



STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2022



A SCHOOL WHERE YOU BELONG

Dear school community:

We are incredibly fortunate to be a part of The University School community—one that welcomes and believes in the potential of all students to thrive. We've all experienced the many ways that our uniquely small and supportive school environment can impact students' academic and social development. It can, in fact, be life changing.

It is our intention—and our responsibility—to protect and care for the long-term sustainability of our school, so that generations to come can benefit from The University School's treasured academic program. As such, I'm proud to share with you this one-year strategic plan to advance our mission.

With this plan as our guide, we look forward to continually enhancing our academic program, growing as a diverse school community, supporting our talented staff, increasing public awareness of our school, and caring for the school's future and legacy. We are steadfast in our commitment to you—our bright and dedicated students, parents, and staff. You belong here, and we will continue to do all we can to help you thrive.

In service,

Nicole Lockerman

HEAD OF SCHOOL

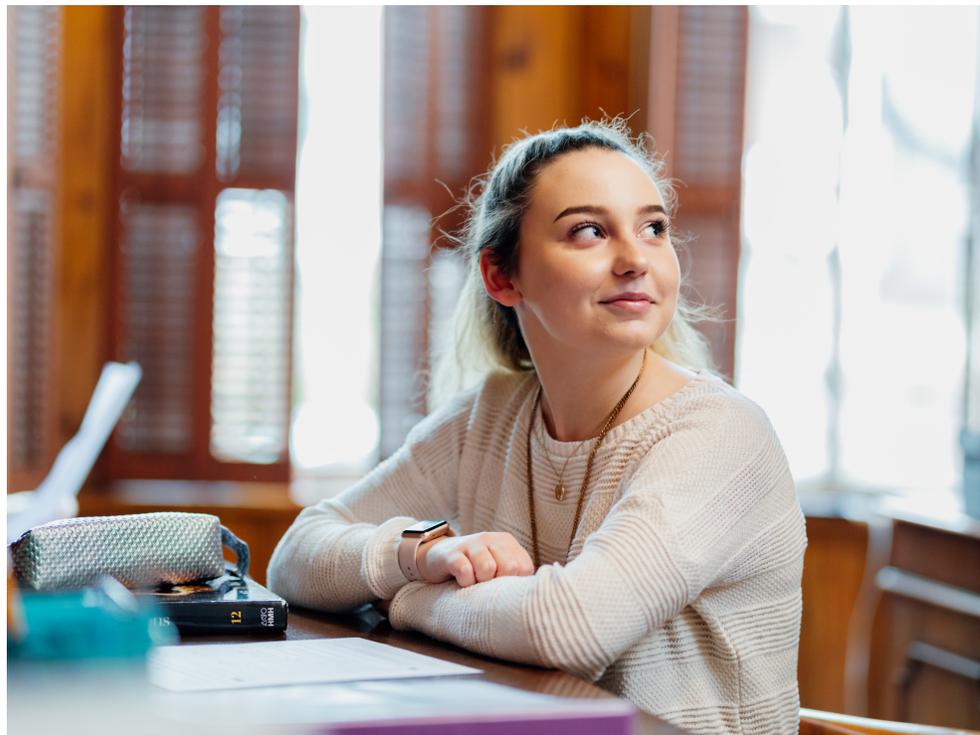
OUR MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

MISSION

The University School is committed to the integration of the educational, personal, developmental and social growth of our students. Our integrative approach to education and professional commitment to high academic achievement enables each student to grow into an independent and confident young adult.

Along with our recognition for differences in learning abilities, emotional intelligence, and mental growth, we believe that social and physical development does not necessarily progress at the same rate as intellectual development. Therefore, our curriculum is designed to challenge students of all learning styles and our staff differentiates instruction to meet the needs of all learners.

The University School offers students a community of learning where positive relationships and a small student to teacher ratio unlocks the academic and personal potential in every student.



VISION

All students can succeed through rigorous academic planning, personalized instruction, and small student to teacher ratio.

CORE VALUES

To develop in the student a sense of community.

Students are immersed in a community that fosters acceptance and understanding of each student by instructors and fellow students alike. Students experience the benefits of cooperative effort and active participation and are encouraged to recognize and develop qualities of leadership. Social responsibility is the natural corollary to developing leadership potential and instilling a sense of community, concern, and service to others.

To develop in the student an appreciation of the continued pursuit of knowledge.

Students are encouraged to participate in the school's atmosphere of intellectual curiosity, to cultivate competent habits of logical thoughts and systematic inquiry, and to develop their ability to deal with life's practical realities.

To develop in the student an appreciation of culture.

Students are assisted in becoming young adults of culture—receptive to beauty, truth, and goodness—possessing taste and social grace.

To develop in the student an appreciation of physical well-being.

Students are taught the principles of good health and physical fitness, which are encouraged to acquire a sense of pride and confidence.

FIVE STRATEGIES WILL MOVE US FORWARD

1

ENHANCE THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM TO FACILITATE A RIGOROUS AND WELL-ROUNDED EDUCATION.

2

SUPPORT AND GROW OUR STUDENT COMMUNITY, ENRICHED BY ITS DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY.

3

ATTRACT, SUPPORT, AND RETAIN A TEAM OF CARING AND DEDICATED EDUCATORS AND STAFF.

4

INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF OUR SCHOOL AS THE GEM THAT IT IS.

5

CARE FOR THE SCHOOL'S LEGACY AND LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY WITH DILIGENCE.



1

ENHANCE THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM TO FACILITATE A RIGOROUS AND WELL-ROUNDED EDUCATION.

Every student on our campus has the ability to thrive. We recognize and respect the fact that students are diverse in their intellectual, social, and physical development, as well as their learning styles. Our primary goal is always to give students the individualized support they need to be successful in the classroom and beyond.



The University School is proud to provide a uniquely personalized, college preparatory education within a small school environment. While it's difficult to have an extensive course catalogue as a small school, we still offer a robust curriculum and we want to continue to creatively expand learning opportunities that engage and interest our students.

In addition to academic excellence, we value developing in students a sense of social responsibility, lifelong pursuit of knowledge, appreciation of culture, and physical and mental well-being. We know that we must prepare our students to become forward thinkers, problem solvers, and makers.

To support our students in unlocking their limitless potential, we are committed to continuously enhancing the education program to ensure our students receive a rigorous and well-rounded education.

We will:

- Evaluate the curriculum to ensure it is current and effectively prepares our graduates for success.
- Integrate STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics) learning across disciplines, bolstered by a partnership with Carnegie Science Center's Teaching Excellence Academy and enhanced through the creation of a STEAM lab and makerspace complete with technology.
- Deepen the ways in which we use the city as our campus for authentic and relevant learning that fosters an appreciation of culture alongside academic development.
- Expand the Arts Intensive program.
- Introduce environmental education as an offering, not only as a new learning experience but also as a therapeutic learning tool.
- Strengthen student preparedness for college and careers through career shadow days, social skill development programming, and targeted support and conversations with staff.
- Continue to invest in students' social skills, self-advocacy, and relationship development.
- Explore other ways of enriching the diversity of elective classes through school partnerships, guest speakers, and teacher seminars.

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SUPPORT AND GROW OUR STUDENT COMMUNITY, ENRICHED BY ITS DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY.

Is it a coincidence that students call us “The U School”? We think not. We are proud to have created a school climate where students feel accepted and understood. When a student feels a sense of belonging, they become free to be themselves and engage in learning.

As a small school, we are family. Students find social and emotional support in the relationships formed with students and staff. We believe in developing in the students a sense of community with one another, as well as instilling social responsibility, concern, and service to others.

Lastly, we fully believe that diversity—in gender, race, ethnicity, religion, mental health, learning style, and more—strengthens our community. We will work to make our school accessible to students across the city for whom our school would be a great fit.



SUPPORT AND GROW OUR STUDENT COMMUNITY, ENRICHED BY ITS DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY.

We will:

- Continue to nurture a school climate that is welcoming to all and inclusive of different abilities, identities, and backgrounds.
- Increase family accessibility of the school by establishing a need-based tuition scholarship.
- Create opportunities for students, families, and staff to show their school spirit and proudly represent The University School.
- Tell our school's personal story of diversity and inclusion.
- Provide the necessary academic, social, and emotional learning support to help every individual child shine, leaving no-one out or left behind.



ATTRACT, SUPPORT, AND RETAIN A TEAM OF CARING AND DEDICATED EDUCATORS AND STAFF.

We are fortunate to have an exceptional team of dedicated faculty and staff. They are passionate teachers who provide students a rigorous and personalized education, and they are caring adults who support and encourage our students to become the best versions of themselves.

The University School is a special place to work. We have been successful in attracting staff who not only hold advanced degrees and professional teaching certifications, but who also have a gift for building rapport with our students.

Just as our educators support our students, as a school community we want to support them. By investing in staff professional development, compensation packages, and the workspace, we intend to support and retain the people who make our school what it is.

We will:

- Provide ongoing opportunities for staff professional development, in particular in the areas of secondary special education and differentiation.
- Retain effective, committed employees with appropriate and meaningful compensation, in addition to other incentives.
- Identify small ways of making the workspace one that inspires and supports learning.
- Emphasize and create ongoing opportunities for team development, growing staff trust and collaboration.
- Attract and hire diverse teacher candidates.
- Develop a trusted and reliable source for substitute teachers.

ATTRACT, SUPPORT, AND RETAIN A TEAM OF CARING AND DEDICATED EDUCATORS AND STAFF.



4

INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF OUR SCHOOL AS THE GEM THAT IT IS.

Anyone who sets foot inside our school can immediately tell that The University School is special. It's unlike any other school in the region, and most importantly it's the "right fit" for our students. Students thrive here, as shown by our graduation and college acceptance rates, not to mention the transformational changes that we witness in students as they begin to gain the confidence and skills to succeed.

Our gem of a school is not well known in the city, however. At times, we also face antiquated ideas and misconceptions about our school. As families look for high school options that meet their child's unique needs, we want The University School to be among those they consider.

It's time that we tell our story, and proudly let others in on the secret of The University School. We know that our school would be a great fit for some students in the Pittsburgh area who are not currently aware of it as an option. We also know that it's important to grow partnerships and awareness in the local business and philanthropic communities.



We will:

- Create and implement a marketing plan appropriate for our needs, which means it may focus more on relationship development than traditional advertising.
- Continue to cultivate relationships with middle and high school counselors and psychologists in the region.
- Elevate the school's presence and partnerships in the region by pursuing opportunities to tell the school's story, evolution, and unique approach.
- Work with students to create a quarterly newsletter and manage social media channels, as opportunities to showcase student learning and experiences with families, alumni, and donors.
- Work with staff to curate and share teaching "tips and tricks," giving other educators in the region a look into how The University School implements a college preparatory curriculum while providing students the individualized support they need.

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5

CARE FOR THE SCHOOL'S LEGACY AND LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY WITH DILIGENCE.

We have a longstanding history in Pittsburgh, and we want to continue being a school of choice long into the future. We know just how important our school is to those who find themselves here. The reality is that we support students in ways that other prestigious schools are not designed to do. Our students—and future generations of students like them—need us.

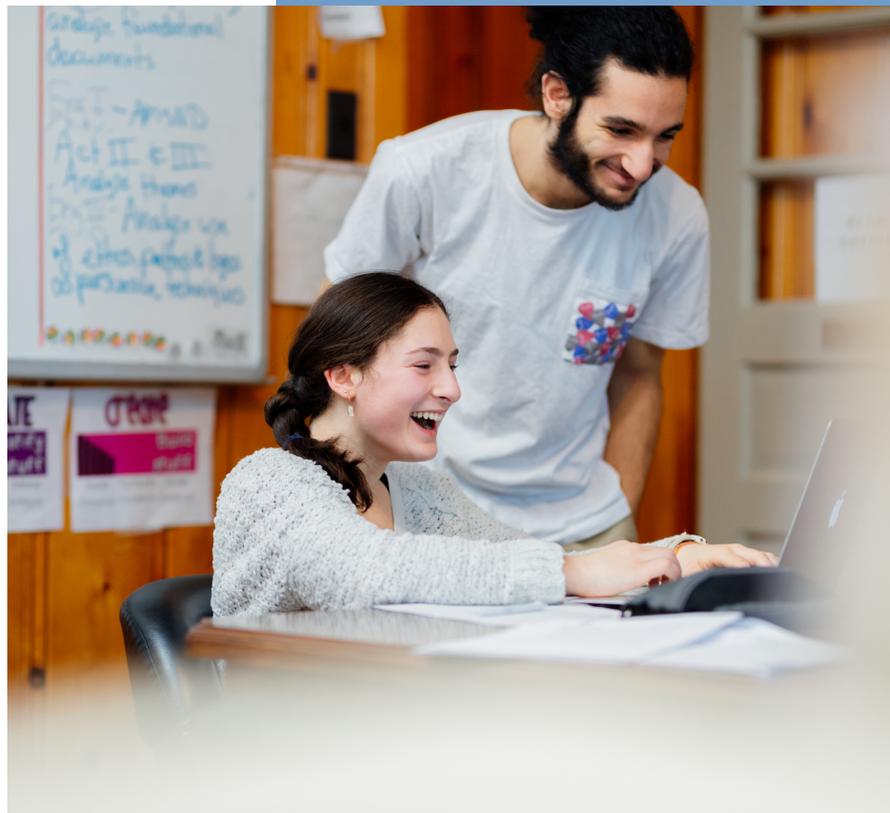
As such, we have a responsibility to care for the school's financial and organizational health. The school is in a good position today as a result of strategic efforts and success over the past decade. We have also enjoyed more than 100 years in our school home, located on Howe Street in Shadyside.

That being said, we know we can expand our impact with essential donations, partnerships, and planning. We will make every effort to care for the school's sustainability and legacy.

We will:

- Initiate our first annual giving campaign with the goal of raising \$15,000 to establish an endowment and make immediate investments in student scholarships, teacher salaries, and a new STEAM lab/makerspace.
- Raise \$20,000 for student scholarships by growing EITC-SO relationships.
- Build relationships with and respect from Pittsburgh area foundations.
- Pursue operational and programmatic grants to cover specific costs and free up funds for strategic purposes.
- Continue to advance school operations and administration systems (e.g., transcripts, student information system) for increased efficiency and accessibility of information.
- Create a 5-10 year facility plan that grows confidence in the long-term integrity of the school building.

CARE FOR THE SCHOOL'S LEGACY AND LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY WITH DILIGENCE.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND GRATITUDE

The efforts described in this plan will not be the work of one, but of many. The University School is full of gratitude for our school community and partners.

Thank you to our Board of Directors for continuously providing guidance and support to our school.

John Ferreira
President

Joshua Bernstein
Secretary

Rebecca Klaw, MS, MEd

Jill Ferreira, Ph.D.

Heather Arnet

Corey O'Connor

Thank you to all those who have collaborated with our staff to develop our strategic plan, including Bortz Consulting, Bear Left Bear, and Broudy Printing.

Thank you to our donors and supporters, and to anyone who is considering making a gift as part of our first annual giving campaign. It means so much to know that you believe in our vision and goals for the future.

Last but not least, thank you to every student, family member, and staff member who regularly show us what's possible when you provide young people the right support. You inspire so many, and the school is grateful to each and every one of you.



The University School is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
Donations are tax deductible.



THE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL

COLLEGE PREPARATORY

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