

Gaston Christian School



Strategic Initiatives

2010 - 2015

Revised 3.1.10

GCS AdvancEd Strategic Initiatives 2010-2015

- 1. Increase effective communication from/to various GCS stakeholder groups. These will include:**
 - a. Parents
 - b. Students
 - c. Faculty/staff
 - d. Early Childhood stakeholders
 - e. Elementary School stakeholders
 - f. Middle School stakeholders
 - g. High School stakeholders
 - h. Head of School's Office
 - i. Board of Trustees
- 2. Establish the GCS Fine Arts Program as a core program versus a supplemental program.**
- 3. Empower teachers/students through technology utilization and improve operating efficiencies.**
- 4. Increase student critical thinking skills through curricula decisions and through supplemental curriculum, enrichment activities, and use of software applications.**

Gaston Christian School's Vision Statement

The vision statement of Gaston Christian School is "Soaring to Excellence in Christ."

Gaston Christian Schools' Mission Statement

The mission of Gaston Christian School is to help students mature spiritually and excel academically by offering a Biblically integrated, college-preparatory program that will enable them to impact the kingdom of God by living productive Christian lives.

Gaston Christian School's Philosophy Statement

Gaston Christian School is a non-denominational Christian school founded on the basic principles of God's Word. The philosophy of the school emphasizes a distinctively Christian environment combined with a college preparatory program. The goals of GCS are the instruction of academic fact anchored in and interwoven with spiritual truth found in God's Word; the teaching and maintaining of Christian principles and ethics; the development of patriotism, respect for authority, and the work ethic. The school seeks to honor God in all aspects of its program, relationships, and activities.

Initiative # 1 – Communication Advancement

Strategic Priority: Develop a communication program that further strengthens the partnership with GCS Stakeholders.

Goal: All action items under this initiative will be implemented by the end of the 2011-2012 school year and will then continue to be part of an effective on-going communication program at GCS.

Measurable Outcomes:

- Annual survey results from GCS Stakeholders (parents, students, faculty/staff, etc.) will show improvement in “communication specific” ratings.

Recommended Strategies:

1. Parents
 - a. Blackbaud module upgrade (online grade review, tuition accounts, etc)
 - Director of Technology (2010-2011)
 - b. Message/discussion board linked to GCS website
 - Director of Technology (2010-2011)
2. Students
 - a. Classroom teacher websites – for access to homework/projects/assignments
 - Director of Technology (MS/HS -- 2010-2011, EC/ES – 2011-2012)
3. Faculty/staff
 - a. Classroom teacher websites – to post homework/project/assignments
 - Director of Technology (MS/HS -- 2010-2011, EC/ES – 2011-2012)
 - b. Develop faculty discussion boards
 - Director of Technology (2010-2011)
4. Early Childhood
 - a. EC connection site
 - Director of Technology (2009-2010)
 - b. Quarterly open forum with principal
 - EC Principal (2010-2011)
5. Elementary School
 - a. Quarterly open forum with principal
 - ES Principal (Spring 2010)
 - b. New parent coffees with principal
 - ES Principal (2010-2011)
6. Middle School
 - a. Quarterly open forum with principal
 - MS Principal (Spring 2010)
7. High School
 - a. Quarterly open forum with principal
 - HS Principal (Spring 2010)

8. Head of School's Office
 - a. Annual state of school night reinstated
 - HOS (Winter/Spring 2010)
 - b. "Round Table" discussion (2/yr) with EC/ES/MS/HS parents.
 - HOS (Winter/Spring 2010)

9. GCS Board of Trustees
 - a. Annual "Meet the Board" night
 - Board Chairman (Winter/Spring 2010)
 - b. Semi-annual Board communication or newsletter
 - Board Chairman (Spring 2010)
 - c. Board profiles online
 - HOS/Director of Technology (Spring 2010)

Initiative # 2 – Fine Arts Advancement

Strategic Priority: This initiative will establish the GCS Fine Arts Program as a core program versus a supplemental program.

Goals: To continue developing the GCS Fine Arts Program by hiring/promoting a staff member to be the "first" GCS Fine Arts Director and to systematically advance the GCS Fine Arts Program. In addition, a substantial facilities goal with this initiative is to construct a new GCS Fine Arts Center by the 2015-2016 School Year.

Measurable Outcomes:

- Hiring of Fine Arts Director by the 2011-2012 school year
- New Fine Arts Elective Courses: ES (add 2), MS (add 2) and HS (add 3) course offering.
 - *Basis for measurable outcomes for Fine Arts Courses. Current course offerings (2009-2010):*
 - ES – Music, Band
 - MS – Art, Chorus, Band
 - HS – Art I, Art II, H. Art III, H. Art IV, Drama, Advanced Drama, Band, Concert Choir, Ensemble
- Construction of a new GCS Fine Arts Center – to be completed by 2015-2016 school year.

Recommended Strategies:

1. Raise funds to construct a new GCS Fine Arts Center
 - Partnership with organizations like "Gaston Little Theater" in the interim
 - Launch a capital campaign once feasibility study and economy indicate appropriateness
 - HOS/Director of Advancement/GCS Board
 - Architect engaged to develop cost forecast (Fall 2010)
 - Feasibility study (Spring 2011)

2. Hire a full-time Fine Arts Director
 - Begin an annual ES & MS Drama – i.e. plays, musicals, etc.
 - Begin an upper ES choir
 - Develop enhancements to visual and performing arts program – ES, MS, HS

- HOS/Principals – Hire either 2010-2011 or 2011-2012 School Year depending on budget strength
 - Balance of action items under this initiative will roll out the year after hire of Fine Arts Director
3. Additional Fine Arts Electives in HS, then in MS, then in ES programs – this will include
 - Add Honors and AP HS Fine Arts courses – Music theory, Art history, pottery, sculpture, computer graphic design, photography, etc
 - HS Principal and/or Fine Arts Director – Honors/AP offerings (begin implementation with the school year 2011-2012)
 - Add Fine Arts Electives in MS Program
 - MS Principal and/or Fine Arts Director (begin implementation during the school year 2011-2012)
 - Expand hand chime ensemble in upper ES
 - ES Principal (School year 2010-2011)
 4. Research and establish ES/MS/HS schedules to allow for more class time for the Fine Arts
 - Research a modified block schedule for MS/HS and an elective wheel for Grades 3-5 in ES
 - HOS and Admin Team (research during the school year 2010-2011, implementation within two school years thereafter or by the 2012-2013 school year)

Initiative # 3 – Technology Advancement

Strategic Priority: This initiative will provide sustained focus on GCS Technology Advancement, specifically: 1) empowering teachers/students with new technologies and 2) providing additional operating efficiencies through technology utilization.

Goals: To advance student learning by enhanced instructional practice advanced through the use of laptop technology by the HS faculty and the HS students. To reduce cost and add efficiencies in school operations by purchasing additional software that provides both better parent access (i.e., communication advancement) and redundancies in GCS operations.

Measurable Outcomes:

- Purchase or put into service donated computer hardware for three labs: ES, MS and HS (75 plus computers projected)
- Purchase laptop computers for each HS teacher (25 projected)
- Institute a computer utilization practice whereby all HS students will be required to purchase and use laptop computers
- Purchase new software module(s) for GCS Blackbaud software application so that parent access to student grades and tuition accounts is through an interface with our Blackbaud software. In addition, all data entry related to admissions will be made on-line.

Recommended Strategies:

1. Empower teachers/students through technology utilization
 - a. Technology hardware rotation
 - Classroom computers – to – donation
 - Lab computers (EC/ES, MS, HS) to classrooms

- New lab computers – 1) HS, 2) MS, 3) EC/ES
 - Director of Technology (HS -- 2011-2012, MS – 2012-2013, EC/ES – 2013-2014)
 - b. Increased bandwidth to service campus IT needs
 - Director of Technology (2012-2013)
 - c. Software upgrades – MS Office and Windows 7
 - Director of Technology (2012-2013)
 - d. HS laptop program for faculty and students
 - Director of Technology (2012-2013)
 - e. Substantial software and hardware upgrades for EC and ES
 - Director of Technology (2012-2013)
 - f. Research online library options for EC/ES/MS/HS (GALE, EBSCO, GCS Library, & NCLIVE)
 - Director of Technology (2013-2014)
 - g. Provide supplemental ES, MS, HS electronic curriculum of existing textbooks to eliminate the need for students to take home GCS textbooks, to reduce wear & tear on textbooks, and to provide access to GCS texts for students during non-school hours
 - Academic Dean & Elementary Dean of Curriculum (2010-2011)
2. Improve operating efficiencies
- a. Blackbaud module upgrade (online grade review, tuition accounts, etc)
 - Director of Technology (2010-2011)
 - b. Blackbaud module upgrade to allow on-line GCS Admissions data entry
 - Director of Technology (2011-2012)
 - c. Research purchase of electronic curriculum for HS program
 - Director of Technology (2011-2012)
 - d. Research additional online professional development opportunities
 - Academic Dean/ES Dean of Curriculum/Director of Technology (2011-2012)
3. Provide online learning opportunities
- a. Foreign language classes – French, German, Latin, etc
 - HS Principal/Academic Dean/Director of Technology (2011-2012)
 - b. Additional AP and Honors classes that have only limited interest to total HS student body
 - HS Principal/Academic Dean/Director of Technology (2011-2012)

Initiative # 4 – Critical Thinking

Strategic Priority: This initiative will provide opportunities for student learning in the area of critical thinking skills through purchase and implementation of 1) new curriculum, 2) supplemental curriculum, 3) software, 4) enrichment opportunities, 5) professional development opportunities, and 6) rewrite of curriculum guides to provide overview of critical thinking instruction and integration.

Goals: To see sustained growth in critical thinking percentiles and stanines as measured by the annual Stanford Achievement Tests (K-11) and to see the number of below average Stanford Achievement Test and Cluster results related to critical thinking/reasoning decrease significantly in the coming years.

Measurable Outcomes:

- Annual achievement scores for grades K-12 will show improvement in critical thinking areas.

Recommended Strategies:

1. Research curriculum with strong critical thinking/reasoning skills as curriculum replacement decisions are being made in the coming years.
 - a. High School (all under Academic Dean oversight working closely with HS Principal)
 - Alg I, Adv. Functions, & Ecology (2009-2010)
 - Geometry & Chemistry (2010-2011)
 - Alg II, H. Chem. & AP Biology (2011-2012)
 - Pre-Calc & Calculus (2012-2013)
 - Phys. Science and HS Elective Courses (2013-2014)
 - W. History, AP US History and Bible (2014-2015)
 - Literature & Foreign Language (2015-2016)
 - b. Middle school (all under Academic Dean oversight working closely with MS Principal)
 - Science/Health – Grade 6 (2009-2010)
 - Algebra I (2010-2011)
 - Pre-algebra (2011-2012)
 - Math 7 (2012-2013)
 - Life/Earth Sciences (2013-2014)
 - Fine Arts/Foreign Language/other MS Elective Courses and Language Arts (2014-2015)
 - Bible/History (2015-2016)
 - c. Elementary School (all under Elementary Dean of Curriculum oversight working closely with the EC and ES Principals)
 - Language Arts (2009-10)
 - Math (2010-2011)
 - Foreign Language (2011-2012)
 - Technology (2012-2013)
 - Science/Health (2013-2014)
 - Fine Arts and other ES Elective Courses (2014-2015)
 - Bible/History (2015-2016)
2. Research supplemental curriculum that teaches strong critical thinking/reasoning (for curricula decisions yet to be completed in step 1) -- ES, MS, and HS
 - Academic Dean and ES Dean of Curriculum (2010-2011)
3. Research additional critical thinking enrichment activities for the ES Enrichment Program
 - ES Dean of Curriculum and ES Principal (2010-2011)
4. Research critical thinking software to implement as supplemental activities for ES, MS, and HS
 - Academic Dean and ES Dean of Curriculum (2010-2011)
5. Rewrite all curriculum guides to account for an emphasis on critical thinking skills – to be completed:
 - HS – HS Principal and Academic Dean (2011-2012)
 - MS – MS Principal and Academic Dean (2011-2012)
 - ES – ES Principal and ES Dean of Curriculum (2011-2012)
6. Develop and implement professional development training to help GCS faculty further understand the rationale for using Bloom’s Taxonomy and critical thinking/reasoning questions and activities as part of their daily instruction.
 - Academic Dean and ES Dean of Curriculum (2011-2012)