

Strategic Goals for Faith Christian Academy 2017-2020

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Project Description

It's not the start of the thing but the ending of a thing that makes the difference. When I first started this program, I desired to learn as much as I could about becoming a better leader, a better mentor, and a better person overall. The first day I arrived at the Van Lunen Center, I didn't think I belonged. I was overwhelmed and frankly, being an independent owner and operator of my school, I wondered if I was cut out for what I was involved in. My pedigree and experience did not seem to match up with the other scholars in the room. However, I made the decision to persevere and to make the most out of this experience. This is why I chose three strong, target of all goals that would not only help my school but would allow me to grow as a leader.

Our school was founded in February 2011; however, it did not open until the following year in 2012. Faith Christian Academy of Plant City started with four students and one teacher. The school quickly grew with a 600% increase in population within the first year of opening. At that time, the board members and myself realized that we had done something that was going to do well.

My project is based on strategic goals. We initially started with seven goals for the 2017-2020 years. We quickly learned that we needed to decide on some major goals to ensure that we completed these areas. In this paper, I will tell you about three goals that we are working towards and the progress for each goal. I will also identify what I have learned and how we measure up to each of these goals.

Project Goals

The first goal within our strategic plan was to ensure that we were intentionally Christian. We examined all the different ways that we exemplify Christianity in our school and looked at how we could improve this image in our community. Our first endeavor was to become a resource to our community for homeless relations. We took the time to research different areas within our state that we're exemplifying quality Christian homeless feeding. With research in hand of what places were making a difference in homeless shelters, our school leadership took some of the students to South Florida to volunteer at a homeless feeding facility so that we can learn how to put this into practice in our area. Our desire was to learn the strategic, tactical practices that would allow us to be a resource to our own community upon our return. We were able to harness the necessary skills that would serve as a launching board to feed our local homeless people.

Another methodology that our school utilized to exemplify Christianity was to extend our Faith Awakening activities. In previous years, we had only done this exercise for a couple of days, however this year we decided to extend activities to the fall into the spring. We created an activity called Faith Fest, which showcased some of our area's premiere Christian musicians and ministers during our homecoming event to speak with the students about what it means to be intentionally Christian. We offered a free concert to our students and our community with five local Christian performers that provided their testimonies, instrumental abilities, and vocal talents. This activity gave our students an opportunity to see local artists that they revered in their school and provided them with the necessary tools to become more active in Christianity. In the spring, we administered a full week of worship through dance, song, and local ministers, which provided more tools for the students to be intentionally Christian. We invited our local

community as well as parents and family members to this event. During this time, we had a minister or pastor come to our school every day during chapel time and share the word of God with the students. Each student was given the opportunity to accept Christ into his or her life and to come to the altar for prayer. The initial response from the students and the staff was a reluctant involvement. However, as the week progressed, the scales of this sinful world began to peel back from our students and our faculty and they begin to freely worship. Not only did our students enjoy having different little perspective person into them on a daily basis, three of them gave their lives to Price and start a new walk with the Lord.

Our next goal was to ensure that all children were succeeding. With this goal, our faculty went into collaboration meeting on how we can make our children become more effective and engaged learners. Our faculty made the decision to change from a paper-based testing to a computerized based testing. We decided to look at all of the data from norm referenced testing, NWEA MAP testing, and divide out the students by grade level and then by ability. We also utilized unweighted grade point averages and recent test scores in core classes. By doing this, we were able to identify the strengths as well as the areas that needed the most improvement. After students were identified as potential matches, we met for two weeks to determine which students would benefit most from individual help after school Monday through Thursday weekly. Our administration and our team leaders for middle and high school gathered together to create a schedule for students. We held meetings with parents so they would understand why we put together and in help class (IHC) and we explained to them the dynamic of how this was to help their children become more effective for students who could benefit from individualized attention.

Our last goal was to create a more effective way to build our community and our school initiatives. In brainstorming, I was able to come up with several people that may be a valuable part of an Advisory Council for school. In doing this, we will accomplish a few goals that the school has in mind.

The first school tiered goal is to figure out how we could become more viable in our community. Plant City is an old-fashioned town that focuses mainly on locals only. If you were not born and raised in Plant City, it is extremely hard to be taken in as one of their own. Being a young lady born in Cleveland, Ohio and transplanted Florida, this has made my journey extremely challenging in the Plant City area. Also, being an African American woman, a double minority, has presented many challenges in this Central area of Florida. Several people made it very clear when I opened my school that maybe this was not the best thing for me to do. So, my immediate goal was to get our school involved in community relations and to foster an environment that is conducive to giving back and supporting the plant city area. In creating the council, our board looked at some strategic people that could be placed on the council that would aid in reaching our goal. We searched for affluent, younger people in the Plant City area as well as other well-known aged people in local education. While we are still in the beginning stages with this Advisory Council, we have made great strides to select three to five people that we believe will help us with our goal.

Our second tiered goal is to become absolutely debt-free. When the council meets in the summer of 2018, the goal will be to work with the Advisory Council to make three solid and strategic financial goals for the school. Within these three goals, one of them is to bring abo our second goal is to become absolutely debt-free. When the council meets in the summer of 2018, the goal will be to work with the Advisory Council to make three solid and strategic financial

goals for the school. Within these three goals, one of them is to bring a development officer that will help us and reaching out to people to give towards our school's mission.

The last tiered goal for the Advisory Council is to help us learn how to give back more. Our school is located in a very secluded neighborhood, which makes it difficult for many to find us. However, we feel as we meet the other two goals, we will be looking for a forever home for our schools and in doing so this will allow us to be more visible in our community. This also will allow us the opportunity to participate in many more community activities.

Project Outcomes

With our first goal of being intentionally more Christian, we were able to learn how to effectively reach more students and families in our community. Our tour to South Florida proved to be our first step in beginning our homeless feeding activities in our area and in becoming more benevolent in our community. By taking our students on the tour, it also gave them the will and desire to help others. We now have incorporated a mission driven item to our senior capstone course. This is a required part of graduation, which allows students to learn how to give to their community.

Next, we have taken our testing data and disaggregated it to the point where we can pinpoint exactly where we need to help our children. This is huge for us as we have never done this before. Normally, with our old testing system, we had to wait until the end of the school year and even sometimes over the summer to get the test results back. At that point we always felt defeated because we knew that we weren't going to be able to help those children at such a late date in the year. Now because we are doing computerized based testing three times a year, we are able to catch any areas of deficiency or high achievements early enough that we can change a child's programming as well as we are able to suggest different things to help the child succeed

or excel. We can even make changes in the first semester or in the second semester which allows us to help that child make better grades and to follow through on the deficiencies that they may have. We were also able to incorporate a help class, which was offered for students that fell below a certain GPA and desire to get the grades back up to the level where they need to be. This was done in all high school and middle school classrooms. To piggyback on that idea, our elementary teachers were able to make smaller communities within classrooms that allow them to break up into reading groups not by grade availability. With these changes, we were able to see greater depth and growth as well as many more students reaching their academic goals.

Lastly, with our third goal in creating our advisory Council we are ready to begin. We have now selected three individuals that will form our first council and we plan to meet in early August 2018 to discuss our three-tiered goals that we decided on as a board and as a faculty. We are excited about what God is going to do for school and what we are going to do in our community.

Learning Outcomes

Within this project, I have learned to be more courageous, bolder, and more passionate about my craft. Being a part of the Van Lunen Fellowship program, has given me more strength and tenacity and creating and achieving goals. I have now learned how to take better charge of my own school than I thought. Learning that it takes a village to raise a school has brought in my initial mindset from just me trying to do everything to valuing my employees as well as the strategic community that I have been placed in. I am now learning how to depend on others and how to become a better leader in my school and in my community. **Please see attached strategic goals approved by FCA Board of Directors and Faculty in fall of 2017.*

Faith Christian Academy of Plant City
Strategic Goals for 2017-2020

1. Mission Statement Revision

- a. Mission Statement should be reviewed to discuss shortening the statement and making it more impactful.

Action Plan: Build 2-4 week review of mission statement, 2-3 month writing of new mission statement.

2. All Children Succeeding

- a. Ensuring that all classroom activities will provide strategic planning to ensure students don't fail.
- b. Creating an environment for inclusive learning and that we are working towards helping all children succeed in their classroom environment and beyond.

Action Plan:

3. Becoming an Asset to Our Community

- a. Giving back to our area in a meaningful, impactful way.
- b. Being involved in community events and being volunteers in many community activities.

Action Plan:

4. Becoming Fiscally Sound

- a. Receiving major grants for our school to contribute to purchasing property, purchasing equipment, and creating a savings plan for the school.
- b. Capital Campaigns to be started to seek donations from our philanthropic activities within the Plant City area and Hillsborough County.

Action Plan:

5. Creation of an Advisory Council

- a. The council will be comprised of affluent and influential people within our area to help us become more involved in our community and to make wise decisions in our growth while staying fully Christian.
- b. Meeting with advisory council 3 times a year to engage in civic conversations that enable our school to prosper and grow.
- c. Networking towards gaining charitable contributions and earmarked philanthropic gifts within the Plant City area.

Action Plan:

6. Be More Intentionally Christian

- a. Everything we do needs to represent Christ
- b. We are a unique asset to the Plant City area and we need to express our individuality as a private school

- c. We need to get our school out into the community so that people know we are a resource to the area as a Christian refuge for people that need us.
- 7. Finding a Place to Live
 - a. Seeking property for our forever home.
 - b. Starting capital campaign funding for down payment
 - c. Hiring an architect/architect builder to build the plans for our school.

Action Plan: