



Island Pacific School

Five-Year Strategic Plan
Fall 2016 to Spring 2021

Executive Summary

Approved February 6, 2017



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Background

Island Pacific School is at a unique time in its history. The founder and Head of School, Dr. Ted Spear will be retiring in June 2017. It is the intention of the Board that this strategic plan captures the best of Ted's inherent institutional knowledge, transfers the culture he has strived to implement, and therefore provide a solid foundation to the new Head who will lead the strong school team to realize their collective vision of the future. Moving forward, IPS is positioned to strengthen its brand as a distinctly different, small by design middle school.

Stakeholder feedback unanimously recognized the strengths of the IPS community: strong school leadership, excellent staff, a school that feels like a family, room for every kind of person and accommodation on a learner by learner basis. It was repeatedly noted that there is a very strong values-driven culture at IPS and this strategic plan was created to preserve these key strengths.

For 20 years IPS has continued to put the Why before the How. We have never stopped asking "What next?" This strategic plan is no different.



About Island Pacific School

Island Pacific School is an independent middle school that focuses exclusively on meeting the educational needs of adolescents in grades 6 to 9. Small by design, IPS has one class per grade consisting of a maximum of 18 students per grade.

IPS currently uses the International Baccalaureate - Middle Years Program (IB-MYP) as our pedagogical framework. IPS enriches this framework and makes our programming distinctly different by combining the best of a classic liberal arts education with innovative developments in pedagogy and educational technology. Classes are taught using inquiry, project-based and blended learning. Classes include Reasoning, Philosophy and Ethics, Design, Math, English, Arts, Humanities and Physical Education. This curriculum meets the requirements of the BC Ministry of Education. There is also a focus on developing self-esteem through participation in excursions, expeditions, leadership training and masterworks.

IPS teachers are middle school experts. Their program implementation is based on creating “engineered experiences” – intentional learning experiences that foster critical inquiry, community engagement and leadership. The faculty team work collaboratively and strive to not only connect with each student but also continuously grow his or her understanding of that student over four years. The IPS community challenges and inspires students to become the very best of who they are.

IPS is situated on Bowen Island, a small community of 3,500 people. Bowen Island is a 20-minute ferry commute from West Vancouver via BC Ferries. IPS’s location on Bowen Island offers unique opportunities for engagement with the outdoors, and a small, diverse community that includes a wide range of artist, artisans, trades people, and professionals that are instrumental in facilitating our masterworks program.

IPS is lucky to have a strong, committed Board of Directors driving the strategic planning process in partnership with a strategic Head of School. They have come together to share their knowledge and vision to guide the organization. They bring to bear not only their own knowledge, but also ideas gleaned from many community conversations with parents and students past and present.



The next 5 years will be an exciting chapter at IPS. Dr. Ted Spear, Founder and Head of School will be retiring in June 2017. This document will serve the Board and membership with not only a transparent, comprehensive plan to give them the confidence to believe in the future of IPS in 2020 and beyond, but as a touchpoint for preserving the cultural foundation of the school and helping the membership navigate the path forward.

In 1995, a group of parents, under the leadership of Dr. Ted Spear felt compelled to create a middle school where students were encouraged to ask questions, be curious about the world around them and experience learning in a natural setting.

Twenty years later, Island Pacific School is still dedicated to its core values of wisdom, courage and integrity and the school is thriving in a much more complex educational landscape.



Key Strategic Objectives

1. Equip and Inspire: We provide engineered experiences designed to equip and inspire adolescents at a critical moment in their development. We encourage students to cultivate their humanity during their crucial middle years – a time when we can either lose students or set them up for the rest of their lives. Middle School matters and kids like it here.

2. Program Excellence: We are middle school experts building innovative programs that support a true liberal arts foundation with the best of new education technologies. We are distinctly different and other schools follow our lead.

3. IPS Forever: We recognize the importance of the long-term sustainability of IPS and we will create a development and alumni engagement plan that will secure the financial foundation of IPS. Our plan will ensure that we can continue to fund innovative programming and financial aid at our well-equipped small by design campus on Bowen Island.



Culture

Mission

Island Pacific School is an independent middle school that equips and inspires students to cultivate their humanity at this pivotal point in their lives. We are an educational community that fosters intellectual engagement, citizenship, leadership and self-confidence.

Vision

The stated vision of the school in 2015 was:
“Island Pacific School inspires excellence in middle school education.”

The new vision is a product of the Board Strategic Planning Workshop, 2016:

Island Pacific School will be widely recognized as a distinctly different, innovative leader of program excellence in middle school education.

Values: Wisdom, Courage, Integrity

WISDOM - Acting on the basis of reliable information tempered by judgment.

People with wisdom commit to learning how to have intelligent conversations and how to use this skill for finding the truth, if it can be found. If it cannot, they seek for a better understanding of the problems at hand.



COURAGE - Rising to challenges and welcoming new opportunities with a spirit of anticipated success.

People with courage accept new challenges willingly and with a spirit of anticipated success. They enthusiastically encourage others to do the same. They defend their convictions vigorously with good argument, but are equally ready to change their mind when given better argument.

INTEGRITY - Interacting in an honest, transparent and just manner.

People of integrity hold themselves accountable for both what they do and what they fail to do. They treat themselves and others with respect.

The IPS Way

On a day-to-day basis, what are the beliefs and core concepts by which we want to operate?

During the strategic planning discussions it became clear that there is a strong culture at IPS that informs how decisions are made daily. Based on the values of wisdom, courage and integrity, the Head and school team (administration and faculty) operate as a cohesive team following an unspoken common culture built from their history together. The Head of School is a popular figure in the school and, as a founder, administrator and faculty member for twenty years, holds a great deal of institutional knowledge. In light of the upcoming transition to a new Head of School, IPS needed a way to articulate the inherent beliefs and core concepts that contribute to IPS' success, not only to the new Head, but to other new community members; the criteria could become a way to enhance consistency of outcomes for all existing team members.

The Baldrige Criteria are a set of commonly used criteria for performance excellence. The Head of School adapted the list and provided context and interpretation for what these criteria mean. They were presented to the Board at the February 20, 2016 Strategic Planning Workshop and adopted as "The IPS Way". They were then used as a reference point for developing relevant and culturally aligned Strategic Objectives.

The IPS Way is intended to anchor the cultural underpinnings and describe the essence of how IPS operates their educational community, and how decisions are made at both a strategic and day-to-day level.

The “IPS Way” Criteria for Performance Excellence

(Baldrige & Spear) ²

| Criteria | The IPS Way: IPS Core Values & Concepts |
|---|---|
| Visionary Leadership | We want all of our actions to be philosophically grounded. We want to do the right thing for each student (i.e. ethical) |
| Stakeholder-Driven Excellence | We want to listen to, and engage with parents, students and alumni as a way to improve what we do |
| Organizational & Personal Learning | We want to make sure we create opportunities for our staff to develop professionally. We want our organization to learn in order to be innovative leaders of programming excellence. |
| Valuing Employees & Partners | We want to make sure we acknowledge the good work of our staff and employees |
| Agility | We want to be agile and flexible, i.e. be able to try new initiatives (and be OK to fail early) |
| Focus on the Future | We want to proactively think about the future of education |
| Managing for Innovation | We want to put educational innovation at the center of what we do. We want to strive to be “Distinctly Different”. |
| Management by Fact | We want to check to see if our assumptions are true (i.e., use metrics to test everything we do). |

² <http://www.nist.gov/baldrige/publications/criteria.cfm>

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Social Responsibility</p> | <p>We want to cultivate a sense of social responsibility within our students, and we want to be socially responsible ourselves.</p> |
| <p>Focus on Results & Creating Value</p> | <p>We want everything we do with our kids to focus on “cultivating their humanity”, i.e. allowing them to acquire the knowledge, skills and dispositions that will enable them to express the very best of what it is to be a human being.</p> |
| <p>Systems Perspective</p> | <p>We want to put in place organizational systems that make it easier and better for us to operate (i.e. so we do not have to reinvent the wheel every year).</p> |
| <p>Culture of Philanthropy</p> | <p>We want to build the kind of culture of philanthropy at the school wherein donors feel genuinely valued and honored to be contributing to something of demonstrable value.</p> |



Governance

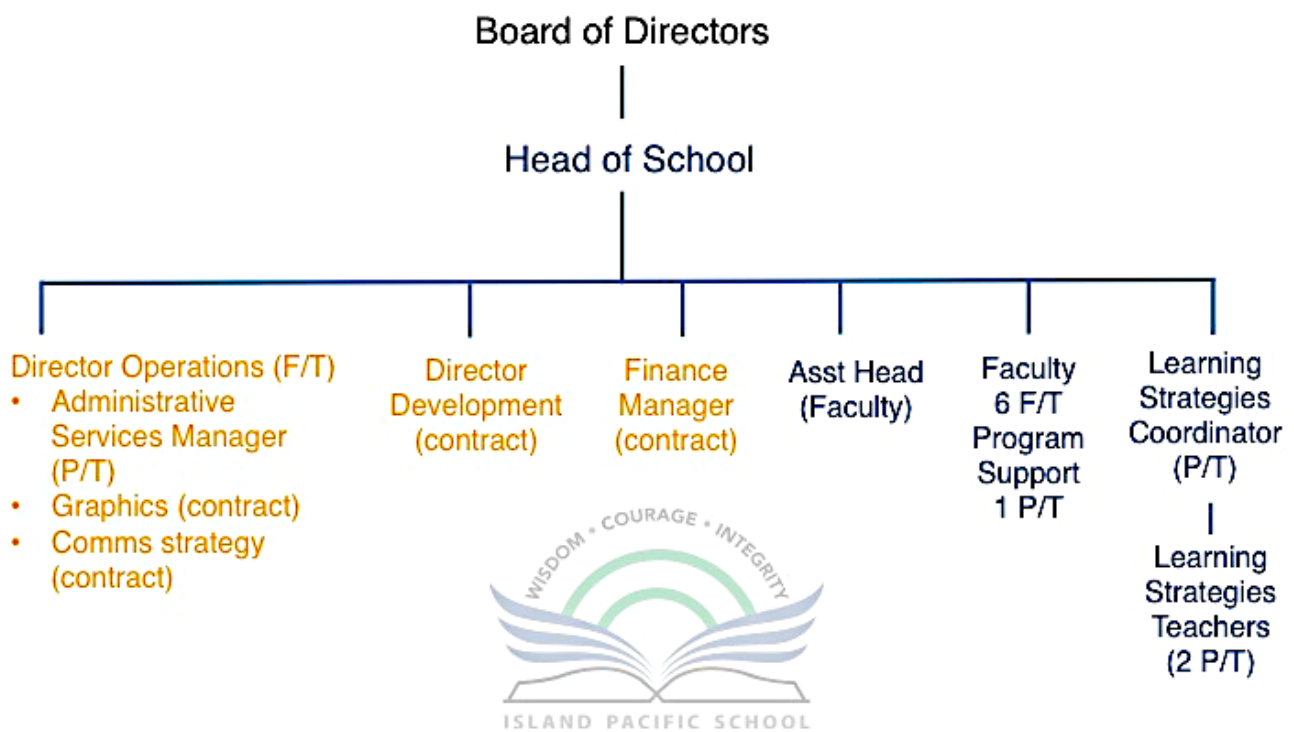
Membership

Island Pacific School is a non-profit independent school and registered charity, operating as the The Island Pacific School Society (IPSS). The Membership of the society is made up of all parents and caregivers of children who attend IPS, and by consent:

- IPS alumni over 19
- Former Board members and school founders
- Members of the Senior Advisory Council of IPSS
- Persons nominated by the Board and admitted membership

Organizational Structure

IPS Organizational Chart 2017



Role of the Board of Directors

The fiduciary duty of the Island Pacific School Society Board is to act honestly and in good faith in the best interests of the school. This includes being the creator and trustee of the school's vision, mission and long-term viability. The Board takes full responsibility for the governance of Island Pacific School in a manner consistent with the standards of excellence on which the school's education program is based. In particular the work of the Board should set an example of best practices within the IPS community.

Key Duties of the IPS Board of Directors are:

- Hiring and evaluation of the Head
- Governance and leadership
- Development and implementation of a strategic plan
- Oversee risk management ● Development and fundraising

The Board utilizes a governance structure that separates the Board duties (listed above,) and the Head's duties: curriculum development, finances, enrolment management, student wellness and faculty hiring and professional development. It is the Chair's responsibility to ensure this separation. The Board acts with confidentiality and solidarity and without conflicts of interest. Board members are selectively recruited and engaged to optimize their contributions to the key duties listed above. The governance structure of the IPS Board is robust and well documented.

Permanent committees are in place as follows:

- Governance Committee
- Finance Committee
- Risk Committee
- Development Committee



Government Oversight and Accrediting Organizations

IPS is regulated under the Independent School Act which is governed and administered by the Ministry of Education of British Columbia.

IPS is a member school of three accrediting organizations: International Baccalaureate - Middle Years Program (IB-MYP), Canadian Accredited Independent Schools (CAIS); and the Independent Schools Association of BC (ISABC).

IPS prioritizes resources to continually meet or exceed all of the standards and requirements of all of these partners.

Finances and Enrolment

The school has had stable enrolment and finances for several years. The enrolment is recorded in the IPS School History Survey that is updated annually and the finances are audited annually and are continually updated in a rolling five-year budget that is overseen by the Board finance committee. Although the finances are stable, the school is motivated to ensure that there is a wider base of financial support beyond enrolment fees that will enable the school to make capital improvements to the facility and increase the operating budget, particularly increases in teacher salaries.

A main focus during this strategic planning will be long-term financial sustainability and the Board has established a permanent development committee. In particular the Board would like to achieve the following:

1. Establish a Culture of Philanthropy at IPS.
2. Build a community and alumni engagement plan.
3. Write and execute a Development Plan that includes annual giving, events and major gifts.
4. Create a “Bridge to the Future” fund to support financial aid and to support our vision of being an innovative leader of program excellence.

IPS has hired a Development professional to lead IPS’ transition to a Culture of Philanthropy.



Appendix: The Why & How of IPS

Island Pacific School (IPS) is a unique Grade 6-9 middle school that has been operation on Bowen Island since 1995. Our students come from the local community, the North Shore and around the world.

Why?

We believe education encompasses both academics and the development of character and we operate according to the following principles:

Students

- Students need specific opportunities to learn to take responsibility for themselves.

Schools

- Middle school matters most: during these crucial middle years, we can either lose students or set them up for the rest of their lives.
- Small schools are very powerful sites in which to create an intentional educational community.

Teachers

- Schools must not insult students' intelligence but must instead stretch and challenge students on all fronts.
- Teaching is a matter of initiating students into the great conversations of human inquiry so they can find their own voice.
- Our job as educators is to equip and inspire students to cultivate their humanity.

How

IPS expresses and realizes these principles through core program elements which include:

Academics

- The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IB MYP) puts a premium on inquiry-based learning.
- Classes in practical reasoning, philosophy and ethics.
- A Grade 9 Masterworks program that requires students to complete - and publicly defend - a 15-30 page independent research project of their choice.



Outdoor pursuits & off-site excursions

- A number of hiking, sailing and kayaking expeditions, including an initial school-wide expedition to launch the school year.
- A full "Discovery Week" In May.
- Monthly educational, cultural and recreational excursions to art galleries, museums, theatres, universities, science exhibits and more.

Community building

- Monthly community service activities.
- A cross-grade mentoring system where older students look out for and support the younger ones.
- A House system that requires, among other things, that students clean the school.