

Developing the Long-Term Strategic Plan for Intermountain Christian School, SLC, UT, 2016

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Last July while at the Prince Conference Center engaging in the teaching of the first week of the Van Lunen Center (VLC) I realize that though I wanted to jump headlong into a capital project, I was getting ahead of where Intermountain Christian School (ICS) needed to be. The VLC faculty kept referring to the school's strategic plan that flowed out of the mission. ICS had just adopted a new mission statement that was driving us in many ways. But a strategic plan? That was something we simply didn't have. That's when I shifted gears and decided it was time to develop a comprehensive strategic plan for ICS.

In November, under the guidance of Jim Marsh, we began the process with a gathering of 50 stakeholders from the ICS community. While breaking into smaller groups, we discussed and shared challenges, dreams and questions about the future of the school. The school community really caught the value of having a plan that is executed and followed in five year increments with consistency in leadership as one of the keys to long-term, sustainable success of a school. The community also resonated with the possibility of a plan not driven by accreditation standards alone as well as one that involved nearly 100 people by the time the process would be complete.

After the November meeting, with the help of Jim Marsh, we identified six priority areas on which to concentrate in the strategic plan. Task forces were established strategically including a broad group of participants. By March, each group had presented recommendations to the administration. After a review with the faculty and initial review with the school board, the administration made finishing touches to the plan as well. The hope is that ICS will have a board approved strategic plan in place by the late June board meeting.

Highlights of the strategic plan are as follows:

- *Academic Program* – Curriculum mapping and alignment, intentional biblical integration, technology integration and support programs developed for struggling students and gifted students.
- *Enrollment Growth, Marketing and Communications* – Developing the ICS story for marketing materials, more intentional social media campaigns and establishing diversity task force.
- *Financial Sustainability* – Gradual goals established of tuition covering 100% of expenses, paying down unearned revenue, establishing a 15% reserve, expanding charitable giving, establishing a finance committee and establishing mechanisms to avoid additional unearned revenue.
- *Mission and Core Values* – Finalizing core values and philosophy of education, commissioning a board subcommittee to determine covenantal/missional enrollment, developing programs for students to explore identity in Christ and broadening community relations.
- *Governance and Decision Making* – Educating the community on the role, function and structure of the board, establishing board training, establishing skill set goals represented on the board, and developing an alternative governance model beyond ultimate control by the EFree Church.
- *Facilities and Ownership* – Due to growth we are establishing goals of on campus expansion including doubling classroom capacity, a performing arts center/church sanctuary and gym expansion, improvements in the interim and pursuing off-campus outdoor athletic property.

These are lofty goals but ones we feel God is calling us to. I don't know where I'd be personally or where ICS would be organizationally without the guidance of the Van Lunen Center. I will be eternally grateful for the contribution the VLC has made to Christian education in Utah.

