



Discovery Charter School

Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025

Approved _____ by the Board of Directors

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Mission Statement

Discovery Charter Schools are dedicated to creating lifelong learners that are prepared to meet the challenges of the future by educating the whole child through family involvement, project-based learning, and respect for individual learning styles and developmental readiness.

We are committed to:

- Building an educational environment where developing, building, and engaging families and communities will provide a common vision for lifelong learning and student success;
- Respecting the cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development of each child;
- Partnering staff, students, parents, and community to create a unique, challenging, and individualized learning environment with high academic standards and expectations;
- Building programs that foster thinking which is original, critical, collaborative, and reflective;
- Developing students who are self-motivated, self-disciplined, and socially responsible, and;
Continuous improvement of teaching and learning techniques based on supporting research.

Development Fund & Annual Fund

Work for Committee: Board will permit the committee to explore more fully and define some of the development program/additional revenue stream ideas, with the goal of writing up and presenting to the Board a plan with development pilot program options to approve as part of the strategic planning and implementation. We should be seeking sustainable solutions and document all relevant processes to share with those who come after us.

Goals

Goal 1 Build a robust Annual Fund program consisting of multiple components

Objectives

- Implement an internal Annual Fund group supporting structures at each school
- Assign accountability/responsibility to key individuals working on the Annual Fund
- Document all processes and collections of deliverables for Annual Fund
- Consistently communicate to the Discovery community about the Annual Fund
- Keep a yearly implementation calendar for activity

Goal 2 Build a finely tuned revenue stream, fundraising, development and annual fund/gift program that is capable of sustaining the Discovery organization and the students/program into the future.

Objectives

- Further fine tune the grant process and grant work
 - Discovery has a grant committee process. Anyone currently on the committee reports to our Executive Director (ED)
 - Discovery ED must approve grants the organization wishes to apply for, and approve the grant content of the grant submissions.
- Develop and produce events for large public draw and revenue (as one organization and not two independent schools) including:
 - Large educational events/entertainment for children in Bay Area
 - Educational and business panel events with corporate and business sponsors and such as School Choice event and others
 - Parent education speakers – one large theater with tickets sold on Eventbrite or other ticket platform
 - Movie nights
 - South Bay K5 Run for children/young teens
- Create training opportunities for teachers and administrators both onsite/online (topics at which Discovery teachers/staff excel) and participate in consulting

Goal 3 Develop external facing program processes to support the Annual Fund

Objectives

- Build corporate relationships by making personal connections with business executives

- Work with corporations to establish service working days/teaching on Discovery campuses
- Create LinkedIn “Corporate Connections” group for Discovery
- Search for opportunities within Silicon Valley business & philanthropic organizations
- Seek out and foster large sponsorship opportunities with key enrichments and program elements (or make or own)
 - Sponsorships of additional opportunities: TinkerLab, Maker Faire, Art Exploration
 - Hold Middle School leadership conference, events, etc.
- Develop a “Friends of Discovery” program that includes searching and personally connecting with those outside our community looking for philanthropic opportunities.
 - This must be a highly supported activity with a dedicated employee or “Development Manager”.
 - Reports and documentation on where money is spent, an annual, and other brochure and development marketing & thank you items would need to be created.)
 - Development Manager job description is written – check with current Discovery ED to obtain a copy.

Goal 4 Establish a culture of giving, by connecting people emotionally to the Annual Fund.

Objectives

- Engage Alumni through 10- and 15-year anniversaries, reunions, and other activities and to participate in philanthropic national and worldwide giving days
- Participate in crowdfunding programs to cover key program elements that cover all schools such as music, arts, tech, science, etc.
- Participate in crowdfunding for well-defined projects that inspire giving

BENCHMARK: How will you know when you’ve met these goals?

Facilities

Discovery will offer facilities (campus, buildings, grounds) that provide the best learning and working environment for its students, teachers, parents and administration, in a scalable and financially sustainable way over the next several years. These facilities will allow Discovery to offer the complete set of academic, enrichment and other programs in a way that fully leverages the available space, with all necessary resources, amenities, tools and equipment, without any encumbrances or restrictions.

Goals

Goal 1 Discovery will offer facilities (campus, buildings, grounds) that provide the best learning and working environment for its students, teachers, parents and administration in a scalable and financially sustainable way

Discovery Phoenix Campus

- Maximize use of existing space including grounds, field and portables' interior.
- Investigate ways to accumulate more space including opportunities for a new campus location.

Discovery Falcon Campus

- Work with SJUSD to fix the walls to reduce noise between classrooms.

Goal 2 Establish an independent, financially stable Discovery Falcon campus

- Negotiate a lower rent with SJUSD for a more cost effective site.
- Explore locations near the Falcon Campus for a new campus location.
- Monitor yearly populations and if/when applicable, consider re-filing under Prop 39.

BENCHMARK: How will you know when you've met these goals?

Elements of the Discovery Experience

The following are the elements of the Discovery Experience for students, parents, teachers, classes, the Board and administration, and the school-wide community.

Students

- Have a positive experience
- Develop a growth mindset
- Demonstrate resilience
- Are capable and critical thinkers
- Know how they learn best and have agency over their own learning
- Are involved in decision making and are empowered to do so
- Exhibit confidence
- Demonstrate empathy
- Have a voice in leadership and school culture
- Students receive meaningful assessments their progress
- Feel a sense of responsibility for their school and actively contribute to its well-being

Parents

- Model positive behavior for students to emulate
- Trained in Positive Discipline
- Feel supported practicing Positive Discipline inside the classroom
- Feel supported practicing Positive Discipline outside of the classroom
- Honor and foster the Discovery Experience
- Feel empowered in and out of the classroom to present ideas, and offer their talents
- Commit to the classroom and the school as defined in the Discovery Community Partnership Agreement
- Read communications
- Participate in events
- Recognize their value in the classroom and school-wide community
- Receive meaningful assessments about student progress
- Have meaningful and open communication with teachers

Teachers

- Foster a Growth Mindset in students and work to develop their own mindset
- Lead the development of classroom communities
- Utilize flexible collaborative learning groups
- Empower parent support
- Collaborate across grade levels
- Model positive behavior for students to emulate
- Promote meaningful and open communication with parents
- Value parents as resources
- Participate in professional development
- Have a voice in leadership and school culture
- Clearly understand the Discovery philosophy and practice it

Classes

- Reflect student interests and honor students as capable contributors to their own learning
- Foster community building
- Utilize posted, collaborative classroom agreements
- Promote relevant and meaningful outside-the-classroom work
- Support a variety of learning levels
- Support a collaborative environment
- Promote student social emotional development
- Value students' diverse aptitudes and abilities
- Foster active student discussions
- Create a safe environment where every voice is valued
- Incorporate life-skills learning
- Incorporate field trips that are connected to academic and/or social emotional development

Board Members and Administrators

- Are advocates for the Discovery Mission and Philosophy
- Solicit input from parents, faculty and staff
- Consider input from parents, faculty and staff when making decisions of significance
- Actively engage in the community through participation in school events
- Communicate meaningfully and openly with parents, faculty and staff
- Communicate meaningfully and openly between board members and administrators

School-wide Culture

- Builds community through sharing resources and talents among teachers, parents, staff, students, and the community-at-large
- Fosters community through events and education
- Is standards-based and not standards-driven
- Utilizes evidence-based practices
- Values depth of understanding and critical thinking
- Creates a welcoming community where people feel physically and emotionally safe

Goals

Goal 1 Ensure each student has a consistent and equitable experience with universal elements across all our programs.

Objectives

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BENCHMARK: How will you know when you've met these goals?

Academic Program (aka Instructional)

Academics at Discovery is a collaborative process between students, teachers, and parents. In our classrooms, we strive to create an equitable thinking environment, in which high expectations and strong support are provided for all learners. We honor the developmental stages of our learners and recognize that there is a wide range of conceptual understanding, skill mastery, and pace of learning. In our classrooms, we strive to create an environment that fosters inquiry. Students become competent problem solvers by actively inquiring, questioning, innovating, probing, experimenting, hypothesizing, and persevering as the tasks become more challenging. Students are provided with thinking time and opportunities to reflect and assess their learning and progress, and to learn from their mistakes. Using their literacy skills, including writing and oral presentations, students work collaboratively and/or individually and share their strategies, refine their own thinking, and engage in academic discourse to communicate their thinking to others.

Social Emotional Learning

We recognize the importance of social emotional learning and teaching to the whole child. During the first six weeks of each school year, time is dedicated to building a foundation for an optimal learning environment that fosters creativity, collaboration, risk taking, perseverance and perspective taking. Deeper learning and engagement occur when students, parents and teachers feel safe, connected, accepted and respected. Parents and teachers at Discovery are trained in both Positive Discipline and Conflict Resolution. Social emotional competency is essential for students to be actively engaged in their own learning, involved in their community, and solving problems independently.

We believe that students are the ultimate users of assessment data, and as such they should be involved in assessing their own work beginning in kindergarten, with gradually increasing levels of involvement and sophistication as they age. We do this through student-led conferences, goal setting, and student-generated rubrics, among other platforms.

Task-Based Learning

While many schools have devoted a tremendous amount of time and resources to improving student scores on standardized tests, or summative assessments, we feel that formative assessments --- those that are a part of the teaching and learning process and aid teachers and students in designing instruction and tasks--- are much more valuable.

Engagement in challenging and meaningful performance tasks allows students to actively learn, make connections to their existing knowledge and build on it, and show what they've learned in a variety of different ways. At the same time, teachers can diagnose student misunderstanding and provide constructive feedback. Feedback that is as close to the time of performance as possible and focused on next steps is going to be much more valuable for learning than a grade or summative test score that provides little if any information and no ability to inform instruction.

Literacy

In literacy instruction, we recognize that there is a wide range of skill mastery in areas such as reading and writing. For example, some students start to read as early as 3, and others do not read until 2nd and 3rd grade. Students read and write about what they're passionate about, what they are interested in, what they are currently exploring, and in ways that express their individuality. We strive in our classrooms to create writing communities that encourage authentic voice and authentic audience. We appreciate that students first and foremost read for pleasure and from that, read for meaning and read to learn. We create classroom communities that celebrate literacy. Within literacy communities, students are invited to think critically, actively construct knowledge through inspiration from what they read and the connections they find in their own lives, and discover themes and ideas, not through rote work, but by engaging in real life discussion of issues and ideas.

Mathematics

In mathematics, developmental instruction involves hands-on math manipulatives to teach mathematics, to build engagement and to deepen understanding of math concepts at all mathematical levels. Students move from manipulative to representational to abstract levels. Information is presented in multiple modalities to meet a variety of learning styles and students develop understanding and progress in their mathematical knowledge at their optimal rate. Students are encouraged to discover mathematical procedures and develop computational fluency not through the memorization of procedures, but by engaging in real life problem solving. Using mathematical discourse, including writing and oral presentations, students work collaboratively and/or individually and share their strategies with others.

Science

Science at Discovery is about creating environments that foster inquiry and encourage students to design experiments to test their thinking. Students have access to materials that support scientific explorations. Teachers facilitate students' understanding of scientific methodologies and provide students with access to scientific tools and resources that can support their investigations. Math and literacy are integrated into science through presentations and data analysis.

Enrichments

At Discovery, parents and teachers collaborate to provide students in TK through 8th grade with meaningful, engaging and experiential enrichments. Through these enrichments, students experience and investigate the physical and social world in diverse ways, explore interests, and connect learning to real world activities. Enrichments may vary depending on the grade level but often include the arts, gardening and outdoor explorations, technology, field trips, cooking, science, foreign language, and music. The various enrichments offer experiences for learning social and life skills, creating and expressing meaningful ideas. Enrichments may be extensions of ongoing classroom explorations or opportunities for students to be exposed to

new skills, materials and experiences. Students are given sufficient time to explore enrichments without interruption. The emphasis of enrichments is on the process of creation rather than the goal of a finished product.

Gifted Students

At Discovery, gifted students are provided with differentiated educational experiences that maintain the interest and intrinsic motivation of gifted students, and nurture their self-esteem. We recognize that gifted students have unique needs that often go unnoticed, have heightened sensitivity to their environment, and often under-perform in school when the educational program fails to meet their needs. At Discovery, students are identified through a process that relies on multiple criteria, including cognitive abilities, academic achievement, learning characteristics and behaviors. Additionally, we look for input from multiple sources, which may include the present and past classroom teachers, special subject teachers, counselors, parents, peers, and the students themselves. Students may be identified for their general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude and/or leadership ability.

Social Studies

In social studies at Discovery, the emphasis is on presenting students with multiple perspectives and a broad range of possible ways of acting in the world, by focusing on: enduring human dilemmas; human agency; authorship and skepticism about author interpretations; connecting historical perspective to current and local issues; and discrimination and marginalization.

The Discovery classrooms are a community of inquiry with the following features: intellectual negotiation among participants who have varying levels of expertise; conversation focuses on questions that warrant sustained discussion and in depth study; students use prior knowledge together with newly gathered data to make sense of new ideas; practice of classroom thoughtfulness—taking time to think carefully and respond thoroughly; and students do history by posing, investigating, and tentatively answering historical questions. In the community of inquiry, there is emphasis on asking complex questions that are worth asking, integrating and challenging students' prior knowledge, using imaginative entry into history (such as role play or creating historical narratives), and empowering students for informed civic agency and engagement.

Social studies is an opportunity to integrate content knowledge learning with social development and learning. Social education, which consists of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), character education, and community building, is an important goal for education in contemporary elementary schools, and the social studies program at Discovery offers important opportunities to integrate social education into the culture of the school.

Special Education

Discovery has a Special Education team that uses a collaborative and inclusive model known as The Learning Center (TLC). TLC is a team of specialized providers, including, but not limited to: Resource Specialists, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists,

and Counselors. TLC primarily serves students with IEPs and 504 plans; however, counseling is a resource available to all students. The team may provide screenings, assessment, therapy, consultation, and classroom recommendations accordingly. TLC utilizes a collaborative approach between providers, teachers, and classroom aides to provide student-centered support. This collaborative approach provides the opportunity to recognize students' strengths and interests in order to support their access to instruction. TLC also offers intervention support and strategies, such as whole class lessons, as well as parent and staff training. TLC strives to implement academic, social, and emotional inclusion for all students.

Goals

Goal 1 DCS shall ensure that the Discovery philosophy of child-centered education is applied in every classroom.

Objectives

- Provide professional development opportunities that provide innovative child-centered methods that engage all students

Goal 2 DCS will ensure that assessments drive instruction and include student input when appropriate.

Objectives

- Provide professional development opportunities focused on innovative methods of assessments.

Goal 3 DCS will develop a comprehensive professional development plan that encourages and supports Discovery staff in practicing student---centered education in all classrooms.

- This can be its own goal (like original) or an objective to meet the other two goals

BENCHMARK: How will you know when you've met these goals?

Marketing and Communications

The mission of the Discovery Marketing and Communications plan is to provide a holistic view and framework that will guide both internal and external organization communications. This plan will define each target audience, the communication objectives, the communication methods, timing/frequency, and expected outcome.

Goals

(See below for specific, measurable details)

Goal 1 External Communications

- “Brand Awareness”: To make the community, other schools, educators, and corporations aware of the Discovery Charter School organization.
- Student Recruiting: To attract potential families and students to apply to the schools.
- Fundraising: To raise money for Discovery from external sources.
- Alumni Connections: To keep a connection with our alumni and have them engaged and support the organization.

Goal 2 Internal Communications

- Organization Awareness: Provide high level information to the entire community regarding the overall Discovery organization, financial reporting, direction, achievements, etc.
- School Awareness: Provide information relevant to each school community.
- Class Awareness: Provide information relevant to each specific classroom.
- Fundraising: Drive awareness and participation in Annual Fund Drive.

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External Communication:

Goal	Audience	Key Message	Method	Success Criteria
Brand Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Bay Area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are a parent participation school This is why we are different and great . . . We are one of the top schools in the area . . . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gorilla Marketing via students/parents wearing DCS logo gear (shirts, hats, license plate frames, etc.) Word of mouth DCS Website Participating in conferences Hosting speaker series 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DCS recognized the same as Rocketship, Bellarmine, Bullis, Mulberry, etc.
Student Recruiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Santa Clara County area Parents of kids looking to enter TK or kindergarten Parents looking for a middle school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is what the school is about, our education philosophy, what the DCS experience is like This is where our schools are located This is how/when to apply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted zip code mailers Local magazine advertising Hosting information sessions at preschools DCS website Social media campaign via current families School open house, tours, information nights Radio advertising Movie theater advertising Review posts on Great School, Niche, Google reviews or other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong number of application, all grade levels full, and large waiting list for K and 6th grade

review based websites.				
Fundraising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Community Local businesses and corporations Education focused organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is the DCS story and why we are different <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is why we need money and what we are going to do with it This is why you should consider becoming a partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “High Touch” relationship building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crowdfunding ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landing one external sponsor Complete a crowdfunding project
Alumni Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DCS student alumni 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is what is happening at DCS and some of the cool things our students are doing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Here are some events you may want to come back and attend Here are ways for you to stay involved in the organization Volunteer opportunities at Discovery to help them complete their high school, assigned volunteer hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email and snail mail newsletters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post alumni stories on website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alumni attending events like fall festivals and volunteering in classes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long term: Alumni families donating to the school

Internal Communication:

Goal	Audience	Key Message	Method	Success Criteria
Organization Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entire DCS community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is what we accomplished These are changes we are making Here is how we are doing financially Here are our long term goals and status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual DCS report Community meetings Email message from Executive director Email message from Board Website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community aware of organization finances, direction, etc.
School Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families at each specific school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Here is what is happening at the school, great things we are doing, etc Share information on relevant topics (education research, parenting, kid safety, etc.) Promote Middle School program to lower grades Processes, procedures, parent ed requirements, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly newsletter with updates from the Principal, PSC, upcoming events, etc Emails to the school community as needed via email groups Internal only "middle school" information nights Principal coffee School community meetings Website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A calm, informed, and connected community Low level of rumors or "parking lot" talk
Class Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is what is happening in your class Class coordination activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly classroom newsletter Email messages to class as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A calm, informed, and connected class

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website 				
Fundraising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DCS Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is why we need money, what it will be used for, how you can donate . .. This is how much we have raised so far . . . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Fund Drive (program to be defined in detail separately) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet participation and total fundraising goals

Please note that Discovery has Marketing Plan & Diversity Outreach Plan documents which can be found in each of other school charters within the Addendum section. These documents can also be located in MediaFire (The Board of Directors repository) and with our organization’s current Superintendent/Executive Director.