

Strategic Planning Cycle at Redeemer Christian School 2016-2017 School Year Luke Butler—Head of School

What I Did

Beginning in the Fall of 2016, the school board approved a strategic planning process. While not employing Jim Marsh in an official consulting capacity, we did lean on his wisdom and guidance throughout this cycle as he provided materials and answered my questions along the way. After a board retreat in the Fall, we initiated a parent survey, set up SWOT analyses with different stakeholder groups and began putting together subcommittees to address key areas of the school operation. The earliest and most foundational work was the Mission, Vision and Core Values subcommittee. I led this group in meeting weekly from November through March as we worked through revisions of the mission and vision statements. We also formulated a core values statement and a portrait of a Redeemer graduate, allowing us to quantify who we are as well as our aspirations for our graduating students. Jim helped me boil down the data from the survey and SWOT meetings to key in on four major areas: School Program, Building and Grounds, Faculty Recruitment and Retention, and Church-School Relationship/Outreach. All but the last subcommittee convened work in late January, with the Church-School subcommittee being tabled. Members of the Redeemer leadership team (administrators and key staff members) led each subcommittee in meeting throughout the Spring semester, each producing 3-4 major recommendations by early May. All of the recommendations have been compiled and will be given to the board to work through and approve in the June and July meetings.

What Did I Learn?

Having never led a strategic planning process, I learned how to design and execute one in a general but thoughtful way. Besides the structure, pacing and key questions involved in the process, I also learned about how and when to include stakeholder groups in the different aspects of the planning. The next time I engage in a strategic planning cycle, I intend to engage more parents and students in the process earlier and more often. I anticipate we would take a little longer than one school year to work through the process next time, specifically to prepare parents, students and the broader stakeholder community to participate more fully. Finally, this process confirmed much of the good work God is doing at Redeemer as well as the good work that needs doing over the next few years.

What Difference Did It Make at Redeemer?

This process allowed many of our newer staff and faculty to learn about our history as well as to contribute to the foundational statements like mission, vision, core values and portrait of a Redeemer graduate. It allowed me as a relatively new head of school (I am completing my 5th year) to have a hand in shaping these foundational statements and to cast a broader vision for what we can become over time. Finally, in the midst of a capital campaign and substantial enrollment growth, it has allowed us as an organization to drill down on who we are and who want to be, giving us the perfect opportunity to refocus on our mission as a ministry.