

# KEITH COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

## 2009 Strategic Planning

### All-School and Advisory Committee Notes

**Any questions or concerns contact:**

Head of School, Betty Giesen, (815) 399-8823

Wendy Perks Fisher at [wperksfisher@eclipsenet.com](mailto:wperksfisher@eclipsenet.com) or (815) 543-0050

## **Parent/Faculty Survey Results**

*Survey period: October 15 to November 17*

77 parents, faculty and staff responded to a survey issued by the Head of School search committee in October. In January, the strategic planning advisory committee met for the first time, using the survey results as a starting point to develop a Keith Country Day School strategic plan.

The results listed below are a combination of the most frequent responses and the advisory committee's recommendations for further discussion and plans.

### **KEY ITEMS: what are the best things about Keith?**

- quality and dedication of teachers
- nurturing environment
- small classes
- Keith community's cultural diversity
- safe environment
- level of academics/overall curriculum
- commitment to the arts

### **KEY ITEMS: what things need attention?**

- finances
- cohesiveness of Lower, Middle and Upper School
- strong leadership
- Keith image in the community
- Facilities
- Internal communications
- discipline in the Middle and Upper School

- more -

## **Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>**

### **Advisory Committee and All-School Planning Notes**

On Feb. 3 and 9, a strategic advisory committee met for the second time and the first of several all-school planning workshops took place. Each group met with the objective to help define “**what skills, characteristics, values and knowledge a Keith graduate will look like in 2025.**” Both groups will be helping create a new Keith School strategic plan by June.

Below are consensus bullet points from each meeting.

#### **Advisory Committee 2025 Keith graduate**

- \* practices courage, discipline and fortitude
- \* appreciation for and participation in the arts
- \* posses creative problem solving skills
- \* strong background in social studies, science, math, history, English and foreign languages
- \* articulation and strong writing skills
- \* globally-oriented and educated/diverse/multi-lingual
- \* vision of greatness
- \* integrity

#### **All-School Workshop 2025 Keith graduate**

- \* critical thinker
- \* passionate learner
- \* living Green
- \* National vs. regional vision for the school
- \* We need to get to work now! 2010 vs. 2025
- \* Ethics and integrity
- \* Independent thinker
- \* Respect for others and the planet
- \* Global citizen
- \* Life-long learner
- \* Balance = hopes, dreams/friends

## Feb. 23

### All-School Meeting Notes

On Feb. 23, several Keith Board of Trustees and some special guests, including former Park District Head, Webbs Norman, hosted a panel to discuss Keith's governance policies. The forum also allowed for questions for the Board, which will be addressed during the May 4 and 11 sessions. The questions from this session were as follows.

- How are board members selected?
- What is the makeup of the Board?
- What is the Board/Administration interaction regarding retention?
- What is ISAC's?
- Is Keith's board governance in alignment/compliance with ISAC's governance policies?
- How does the mission/vision relate to discipline and curriculum?
- Who owns Keith School?
- What is the training process for Board members?
- Do the board members actually follow the chain of command by referring questions to the appropriate division heads?
- What is the faculty structure? Review process? Division head roles?
- If the Board hires and fires one person, why is the Board after one person's head?
- What is the difference between a mission and a vision?
- What is the role of the Board and the administrators in teacher evaluation/retention?
- How much does the Board contribute financially/help with fundraising?
- As a parent, should I have concerns about the headmaster search and who our board members are? How do I know my concerns are acknowledged?
- What is the Board's role in fundraising?
- How was the Board trained in policy governance?
- Does the Board evaluate the level of education to make sure that it exceeds the programs of other schools in the region?
- How can we make Keith the best school educationally?
- What is the process of finding new Board members?
- Is there a term limit for service on the Board?
- If we have faculty liaisons why are they not allowed to voice opinions at the meetings?
- How can we increase the number of Board members to reach a more acceptable number?
- How does the Board evaluate itself?
- What is the strategy for combating the economy vs. school tuition?
- How does the board address differences in information and opinion of whether administrators and teachers are in compliance with standards?
- How can the board know that the administrators are competently implementing the policies of the school?

- more -

# April 6

## All-School Meeting Notes

On April 6, the all-school meeting covered two areas -- roadblocks and opportunities to reach our strategic priorities. Below is a list compiled from several small groups.

### **ROADBLOCKS**

- SPACE CHALLENGED, INSIDE AND OUT
- BALANCE LONG TERM AND SHORT TERM GOALS
- THE ECONOMY
- LOSS OF DEDICATED FACULTY
- STABILITY/INCREASE IN ENROLLMENT
- RESISTANCE TO CHANGE
- TUITION COMPARED TO OTHER PRIVATE SCHOOLS
- LACK OF LEADERSHIP
- COMPETITION FROM THE CHARTER SCHOOLS
- PUBLIC MISCONCEPTION OF KEITH
- DUBIOUS CHANGE
- OPEN COMMUNICATION
- TIME FOR WORKING ON THE GOALS VS DOING OUR EVERYDAY WORK
- BUILDING LOANS
- INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS
- LACK OF CLEAR AND COMUNICATED STRATEGIC PLAN
- PARTICIPATION BY THE WHOLE KEITH TEAM
- PAST HISTORY OF THE TRUSTEES
- LACK OF FOCUS=TEACHERS AND STUDNETS ON CORE CURRICULUM
- UNCLEAR LEADERSHIP
- LACK OF JOB DESCRIPTIONS
- LOW MORAL =ALL TALK/NO ACTION
- UPGRADED TECHNOLOGY
- CURRICULUM SHOULD REFLECT THE SCHOOL GOALS NOT TEACHER - - COMPETENCIES
- COST OF TURNOVER-STAFF AND STUDENTS
- LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT PERSON

### **OPPORTUNITIES**

- TRADITIONS AND HISTORY
- TECHNOLOGY
- MESSAGE TO THE COMMUNITY ABOUT WHAT KEITH IS
- TUITION AND GRANT PROGRAM
- NOT CONSTRAINED BY RED TAPE IE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- NEW LEADERSHIP
- RECOGNIZED TALENT
- DEFINE ADMINISTRATIVE ROLES
- FLEXIBILITY IN SCHEDULES AND DAYS AND TIME
- CARNEY SANDOE CONNECTION=WITH ALL KEITH VOICES PARTICIPATING
- SCHOOL SPIRIT THROUGH SPORTS
- MINE FORMER EXCHANGE STUDENTS
- FAMILIES INVESTED IN THE SCHOOL
- DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
- ARTICULATE OUR SUCCESSES
- LISTEN TO THE WISDOM IN THE SCHOOL
- SPONSORHIP/SPEAKERS SERIES
- ENHANCE ENDOWMENT
- HARVEST EXPERIENCE
- RESERACH COMPETITIVE HOME PAGES
- DEVELOP ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
- LEARN FROM OTHERS-TEACHNOLOGY

- more -

## April 20 Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

The April 20 advisory committee began to finalize the last steps of the strategic planning sessions. Here are the notes from that meeting.

### What has been accomplished?

- Review and analysis of data from the fall parent/faculty/staff survey on current status of Keith Country Day School.
- All school meeting with Mark Murphy, former Keith Head, on critical ways “We can work together to move Keith ahead”.
- Workshop with community experts on Keith Governance Process, what it is, and how it works.
- Developed a draft of what the “Keith graduate of 2025” should look like.
- Reviewed schools vision and mission as they relate to Keith’s founding philosophy and history.
- Prepared a list of opportunities and roadblocks to achieving our Board established strategic priorities.
- Prepared draft of key actions to achieve priorities (June 2009-June 2011)
- Familiarized ourselves with the Keith transition plan (2008-2010).
- Communicated meeting results via all school follow up, e-mails and posting on the web.
- The Keith families of 75 plus participants, consisting of Keith Board, faculty/staff, students and alumni have participated in the meetings.

### Plans for May 4 and May 11 sessions

- May 4<sup>th</sup> and May 11<sup>th</sup> – Answers to questions submitted by participants regarding Keith governance, finalize the draft of Strategic Plan Document. (Contents: mission, vision, history, process overview, Keith graduate of 2025 profile, roadblocks and opportunities, priorities with action steps).
- May – advisory committee will finalize the draft after these meetings and the final draft will be presented at the June Board Meeting.
- In May there will be after school sessions and a draft report sent out to reach parents and friends that have not been able to participate in the morning meetings. **Please join us even if you have attended the morning meetings. Dates and time TBA soon.**
- June Board meeting – will review and approve document so we may begin the action steps immediately.