



Foothill Country Day School Long Range Plan 2014

In the spring of 1954, postwar growth came to southern California. Subdivisions were springing up where citrus groves once dominated the landscape. Elementary schools were going on double session as the Baby Boomers reached school age.

Howell Webb was teaching Latin and serving as assistant headmaster at his father's school, Webb School of California, located in the hills above Claremont. As admissions director, and also as the father of a young child, he was concerned about the poor elementary preparation that he was seeing in the applicants to Webb and the dearth of local alternatives to public school. A group of equally concerned parents came to Mr. Webb to solicit his help in finding families to join their effort. Their challenges were locating land, buildings and money. A parent at one of the early meetings announced that he was going to Kentucky in a few weeks, and that "when I come back, we'll decide" about building a school. His horse, Determine, won the 1954 Kentucky Derby. A share of the winning purse plus contributions from other founding parents secured the notes for the loan and preparations began in earnest to found Foothill Country Day School on a plot of land at the corner of San Antonio (renamed Towne) and Harrison Avenues. Howell Webb served as founding head of school with the intention of returning to Webb after two years. He retired from Foothill 32 years later.

A commitment to maintaining sustainable levels of tuition while continuing to provide a strong liberal arts education grounded in the greater concern for the moral development of children led to a 2004 strategic initiative to increase the size of the student body. The largest capital campaign in the school's history and the addition of the upper village building were completed in 2010. With the support of an active and dedicated parent organization, Foothill has grown and prospered under the leadership of five heads of school. The school has enjoyed a reputation for preparing its students to excel academically and, more importantly, as persons of character and purpose.

Source: *From the Ground Up: A Brief History of Foothill Country Day School*

OUR FOUNDING STATEMENT

We sought to establish a school in which our students would find stimulation and excitement in learning and would be challenged to put forth their best efforts. But even greater than our concern for academics has been our determination to do an old-fashioned thing, to build character in our children—to stress honesty, courtesy, responsibility, and a concern for others.

When Howell Webb established Foothill Country Day School in 1954, his Founding Statement defined the purpose and values of the school. It serves as the foundation for our learning environment, where our greater concern--the moral development of children--is pursued within a community of shared values and traditions.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Learning Environment

- We are committed to creating and sustaining a teaching and learning environment that is physically and emotionally safe for children and adults.
- We believe the pursuit of academic excellence is consistent with our values, and that strength of character distinguishes a child more significantly than academic achievement.
- We believe that children learn best when we engage their natural curiosity, spark their imagination, and challenge their intellect.
- We support a developmentally appropriate curriculum that provides a range of learning experiences and opportunities for success.
- We believe the natural environment, the arts, athletic activities, and service to others provide essential opportunities for lifelong learning.
- We encourage children to take risks and to view setbacks as part of the process of discovery, learning, and growth.
- We believe moral fortitude, a sense of responsibility, critical thinking skills, a global perspective, and the ability to work collaboratively with others are essential to a successful life of purpose.
- We believe children develop a sense of responsibility when they are expected to follow through on their obligations and are held accountable for their actions.

Shared Values and Shared Purpose in a Family School

- We believe parents and children share the school's founding principle of concern for others and that they are therefore responsible for contributing to a physically and emotionally safe school community.
- We value school traditions that embody our core values and that serve as vehicles to transmit those values from one generation to another.
- We view families as partners in their children's education and seek to engage them collaboratively in the life of the school.
- We believe that nurturing self-respect leads to respect for others.
- We believe that small class sizes allow teachers to know each child and enable each child to thrive.
- We believe that our school values and traditions such as daily chapel, celebrations, and all-school activities can best be realized in a diverse community that embraces a broad range of cultural perspectives.
- We believe change must be embraced and that we must adapt to new understandings about teaching and learning, while remaining true to the principles of our founding statement.

OUR STRATEGIC THINKING

The Strategic Plan outlines an ambitious vision for the future of FCDS that embraces new possibilities while preserving the values of its founding statement and philosophy. Our Plan seeks to strengthen every aspect of the school to deliver a meaningful, innovative educational experience for students who will live their lives and pursue their work in a rapidly changing world.

The school will be:

- a dynamic educational platform from which students will learn, discover, make connections and develop habits of thought and mind to lead a successful, purposeful life.
- the center of an expanding world for students to include the community in which they live as well as global, political and environmental issues.

We believe that students in the early stage of their education are best served by being part of an intimate community in which they are known and recognized for their capacities by supportive parents; caring, dynamic teachers; and respectful peers.

We remain firmly committed to being a family school with shared values and shared purpose. To support that core value, the school will:

- involve families in the education of their children, consider the context of each child's family in making decisions about their education, support a vigorous and vibrant parent organization, and include families in the values education so important to the students' development as honest, courteous, responsible, concerned, and caring individuals.
- strengthen ties with alumni through outreach on social media and ongoing involvement in school activities and events.

To support the educational program and maintain first-rate facilities, the school will:

- ensure long-term financial stability and sustainability by viewing financial management, facilities, development, fundraising, communications and marketing as a set of synergistic components that must function efficiently and effectively both separately and as components of the whole to ensure a sustainable future for FCDS.

PILLAR I: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

GOAL 1: *Foster intellectual growth, moral development, and an intrinsic desire to learn by teaching to the whole child in an environment that emphasizes compassion for others, quality over quantity, problem solving, multiple perspectives, and collaboration.*

Rationale: We are committed to focusing the school's curriculum and methods on learning outcomes that reflect the school's Founding Statement and Philosophy.

Implementation Steps:

- 1.1 To ensure ongoing program improvement, identify and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching practices, curriculum choices, and assessment, implementing those options that meet students at their highest level, and foster skills of critical thinking, problem solving, and collaboration.
- 1.2 To ensure ongoing program improvement, identify current teaching and assessment practices that align with or can more closely align with research on the correlation between social emotional wellness and academic achievement.
- 1.3 Evaluate current teaching practices and provide staff support for their effectiveness in meeting the academic and emotional needs of all Foothill students.

GOAL 2: *Prepare students with the foundation to fulfill the increasing need for STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) skills in the larger world.*

Rationale: We recognize that rapid and complex social, technological, and scientific change will require students to have greater STEM-related skills in order to remain competitive and relevant in the national and global economy.

Implementation Steps:

- 2.1 Commit resources to support professional development for administrative and faculty exploration of STEM programs.
- 2.2 Ensure the existing K-8 science, technology, engineering, and mathematics curricula and learning experiences are consistent with current research and policy on STEM instruction.
- 2.2 Identify and forge partnerships at the local level to deepen STEM experiences and engage in real-world application of STEM concepts.

GOAL 3: *Provide broad and engaging arts and athletics programs across all grade levels.*

Rationale: Foothill is committed to providing artistic and athletic experiences that enrich students' academic education and lives, provide outlets for artistic and physical expression, instill values of fairness and respect in the context of competition, and develop an appreciation for beauty and grace in art and sport.

Implementation Steps:

- 3.1 Develop mission statements for the performing arts, visual arts, physical wellness, and athletics that reinforce the core values of FCDS.

- 3.2 Develop and implement a plan for after-school team sports that addresses the challenges of the limits of the daily schedule and a growing student population.
- 3.3 Expand the musical arts experiences at Foothill to provide additional outlets for artistic expression and intellectual development.
- 3.4 Identify and address the challenges, in the context of this goal's rationale, of staffing for the K-8 visual arts and music programs.
- 3.5 Identify opportunities to integrate the arts and athletics across disciplines and throughout the student learning experience.

GOAL 4: *Provide an academic technology infrastructure that supports the teaching and learning needs of the faculty and students.*

Rationale: We recognize that technology is an essential component of education and the workplace.

Implementation Steps:

- 4.1 Develop a technology mission statement and curriculum framework consistent with the core values of the school that ensures technology's integration into the student learning experience.
- 4.2 Increase focus on professional development opportunities that promote teaching with technology.

GOAL 5: *Provide for experiences and programs across disciplines and grade levels that teach the complexity and interconnectedness of environmental systems and the importance of environmental stewardship.*

Rationale: We believe raising awareness of global and local environmental issues enables students to understand, from an informed perspective, that we are all responsible for the ecological sustainability of the world in which we live.

Implementation steps:

- 5.1 Develop a mission statement for environmental stewardship that is consistent with the core values of the school.
- 5.2 Create experiences for students that will teach values of conservation, recycling, and the use of renewable resources.
- 5.3 Build connections and partnerships with other non-profit, public and educational institutions that can offer experiences for students beyond the campus.
- 5.4 Communicate to the larger FCDS community information about activities and practices that demonstrate the school's commitment to ecological sustainability and environmental education.

GOAL 6: *Strengthen the SEL(social emotional learning) curriculum (K-5), advisory (6-8), and chapel program (K-8), so that they serve as primary contributors to a healthy quality of student life and the development of strong character consistent with the values in the Founding Statement and Philosophy.*

Rationale: We believe that a robust, relevant social emotional learning curriculum, an advisory program with structure and purpose, and a chapel program that reinforces shared values are essential to ensure that each student feels known, respected, and accountable to themselves and for their actions toward others.

Implementation Steps:

- 6.1 Commit resources for professional development to support faculty effectiveness in engaging students in an SEL curriculum (K-5) that is consistent across the grade levels and conveys the school's philosophy.
- 6.2 Commit resources to develop a coordinated 6-8 advisory program/curriculum and support faculty development as advisors to ensure a consistent and meaningful student advisory experience.
- 6.3 Assess the K-8 chapel experience for its effectiveness in promoting inclusion, diversity, and opportunities for reinforcing the principles of the Founding Statement and Philosophy.
- 6.4 Commit resources to ensure ongoing professional development is provided for fostering character development in alignment with the school's philosophy.

GOAL 7: *Recruit, support and retain diverse, talented faculty, staff, and administration who embrace the core values and philosophy of Foothill Country Day School.*

Rationale: We are committed to attracting and developing a diverse, professional group of educators and staff who demonstrate the capacity and effort to reflect the Founding Statement and Philosophy in their work.

Implementation Steps:

- 7.1 Review and assess current Employee Handbook and Human Resources policies, procedures and systems to ensure legal compliance and accountability for an equitable workplace.
- 7.2 Determine the school's Human Resources needs and the effectiveness of current staffing levels in meeting them.
- 7.3 Develop a faculty evaluation plan that is manageable for administrators and supports teacher growth and accountability.
- 7.4 Review and assess the current salary and benefits program to keep compensation competitive with like-sized schools in the California Association of Independent Schools.
- 7.5 Provide funding for professional development opportunities and programs to ensure ongoing professional support for faculty and staff.
- 7.6 Regularly review and assess the working environment/climate with faculty, staff, and administration through conversations and written surveys to assess morale and promote respect, transparency, collaboration, and openness for differing views.

PILLAR II. FINANCE & OPERATIONS

GOAL 8: *Develop a long-range, sustainable financial model that supports the educational program and goals, proper maintenance of facilities, and the needs of faculty, staff and students.*

Rationale: We recognize that a multi-year financial plan that projects student enrollment, revenue and expenses, and incorporates new sources of revenues, allows the school to think more strategically about the future and ensures that short-term decisions will not conflict with long-term stability.

Implementation Steps:

- 8.1 Develop a plan and timeframe for retiring the school's debt.
- 8.2 Develop a mission statement and plan for financial assistance to ensure its sustainability and role as a catalyst for achieving optimal student diversity and a supportive parent community.

- 8.3 Expand existing summer program offerings.
- 8.4 Explore additional, less traditional sources of revenue to supplement tuition and voluntary giving.
- 8.5 Develop a plan to acquire adjacent properties as they become available.

GOAL 9: *Create a comprehensive advancement, communications and marketing strategy that is inclusive in content and tone to connect stakeholders to the values, goals and aspirations of the FCDS community.*

Rationale: We believe that a comprehensive advancement, communication and marketing plan asserts, clarifies, and affirms the purpose and intentions of the FCDS philosophy to all constituents of the school community.

Implementation Steps:

- 9.1 Upgrade and establish the website as a primary tool for marketing and communication, both internally and externally.
- 9.2 Develop a mobile website application.
- 9.3 Develop a plan to strengthen alumni relationships to the school.
- 9.4 Evaluate advancement goals and staffing needs in the Development Department.

GOAL 10: *Develop a culture of philanthropy within the FCDS community to enhance fundraising and stewardship to provide sufficient financial resources to fulfill the school's commitment to its philosophy and purpose.*

Rationale: We are committed to perpetuating the school's strengths and securing its financial future by building relationships within the school community that stress intergenerational equity (equally strong programs, facilities, and resources over time), the value proposition of an FCDS education, and loyalty to the school's past and present.

Implementation Steps:

- 10.1 Provide resources for the head of school, director of development, and trustees to increase their knowledge, expertise, and active involvement in fundraising.
- 10.2 Develop marketing materials that explain and demonstrate the necessity of giving beyond tuition.
- 10.3 Raise awareness among parents of their role as internal ambassadors and fundraisers for the school

PILLAR III. COMMUNITY OF THE SCHOOL

GOAL 11: *Develop clear, regular communication between the school leadership and the parent body to ensure understanding of the roles and expectations the school has for the parent community.*

Rationale: We understand that FCDS sustains itself through shared purpose and values, and must therefore be intentional about perpetuating a strong feeling of community and connectedness within the parent community.

Implementation Steps:

- 11.1 Work with the BWO leadership to find ways to broaden parent participation.

- 11.2 Work with the BWO leadership to clarify the role of the BWO as ambassadors and supporters of the school's mission and philosophy.
- 11.3 Develop recruitment strategies for students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds.
- 11.4 Establish teachers as lead partners with room parents to develop procedures, expectations, and timelines for grade level and school-related activities.

GOAL 12: *Maintain and enhance the strength of the Board of Trustees by recruiting and supporting trustees who are committed to the school's mission and educational philosophy, actively supportive of the school's long-term goals and willing to be leaders in ensuring the school's financial sustainability.*

Rationale: We recognize that a strong board, focusing its efforts to sustain itself as a strategic entity, is vital to the FCDS's long-term financial sustainability and alignment with its Founding Statement and Philosophy.

Implementation Steps:

- 12.1 Continue board recruitment from community sectors beyond the parent body to ensure that board planning and culture benefit from a variety of perspectives and professional qualifications.
- 12.2 Develop a plan for leadership succession and continuity within the board.
- 12.3 Research best practices and evaluate current meeting structure and content with the intent of encouraging generative thinking and discussions at the board level.