

Strategic Plan
Approved by Board of Directors on 9.18.19

MISSION

It is the mission of the Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School to create a public school that will cultivate lifelong learners in a multi-age, project-based setting. Within an environment that models interdependence as the foundation of society: The individual student will learn to direct his /her learning; The group will make decisions together and recognize the unique contributions of each member; The community will support and interact with the school body.

These Pillars express the core values of the school:

1. Trust
2. Respect
3. Freedom
4. Responsibility
5. Democracy
6. Cooperation

INTRODUCTION

The Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School opened in September 1996, eventually offering a full K-12 (program serving 180 students from all island towns. Over the subsequent twenty years, the school has had several Strategic Plans written by the Administration, the latest of which was created for the years 2014-2019. All of the major elements from that plan have been folded into this plan, updated and reimagined. This is a plan for 2019-2024.

The Board of Trustees spearheaded the effort to create a more comprehensive and specific Strategic Plan with input from all sectors of the school community. Meetings were held since the spring of 2016 to brainstorm ideas and express concerns and hopes for the future. A new Director was hired in July of 2018. From these wide-ranging discussions, ten major areas of focus were identified:

- Students
- Program
- Community
- Faculty
- Administration
- Board
- Parents
- Facility
- Finance

- Health

A Strategic Plan Task Force met to discuss and create goals for each of these areas of focus with the aim to create a Strategic Plan that is “**SMART**”: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ctionable, **R**elevant, **T**ime bound.

Achieving the objectives identified in this Strategic Plan will ensure that MVPCS effectively fulfills its vision, prepares students for future academic and personal success, and endures as a model of K-12 public education.

It should be noted that this Five Year Plan is a living document. The Board of Trustees commissioned this plan and serves as the plan’s guiding body. It will review progress under the plan annually and refocus the plan’s goals on a regular basis.

VISION

As a community, we will amplify, celebrate and promote our distinct holistic approach that offers a true option in progressive public education on Martha’s Vineyard.

STRATEGIC GOALS

STUDENTS

One of the primary reasons that the school was founded was to create a child-centered school where students have a voice in their education. MVPCs students are engaged in making choices about their education and in the daily life of the school. They know that the Charter School is an institution that respects their rights and opinions.

We would like to take the vision of the Founders further by creating even greater opportunities for student choice in a project-based setting and for students to engage in more meaningful responsibilities as members of the Charter School community.

Goal: Continue to provide a high quality academic and social/emotional programs for all students.

- **ACTION:** Provide a challenging academic program for all students that is of high quality, aligned with the MA Curriculum Frameworks that enables students to transition to higher educational settings and the workplace with the skills to be successful.

(Responsibility: Administration)

- **ACTION:** Nurture emotional and social wellbeing by fostering deep student understanding of the important role of the School Rights, Charter School Pillars and the Charter Learner Tool. *(Responsibility: Administration and Faculty)*

Goal: Maintain a safe and secure environment for all students

- **ACTION:** Be an inclusive, safe, and supportive school for a diverse student body

comprising of children from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, gender identities, sexual orientations, socioeconomic status, academic abilities and students who are identified as in need of Special Education. *(Responsibility: Administration and Faculty)*

• **ACTION:** Continue to support positive behavioral programs such as Responsive Classroom in Grades K-6 and Success Counseling in Grades 7-12. Provide Professional Development for administration, faculty and staff to support these programs. *Responsibility: Administration and Faculty).*

• **ACTION:** Deal proactively and constructively with all forms of difference, and serve as a model school for these efforts. Specifically, we will continue to support the school's Gay/Straight alliances and ensure the wellbeing of all members of the LGBTQ student community are met. Additionally, those students who are designated as requiring Special Education services will feel included, accepted and celebrated by our community. *(Responsibility: Administration and Faculty)*

• **ACTION:** Continue to advocate for second language learners. MVPCS will promote international-mindedness and recognize the inter-connectivity of humanity. We will welcome immigrant families into our community *(Responsibility: Administration, Faculty and MVPCS community)*

PROGRAM

The Charter School is proud of our successful ability to cover the breadth of public education while providing opportunities, such as Project Period, to pursue learning in depth. As an indicator of achievement as a public school, Charter School students continue to do well on standardized testing and graduates get into competitive colleges. But such measures are only part of the picture at a school that activates a variety of learning modalities beyond the standard set proscribed by the state.

The school created its own Charter Learner Tool to help teachers with authentic assessment and for families to chart progress. We will continue to improve forms of evaluation and reports that are as meaningful, accessible, and useful as possible.

Goal: The Charter School will be a leader in innovative public education.

• **ACTION:** Build on our strengths to create a distinctly different public school option that is attractive to Vineyard families. Specifically, schedule more opportunities for mixed-age groupings throughout the year. *(Responsibility: Administration, Staff)*

- **ACTION:** Adopt the International Baccalaureate (Diploma and Career-Related Certificate) programs in Grades 11-12. *(Responsibility:Administration, Staff)*
- **ACTION:** Implement the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project in Grades K-7. *(Responsibility:Administration, Staff)*
- **ACTION:** Evaluate and update the Personal Education Plan system and the Charter Learner Tool. *(Responsibility :Administration, Staff)*
- **ACTION:** Review the role of technology in education and tailor those to support project Based Learning at The Charter School. *(Responsibility:Administration, Staff)*

Goal: The Charter School will create innovative assessment tools to support all learners.

- **ACTION:** Evaluate and revise present assessment methods that are aligned to MA Curriculum Frameworks in order to support our academic program. *(Responsibility: Administration, Staff)*
- **ACTION:** Redesign report cards to make them both easier in form and richer in content. Evaluate, systematize and disseminate Charter Learning Tool. *(Responsibility:Administration, Staff)*
- **ACTION:** Develop a comprehensive RtI in Grades K-8. *(Responsibility:Administration, Board, and Staff)*

COMMUNITY

One of the notable aspects of the Charter School is its strong sense of community. Every school day opens with Morning Meeting, where all students and staff gather to share announcements and celebrate achievements. The togetherness of this daily event percolates throughout the school day as people of all ages interact in class and in the halls with collegial respect. It is at the core of our identity as a school and one of the central unique aspects that sets us apart.

For the school to flourish, we need to deepen and amplify this sense of community within the school and between the school and its wider community.

Goal: Increase and improve communication between Administration, Faculty, Students

and the greater community.

- **ACTION:** Create a document that specifically delineates the roles and responsibilities of everyone in the building. *(Responsibility: Director)*

- **ACTION:** Manage social-media networking and assess ways to make website more useful, user friendly, and attractive to those outside the school.
(Responsibility: Administration)

- **ACTION:** Utilize on-line services for parents by making it easier for teachers to post information (e.g. parent volunteer work opportunities, homework, classroom projects, grades, attendance). *(Responsibility: Administration, Staff)*

- **ACTION:** Publicize Charter School achievements, community service, and mentorships through regular newspaper coverage, social media, and public events. *(Responsibility of Administration, Parents)*

FACULTY

The Charter School faculty is dedicated, hardworking, and cares deeply about the students and the school. Because of the State funding mechanism, teachers are not compensated at levels competitive with other island schools. It is a major goal of the school and its Board to maintain a salary structure and benefits package (within its existing financial constraints) that makes it possible to attract and retain teaching faculty of the highest caliber.

While it is difficult to maintain monetary compensation on par with other island public schools, the Charter School has unique flexibility and the desire to offer other attractive incentives for teachers to work at the school.

Goal: Attract and retain outstanding faculty and staff to MVPCS.

- **ACTION:** Devise a “fair plan” to eliminate uniform starting salary for all teachers, regardless of education level and experience, while compensating those who would be affected by this change. Ensure that proposed changes realistically meet financial goals of balanced budget.
(Responsibility: Board, Director, Business Manager)

- **ACTION:** Pay for course work for teachers that will enhance their classroom practice. Support personal growth opportunities for staff through some funding of life-enhancing classes and activities. *(Responsibility: Board, Director, Business Manager)*

Goal: Enhance Professional Development Offerings for faculty and staff.

- **ACTION:** Create and enhance professional development to maximize faculty and

staff efforts to develop Project-Based Learning opportunities. *(Responsibility: Administration)*

- **ACTION:** Provide workshops for the teachers working with distinct student populations including students with social-emotional challenges, ELL, Special Education and LGBTQ in order to implement strategies to work with this student population. *(Responsibility: Administration)*

ACTION: Prepare incoming teachers for school culture by creating an orientation and mentoring program for new hires. Create a formalized mentoring practice pairing faculty in a practical, meaningful, and ongoing fashion. *(Responsibility: Administration)*

ACTION: Research and apply for grants to support professional development. *(Responsibility: Director)*

ACTION: Continue dissemination opportunities to share faculty innovations in-house, on-island, and off-island. *(Responsibility: Administration, Faculty and Staff)*

ADMINISTRATION

The Administration is charged with demonstrating how the Charter School must continue to provide a distinctly different option for island families. Working with key stakeholders, the Administration must fortify and expand the delivery of our distinctive attributes including: Mixed-age groupings, Project-based Learning, Differentiated Learning, Collaborations with the external community. These skills and habits of mind are intentionally designed to lead to the International Baccalaureate program in grades 11 and 12. We need to celebrate and publicize the reasons why families love the Charter School: our strong sense of community, our respect for each student, and the nurturing connections made throughout the building.

Goal: MVPCS will promote the vision of the Strategic Plan.

- **ACTION:** Create a public relations strategy that promotes our unique approach to education: Project Based Learning, Socio-political Activism, Multi-Age Learning, Community Service, Community Interaction, the I.B., et al.. *(Responsibility of Administration, Board, and Staff)*

- **ACTION:** Develop a strategy to actively connect with the Brazilian and Wampanoag communities on Martha's Vineyard. *Responsibility of Administration, Board, and Staff)*

BOARD of TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees plays an important role in the life of the school. As the representative liaison between the state and the Charter School, board members are pledged to uphold and ensure that the mission of the school is being carried out.

Goal: Have a knowledgeable and active Board of Trustees.

- **ACTION:** Create mechanisms for board members to educate themselves about board governance in a charter school context, including the regular dissemination of materials. (*Responsibility: Board*)

- **ACTION:** Provide active oversight of the Charter School and its Director, including a monthly review of the school's financial statements and an annual performance review of the Director. (*Responsibility: Board*)

- **ACTION:** Encourage the creation of board committees charged with active goal-setting and implementation of new initiatives (including fundraising, communications, curriculum development, etc.) and to create opportunities for board members to become active ambassadors for the school, on Martha's Vineyard and beyond. (*Responsibility: Board*)

- **ACTION:** Create and disseminate to each board member a concise board handbook, to serve as a source of orientation and information for new board members, and as a point of reference for anyone interested in understanding the board's work. (*Responsibility: Board*)

- **ACTION:** Schedule an annual board retreat to reinforce and educate board members about their responsibilities including the legal role of the Board of Trustees in Massachusetts and to set the Board's goals for the upcoming school year. (*Responsibility: Board*)

PARENTS

Many of the school's Founders were parents looking for a new educational model for their kids. Twenty years later, parents remain an important factor in the school's equation for success. The newly revitalized Parent-Teacher Organization has breathed fresh energy into the school that all parties would like to see grow.

Goal: Increase and improve the relationship between school and parents.

- **ACTION:** Promote the activities of the PTO and enlist parent help as ambassadors of the school in the community. . (*Responsibility: Administration, and Parents*)

- **ACTION:** Invite and include families in Community Building activities. Schedule more community-building activities (Peace Day, Writing Day, Soup and Games Night, et al.)

(Responsibility:Administration, Staff)

- **ACTION:** Continue building an orientation program for new parents/guardians. Create an annual and ongoing feedback mechanism to receive information from parents/guardians regarding their Charter School experience. *(Responsibility:Administration)*

FACILITY

Since the day that its doors first opened in 1996, the Charter School has occupied the same location. Options in Education, a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization, owns and maintains the school grounds and physical plant. and will continue to work with the school to maintain and expand facilities. The relationship between the Charter School and OIE has always been close and the OIE Board looks to this strategic plan for guidance as it plans for the future.

As the needs of the school have evolved, OIE has helped the school meet these needs through improved and expanded facilities. The recent addition of the *Vernon Jordan Science Center* has helped the school significantly upgrade its Science program while adding much needed space to the high school.

As the school looks forward to the next twenty years, we need to anticipate the needs of our students and community to ensure that the facility will address these needs.

Goal: MVPCS will make sure that the building remains safe, healthy and able to meet the diverse needs of the school community.

- **ACTION:** Work with Options In Education to implement repairs and maintenance of existing buildings (as outlined in The South Mountain review).
- **ACTION:** Work in conjunction with OIE to develop a *Needs Assessment* of the facilities to determine future areas of focus.

Goal: MVPCS will improve grounds.

- **ACTION:** Evaluate present playground and building to determine upcoming student and faculty needs. *(Responsibility:Administration)*
- **ACTION:** Review parking needs and work with an architect to improve parking area. *(Responsibility:Director, Board, and Options In Education)*

- **ACTION:** Upgrade play areas with equipment and spaces that are age-appropriate for play, physical education, and social growth. *(Responsibility: Administration)*

FINANCE

The Charter School has a strong record of being able to operate with a balanced budget. Maintaining financial stability is essential for continued sustainability. The financing of the school has two main challenges:

The Charter School funding formula is completely dependent on enrollment, within the context of an operating budget that must cover all annual expenses. This is in contrast to other island school which have budgets funded by local, state, and federal sources and have the option of raising additional or ad hoc funds by asking towns directly to cover extra expenses.

The enrollment in the K-8 classes at the Charter School is determined by towns (School Districts). The Charter School may enroll up to 9% of the enrollment in Tisbury, Oak Bluffs, Edgartown, and Up Island. We receive many applications from the Up Island District, which we cannot honor due to the 9% limitation while we experience under enrollment in some down island towns, resulting in overall inefficiencies in the K-8 program. The Charter School can enroll 9% of the high school population on the island regardless of the town in which a student resides. If the K-8 enrollment was determined on the same basis, we would be guaranteed full enrollment.

Goal: The Charter School will continue to operate with a balanced budget

- **ACTION:** Create a balanced budget based on past and projected spending to present at the Annual Meeting. *(Responsibility: Board, Director, Business Manager)*

- **ACTION:** Review how savings could be achieved and recommend expense cuts and potential staffing restructuring. Maintain a savings account of 20% of the budget. *(Responsibility: Board, Director, Business Manager)*

Goal: The Charter School will maintain full enrollment of 180 students.

- **ACTION:** Press DESE and State Legislature to amend rules that cap the Charter School at 9% of net school spending in any one town. *(Responsibility of Board and Director)*

- **ACTION:** Increase advertising and recruitment efforts and evaluate their effectiveness. Administer entrance and exit interviews to help refine recruitment efforts. *(Responsibility of Director and Guidance Counselor)*

Goal: The Charter School will actively search for alternative funding sources

- **ACTION:** Research State funding to determine that the Charter School is receiving all the funding for which we are eligible from the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. *(Responsibility: Board, Director)*

- **ACTION:** Research and apply for grants to bolster funds. *(Responsibility: Board, Director)*

HEALTH

As a public school, the Charter School meets the state requirements regarding tracking and reporting the physical health of the students. In compliance with our population requirements, we have a nurse on-site three days each week.

Beyond meeting mandates, the Charter School considers the health of the whole child as a priority. Learning occurs best when a person is healthy in mind, body, and spirit.

We have a full time counselor and a three-day a week counselor to address the social and emotional needs of the students, as determined by the IEP (Individualized Education Plan) mandate.

Moving forward, we will continue to individualize health responses as we develop a comprehensive all-school approach to health care. As those closest to observing student behavior in school, faculty play a key role and must be supported to help attend to ongoing social, emotional and physical needs in tandem with the school counselors and in concert with parents and caregivers.

As stated in our Mission, the school aspires to create life-long learners. In addition to inspiring their curiosity and intellects, the school will nurture the grit and fortitude to persevere.

Goal: The Charter School will have a comprehensive K-12 approach towards addressing the social, emotional and health needs of our students.

- **ACTION:** Increase implementation of Mindfulness, “Responsive Classroom” (K-6) and Success Counseling practices. *(Responsibility :Administration, Staff)*

- **ACTION:** Incorporate lessons of perseverance and resiliency into the daily lives of students. *(Responsibility:Administration, Staff)*

- **ACTION:** Implement the 2019 School Wellness Policy *(Responsibility :Administration,*

Staff)

- **ACTION:** Continue to support new and existing Athletic programs (at MVPCS and in conjunction with MVRHS) to support a diverse range of athletes.

Responsibility: Administration, Staff)

- **ACTION:** The school kitchen will develop close ties with local farms through (with IGI?) the Island Grown Initiative to help our students understand the importance of eating nutritious foods from local sources, including the school garden. Nutrition lessons will be incorporated in health classes. *(Responsibility: Administration, Faculty and Staff)*