



# CHRIST EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

**STRATEGIC PLAN 2021 - 2023**

# Letter from the Administration

Dear Christ Episcopal School Community and Friends,

As we reflect on our recent re-accreditation process and the many things we learned during the arduous, yet rewarding experience, we have created our latest strategic plan - one that has been compiled and completed with love, gratitude, hard work, devotion, and faith. Christ Episcopal School has over 70 years of tradition in the Nacogdoches community. Looking forward, we want our precious school to continue to educate and inspire children for many years to come, filling them with God's love and His understanding of building lives of genuine meaning, purpose, and service in the world they will inherit.

The School Board took on the task of revamping our strategic plan wholeheartedly. A Strategic Planning Task Force was created to pursue the many tasks needed to make the new strategic planning process a thorough and meaningful experience of learning, growing, and forward thinking. Members read books including, Start with Why (Sinek), Range (Epstein), Mindset (Dweck), and Creating Schools That Thrive (Rogen). Task force members also participated in some the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools' webinars to further their understanding on how other successful Episcopal schools thrive.

A letter was sent out to school constituents including current and past faculty, current and past parents, church members, and friends of the school, asking if they would like to serve on one of our four advisory boards and assist in the composition of a strategic plan to encompass our mission and vision for the future. The four advisory boards were as follows: 1. Mission, Identity and Culture; 2. Governance, Finance and Administration; 3. Teaching and Learning; and 4. Facilities and Safety.

The newly comprised advisory boards began meeting on a regular basis and together they compiled a survey for distribution to parents, teachers, and vestry members. A Town Hall Meeting took place in conjunction with Open House and the Task Force met with parents and engaged in conversation as surveys were passed out for feedback. The results were tabulated, and with the information collected, answers were used to assist in the preparation of this strategic plan that encapsulates all aspects of school life.

So many representatives of the Christ Episcopal School family came together to collaboratively work to achieve our goals both before and since re-accreditation. We thank the many faculty and staff members, the parents, alumni, board members, and church and vestry members who participated in surveys, accreditation committees, advisory boards, and task forces that collectively accomplished the design and the content of this Strategic Plan. We so appreciate their time, effort, knowledge, and expertise.

Because of so many people's efforts, we have great confidence that Christ Episcopal School will continue to instill a love of lifetime learning in all of our students for years to come.

Sincerely,



Catherine Fenci Oliver  
Head of School



Travis James Killen  
Board of Trustees President



# History of the School

In 1948, exactly one hundred years after the first Episcopal service was held in the Nacogdoches Courthouse on June 14, 1848, Christ Episcopal Day School was established by The Reverend Scott Field Bailey, rector of Christ Episcopal Church. Father Bailey and the parishioners of the century old church sought to devote attention to and dedicate an environment of learning for the children and youth of the congregation. Miss Lucette Alexander Sharp, was recruited by Father Bailey to serve as the first Coordinator of the first Protestant private school in Nacogdoches.

Lucette Sharp was well-suited for the job, having received her baccalaureate from Stephen F. Austin State Teachers College and her master's degree from the University of Wisconsin. With support of the parishioners, a kindergarten program was established and taught by Lucette, and soon thereafter a pre-kindergarten for four year olds and a first grade program were added. Miss Sharp loved teaching young children and was known as the teacher who always had a twinkle in her eye and was full of surprises. She taught from a rocking chair, never using a desk.

From 1964 to 1971, Mrs. E. Branch Patton (Florence Fitch) became Principal and first grade teacher, expanding the Day School to encompass two pre-kindergarten classes, two kindergarten classes, one first grade class and a newly added second grade class to the school.

In 1971, Mrs. John Ruckel (Deborah) became Coordinator of the Day School. Mrs. Ruckel added a third grade in 1973 and was responsible for harnessing accreditation for the Episcopal Day School of Nacogdoches, incorporated in 1974, by the Southern Association of Elementary and Secondary Schools. Grades four and five were added and Mrs. Bailey Nations (Frances) served as Coordinator from 1975 to 1978. Mrs. George Barham, III (Patsy) held the position of Coordinator from 1978 to 1981. Mrs. James Reese (Shirley) served as Principal from 1981 until her death in 1997. Grade six was added in the fall of 1989.



Grade seven existed in 2000-2001 and in 2004-2005. Grade eight plans were discontinued. The last year the school had a sixth grade was in the school year 2017-2018.

Completing a self-study during the 1983-84 school year under the leadership of Mrs. Reese, the school became accredited by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and became a member of both the National and Southwestern Associations of Episcopal Schools (NAES and SAES). In 1989, the school was accredited by SAES, after the state's education agency no longer accredited private schools, and assumed the name Christ Episcopal School (CES), incorporating as such in 1994.

Mr. Ralph Morgan became Headmaster in 1997. Headmistress Mrs. John Dahmus (Loretta) served 1998-2005; Headmistress Mrs. Sam Bass (Linda) served 2005-2008; and Head of School Mrs. Barry Russell (Audrey) served 2008-2016.

Classes are now housed in two buildings: the main school building and the Reese Pre-School Building. The main school building houses kindergarten to grade 5, the library, the computer lab, a multi-purpose room (the Bailey Room), the art room, music room, administrative offices, and the School Hall, which is used for lunch and special events. The Reese Pre-School Building, across from the main building, houses the Pre-K programs.

The Reverend Karl Griswold-Kuhn began his rectorate at Christ Episcopal Church in August 2020, with The Reverend Michael Caldwell serving as Associate Rector and Chaplain to Christ Episcopal School since 2016. Head of School Mrs. John Lawrence Oliver, Jr. (Catherine Fenci) began in 2016 and serves currently. The school serves students in Pre-Kindergarten (3 & 4 year olds) to grade 5, is accredited by the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools, and retains its membership in the National Association of Episcopal Schools and the Texas Private School Association. CES is a parish day school operating within the Diocese of Texas.





## Mission, Identity, and Culture

Christ Episcopal School believes that to prepare students spiritually, academically, and in accordance with their God-given potential, thereby enabling them to handle the rigors of life with courage, we must continue to manifest our core beliefs and values.

### Mission

Christ Episcopal School is a diverse community of learners who participate in an enriched academic program in a nurturing Christian environment which fosters a dedication to service to others and a love of lifetime learning.

### Vision

Christ Episcopal School identifies its core beliefs and essential values in order to focus on the construction of clear and succinct ideals to define our school's purpose and future outlook. We strive to embody our school's mission to provide students with excellence in education and strength in character so that students will be spiritually, intellectually, physically, and socially equipped to impact their community and the world for Christ.

### Core Values

- Provide quality accredited academics
- Support ongoing professional development
- Endorse diversified service-learning
- Embody 21st century learning experience
- Celebrate and embrace change
- Champion character counts



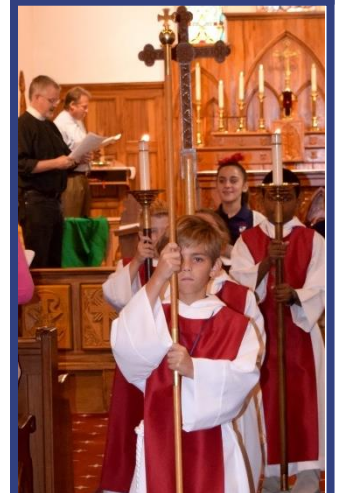


## Mission, Identity, and Culture *(continued)*

Christ Episcopal School will review our mission statement annually to assure its policies, procedures, and programs fulfill the relevance of our mission and to confirm that our Episcopal identity continues to be defined as a welcoming community that strives to instill the importance of loving and serving others.

### Action Items

- Adopt a CES Code of Conduct and Character that will govern what is acceptable and not acceptable
- Decide on a school mascot, school cheer, school song, and school motto that will strengthen and better define our identity
- Engage in a continued relationship with Stephen F. Austin State University that will result in professional development for CES faculty and guide teachers in instructional approaches that emphasize diverse and critical thinking and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning
- Develop more programs to provide students with a social ethic that fosters mutual respect and concern for community and will instill moral behaviors, values, and principles
- Create a more robust service-learning program that involves students participating in service projects for local agencies that exist to effect positive change in the community





## Governance, Finance, and Administration

Christ Episcopal School is governed by standards and principals that are in accordance with the Southwestern Association of Episcopal School (SAES) accrediting agency. Policies and budgets set forth by the school will contribute to the school mission.

### Core Values

- Fiscal responsibility
- Stakeholder input
- Transparency
- Donor appreciation
- Professional development

The school will improve with guidance and resources from SAES, the advisory committee and the Board of Trustees. The school and board will review SAES materials including webinars and accrediting documentation that is provided to the institution. The Advisory Committee will meet annually to review the strategic plan and recommend action items for the board to review.

### Action Items

- Review the multi-year financial plan and update annually
- Better understand the true cost per student and how much we rely on donations
- Split External Affairs Committee into two committees where one is focused on marketing and one on fundraising development
- Task the new Marketing Committee with reviewing and updating the Enrollment Management Plan
- Complete implementation for online donations and automated bank drafts
- Continue investigating options for online tuition payments that integrate with PraxiPower
- Consider an unpaid internship position for teachers aid and office assistant



# Teaching and Learning

Christ Episcopal School, in a positive and caring Christian environment, will create and enable the culture, competence and conditions to ensure each student is prepared for meaningful learning through an enriched curriculum that promotes citizenship and respect in a diverse and rapidly changing world. Christ Episcopal School will be a school that highly values and supports excellence in teaching, successful student learning in and out of the classroom, and places an emphasis on family involvement that will result in strong, long lasting and meaningful relationships.

## Core Values

- Caring
- Fairness
- Responsibility
- Citizenship
- Respect
- Trustworthiness

Christ Episcopal School will focus our energy and resources on learning and teaching excellence. The Advisory Committee will meet annually to review the strategic plan and recommend action items for the Board of Trustees to review.

## Action Items

- Embed learning in authentic activities and projects
- Connect learning day to day and year to year
- Utilize our community, in all its facets, to provide rich resources for place-based learning. Examples: University resources (ie. Arboretum and Planetarium)
- Balance rigor, creativity, and innovation for a multi-dimensional learning environment
- Teach to the “whole child” with consideration for the age-appropriate intellectual, social, physical, emotional, and spiritual development of students is addressed
- Provide the faculty with adequate time, training on incorporating open ended discovery learning and 21st century thinking, materials/resources, including technology to develop and implement the curriculum





# Facilities and Safety

Christ Episcopal School believes in creating a safe, secure, and healthy learning environment where faculty, staff, and students can teach, work, learn, and grow. With education, regular inspections, and lots of practice, we hope to do our very best in preventing, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies and crisis situations. We believe in providing a safe environment, responding to crises when they happen, and improving our systems when faced with new situations and challenges.

## Core Values

- Safety
- Cleanliness
- Organization
- Record keeping
- Commitment

The school will pay close attention to make sure the proper actions take place regarding the maintenance of the interior and exterior of the buildings, as well the surrounding school grounds and the playground equipment.

## Action Items

- Adhere to our Emergency Preparedness and Crisis Response Plan with annual reviews and updates when needed
- Request annual visits from the Nacogdoches Fire Marshall to review facilities and procedures
- Practice all four types of Emergency Management Drills on a regular basis
- Inspect the Automatic External Defibrillators annually, paying attention to four year battery life
- Schedule regular maintenance of the grounds regarding overgrown poison ivy and other foliage, as well as clearing fallen branches and leaves.
- Mitigate the erosion caused by the parking lot drainage swale into the main building playground
- Keep the door between the administrative assistant and the file room locked at all times
- Offer CPR/AED/First Aid classes every February to assure certification for faculty and staff members



# Acknowledgements

The strategic plan is a collaborative effort with the Strategic Planning Task Force, Board of Trustees, the School Administration, the Advisory Committee and other members of the Christ Episcopal School Community.

## **Strategic Planning Task Force:**

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