

# OUR PATH FORWARD

a Strategic Plan





It's time to reconnect.

Dear Presbyterian School Community,

We invite you to reconnect with Presbyterian School as we begin to emerge from such a challenging time—so much of which has been spent apart. Although many things in the world have changed, the heart and soul of PS remains—we are a community you can **believe in** and **belong to** because we subscribe to the words of John Dewey that *“Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.”*

*Our Path Forward* envisions the exciting future we can have together. No matter what part of this amazing city you live in, no matter where you worship, no matter what your background, PS will give you the kind of community you’ve been longing for — a neighborhood school that transcends neighborhoods imbued by a joy extended from each child and to each child’s family. In fact, “Family” is the first word in our Mission, and our goal in the years ahead will not be limited to helping children thrive but to helping families of all kinds thrive. We will invest in the whole family because we believe families need connection and community in a disconnected age. Students will build lifelong friendships here, and so will families—finding friendship, comfort, inspiration, and support.

This connection and support will be *Rooted in God’s Love* reflecting the essence of our Christian Mission. Harkening back to Teddy Roosevelt’s understanding that true character is forged in the crucible of life’s many “arenas,” in the future we are casting, families will learn that they are **not alone** in those arenas as we invite children and parents alike to develop a

spiritual compass for trustworthy, inner guidance.

Finally, the future we envision here will be uniquely connected to the exceptional city and neighborhood in which we live. Teaching and learning in the heart of Houston’s Museum District will deepen and amplify every person’s experience. Fieldwork, STEAM-based courses, and cross-curricular projects will continue to play a pivotal role for students, and partnerships with a host of organizations will provide opportunities for all of us to grow our curiosity and creativity and to answer our collective drive for purpose and meaning.

While you read, we encourage you to look beyond *what* we do to catch a far more important glimpse into *why* we do it. We hope our future vision and goals resonate and offer your family something more to encounter, something that is bigger than merely “school.” If education truly is life itself, then in the future we envision at PS, we are the place where the education of a child shapes the life and future of families, of communities, and even of humanity. Walk with us as we shape that life and that future...one child, one family, at a time.

Sincerely,



Dr. Mark Carleton  
Head of School

# FAMILY, SCHOOL AND CHURCH

united in the education and  
support of each Child.



our Mission



PORTRAIT  
 OF A PS  
 PANTHER



our Core  
Values



# RESPECT

it's about you and me

# PERSEVERANCE

it's about staying in the game

# INTEGRITY

it's about being the best possible me



# COMPASSION


it's about showing your love

# COURAGE

it's about daring to try

# GRATITUDE

it's about appreciating today



it's about  
Reflecting  
God's Love

We are a  
school where



**MEANINGFUL  
JOYFUL LEARNING  
ROOTED IN GOD'S LOVE  
EVERY DAY  
FOR EVERY CHILD**

happens





We believe we are different.

# MEANINGFUL

- We believe in
- Challenging academics that cultivate critical, creative, and collaborative thinking
  - Dedicated time to THINK and research ideas; to MAKE real-world connections from our thinking; and then to TALK about what we've made in a variety of contexts and settings
  - Each student's capacity to critique, apply, evaluate, and construct learning in meaningful and authentic ways

## So this is what we do...

- We question old assumptions that define student success too narrowly and stifle love of learning.
- We favor research and methods to grow our students' curiosity and creativity and to answer their drive for purpose and meaning.
- We promote agency, choice, and challenge through active, project-based learning that is cross-curricular, hands-on and "in the field."



BE YOU, **PS**  
BE BRILLIANT





PS: ENJOY THE  
JOURNEY





# JOYFUL

We believe that



- Joyful learning happens everywhere, especially when every adult in our community leads with it and every child expresses it by connecting their passions and interests.
- A high joy factor is important because happier students achieve at higher levels, and all students are hardwired to connect their intellectual lives with their emotional lives.
- Taking risks builds an earned confidence which results in greater success and lifelong joy.

## So this is what we do...

- We learn in classrooms within walking distance of over 20 museums, Rice University, and the Texas Medical Center bringing joy into our teaching and learning. Partnerships are in our DNA.
- We are in partnership with a globally-focused church who has our passion for family and community outreach.
- We share our campus with a forward-thinking Museum of Fine Arts who models our penchant for creativity and collaboration.

# ROOTED IN GOD'S LOVE



- A loving God whose truth is timeless, whose compassion knows no bounds, whose forgiveness sustains us, and whose grace defies our understanding
- Sharing this God in inclusive, intentional and Christ-centered ways.
- A partnership among Family, School and Church that creates an optimal learning environment.

## So this is what we do...

- We nurture the minds, bodies, hearts, and souls of our students so they understand who they are as a child of God - with unique gifts to cherish, develop and share.
- We want families of all kinds to thrive because “Family” is the first word in our mission... here, entire families find friendship, comfort, inspiration, and support.
- We give our families the kind of soul-filled, loving community they long for—a Christ-centered neighborhood school that transcends neighborhoods—no matter where they live in Houston.

A scenic view of a church with a tall steeple and surrounding city buildings at sunset. The church is a brick building with a prominent white steeple topped with a cross. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow over the scene. In the background, modern city buildings are visible, including one with a sign that reads "H. Rouse Caffery". The foreground shows the roof and upper walls of the church building, which is surrounded by lush green trees.

**PS: GREAT  
STORIES  
BEGIN HERE**





WHERE  
WILL **PS**  
TAKE YOU?



# EVERY CHILD

We believe that



- Each child's success is influenced by every adult in our community and this success is made more tantalizing in a culture that is characterized by respect for all.
- Success is individual and personal: it's dependent upon encouragement from teachers and peers; and will ultimately help define a different and better understanding of success beyond our walls.
- The success of one child shouldn't come at the expense of the success of any other child.

So this is what we do...

- We have confidence in every child. We inspire future leaders to value others, grow in belief and understanding, value character above accomplishment, and embrace confidence that lasts a lifetime.
- We challenge every child into a confident awareness of their unique strengths, as well as the strengths and needs of others.
- Through Christ's example, we build communities with empathy and grace, giving children and families a confident vision of who they are and who they can become.

## This is our vision for the future.

Everyday, Presbyterian Schools delights in and celebrates creativity and imagination within a close-knit learning community rooted in Christian values, where the next generation of successful families are growing into their full potential, where faculty are dedicated partners in the learning experience, where neighborhood partnerships are critical and where students are actively shaping their own exciting futures.

**LEARN**



creative curiosity

**GROW**



community partnerships

**LOVE**



family culture

**GO**



confident leadership

# LEARN

Our students and their families learn about their world, how it functions and how to function within it through collaborative projects and joyful inquiry. The PS curriculum is focused on how children learn in addition to what they learn. Our challenging program celebrates learning more than grades, projects more than tests and collaboration more than memorization.

## Our Strategic Goals

1. Celebrate curiosity, creativity, and wonder as an integral part of the learning process.
2. Value personal best academic growth as a vital component of our approach to mastery.
3. Inspire learners to embrace challenge in order to develop character and confidence.
4. Recruit, support and inspire trustees, school leadership, faculty and staff through ongoing personal and professional development and learning opportunities.
5. Write the narrative for best practices in K-12 education to offer the future of education to families right now.





PS:  
**YOU SEE A SANDBOX  
I SEE MY CLASSROOM**





FROM **PS**  
TO ANYWHERE



# GROW

We expand and deepen our partnerships in a diverse neighborhood where all the members of our community grow into their work in the world. PS students learn everywhere among a wide range of cultural, educational, science, technology, and business partners. This relationship is reciprocal. We are an idea incubator and testing ground for new approaches and thinking. Our relationships are so strong and successful that our partners express interest in our future.

## Our Strategic Goals

1. Build a strong campus identity with contiguous neighbors in order to leverage community partnerships with institutions of the arts, sciences, businesses and higher education to advance innovation and learning.
2. Explore opportunities to grow through campus expansion, imagining and building new spaces that support our dynamic growth, further our connected and collaborative culture, and promote our unique vision for excellence in teaching and learning.
3. Seek innovative outreach opportunities with our globally-focused church partner.
4. Advance innovation while serving as an incubator for new ideas, partnerships, and processes.
5. Cultivate a new brand of volunteers involving vocational and entrepreneurial social leadership.



# LOVE

We know that children who are in a positive relationship with God are more likely to have lives of meaning and purpose, so we invite our children and their families into this relationship through the life, love, and teachings of Jesus. Our families benefit from the School's role as a gathering place where relationships and supporting community is just as important as our children's education. Because we emphasize respect, compassion, and integrity education here really is a "family experience" that helps us all understand ourselves and how we should act in the world.

## Our Strategic Goals

1. Demonstrate our core values to incoming and prospective families.
2. Ensure our parents/families are involved and growing together with their children at Presbyterian School.
3. Strengthen the sense of community within PS by inviting all constituencies to thrive in their relationships with each other and with God.
4. Reflect the broader diverse Houston community in our faculty, family, and student populations.
5. Ensure that our students' lives are balanced, ethical, and healthy.





Cristina Masson '04  
Vice President of Finance

PS  
FOR LIFE



READY,  
SET, **PS!**



# GO

We go into the world, into communities, and into individual relationships with an education that brings us all closer to God. We develop the next generation of leaders through the process of self-discovery. Our students are both challenged and nurtured to find their passions, realize their purpose and connect with the world. PS students will learn to share their talents with confidence and in service to others, to embrace differences, and to understand that Christ's love knows no boundaries.

## Our Strategic Goals

1. Strengthen the diversity and cultural proficiency of our trustees, school leadership, faculty, staff, and students.
2. Give children and families a confident vision of who they are and whom they can become.
3. Educate students in the civic responsibility of good citizenship to uncover and develop their passions to shape the future of Houston.
4. Inspire families to embrace their strengths in the service of others.
5. Create a sustainable financial model that expands Presbyterian School's impact into the future.



**to be continued...**



that's right, this is  
only the beginning