

**NORTHLAND PREPARATORY ACADEMY
DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN**

JANUARY 2005- MAY 2007

INTRODUCTION

Northland Preparatory Academy (NPA) is a nonprofit Charter School founded in 1996 as a college preparatory school with a mission to provide Flagstaff middle and high school students a rigorous, personal education experience. The philosophy articulated in the original charter for the school still holds true today:

Educating the whole person is particularly significant in the twenty-first century. The explosion of knowledge makes the earlier concept of a general education increasingly harder to achieve, and the mass of information available in each discipline makes an encyclopedic approach to education virtually impossible. Learning how to learn is just as important as mastering a discipline. NPA has been designed to offer a program that is broad enough to enhance the awareness of a common humanity, yet sufficiently specific to ensure the disciplinary and interdisciplinary acquisition of essential skills that are now prerequisites for higher education and employment in an increasingly complex world.

The school has grown impressively from its first year in a converted dance studio with thirty students to over 270 students in a modern facility. NPA has a 100% graduation rate, with virtually all students attending college in Arizona or at some of the most prestigious universities in the country such as the: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of Chicago, Princeton and John's Hopkins University. Standardized test scores demonstrate the remarkable academic talent of NPA students and reflect the outstanding work of faculty and staff.

The Board of NPA decided to develop a strategic plan for the school for three important reasons: First, to provide a framework that allows parents, students, faculty and staff to reflect on where NPA is today and where it wants to be in two years; Second, to articulate important actions that are needed to ensure NPA is always improving and meeting the expectations of students, parents and staff; and finally, to ensure that budget, resource allocation and staff and faculty performance evaluations are directly tied to and support the goals listed in the strategic plan.

VISION

Northland Preparatory Academy will be recognized as a premier, academic middle and high school in Flagstaff and Arizona. Students who graduate from NPA will be prepared for a life of learning and success.

MISSION

Northland Preparatory Academy provides an integrated program of study that promotes academic excellence and provides educational opportunities for serious middle and high school students, regardless of gender, ethnic origin, economic status, or academic ability.

CORE VALUES

- Learning is a lifelong process that is essential to a productive and enriched life
- Critical thinking is encouraged in all disciplines as the link between content and their applications
- Students are expected to do their best to meet the academic standards established by the school
- Students will be supported in a healthy, stable and safe learning environment that will help them achieve their goals
- Faculty and staff are respected and valued as integral elements to students' success
- The families of NPA students are important partners for achieving academic success
- A sense of community and diversity are important among our students, staff, and faculty
- Faculty will be supported and encouraged in their pursuit of intellectual activities that enhance the art of teaching (including critical thinking skills instruction) and advance knowledge in their field of expertise

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Northland Preparatory Academy is distinguished by its academic excellence, small class size and personal atmosphere. The 2003-2004 school year was a period of change and high achievement including, moving into new facility. Students continued to score well above the average on nationally normed tests and on the Arizona measurement of performance referred to as the AIMS test. The number of total students at the school increased from 193 to 270 and the demand for middle school enrollment soared.

Our success and rapid growth requires that the parents, board, faculty and staff pay constant attention to the impact of change and growth on the core attributes of the school. In order to meet the increasing demand for middle school and to provide state of the art facilities for fine arts and physical education, the Board initiated plans to add an addition to the existing NPA facility and to increase the overall student population to 360. This document is an attempt to review the qualities of Northland Preparatory Academy that are the key to its success and identify actions that will continue to keep the school at the forefront of excellence.

Fortunately, over the last year several surveys were conducted to identify some of the strengths of NPA and identify areas of improvement. These surveys were part of a five year review required by the North Central Association on Accreditation and School Improvement to renew NPA accreditation. The results of these surveys are the basis for

the goals articulated in the next section. A brief summary of the outcomes of each survey are as follows:

Faculty Survey Results

The faculty survey provides insight on how they view their jobs and how to improve performance. The faculty identified four key educational objectives that they consider important: providing individual attention to students; helping students to develop abilities in analytical reasoning and problem solving; ensuring that students learn basic skills, subject matter and content; and enriching the educational course of study for students. Lack of adequate facilities was considered the primary barrier for achieving educational objectives. Teachers felt that training in classroom will enhance learning at NPA.

The teachers consider the strengths of the school to be: the quality of the teachers and administration (16); the small class size that enables more interaction between students and faculty (11); the high caliber of students that exhibit good behavior (10); and commitment to academic excellence (6).

When asked why they chose to work for NPA faculty identified academic rigor, small classes and school size, the students and a supportive administration as important features.

Parent Survey Results

Sixty-four surveys were returned, representing approximately 25% of NPA families and the views of several faculty members.

The rigorous academic curriculum, the small class size, quality of teachers and the safe learning environment offered by NPA ranked most highly among parents for the reasons they like and chose the school. Parents overwhelmingly identified a preference for class sizes in the range of 15-20 students; support the expansion of the student body to 360 students (which translates to 60 students per grade) and approve of efforts to increase the size of the facility.

Most parents surveyed are satisfied with the current curriculum. However, many important suggestions were made including bringing back drama, increasing the number of electives and adding classes in keyboarding and composition.

Retaining more students throughout their entire secondary education has been recognized as an important area for improvement. One question was directed specifically to middle school parents and asked whether or not their students will continue at NPA throughout high school. Parents that said their student would stay cited curriculum, students and small classes as their reasons for staying. Those parents that will move their students cited sports, and more social and extracurricular activities as their reasons for leaving.

Student Survey

The student survey revealed that they consider their teachers to be capable and fair and that regardless of their grades they are learning a lot at NPA. Students indicated a desire

for more electives and extra-curricular activities and more representation and consideration during the development of school policies.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR JANUARY 2005 THROUGH MAY 2007

PROGRAM GOALS

1. Complete the building addition by July, 2006
2. Expand academic, elective and extra-curricular offerings
3. Retain more students in the upper grades
4. Provide more opportunities and resources for staff and faculty development, especially with regard to technology in the classroom
5. Expand parent involvement
6. Supplement the base budget with annual fundraising activities
7. Review and refresh the strategic plan every two years
8. Maintain a high quality curriculum

ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE GOALS

GOAL ONE: Complete the building addition by July, 2006

ACTIONS:

- Building committee will meet twice a month until completion
- Capital Campaign will continue to raise funds for the addition
- Renovations to science labs will occur in the summer of 2006

GOAL TWO: Expand academic, electives and extra-curricular offerings to meet demand

ACTIONS:

- Integrate more composition in the overall curriculum by fall of 2005
- Add basic composition to seventh grade curriculum by fall of 2005
- Add drama and dance by fall of 2006
- Expand PE curriculum to include health by fall of 2006
- Identify, acquire and integrate advanced technologies into the curriculum
- Acquire the hardware and software required to support advanced technology

GOAL THREE: Retain more students in the upper grades

ACTIONS:

- Identify and add electives and programs to aid in retention
 - Initiate a program of recruitment for current 8th Graders
 - Identify and add activities that will strengthen social bonds among students, especially in grades seven and eight
 - Reconsider effectiveness and possible initiation of individual class sponsors and activities
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GOAL FOUR: Provide more opportunities and resources for staff and faculty development

ACTIONS:

- Use Proposition 301 funding to advance training (including training to incorporate critical thinking skills into classroom instruction)
 - Provide two in-service days in 2005-2006
 - Pursue technology grant (for example, with NAU) to advance knowledge of technology
 - Explore and possibly add a sabbatical program to reward excellence and expand the knowledge of faculty
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GOAL FIVE: Increase parent involvement

ACTIONS:

- Actively promote opportunities for parent involvement throughout the year by increasing publication of announcements in the newsletter, on posters in the school, and occasional small group meetings to share updates,
 - The Board will establish routine communication with the Parent Teacher Organization
 - Annually compile a list of parent "talents and interests" and actively use it to link parent interest with school needs.
 - Encourage 10 hours of school service per family per year
 - Foster a sense of community by encouraging faculty, staff and family attendance at events, regardless of whether their student is involved in the activity
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GOAL SIX: Develop a strategy to identify funding to supplement base state budget

ACTIONS:

- The Board will work with the PTO and parent community to identify ways to ensure that funds are available to maintain excellence in learning
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GOAL SEVEN: Review the strategic plan every two years

ACTIONS:

- The Board will establish a process to review the strategic plan every two years to ensure that the school maintains a program of academic excellence and rigor and to ensure that offerings will enable students to successfully enter the college of their choice
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GOAL EIGHT: Strengthen and Monitor Curriculum

ACTIONS:

- Create curriculum for each English and Math course that is aligned with essential state standards
 - Create common quarterly and end-of-course assessments for each course offered to evaluate effectiveness and student progress
 - Adopt the “professional learning communities” model to facilitate faculty communication and curriculum evaluation and performance
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APPENDIX

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Lynn Burch
Carol Bousquet
NPA Board
NPA Staff