



[Revised DRAFT Nov 16, 2015]
Hawbridge 2020 Strategic Vision

About this document: The Hawbridge School operated for more than a decade around a set of principles and a mission statement, but never had any kind of planning document. With former-director Dr. Huth retiring in 2013, and with the school experiencing significant change in subsequent years, the board determined that it would be very helpful to develop a strategic vision in order to 1) articulate core school values, 2) create a compelling vision for the future (what Hawbridge will look like in the year 2020) and 3) provide the board and other key actors in the school (e.g. PASTA, the faculty) with guidance and priorities for decisions that arise in the coming years.

After surveying the Hawbridge community in August, 2014, a vision steering committee made up of teachers, students, parents, and board members was appointed to develop a vision and goals for the school that the board will use as a guide for planning over the next five years. The committee identified themes based on the survey feedback, then sought additional input at events with students and with the broader school community, then worked on drafting the vision, goals and potential actions in this document.

Our vision is of an enduring, intimate and caring community of educators, parents, and students, working together to create an environment where all students thrive. A school of excellence built on a foundation of inclusiveness, mutual respect, personal attention, exploration, an inspired and inspiring faculty, and community engagement, with special emphasis on environmental stewardship and the arts.

This vision will be realized through attending to six mutually supporting goal areas of: Inclusive Culture; Individualized Instruction; Individualized, Exploratory Learning; Inspired and Inspiring Teachers; Sustainability; and Community Engagement.

GOAL AREA: **Caring, Inclusive Culture**

All Hawbridge faculty, staff, students, and families work together, in a spirit of community, to ensure that all students are welcomed and feel valued for all the things that make them unique, including their distinctive cultures, identities and personalities and that the school benefits from the active engagement of families.

Strategy: Prioritize *inclusiveness* as a pillar of school culture. Ensure that Hawbridge is a *welcoming* community and seek to eliminate barriers that might make Hawbridge more exclusive or less diverse for students, families and the community. Action steps include:

- Maintain metrics on student demographics and include those metrics in reports to the board.
- Include as part of an annual school community survey questions about perceptions around cultural inclusion. Assess how well students in particular feel that their unique identities are honored (e.g. gender, race, ethnicity, religious preference, sexual orientation, etc.).
- Explore options for transportation and a lunch program that could help remove those significant barriers to attendance.
- Monitor on an annual basis the incidence of reports of bullying or related events.
- Create a tradition of beginning and end of year potlucks (or similar type events) that focus on welcoming new families and building community.
- Explore how information technology and social media can be better utilized to build community among Hawbridge families, students, and staff.
- Empower PASTA to have more of a leadership role in building community-wide inclusion and participation.

Strategy: Formally adopt a school-wide statement and policy on diversity and inclusiveness that enshrines the “bully-free” dimension of the school’s culture. Action steps include:

- Draft and approve school-wide statement on diversity, inclusion and community culture that captures the essence of a school culture that supports the vision and outlines how our “community” ideally functions.
- Ensure that policies and handbooks are consistent with the statement.
- Include questions relating to diversity, inclusion, and community in an annual school community survey.

GOAL AREA: **Individualized Instruction**

Hawbridge is committed to maintaining small class sizes in order to preserve an intimate learning environment and ensure that all students can and do receive individual attention that engages and embraces their varied learning styles.

Strategy: Board (working with administration) annually sets specific caps per grade prior to the spring admission lottery. Wait list admittances determined by those caps.

Strategy: Carefully track average, minimum, and maximum class sizes by teacher, by grade, and by core/elective/AP classification. Plan grade caps, staffing levels, and course offerings in such a way, year-to-year, that the small average class sizes are consistently maintained over the long-run, and even reduced in classes most impacted by class size. Action steps include:

- When planning for next school year in terms of numbers in each grade and staffing levels, use projections of class sizes as key decision factor. While in some cases one might have an elective or AP course with less than the recent average (around 17-18), and occasionally there will be a need for a class with slightly more than that, when one averages all classes per teacher, the goal should be as close to maintaining (or reducing) the average as possible and avoiding any significant outliers.
- Where an individual teacher's average is significantly above the school average in one year, effort should be made to reduce that number in subsequent years.
- Exceptions to the above (e.g. study hall) should be clearly spelled out by the administration and board in annual planning settings.
- This goal assumes that current funding levels and cost of inputs remain more-or-less consistent.
- Make class size by teacher, by grade, and by required and elective courses, a measure that is regularly in front of the board.
- Advertise class size data as this has been and continues to be a *strategic advantage* of the Hawbridge School.

Strategy: Continue historical commitment to develop individual plans of study for each student that meet their particular needs. This has long been a Hawbridge tradition, and we will strive to maintain this practice as part of an individualized instruction model that goes along with cohesive teacher-student relationships and small classes.

- Develop clear protocol for class scheduling that eases administrative burden while also allowing maximum flexibility for students. Explore options for better utilizing technology in this process.
- Include questions about curriculum in annual school community survey, so that the curriculum reflects student needs/demand as much as possible.

- Explore ways to increase opportunities for student-teacher interaction outside of class time.

GOAL AREA: Individualized, Exploratory Learning

Hawbridge will foster a spirit of exploration in students by providing opportunities to explore their interests and expand their creative and critical thinking skills through an academically rigorous curriculum that is implemented both inside and outside of the classroom. This fuels students to become lifelong learners and compassionate citizens equipped with a sense of environmental stewardship and leadership skills that prepare them for life.

Strategy: Provide an inquiry-based curricula that meets the needs of all students. Action steps include:

- Provide professional development on project based learning and interdisciplinary units of study.
- Provide professional development on differentiation for student learning needs within the curricula.
- Develop and implement interdisciplinary units of study.
- Develop and implement lesson plans that provide for differentiation of student learning needs and interests.

Strategy: Integrate outdoor and environmental education and stewardship across the curriculum.

Action steps include:

- Teachers seek to integrate the outdoors in their course planning where it can enhance learning goals.
- Provide professional development around this aspect of teaching and learning.
- Expand outdoor learning program to include more extra and co-curricular experiences and seek to increase student participation in those programs.
- Track number of students participating in Hawbridge-Outdoors, Envirothon, and other related activities.
- Have teacher evaluation and feedback include this dimension of the Hawbridge curriculum.

Strategy: Integrate arts and critical and creative thinking into courses. Action steps include:

- Teachers seek to integrate the arts/critical thinking in their course planning where it can enhance learning goals.
- Provide professional development on critical and creative thinking.
- Expand arts program to include more extra and co-curricular experiences and seek to increase student participation in those programs.

- ❑ Track number of students participating in Hawbridge Players, arts-focused clubs and other related activities.
- ❑ Have teacher evaluation and feedback include this dimension of the Hawbridge curriculum.

Strategy: Provide and support opportunities for students to initiate and participate in clubs, co-curricular, extracurricular and other leadership opportunities. Action steps include:

- ❑ Ensure daily schedule allows for in-school club experiences.
- ❑ Revitalize and utilize student council to increase student participation in leadership and decision-making.
- ❑ Gather input and feedback on current offerings from student council.
- ❑ Enhance/change the club, co-curricular, extra-curricular offerings based on student input and feasibility.
- ❑ Include in school community annual survey questions about satisfaction with club, co-curricular, extra-curricular opportunities.

GOAL AREA: Inspired and Inspiring Teachers

Hawbridge attracts, retains, and empowers passionate educators. Faculty are encouraged to utilize/adopt a variety of teaching styles, models, and methods to ensure the long-term success of students. Hawbridge teachers should:

- ✓ *Believe in the mission and values of the school*
- ✓ *Be passionate about their subject(s)*
- ✓ *Feel their work is valued*
- ✓ *Have the freedom to teach the way they think is best for the students*
- ✓ *Be supported by the school for classroom decisions*
- ✓ *Be placed in situation that lets them succeed as teachers*
- ✓ *Collaborate with each other*
- ✓ *Be committed to excellence; utilizing evaluation from administration, peers, students, and parents to improve*
- ✓ *Communicate effectively with students and parents*

Strategy: *Attract* highly qualified teachers with diverse and eclectic backgrounds, who are passionate about teaching in a place where they can make a difference. Action steps include:

- ❑ Develop a recruitment plan that involves the school leadership team.
- ❑ Ensure that there will be a sufficient number of teachers who meet required state licensing requirements.
- ❑ Provide professional development support for teachers to acquire the credentials necessary to meet state licensing requirements or add new licenses.
- ❑ Provide comprehensive orientation to new staff to inculcate Hawbridge culture.

Strategy: *Retain* excellent teachers and develop a school climate conducive to teacher satisfaction and success. Action steps include:

- ❑ Create and maintain a competitive salary structure and provide annual employment agreements so teachers are clear about compensation structure.
- ❑ Ensure that teachers are offered the opportunity to further their own education and academic success, both in content and pedagogy.
- ❑ Establish a baseline of data for Teacher Working Conditions (TWC) that takes teachers' stated priorities (above) into account. Measure TWC annually and include this data as part of executive director evaluation and make adjustments as needed.
- ❑ Use teacher mentoring program to ensure continuity of culture and commitment as new teachers join the Hawbridge community.
- ❑ Encourage community celebration and support of faculty through opportunities such as the traditional holiday gift exchange and Teacher Appreciation Week.

Strategy: *Empower* teachers so that each one of them feels fully invested in the school. Action steps include:

- ❑ Establish a teacher leadership team, including the faculty representative to the board of directors that provides regular feedback about school climate and is involved in school decision-making.
- ❑ Provide professional development opportunities for teachers based on evaluation, student data and broader school initiatives. Each teacher should have a growth/development plan.
- ❑ Establish both formal and informal teacher feedback process to ensure teachers have opportunities to observe one another, receive regular and ongoing feedback about their work from administration, students and peers, and have good information to guide their growth/development plans.

GOAL AREA: **Sustainability**

The school is financially and organizationally stable through a steady revenue stream derived from student enrollment plus external funds (fundraising and other revenue-generating enterprises), and a stable physical plant situation.

Strategy: Build into budget a separate building maintenance reserve fund. Action steps include:

- ❑ Study best practices for maintenance/contingency funds for similar organizations.
- ❑ Develop implementation plan with target date for reserve to be fully funded.

Strategy: Maintain a reserve (fund balance) of at least three months operating costs. Action steps include:

- ❑ Track current and projected reserve (fund balance) on all budget documents.
- ❑ Once minimum achieved, do not go below that amount except in cases of financial exigency.

Strategy: Develop at least one revenue-generating enterprise (e.g. summer camp, after school care) that is consistent with the school’s values and mission, but also is a significant revenue-generator (to help decrease the percentage of the general fund that comes from state/local revenues). Action steps include:

- ❑ Conduct feasibility studies of potential enterprises.
- ❑ Offer one program on a pilot basis.
- ❑ Expand, make permanent if program meets stated goals.

Strategy: Build a development capacity that is able to generate additional revenue from private sources (gifts) as well as grants (again, to help decrease the percentage of the general fund that comes from state/local revenues). Action steps include:

- ❑ Create a development committee of the board, and investigate establishing a nonprofit foundation, to oversee these activities. Possibly include non-board members with expertise in fundraising to join effort and create school-wide development strategy.
- ❑ Explore having a staff member with responsibilities that include grant writing and administration.
- ❑ Create marketing plan to aid in development activities.
- ❑ Work with PASTA to continue fundraising efforts (silent auction, tools for teachers, etc.) and better coordinate those fundraising activities with others. Identify specific annual goals for PASTA fundraising and how the funds will be utilized.

GOAL AREA: Community Engagement and Partnerships

Hawbridge builds strong ties with the Saxapahaw community and broader region from which we draw students.

Strategy: Add service dimension to a student’s path to graduation either by having a service requirement for graduation or by created a special designation of “service scholar” (or something like that). Seek to add service dimension to interdisciplinary units. Action steps include:

- ❑ Identify local liaison to identify volunteer/service opportunities within the community.
- ❑ Conduct a feasibility analysis on how to implement identified volunteer/service opportunities within the existing curriculum (i.e., voluntary versus mandated, graduation as well as within interdisciplinary units). Have study group made up of relevant stakeholders explore this.
- ❑ Work with school administration to implement proposed volunteer/service opportunities.

Strategy: Identify internships and apprenticeships for current students with local businesses.

Action steps include:

- ❑ Identify local liaison to help procure internship/apprenticeship opportunities.
- ❑ Create a summer internship/apprenticeship program for current students and recent graduates.
- ❑ Work with PASTA to advertise internship/apprenticeship opportunities for Hawbridge students within the local community and broader region from which Hawbridge students come from.

Strategy: Utilize the Hawbridge Helpers club on a consistent basis and elevate its status as a core feature of the Hawbridge culture. Action steps include:

- ❑ Ask the Hawbridge Helpers club to identify its collective expertise and interest at the beginning of each school year and convey that expertise and interest to PASTA and the school's administration.
- ❑ Identify a liaison from within the Hawbridge Helpers club to maintain regular, yearlong communication with PASTA and the school's administration regarding existing and emerging opportunities.
- ❑ Create a web portal (or Facebook page?) for the school community to advertise opportunities volunteer/service opportunities for the Hawbridge Helpers.
- ❑ Celebrate Hawbridge Helpers successes as part of year-end awards assembly.