Smith Group, Swampscott, MA (2021-22).
- NSCS began a strategic planning process with the assistance of Lon Swartzentruber of Design Group International.

Standing on this strong foundation and legacy, the School's leadership seeks to *collectively* envision a robust future for its Christian school community. Through this process, Pam Heintz seeks to further understand and cast a bold vision for the future of the School (the picture of what we want to become), reaffirm the organization's mission (its underlying purpose), and the School's identity and/or core values (how we behave as an organization).

Utilizing these core organizational documents, NSCS leadership seeks to craft and implement a strategic plan that guides the future of North Shore Christian School toward long-term sustainability, nurtures Christian formation of students, enhances constituency and parent engagement, demonstrates educational and co-curricular excellence, and strengthens both our financial model and facility enhancement plans.

Pam Heintz reached out to Lon L. Swartzentruber, CEO and Senior Design Partner of Design Group International, in November 2021 to assist her in designing and facilitating a process to achieve the above objectives. By taking a posture of listening, Design Group International's process consultants seek to help uncover activities and processes that support the learning of their clients, moving them forward towards their articulated vision, purposes, and desired outcomes.

*...Like a tree
firmly planted...
Psalm 1:3*

WHO WE ARE

Our Core Values: Our Pillar Distinctives



PLANTED IN EXCELLENCE

North Shore Christian School students are planted among caring faculty who provide innovative, research-based, and rigorous instruction, thus imparting to students the skills they need to think deeply and critically as they demonstrate proficiency in their learning.



NURTURED TO THRIVE

North Shore Christian School students are nurtured to recognize their innate value as children of God and to gain confidence in the discovery and expression of their unique gifts and abilities.



ROOTED IN CHRIST

North Shore Christian School is a diverse community rooted in a biblical worldview equipping students to discover God's truth in all knowledge and understanding.



FLOURISHING TO IMPACT

North Shore Christian School students are flourishing in their ability to think diversely and work collaboratively. Having gained an appreciation for the uniqueness of all people, they are able to thoughtfully engage with others and are inspired to lead lives of eternal impact.

WHO WE ARE

Our Mission Statement

Rooted in historical evangelical Christian faith, North Shore Christian School, in concert with family and church, seeks to be a community that provides challenging elementary and secondary education. Through academic and biblical instruction, we strive to nurture each student's learning and thinking, and equip them to serve God within their local communities and around the world.

OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Advancing the Voice of Christian Education in Essex County

Built on a tradition of excellence for over 70 years, NSCS believes that school buildings are built with bricks and mortar, but school communities are built with passion. It is NSCS's passion to build up intellectual, articulate, confident, God-minded, and God-fearing individuals. Having been equipped to think with both their heads and their hearts, our students are compassionate individuals who are critical thinkers and strategic problem-solvers. Our students leave our school buildings prepared to impact those around them.

Recognizing that the world is changing at an increasingly rapid rate and coupled with an increased desire from parents to have their children experience a non-public school setting, there is an urgency for NSCS to have larger facilities to create more admissions capacity across our campuses. This will require consideration of options to expand existing facilities or identify new facilities to better accommodate all NSCS programs. NSCS is committed to instructing children in a Christian school context, so to develop individuals who are able to articulate their thoughts and ideals within a 21st century climate. This is the School's priority, along with a desired outcome to produce students who will stand out as persons who possess godly integrity and intellectual capacities and who are prepared to continue their educational journey beyond NSCS.

As was the case at our inception in 1951, it remains our desire to produce individuals who are justice oriented, for Kingdom's sake, and who can navigate the demands of our changing society. The design and implementation of NSCS's Strategic Plan is to be viewed as a living document, to be used as a framework with which to propel the School into the future.

THE NEXT 3—5 YEARS

IDENTIFIED STRATEGIC GOALS

These strategic goal areas have been identified as the priorities for NSCS to address over the next 3 to 5 years. It is understood that this document, and strategic planning itself, are dynamic, and that some of these goals may be achieved in a shorter time frame. A task force consisting of board members, SALT members, staff, parents, and other appropriate individuals will be assembled for each goal area. Each task force will regularly report its progress to the Board of Directors and formally present recommendations to the Board for action and/or approval.

GOAL AREA 1

Provide academic and supportive programs that align with the diverse learning profile of our current and future students while integrating Christian faith and learning. Equip and strengthen the quality and efficacy of faculty teaching practices to promote excellence in student learning and enrich the partnership between home and school.

GOAL AREA 2

Ensure that our (current and future) facilities create the necessary environments that support teaching and learning, facilitate high quality curricular and co-curricular programming and learning, and support our desire for future enrollment growth.

GOAL AREA 3

Further develop partnerships in Essex County so that more families have access to a high-quality faith-based education and students understand the call God has on their lives.

GOAL AREA 4

Develop a robust, sustainable financial model for NSCS to solidify our fiscal health, to promote growth and expansion, and to ensure uncompromised execution of the School's mission into the future.

GOAL AREA 5

Refine the School's governance and leadership models in order to ensure healthy and relevant organizational (spiritual, academic, administrative, financial, etc.) oversight and high quality leadership at all levels to meet the current and future needs of the School.

A NOTE ABOUT STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES

Aligned with each Goal Area are specific Strategies and Initiatives. The Strategies are the identified efforts by which NSCS will achieve its stated Goals. The Initiatives are possible actions that will support the work of the related Strategy. It is understood that Initiatives may be revised by the Task Force to better reflect the actions needed to achieve the Goal. Initiatives are not to be considered as approved outcomes or definitive action items and are subject to Board review and approval prior to formal action on behalf of NSCS.



GOAL AREAS AND STRATEGIES

GOAL AREA 1

Provide academic and supportive programs that align with the diverse learning profile of our current and future students while integrating Christian faith and learning. Equip and strengthen the quality and efficacy of faculty teaching practices to promote excellence in student learning and enrich the partnership between home and school.

Strategy 1:

Advance our educational program by creating a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) in order to educate and service our students with multiple learning styles and abilities.

Initiatives

- Identify a portrait of a NSCS graduate
- Identify the student profile for admission
- Research and recommend educational programs that align with our culture and core values
 - Determine what additional staffing support is needed in order to serve our current student body, while building capacity for expansion
 - Expand the Academic Support Center
 - Identify and support students in need of Tier 2 intervention
 - Identify students excelling in mastery to provide meaningful opportunities to demonstrate learning
 - Equip faculty, specialists, and staff with professional development to implement Tier 2 intervention strategies within the classrooms
 - Develop a budget to include both revenue and a staffing plan that supports a sustainable program, and includes an on-site social/emotional counselor and reading and math specialists.
 - Research and recommend a social/emotional development curriculum that supports the learning of students at their grade/maturity level
 - Analyze the student profile for those not being served and/or who we are not accepting

Strategy 2:

Create and enhance space and programming that supports core-curriculum in the following areas: Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM). Create Fine Arts, Performing Arts, Athletics, and After-School Enrichments to allow for balanced and meaningful student engagement across all grade levels.

Initiatives

- Needs assessment
 - Space (within classrooms or buildings)
 - Technology
 - Cyclical plan to secure and update technology
 - Staffing models to reflect prioritized programming, enrichments, and co-curriculars to include increased collaboration across disciplines/departments to develop interdisciplinary project-based learning
- Create budget, including revenue streams to support staffing and sustainable programming enhancements

Strategy 3:

Create a framework to ensure that all faculty and staff have an understanding of a biblical worldview and the intersection of faith and learning at their respective grade level.

Initiatives

- Needs assessment
 - Professional development for faculty, Deans of Students, and Deans of Academics to foster understanding of the intersection of faith and learning at all grade-levels
 - Service-Learning Framework
 - Available and continued resources; time, funding and personnel to provide effective framework for SAFE Groups
 - Training opportunities for faculty regarding SAFE groups
 - Design a training series through a biblical worldview on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging
 - Expand training to provide faculty with initial and ongoing Collaborative Critical Thinking (CCT) training to support intersection of faith and learning

Strategy 4:

Develop a faculty and staff professional development process that positions individuals to be strengthened in the quality and the efficacy of teaching practices to promote excellent outcomes in student learning.

Initiatives

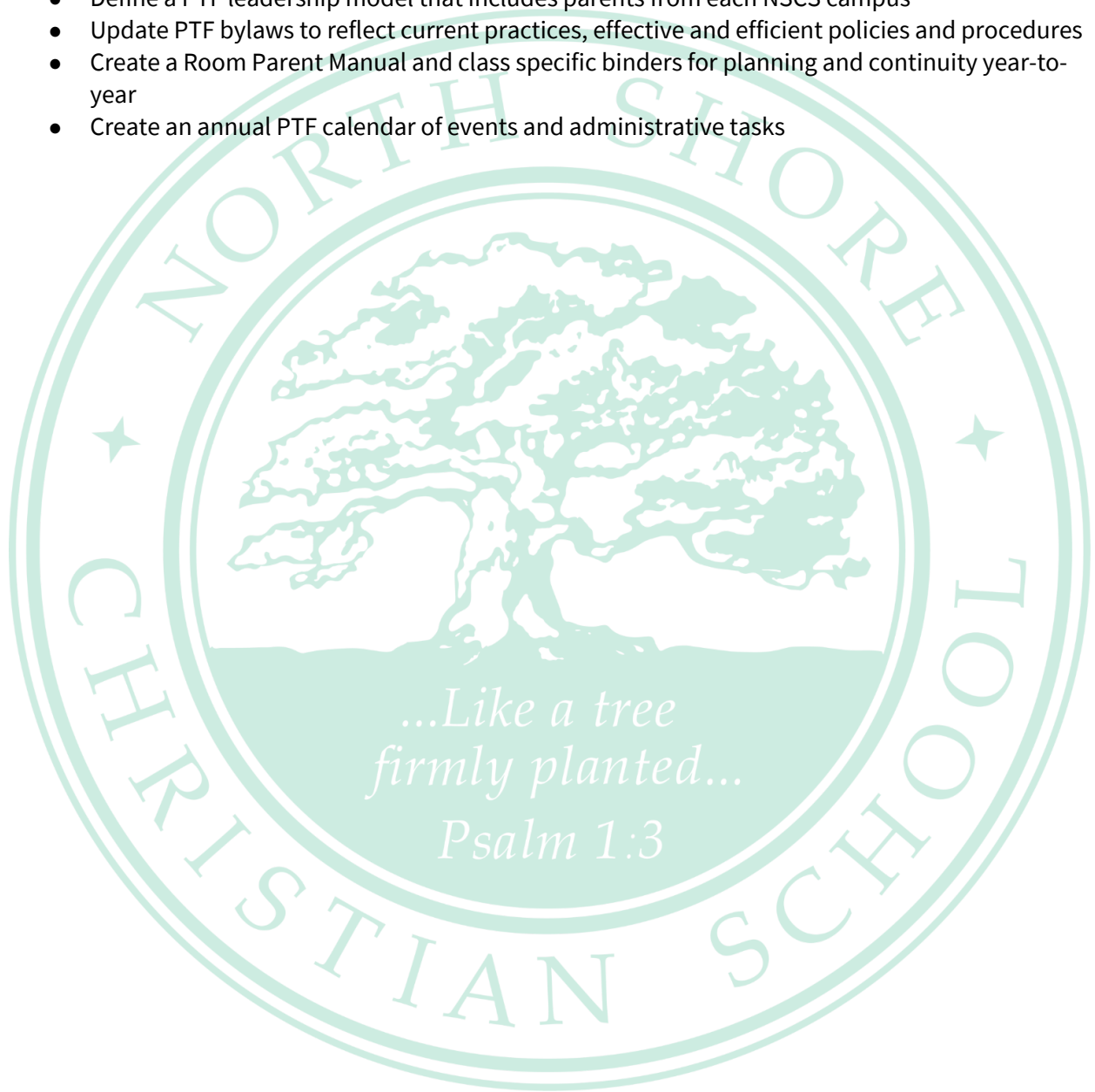
- Ensure annual evaluation of each faculty member's professional and instructional goals; take necessary steps as needed
- Needs assessment
 - Faculty and staff coaching/mentoring/training needs

Strategy 5:

Update the Parent Teacher Fellowship (PTF) model to best represent and serve all NSCS campuses.

Initiatives

- Define a PTF leadership model that includes parents from each NSCS campus
- Update PTF bylaws to reflect current practices, effective and efficient policies and procedures
- Create a Room Parent Manual and class specific binders for planning and continuity year-to-year
- Create an annual PTF calendar of events and administrative tasks



GOAL AREA 2

Ensure that our current and future facilities create the necessary environments that support teaching and learning, facilitate high quality curricular and co-curricular programming and learning, and support our desire for future enrollment growth.

Strategy 1:

Host an independent comprehensive facility assessment process that captures the extent, priority, timeframes, and costs associated with implementing a high-quality facility standard.

Initiatives

- Based on these learnings, bring to the Board of Directors, for their approval, the costs and timeframes necessary to renovate our Beverly & Lynn campuses.
 - *Cost determinations should be known within three to six months of launching the strategic plan
 - Based on these learnings, determine if additional (new and/or additional) facilities are needed in order to meet the educational program desired. Determine by no later than Spring 2023 whether we stay or renovate our Beverly campus
- Determine how the Hamilton campus fits into the broader conversation of our facilities and School mission.
 - Further develop our relationship with Gordon Conwell in order to secure and have a certain long-term future of this campus. Consider the students it serves, community visibility, and future partnerships.
 - Consider and determine if a day care is a next viable step.

Strategy 2:

Develop and execute a comprehensive funding plan that establishes the funding necessary to achieve the broad purposes outlined in this strategic plan.

Initiatives

- Conduct a feasibility study to better understand the charitable interests, intents, and capacity of those engaged in Christian education
- Develop a group of committed individuals who by their nature and standing within the community can lead a campaign for NSCS
 - Fostering additional donor relationships beyond what is currently present
- Initiate an endowment and bequest program that provides 5% of organizational revenue within 10 years.
- Support the Advancement Office to be able to host a capital campaign/funding initiative.

Strategy 3:

Further develop organizational marketing and communications efforts that shares broadly the impact and benefits that Christian education has on a child.

Initiatives

- Develop a series of marketing materials that promote the mission, core values, and vision of NSCS and support the recruitment of students
- Initiate a young moms/dads recruitment program that assists new families to understand the transformational education their children can receive at NSCS
- Create a recruitment committee that helps the School develop relationships with new families interested in learning more about NSCS
- Ensure that the recruitment and admissions office have the staffing and infrastructure resources necessary to support and sustain these efforts.

Strategy 4:

Research and understand demographic shifts, birth trends, or other regional shifts that impact future enrollment in Christian education within our broader School community.

Initiatives

- Initiate an enrollment projection for the next 7 – 10 years in order to better understand admissions trends, ideal class sizes, retention rates, etc.
 - Ensure that these projections take into consideration each campus that we occupy
 - Continue to explore day care opportunities within the surrounding communities we occupy or desire to inhabit so that we are positioned to meet the needs of young moms and dads

Psalm 1:3

GOAL AREA 3

Further develop partnerships in Essex County so that more families have access to a high-quality faith-based education and students understand the call God has on their lives.

Strategy 1:

Determine viable partnerships to either explore or continue exploring that may prove to be critical in the continued mission of NSCS to advance the mission of Christian education more broadly in Essex County, including but not limited to other Christian schools, churches, and institutions.

Initiatives

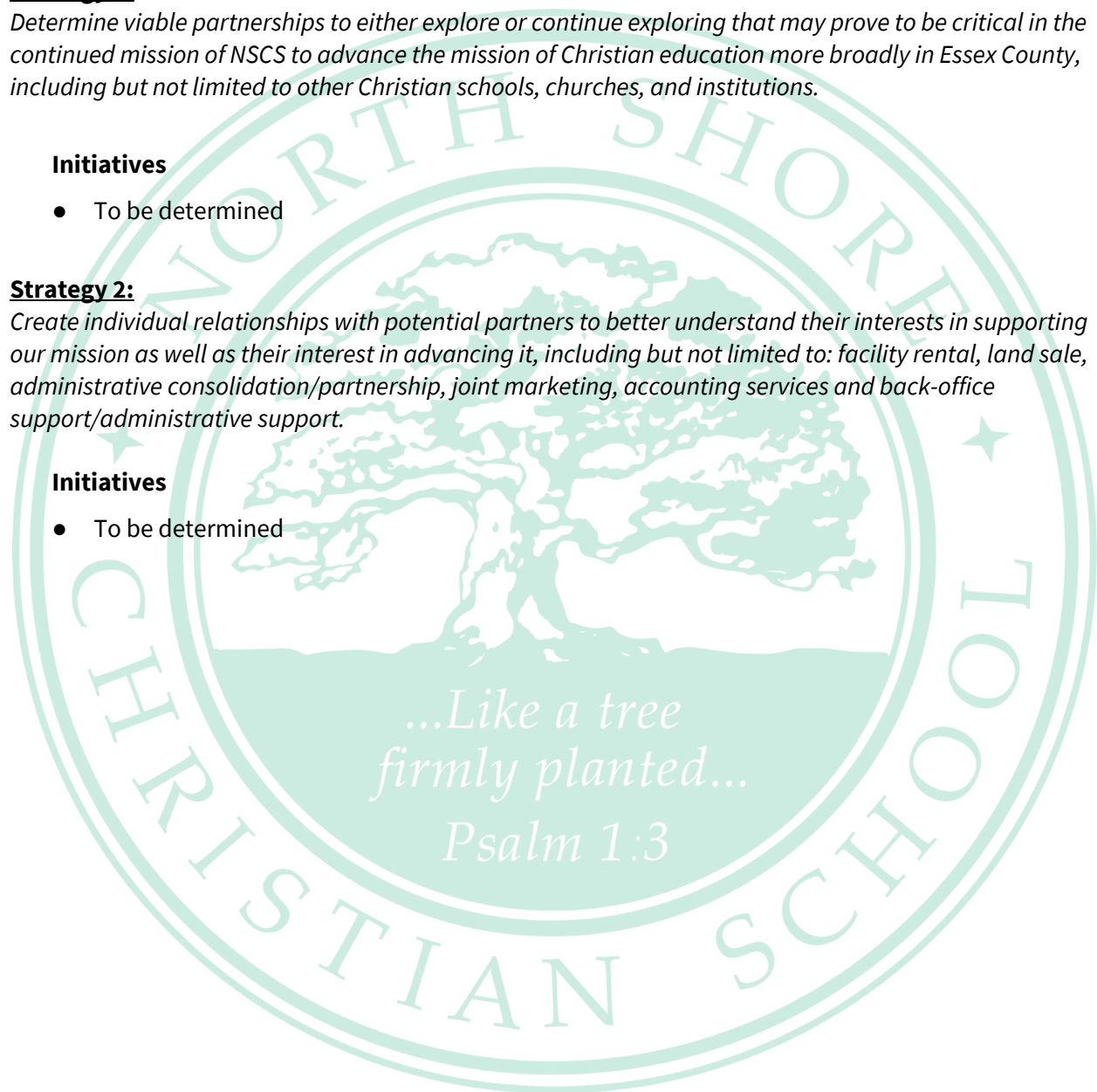
- To be determined

Strategy 2:

Create individual relationships with potential partners to better understand their interests in supporting our mission as well as their interest in advancing it, including but not limited to: facility rental, land sale, administrative consolidation/partnership, joint marketing, accounting services and back-office support/administrative support.

Initiatives

- To be determined



GOAL AREA 4

Develop a robust, sustainable financial model for NSCS to solidify our fiscal health, promote growth and expansion, and ensure uncompromised execution of the School's mission into the future.

Strategy 1:

Develop a long-range financial model that ensures that NSCS has sufficient and sustainable financial resources to achieve its goals.

Initiatives

- Develop a new budgeting and monthly financial reporting process that involves the principals and department heads to better understand the integration of their program and the overall organization.
- Develop a multi-year plan that positions faculty and staff compensation to a % of local public school salaries.

Strategy 2:

Ensure the Finance and Operations Office is appropriately structured and staffed to negotiate and manage the capital and growth needs of the School.

Initiatives

- Clearly define the roles and responsibility of the CFO/Business Office and any necessary staff support positions, increases in FTE, within the Business Office, and provide needs assessment to HOS and BoD by Feb. 2023
- Further develop the role, responsibility, and regular meeting schedule of the Board Finance Committee
- Define role and responsibilities of Finance Committee, Treasurer, and Board
- Expand the Board Finance Committee to include volunteers outside of the Board of Directors, and utilize committee volunteers as a way to vet future BoD candidates
- Evaluate financial aid process and develop a model to improve efficiencies, in way of time and people involved
- Establish legal expertise relationship(s)

Strategy 3:

Design and execute a communication strategy to apprise interested parties (including staff, parents, and donors) of the School's funding model and its specific uses.

Initiatives

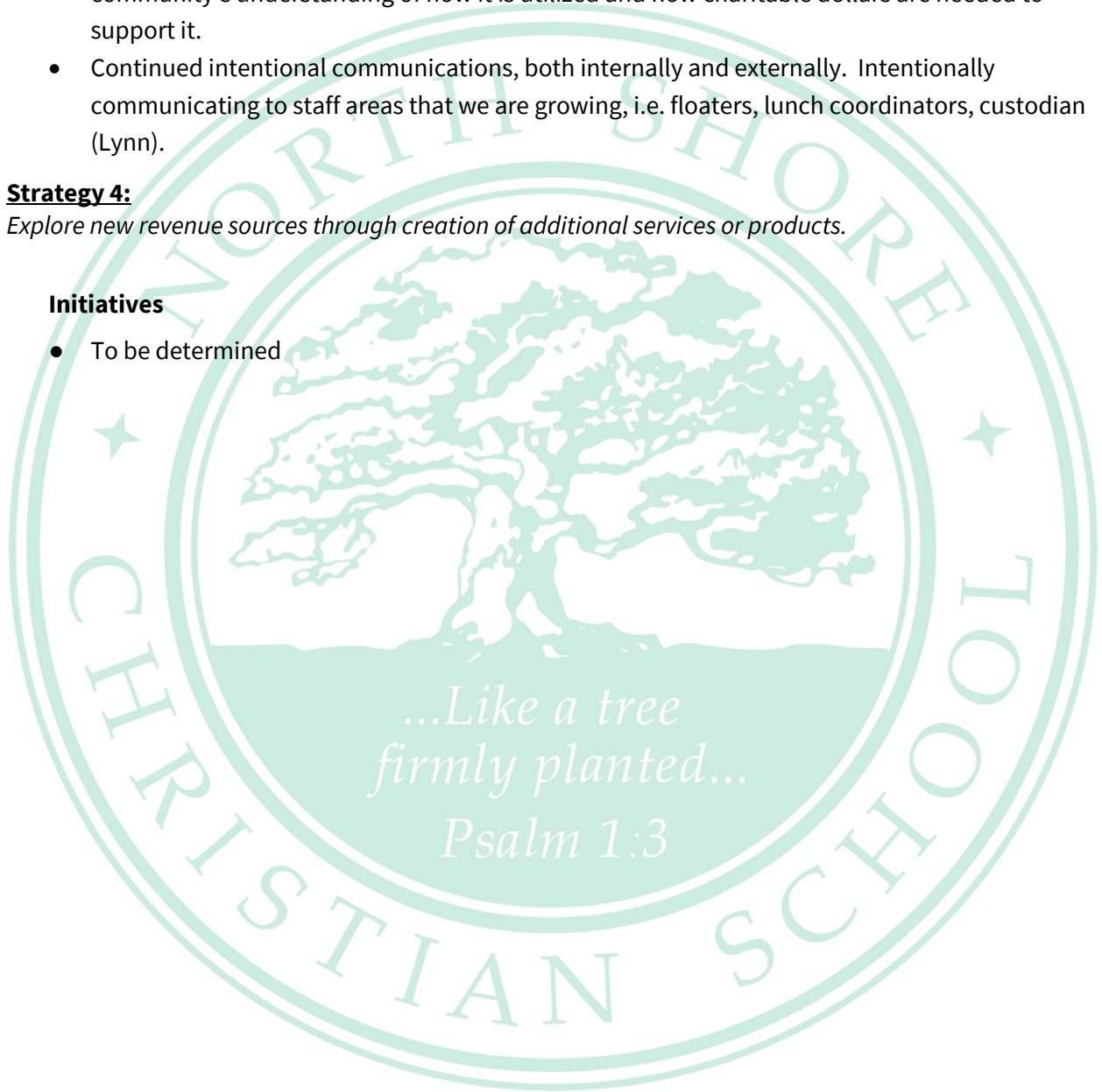
- Initiate an annual parent communication program that outlines the School budget, volunteer and leadership roles, and the important role that philanthropy plays
- Establish a more formal tuition assistance program in order to support the School community's understanding of how it is utilized and how charitable dollars are needed to support it.
- Continued intentional communications, both internally and externally. Intentionally communicating to staff areas that we are growing, i.e. floaters, lunch coordinators, custodian (Lynn).

Strategy 4:

Explore new revenue sources through creation of additional services or products.

Initiatives

- To be determined



GOAL AREA 5

Refine the School's governance and leadership models in order to ensure healthy and relevant organizational (spiritual, academic, administrative, financial, etc.) oversight and high quality leadership at all levels to meet the current and future needs of the School.

Strategy 1:

Ensure full Board understanding of our current governance model in order to develop the model needed going forward.

Initiatives

- Review all necessary corporate documents to ensure full understanding of the current governance model.

Strategy 2:

Revise the School's constitution (including the Board of Directors leadership model) to reflect best practices in alignment with the mission and vision of the School.

Initiatives

- Develop a BoD covenant that outlines the work and responsibilities of BoD members
- Create a BoD manual outlining all policies and procedures of BoD governance
- Initiate a nomination process that identifies candidates for membership that meet the profile of needed competencies and expertise on the Board of Directors.
- Develop a BoD term sequencing process that ensures the School has consistent and high-quality oversight.

Strategy 3:

Ensure that School leadership is fully equipped and positioned to lead North Shore Christian School into a robust and sustainable future, and that both our BoD and SALT have a healthy working relationship and understanding of roles.

Initiatives

- Revise/initiate a BoD orientation and training process that supports the Board's understanding of modern governance, future K-12 educational programs, and donor and community engagement methods
- Initiate an annual Board of Directors and SALT team self-assessment process that further supports learning, growth as professionals, and the deepening of relationships
- Create BoD liaison roles to SALT and Task Force groups.
- Create a predictable flow of monthly communication processes between SALT & BoD

Strategy 4:

Review the NSCS mission statement to ensure it best reflects our current vision and goals.

Initiatives

- Develop and implement a regular review of the School's mission statement bi-annually
- Ensure that all constituent groups are part of and in alignment with revisions to the mission statement

