

The Gillispie Mission

The Gillispie School community is devoted to educational excellence for children in preschool through sixth grade. Our program serves as a springboard for children's love of learning, creativity, and readiness for the future. We value kindness, respect, and individual commitment to the larger world.

The Gillispie Philosophy

We believe that learning is a journey. Our early childhood and elementary programs are designed to guide our students' academic, creative, and social growth. We strive to develop resiliency in our students so that they are prepared for whatever paths they may choose.

We believe that students, if they are to become positive contributors to society, must become articulate communicators and critical and creative thinkers. We are committed to a balanced approach of child-centered and teacher-directed activities to aid our children in their understanding of the world. Our teachers and administrators keep informed of best practices and recognize that good teaching is neither a science nor an art, but a skillful blending of both.

We believe in the dignity of each child. As children mature from preschool into early adolescence, we expect that even as they develop their own gifts, they will learn to appreciate the gifts of others. They will also come to recognize that their independence is bound by interdependence on one another and that they are more alike than different. In this way, children develop empathy, a sense of justice, and the realization that their collaborative efforts can solve problems and move mountains.

We believe the adults in our community – teachers, staff, and parents – should model a love of learning, strength of character, and kindness toward others. Thus, the School values a partnership between our faculty and families to promote our educational philosophy and goals.

The Strategic Plan

The plan is divided into five key strategic areas: Educational Program, Facilities, Finance and Development, Governance and Leadership, and The Gillispie Family. Each key strategic area has one goal and strategies that outline the major approaches that will be used to attain the goal.

Educational Program

Goal

The Gillispie School is committed to fulfilling the mission of educational excellence for all students by attracting and retaining exceptional teachers, designing a curriculum that fosters understanding and excitement, and nurturing respectful citizens who embrace the love and challenge of learning.

Strategies

We wish to employ teachers who commit to the School's mission and philosophy by

- collaborating with their colleagues
- seeking ways to improve their programs on an ongoing basis
- assessing student progress in frequent, varied ways to inform teaching
- maintaining positive communication and professional relationships with parents and administration
- regularly participating in professional development including the pursuit of advanced degrees and opportunities to learn best educational practices
- supporting the concept of teacher leaders to promote growth and job satisfaction

We seek to affirm excellence in education by

- continuing to develop a comprehensive, cohesive curriculum plan with benchmarks for Grades TD - 6
- coordinating admissions practices to attract and retain Gillispie families who are committed to the School's mission and philosophy
- ensuring re-accreditation by the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)
- benchmarking to and adopting National Association of Educating Young Children best practices appropriate to Gillispie's early childhood program

We want to enhance the lives of our students by

- providing academic and specialty programs that encourage students to discover and build on their interests
- using students' prior knowledge to guide curricular planning
- offering opportunities to address the challenges unique to 21st century life, including the appropriate use of technology
- understanding and responding to the individual gifts and challenges of each child
- establishing ways to better meet the varied learning and social needs of all children
- reinforcing the importance of healthy choices, play, and relaxation
- continuing to weave a "social curriculum" through the academic program and provide adult role models who embody respect and kindness

Facilities

Goal

The Buildings and Grounds Committee will oversee the development and completion of a campus master plan that will 1) integrate the early childhood with the elementary school program; 2) maximize flexible and creative use of space; 3) provide a safe and secure environment; and 4) promote an environmentally sensitive setting.

Strategies

- Design and initiate a re-imagined campus that will successfully create new educational and operational spaces, unify old and new facilities, expand recreational and outdoor space, and support all programs.
- Maintain existing and new facilities at a high standard of excellence.
- Ensure "green" and sustainable landscape, construction, and operations standards.
- Explore opportunities to use the facilities as a means to generate additional revenue for the school.
- Identify and implement technological advancements.
- Seek opportunities to acquire meaningful additional property in accordance with the campus master plan.
- Enrich the physical education programs with outside venues.
- Monitor and update school safety and security compliance.



Finance and Development

Goal

Support the mission and vision of the School by operating from a position of fiscal responsibility and strength and by building needed capital and endowment funds.

Strategies

- Develop a financial master plan that includes funding campus enhancements and expansion.
- Plan and implement a capital campaign to build funds for campus development.
- Attract and retain excellent faculty and staff with competitive, yet fiscally sound compensation and benefit programs.
- Explore ways to increase the financial aid program to support the School's commitment to an affordable quality education for a diverse student population.
- Educate the Gillispie community on the purpose and importance of endowment and grow the endowment fund by offering endowment giving opportunities.

Governance and Leadership

Goal

The Governance Committee will continue to develop and retain analytical, strategic, innovative-thinking trustees who will 1) adopt policies to achieve the mission and vision of the School; 2) oversee the fiscal integrity of the School; 3) support the administration in the implementation of policy; and 4) provide philanthropic leadership.

Strategies

- Develop a specific plan for future trustee leadership.
- Cultivate a pool of highly qualified candidates for trusteeship using different venues to expose The Gillispie School to these individuals.
- Integrate non-trustees into existing and new committees.
- Involve administration in the process of developing candidates.
- Adopt a board meeting format that encourages more forward thinking discussion and interaction among trustees.
- Revise the head of school evaluation.

The Gillispie Family

Goal

To promote an inclusive school community that supports the mission of the School, respects all its members, and embraces the larger world.

Strategies

- Seek the input of parents, faculty and staff when making broad decisions regarding the School's future.
- Communicate clearly and often with all school constituents, including families, faculty and staff.
- Foster an environment that welcomes parent participation and encourages volunteerism.
- Continue to schedule family-friendly events.
- Develop avenues through which to involve alumni in the school community.
- Be a good neighbor within the La Jolla community and communicate our plans, triumphs and goals to our fellow citizens.
- Model inclusive, respectful behavior towards others and towards our environment.
- Ensure new families feel welcomed and included in Gillispie community life.

THE GILLISPIE SCHOOL

Tradition • Innovation • Education

Strategic Plan 2008 - 2011

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