



Thriving Roots & Flourishing Branches: Strategic Plan 2018-2023

It's been nearly 40 years since Mustard Seed School opened its basement doors to 16 students. Today 270 students enter our classrooms every morning. Many things have changed. Many things remain the same. In this ambitious strategic plan, we look to the future and the continual growth of the Mustard Seed School community. We reaffirm our commitment to the highest level of education, to the students and families we serve, and our identity as a community of faith.

Because of you, our roots go deep and our branches reach to the sky. Thank you for joining us on this journey!



Introduction

For over 39 years, Mustard Seed has remained deeply committed to providing an education that prepares students not just for high school and college, but for life. We've seen the successful outcomes in the lives of our students. They're lifelong learners. Curious about the world and other people. Able to think critically. Skilled collaborators. Eager both to serve and lead. They're good citizens and neighbors. They make the world a better place. We couldn't be more proud!

But a MSS education is not just for those who can afford it—it's for children across the socio-economic spectrum. We believe that ALL children benefit from learning with classmates who are different from themselves. In this strategic plan, we reaffirm the school's commitment to the highest level of education, to the students and families we serve, and our identity as a community of faith.

It took more than 1,000 people hours to build this plan! Well over 65 people contributed, most of them serving on one of seven Strategic Plan Task Forces. They met throughout the 2017-18 school year, tasked with crafting this exciting plan. We're grateful for the expertise, dedication, and hard work of so many people.

Here you will find the highlights of the Strategic Plan, **Thriving Roots & Flourishing Branches**. This is an overview, rather than a comprehensive list of all the action steps we'll be undertaking. If you would like to view the plan in more detail, contact **Abby Hall Choi**, Director of School Initiatives and Improvement, (achoi@mustardseedsschool.org).



I. Educate the Whole Child *Engage mind, body, and spirit*

Program

Today's dynamic educational environment requires that we review and refresh all aspects of our program: academics, arts, faith, and service. This includes our curriculum, standards, and assessment practices. We'll evaluate academic challenge for students and take steps to enhance our program. We'll consider the support available for students, and where indicated, put new systems in place to ensure that all students have what they need to flourish.

Faculty

We strive to increase the ethnic and cultural diversity of the faculty and enhance the skills they need to address diversity in academic learning styles and social-cultural contexts here at Mustard Seed.

Christian faith and school culture

Celebration and faith remain at the center of school life. We celebrate the God-given gifts of each child and our joy in learning together as a community of faith. Serving others has always been a key component of school life. We'll build a more formal structure around service, including developing and communicating a school-wide philosophy of service.



II. Nurture Our Core *Respond to the needs of families and our community*

Mustard Seed families lead demanding lives. We will serve the needs of families by implementing an after school program and assessing the need for a before school program. In this way, we hope to better serve our current families as well as attract new families. Our school community is enhanced when we share in each others' lives. We will establish a parent support network to strengthen parent connections across the school and ensure that all parents feel welcome and known.



III. Plant Seeds *Tell the story*

The Mustard Seed story started with the tiniest of seeds and has grown into a mighty tree. We want to become better storytellers so that current and prospective parents can more fully understand all aspects of a Mustard Seed education and its impact on children. We want our supporters to see and feel the difference that they make at the school every day. And finally, we want to share our knowledge and expertise with other educators.

To this end, we will establish a formal marketing and communications structure and sharpen the Mustard Seed message. We will staff for success and have already hired a Director of Marketing and Communication, beginning September 2018.

We will use our marketing and communications strategy to become better known in the community and to expand our base of support.



How did we get here? *The strategic planning process*

The Strategic Planning process was designed to be fully inclusive. It began with a comprehensive survey of parents, alumni, teachers, donors, and students. Then over 65 people from the community participated in an all-day Saturday retreat. The resulting data was analyzed and shared with the members of the seven task forces, so their work was based on the voices of our community. Task Forces examined the areas of admissions, facilities, finance, governance, marketing and communications, program, and staff. Members of the Task Forces included people from all constituencies, including alumni, current and alumni parents, donors, staff, board members, community members, and friends of the school.



IV. Cultivate Roots

Build a strong and flexible school for all seasons

Building

For almost 20 years, Mustard Seed has flourished in our current facility at 422 Willow Avenue, across from Church Square Park in Hoboken. Our relationship with Our Lady of Grace Church is strong. It is our goal to have a long-term plan in place before our current lease expires in 2025.

Technology

Our students are digital natives. The one-to-one laptop program in the middle school, one goal of our last strategic plan, has been a great success. We want to take our use of technology to the next level. We will provide more structure and support to enhance student learning.



V. Spread Roots

Grow School Leadership

Mustard Seed School has been well-served by school leaders over the years. We continue to think about the sustainability of the school and will create a leadership succession plan. We will also increase the diversity on the Board of Trustees to better reflect our student body and provide the skills needed to accomplish the goals of this strategic plan.



Strategic Plan Task Force Members and Retreat Attendees

We're grateful for
your hard work and
expertise!

Manisha Agarwal
Sonal Agarwal
Kelesha Armand
Christine Austin
Dana Baker
Terry Battaglia
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Mary Vidal
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Yunho Song

**Your hard work and
dedication translates
into amazing
opportunity for
students and their
families.**





The mission you make possible:

Mustard Seed was founded in 1979 to address the educational needs of the urban community, to stimulate and broaden the experiences of city children, and to educate students in an intercultural, interdenominational Christian setting. Mustard Seed has an intentional mission to the urban poor.