

Strategic Planning Update: A Vision for Putney

Envisioning The Putney School in 2015 is the exciting work of the strategic planning process that will chart our school's direction over a ten-year period. As conceived, the process will include all members of the faculty and administration, as well as staff, students and trustees. Director Brian Morgan will also be holding community meetings throughout the country to gather ideas from alumni and friends of The Putney School. As the chair of the steering committee and the person designated to run the day-to-day operation of the school while Brian travels this year, I am responsible for seeing this process to a timely conclusion in the early spring of 2006. The process will begin with a rededication to the founding principles, a reexamination of priorities deep-rooted in the school's mission, the reconsideration of our current offerings and strengthening and securing that which we want to retain as well as imagining the future and with new initiatives.

Five task forces have been formed in addition to the steering committee that is charged with the responsibility of finalizing the plan before presenting it to the board of trustees for approval. Each task force will include faculty, staff, students and a trustee. The task forces and their assignments are:


Social Fabric Task Force This group will project a plan that will strengthen the sense of community at The Putney School. The task force will consider the principles and values upon which the community is founded; the behavioral expectations that govern the interaction of community members, faculty, staff, administration and students, and matters of student life among the boarders, day students and their families. The physical and emotional health of the community is under this task force's purview. Chairs are Dean of Students Mary Jenkins and Victoria Vreeland '06.

Faculty/Staff Professional Life Task Force This group will project a plan that will strengthen the professional life of Putney's faculty and staff. The task force will consider faculty/staff workload, professional development, reflection and evaluation, professional behavior and expectations, salary and benefits, and housing. Chairs are Art Teacher Brian Cohen and Dean of Studies/Drama Director Karla Baldwin.

Educational Program Task Force This task force will project a plan that will sustain the quality and uniqueness of Putney's full educational program. The group will consider academic classes, work, afternoon and evening programs, as well as the international program. It will look at interdisciplinary possibilities, schedule and at eliminating and expanding components of the program to meet the needs of students in 2015. It will consider the possibility of international programs of study as well. Chairs are History Teacher/Director of Afternoon and Work Programs Lies Pasterkamp and English Department Chair Harry Bauld.

External Relations Task Force These people will project a plan that will strengthen and broaden the institutional profile of the community beyond the campus. The task force will consider marketing, public relations, local community relations, college counseling, publications, website and programs that expand the Putney influence, such as establishing programs that attract other educators and alumni. It will also consider entrepreneurial ventures. Chairs are Admission Director Rick Cowan and College Counselor Joyce Morgan.

Environmental Sustainability Task Force This group will work to project a plan that will move The Putney School towards becoming a model of environmental sustainability. The task force will consider buildings and grounds, food production, and generation of power and use of fuel. Chairs are Plant Manager Jim Taylor and Science Teacher Hans Estrin '85.

The process of creating a ten-year plan for The Putney School will have as an important outcome a better understanding of our school, best practices in education, and what is and what is not possible given current and projected resources. 

—Judith Sheridan
Associate Director