2626 Hogan Road, East Point, GA 30344

The RISE Schools Strategic Plan
2020-2023

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I. THE RISE SCHOOLS

History of The RISE Schools

The RISE Schools (RISE Grammar School, and RISE Prep) opened their doors in August of 2015. The schools are co-located in a school building owned by Fulton County Schools. In the first two years of operations, the school occupied the facility free of charge, but in year three decide to purchase the facility and lease half of the space to RISE Grammar School.

The school suffered some turmoil prior to becoming operation; however, all matters related to that pre-operational phase have been resolved, the schools have been rebranded and redesigned and are now on a path of success.

The school was initially founded on the premise that students would be exposed to Latin instruction, and, thereby increase their understanding of language as well as access to a broader vocabulary. Given the extenuating pre-operational issues, the school has since been redesigned to provide a rigorous and culturally affirming educational experience.

Mission and Innovative Features

Mission:
To provide a rigorous and holistic education that develops the minds and character of scholars to be catalysts for social change.

Vision:
The RISE School scholars will have the capacity to maintain balance between competition and compassion to be catalysts for social change in their lives and in their communities.

Innovative Features

6 Pillar Model

Holistic Education	
The purpose of holistic education is to prepare scholars to meet the challenges of living as well as academics. Holistic education involves scholars learning: 1) about themselves, 2) about healthy relationships and pro-social behavior, 3) social development, 4) emotional development, 5) resilience, and 6) to see beauty, have awe, experience transcendence, and appreciate one's own truths.	
Restorative Practices (changed from discipline at last meeting)	Restorative practices refer to a social science that studies how to improve and repair relationships between people and communities. The purpose is to build healthy communities, increase social capital, decrease antisocial behavior, repair harm and restore relationships.

	Add- *in the least punitive manner possible* (wherever it best fits) Juan P. --with the ability to succeed in an ever-changing and increasingly competitive global market.
Entrepreneurship	The pursuit of opportunity beyond personal resources and circumstances. Scholars gain capacity to take initiative and position themselves to build and sustain a legacy that promotes ownership and generational wealth. *Notes: "spirit" rather than end product.*
Ethics of Care	An ethical theory that emphasizes interpersonal relationships that are based the well being of the community.
Experiential Learning	Engaging scholars in direct experiences that include the planning, application, and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop scholar's capacity to contribute to their communities.
Culturally Responsive Teaching	Teaching and learning practices that foster a school environment that is culturally aware, sensitive, and inclusive of all stakeholders in order to honor each person's lived experiences. Notes: more than one version of truth based on students' lived experiences.
Social-Emotional Wellness	Scholars have tools to positively view themselves, interact with others, evaluate challenges, and explore choices.

II.   THE RISE SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLANNING

Overview and Purpose

At the conclusion of the 2018-2019 school year, The RISE School's governing boards agreed to develop a strategic plan as part of the charter renewal process. The strategic planning process formally began in May 2019. The Georgia Charter Schools Association (GCSA) was engaged to facilitate the process and develop the strategic plan. The strategic planning process used by GCSA was designed to comply with the State Board of Education (SBOE) Standards for Effective Governance of Georgia Nonprofit Charter School Governing Boards, adopted in November 2014, as well as the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) strategic planning framework for charter schools.

Some of the key strategic-level issues that needed to be addressed through this process were; program growth, continued implementation of the academic program, board development, resource development, family and staff recruitment, retention and training, charter renewal, and fiscal health.

The strategic plan is meant to guide decision-making and implementation throughout the new charter term. It is also intended to guide the planning for charter renewal.

The Planning Team

The strategic planning team included all members of The RISE Schools governing board and the administrative team. The executive director played a vital role in the development of the plan. The efforts of the strategic planning team were valued and appreciated. The following individuals served on the strategic planning team:

Board Members
Jonathan Penn
Dr. Shelicia Terry
Leonard Neely
Iesha Davis
James A. Bush
Linda Gaston Paden
Amy Jackson
Corey Sheffield
Candace Tate
Andrew McKinnon
Kari Prevost
Brandon Arentson

Staff Members
Davion Lewis, Executive Director

Methodology

Planning Session I

On May 18, 2019, GCSA facilitated a *"Strategic Planning Workshop"*. The purpose of this session was to establish conceptually what the strategic planning process requires in terms of perspective, analysis and thought process. Key concepts were reviewed and discussed to assist the group in gaining some perspective on how to approach the process to achieve the desired outcome: a strategic plan guiding the school through year five and beyond. A strategic framework was also provided that outlined the following elements:

- Vision
- Mission
- Strategic Initiatives
- Strategic Goals
- Tactical Plans and Measurements

The following steps were agreed upon (*for planning sessions I, II, and implementation phase*):

- Conduct visioning exercise
- Create an environmental scan of members' collective knowledge
- Identify vision (external and internal)
- Identify strategic initiatives
- Develop goals
- Develop tactical plans to accomplish goals
- Review drafted plan and provide feedback
- Approve strategic plan formally at a regular board meeting
- Monitor plan on a quarterly basis

SWOT Analysis

Environmental scan activities were conducted by using variations on a **SWOT** analysis tool. Internal and external **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats were discussed, identified and analyzed. The following themes were identified from information gathered during the environmental scan activities and contain perceptions of both internal and external conditions.

The first environmental scan activity focused on the governing board's and the leadership team's general knowledge about conditions impacting the school. The following chart demonstrates the present knowledge about external conditions that impact the marketplace for The RISE Schools:

The Marketplace –

Working as a group, the following essential question was discussed and analyzed:

> *What do we understand about the conditions in the external setting and what do we understand about our organization?*

The group was specifically asked to list the key opportunities and threats that may impact THE RISE SCHOOLS's ability to shape the educational landscape in Georgia. The following categories were considered as a guide:

External SWOT Factors

- Authorizer Expectations / Capacity
- Funding
- Governance
- Renewal
- Outreach / partnerships
- Sustainability
- Local Politics
- Local Economy
- Economic / financial
- Accountability
- Capacity-related
- Technology
- Demographics
- Legal
- Compliance Requirements

Our External Market SWOT Analysis

The planning team, in two groups, discussed the external conditions impacting THE RISE SCHOOLS.

Grammar SWOT Analysis
Leadership

Strengths	Weaknesses
● The leadership is accessible ● The team is qualified ● Focus on collaboration ● Open to trying new things. Eagerness to get things right ● Reflective and seeks feedback ● Standard 1.2 is probably greatest strength ● Committed to transparency ● Evidence of being responsive to stakeholders ● Standard 1.8 is also a strength ● Leadership is growth oriented ● Gives leadership opportunities to staff ● Refers back to policies that are place ● Always intentional about decision-making ● Inter-related reliability ● Respect and shared responsibility ●	● Lack of experience- everyone is new in their roles ● Standard 1.1 the level of commitment to the purpose and mission ● Not prioritizing specific focal areas ● What's being delivered between what's being received ● Disconnect between what's being asked for versus what's being provided ● Improving interpersonal relationships with staff ● Not including staff in shared leadership opportunities or school-wide projects
Opportunities ● Policies are in place to support 1.7 ● Follow through and accountability on policies ● Additional PD opportunities with external agencies ● Ongoing goal-focused team building with staff ● Finding new partnerships to support STEAM focus ● Better leverage parents	**Threat** ● Past reputation associated with the old name ● Change in urban planning and demographics of East Point ● Emerging new charter schools ● Policies and staffing of The RISE Schools ● Prior experiences of current stakeholders ● The experiences of our former stakeholder

Learning

Strengths	Weaknesses
- We have programs in place to support to SWD, SpEd students - Benchmark Assessments-using data from benchmarks - We maintain a learning environment that is safe and conducive to learning - Our core values support Standard 2.3- responsive classroom, counseling program, etc. - We utilize the state curriculum that is supported through the research based resources - Things like the morning meetings, responsive classroom, counselor, "trusted adult" support Standard 2.4 - Weekly and ongoing PD to support adult learning - The implementation of LKES and TKES - We have an instructional coach and IST who support differentiated instruction - Programs to support the development of the whole child	- Varied and significant gaps in the instructional training and experiences of our staff - Differentiation - Goal and growth mindset - Lack of desire to align with the learning philosophy of the school - Lack of culture of reflection - Exciting and passion for learning - Holistic instructional strategies - Maximization of instructional time - Lesson planning - The behavior management system not being used with integrity
Opportunities	Threats
- Use of data to inform instruction - Recognizing those who meet expectations- how people like to be motivated - New teacher induction program - Career exploration program - Mindfulness, De-escalation, and Emotional Intelligence training - External school visit - Developing teacher efficacy - New bell schedule with a later or differentiated schedule	- How teachers talk publicly about the school - Attendance - Inequities in the home environment of some of learners - Inequities in resources accessed via the district - The intention of the PTO

Resource

Strengths	Weaknesses
● Standard 3.5 the school is well equipped with digital resources ● Consistent professional learning opportunities for teachers ● The school is financially sound- manages it financial resources very well ● Demonstrates long-term planning to manage the use of resources ● No wasteful with resources ● All resources support the mission of the school- resources not purchased unless it is needed ● School provides ongoing PD for the support of digital resources provided to staff	● Does not attract and retain the most qualified staff ● The lack of a strategic plan ● ● Leveraging parents as a resource ● Internet bandwidth
Opportunities	**Threats**
● Build on the staff mentoring program ● Build external partnerships to leverage their resources ● Mentoring/ new staff induction program lacks structure ● ● Continue to seek out new funding opportunities ● Revamping the space to accommodate the 5th grade ● Having adequate human resources to support the work of the school ● Lack of structure to support the use of existing resources to better collaborate	● State funding of QBE might force us to rethink staffing in order to leverage those funds ● GA legislature (funding and school calendar) ● Procurement of resources can sometimes be challenging due to processes or other delays

Prep 2019-2020 SWOT Analysis

Leadership

Strengths	Weaknesses
- Frequent Meetings - Collaboration between Departments - Board Engagement - Teacher Meetings - Learning Opportunities for Families - Management and Fiscal Responsibilities - Formal Evaluation Systems - Administrations Accessible - Ongoing Professional Development for Leaders and Board - Teacher coaching - Organization structure	- Streamlining Communication - Delivery of Communication - Differentiated Supports (one size fits all mindset) - Processes - Lack of Stability- Reactive vs Proactive - Finding Root Causes- Reactive vs Proactive - Rushing to Implement - Deciding in isolation/ maintaining - alignment- Pillars - Measuring Outcomes - Too many Initiatives
Opportunities - Build Leadership pipeline - More sponsorship/partnerships - Leveraging existing resources - Character Education (responsive classroom/ Restorative actions) - More partnerships with county - Teacher induction program - Stakeholder feedback - Data practices - School website - Communication - Teacher accrumtablity - Change Management - Sharing the "Why" - Lack of staff buy-in	**Threat** - Misalignment of expectations - Funding - Differentiating PD - LGS - Safety - Facilities - No knowing our identity

Learning

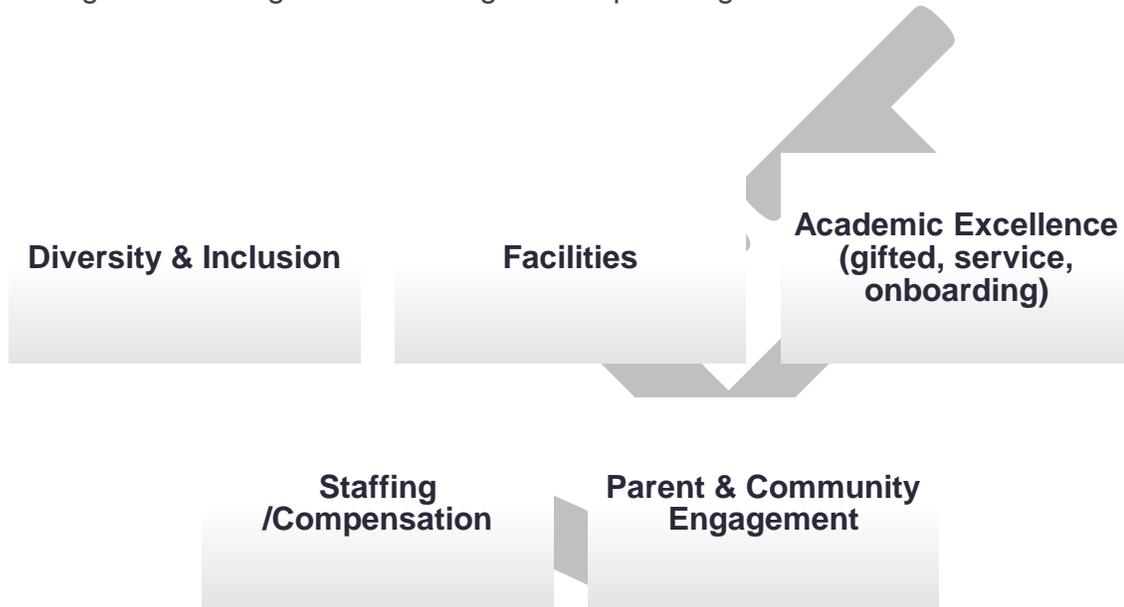| Strengths	Weaknesses
● Family University Nights ● Partnerships (math programs) ● Design of Daily Schedule ● Specialized Services ● Data Meeting ● Monitoring of Lesson Plans ● External Staff Development ● HS Night, Lunch 'N' Learn- 2.8 ● Advisory ● Technology	● Lack of Celebrating Student Success ● Classroom Management ● Use of class time to discipline/ other programs ● Level of Student Investment ● Quality Assurance ● Personalized Instruction
Opportunities	Threats
● Student Instruction ● Redefine Instructional Model ● Become more Student Focused ● Peer Observation ● Critical Friends/Conversations ● Enrichment Rigon ● Resources ● More Opportunities for Teacher Growth ● Incluisuliy ● Better use of Paras ● Build better Community Relationships ● Teacher Preparedness ● Data- Driven Instruction	● Social Media ● Misuse of Technology ● Outside Student Interactions ● Funding Gap ● More Charter Schools ● GA Standards of Excellence

Resource

Strengths	Weaknesses
● Leadership has conducted an basic analysis of resources availability ● Leadership is moving towards becoming a one-to-one school ● Professional learning/development is facilitated each week ● Varied digital resources are utilized by students and staff ● Challenges in attracting and retaining highly qualified staff ● Lack of consistently robust professional learning opportunities	● Lack of strategic resource allocation (human, material, etc.) ● No school-wide strategy for digital-resource management
Opportunities	**Threats**
● Attending all available and relevant hiring fairs as early as possible ● Implement Induction, mentoring and coaching program for staff ● Well-rounded digital learning ● Modify screening/interview to include adaptability, grit, etc. ● Poor implementation of technology and digital resources; ● Unclear system/strategy for individualized support and development inside the classroom	● School reputation ● Funding

III. THE RISE SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The following over-arching themes emerged from planning session I.

Diversity & Inclusion	Facilities	Academic Excellence (gifted, service, onboarding)
Staffing /Compensation	Parent & Community Engagement	

It is recommended that these themes be re-labeled as follows. Teaching and Learning would include all instructional goals, faculty compensation, student services, etc. Stakeholder Engagement would include outward and inward facing stakeholder relationships.

Diversity & Inclusion	**Facilities**
Teaching & Learning	**Stakeholder Engagement (board, families, students, community, authorizer)**

IV. GOALS & ACTION PLANS

Initiative I: Teaching & Learning

Goal 1: Teacher Environment
- Satisfaction – by survey 80% satisfied or highly satisfied
- Total Compensation – (salary & other benefits)
- By survey, baseline in 2018-2019, annually thereafter
- Increase staff retention to 85% + minimum
- Formalize professional development professional learning community (PLC) expectations

Goal 2: Pedagogy
- Ensure competency in project-based learning
- Deliberate utilization of metrics down to individual student level
- Create recognition program for superior project-based learning achievement by advisors
- Developing school-wide data analysis protocol from classroom level to governing board

Goal 3: Academic Performance
- Establish goal-setting protocol for MAP, GMAS (Milestones), SGPs, Service Learning
- Increase graduation rate
- Increase access to dual enrollment opportunities
- Increase student retention rates
- Develop resources for gifted program
- Strengthen Student Support Team (SST) process and RTI (Response to Interventions) protocol and systems, increase advisor and support staff training for SST / RTI

Initiative II: Stakeholder Engagement (board, families, students, community, authorizer)

Goal 1: Board Succession Planning and Onboarding
- Recruit potential board members through committee service
- Develop a written plan that creates a pipeline of diverse committee members with a variety of expertise and skills to maintain an effective board of nine (9) to eleven (11) members

Goal 2: Awareness, Recruitment, and Branding
- Increase external engagement on and off campus*
- Increase awareness of school's purpose

* Engagement is defined as bringing external stakeholders and community members into the campus setting for student enrichment and exposure to life beyond school. Off campus engagement refers to experiences for students in the broader community. (i.e. service learning, field trips).

Goal 3: Family Engagement
- Increase PTO membership
- Establish and maintain the family resource center
- Develop and deliver family development classes
- Increase awareness of classroom activities
- Establish a focus group and survey protocol to get regular stakeholder feedback

Goal 4: Improve Authorizer Relationship
- Schedule speakers at the regular Sumter County Schools Board meetings to increase awareness about The Furlow Experience. Speakers may include parents/guardians, advisors, students, and board members.

Goal 5: Student Pride & Involvement
- Increase opportunities for students to engage in all aspects of Furlow
- Implement satisfaction survey protocol to obtain student feedback

Initiative III: Facilities

Goal 1: Develop a long-term occupancy solution.
- Negotiate long-term lease or purchase of current facility
  - Include maintenance plan
  - Include I.T. plan

Goal 2: Create a plan with space-expansion contingencies
- E.g. science lab space, music space, full gym
- General classroom space
- Administrative offices / meeting rooms
- Storage and organizational capacity
- Vehicular logistics

Goal 2: Create a plan for recreational and grounds development and maintenance.
- Playgrounds
- Fence, general grounds-keeping
- Ensure that we have appropriate equipment and staff

Initiative IV: Diversity & Inclusion

Goal 1: Create a definition of diversity for all stakeholders to follow.

Goal 2: Create a system to identify and recruit low income students.
- Develop a comprehensive student recruitment plan designed to increase ethnic and socio-economic diversity at the school.
- For FY20 implement the use of Federal Income forms to collect the necessary information to track low SES students.

Goal 3: Establish a plan to recruit and retain diverse advisors.
- Develop a comprehensive advisor recruitment plan designed to increase ethnic diversity.
- Develop an advisor retention policy and related plan to memorialize the approach to staff retention at THE RISE SCHOOLS.

Goal 4: Create a culture of diversity and inclusion through programming, classroom curricula, training, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Review current curricular for cultural responsiveness.
- Review overall approach to programming, scheduling and course offerings for cultural relevance and responsiveness.
- Schedule annual inclusion/implicit bias training for all new advisors/staff. This should become part of the on-boarding of new staff.
- Ensure that monitoring and evaluation of staff take into account cultural sensitivity and responsiveness.

V. MONITORING

Recommended Monitoring Cycle

In order to successfully execute the action and attain the goals set forth in this plan, consistent and timely monitoring must be conducted. It is recommended that the plan be monitored on at least a quarterly basis. It is recommended that the plan be officially adopted at the April or May regular board meeting. The plan can be implemented in June 2019, with the first monitoring period beginning in September 2019. The following is an illustration of a recommended approach to monitoring:

Adopt Strategic Plan June 2019	Monitoring Cycle 1 September 2019	Monitoring Cycle 2 December 2019	Monitoring Cycle 3 March 2020	The cycle would repeat quarterly thereafter