Almaty International School

Strategic Plan
Executive Summary
2015—2022
Oversight, Implementation and Review

Almaty International School (AIS) has created a strategic plan to improve, enhance and define its culture and community. An independent committee will oversee and report the implementation of the plan. The committee will represent members of all constituency groups:

- Strategic Planning Chair
- Middle States Association Accreditation Coordinator
- 2 Parents
- 2 Students
- 2 Faculty Members
- 1 School Administrator
- 1 Staff Member
- 1 Corporate Sponsor
- 1 member of the Diplomatic Corps

The Director of the School, Advisory Board, and Administration are responsible and accountable for the implementation of the plan. The Strategic Planning Committee which serves as an independent entity charged with the observation and recommendations for the plan’s contents and application.

An Annual Report will be published by 15 June of each year. This is, in conjunction with the Director of the School’s Annual Report, required by our umbrella organization, Quality Schools International (QSI). The contents of the report will summarize the projects completed, in progress, or which require additional attention or time.

AIS wishes to celebrate the community’s progress and achievements. To promote awareness and transparency, the school will make the Executive Summary of the Strategic Plan and the Annual Report available in three formats:

- The Director of the School will schedule open forums for constituents to discuss the Strategic Plan’s implementation and evaluation with direct support from the Strategic Planning Committee.
- Each family will receive a print copy of the report. Additional print copies will be made available to new families, affiliated corporations, NGO’s and the Diplomatic Corps.
- The report will be available for download on the AIS website.
Almaty International School Vision

Almaty International School is a community for those seeking mastery learning.

Quality Schools International

Mission Statement

Virtually every five-year-old comes to school eager to learn. The mission of Quality Schools International (QSI) is to keep this urge to learn alive in every child in QSI schools. Our schools are established to provide in the English language a quality education for students in the cities we serve. These students are the children of parents of many nationalities who have come to a foreign country, usually for a limited stay of a year or more. Some students are permanent residents, citizens of the host country.

Our schools follow a logical model of education which measures success by the accomplishments and attitudes of our students. We believe that all of our students can succeed, that their successes encourage them to continue in a pattern of success, and that it is the schools' responsibility to provide the conditions for success. These conditions include: developing clear statements in measurable terms of what the student will do to demonstrate mastery of learning, ii) providing the time and resources needed for each student to attain mastery, and iii) ensuring that students engage in learning at a level which is challenging, and yet a level for which each student has the prerequisite skills necessary for success.

We believe in providing an aesthetically pleasing physical surrounding under the charge of a caring staff who believe their students will be successful, and who use time with the students as a resource for learning rather than as a boundary condition to determine when a unit of learning begins and ends. We believe in providing resources such as books, learning materials, and educational technology. In the world today children need to become proficient in the use of computers and related technology as tools to accomplish a myriad of tasks.

Finally, we believe in working with parents to encourage our students to adopt qualities of living which lead to success long after formal schooling has ended. These include universally accepted "success orientations" of trustworthiness, kindness/politeness, responsibility, independent endeavor, concern for others, group interaction, and aesthetic appreciation.

Statement of School Specific Conditions

Almaty International School will provide a safe and nurturing community of empowered and successful learners who celebrate diversity, practice mutual respect to all people, and partner with families, creating a foundation for lifelong learning.

Our motto is SUCCESS FOR ALL.
Introduction from the Director

VISION AND MISSION

As the Director of Almaty International School, I have the distinct privilege of being the leader of a community that works with one vision. Almaty International School is a community for those seeking mastery learning. I witness everyday faculty and staff, alike, working tirelessly to bring our families closer in our community.

By leading our student body with our Success Orientations, a constant commitment to our curriculum and instruction and focusing on the whole child, we aim to create a safe and nurturing environment comprised of academic rigor, artistic expression, and a healthy lifestyle and competition.

Under the umbrella of Quality Schools International, we will improve our school, over the next seven years, focusing on three categories:

- **Academic:** We will provide transparent academic policies and expectations, and expand our professional development for our teachers, in addition to becoming an Advanced Placement Capstone school.

- **Infrastructure:** We will provide an infrastructure with subject-specific facilities, technology integration, while protecting the environment and being fiscally responsible.

- **Communication:** We will provide a unified, transparent message with our students, families, faculty, alumni and others with policy, print material, email/social media, and social functions to engage our community.

This Strategic Plan is a “living and breathing document” which helps us accomplish our goals with the flexibility in an uncertain world. I can say with certainty, Almaty International School is moving in a very positive direction and I ask the members of our community to make our plan a Success for All.

Faithfully,

John Newton, Jr.
Director
Message from the Chair

PLANNING PROMOTES PROGRESS AND PROSPERITY

Upon our arrival to Kazakhstan in the Fall of 2014, my family and I discovered one of the world’s greatest jewels—Almaty International School (AIS). As a new eight-year-old teacher, I had the opportunity to see minds grow, hearts swell and feet run. Although, I had taught for 16 years, I saw a new perspective of learning in action:

Mastery Learning. This is what makes AIS so unique.

I also saw many people in our community searching for clarity and direction. AIS has grown over the past twenty years and has overcome many obstacles. Many stakeholders have dreams, desires and ambitions for our school. After a two year process of self study, accreditation, brainstorming, committee work, research and conversation, AIS has created a plan for progress and prosperity, making our school one of the leading institutions in Central Asia.

Our thoughts and ideas have been heard and the reality begins. We will strengthen our community’s communication and participation; provide our students the opportunity to maximize their potential; work with parents to prepare them as artists, athletes, and scholars and, most importantly, global citizens.

Our committee invites all community members and stakeholders on the incredible journey of implementing our Strategic Plan. Whether you are a part of it for one year or its entirety, we hope you will participate in making AIS a more progressive and prosperous community. Embrace our vision:

Almaty International School is a community for those seeking mastery learning.

Thank you to the members of the 2014—2016 committees for your service, time, and dedication. In addition, thank you to all the people who shared their dreams, ideas, and opinions. Regardless of the size of your contribution, you were heard and your voice is important. Now is the time for action! Let’s go!

With confidence,

John Christian, M.A.
Chair, Strategic Plan Committee
AIS is committed to creating an academic culture whose graduates will thrive in the global community.

To create a culture of lifelong learners who will thrive, AIS wants to strengthen its foundation of a rigorous curriculum through a variety of initiatives. Mentoring new faculty and staff who join our community is the initial step. Giving them the understanding of our school culture, policies and expectations can provide our students and their families more comfort and continuity. This initiative allows us to update and implement transparent policies in admissions, academics, and attendance.

Attendance at AIS is an opportunity for our students to grow in the traditional classroom, but 21st century learning in a global community demands 21st century connections. Any time, any place, anywhere is a classroom. Departmental collaboration and experiential learning will strengthen our students. Creative Problem Solving, Subject Integration, Service and Project Based Learning, and other educational initiatives will prepare our students for the future.

**Strategic Initiatives**

- Establish Mentoring Programs for New Faculty
- Increase Departmental Interaction and Collaboration
- Create and Implement effective attendance policy
- Update and Publish Academic/School policy requirements
- Increase experiential learning opportunities
- Instituting the Advanced Placement Capstone
- Research formative and summative assessment tools
Guidance and Counseling
AIS is committed to assisting students in creating a happy, meaningful and successful life through knowledgeable academic planning and quality guidance support.

The AIS Guidance and Counseling Office assists each student to realize his/her full potential as a physically, emotionally, socially and educationally developed person. A student’s well-being is directly related to a positive self-image developed through continuous experiences of challenge, achievement and success. We engage our students to become Inquisitive and Reflective Problem Solvers, Knowledgeable and Skilled Learners, Caring and Ethical Contributors, and Effective Communicators in a Global Context.

Strategic Initiatives
- Create, Clarify, and Document Policies and Procedures
- College Application Preparation
- Communicate More Effectively
- Explore Secondary Advisory Groups/ Faculty Mentors
- Increase Guidance Support for Student Body
- Create a Positive Communal Environment for Students

College/University Preparation
Beginning in the 13-year-old grade level, students should begin Career Exploration Seminars, Briggs-Meyers Testing, College Essay Preparation and PSAT/SAT prep classes. Streamlining the college application process through the Naviance College Planning Software will increase efficiency for our community.

Community Engagement
Our community continues to increase its engagement with secondary school students and their families. Participation with families improves knowledge of their child’s four-year plan and the university application process.

Guidance Support
Our school needs to be a more proactive and caring place to help all students through many important transitions as they become caring, independent, and responsible adults. Our community strives to incorporate all of our Success Orientations in everything we do.
Long Term: Phase 3

AIS has seen tremendous growth in the 20 plus years it has been open. Students have represented over 50 countries from around the world. Many people would claim the city of Almaty as “the capital of Central Asia.” The city offers many cultural and economic opportunities to people. As additional companies, NGO’s, financial institutions, and the diplomatic corps continue to operate here, so does our school community. The school commits itself to creating physical spaces to support our curriculum and learning environment.

Facilities

AIS is committed to enhancing and creating program-specific facilities to support academic, artistic and athletic endeavors for instruction, exploration and exemplifying talent.

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Strategic Initiatives

- Classroom allocation and refurbishing
- Purchase of additional lots
- Add second floor to World Languages Building
- New Early Childhood Center
- Expand Cafeteria
- Student Commons
- New Athletic Complex
- New Fine Arts Center
Technology

AIS is committed to 21st century learning with 21st century Technology Integration in all areas of instruction.

Development in the modern world has multiplied at an astronomical rate over the last one hundred years. Recorded sound, Transistor, Microchip, Space Travel, Smart Phones. It doesn’t matter from whom or where it was derived (Thomas Edison or Captain Spock from Star Trek), without embracing change, societies become absorbed or extinct.

Education and excellence intersect in all subject areas and prepare our students for events and technology, yet to be perceived. Preparing our students for 21st century opportunities and obstacles must involve safely accessing information and knowledge of current peripheral, software, and online technologies.

Strategic Initiatives

- Upgrade school network infrastructure
- Increase Accessibility
- Increase Cyber Safety
- Technology Coordinator access to entire network
- Increase IT Support
- Printing
- Software/Hardware Upgrades
- Professional Development
Communications

AIS is committed to transparent and informative communications with all members of its community and beyond.

Almaty International School will strengthen its community by engaging its members and beyond by becoming more transparent with information. The clear documentation of policies, procedures, information, calendars and news is essential for growth, morale and our narrative.

AIS will allocate 2–4 faculty, staff or administrative members with a minimum of 30 hours a week to communication, marketing, admissions and alumni activities. These people will serve as the primary voice and clearinghouse for information, lead fundraising efforts and recruit high quality students whose families engage in the Almaty International School Community.

School Climate

AIS is committed to creating a positive community with a unified message and the creation of interactive opportunities amongst its stakeholders.

Complimenting Communication, our School Climate depends on our message to the community and how it is delivered. A positive school climate and community begins with understanding its expectations and inclusion of all stakeholders with information to unify it.

AIS will communicate effectively its Internal and External expectations.

Strategic Initiatives

- Unify Internal Message
- Unify External Message
- Increase Administrative Transparency
- Distribute information more effectively
- Increase Community Involvement/Ambassador Programs
Environment

AIS is committed to the understanding of Global Issues, the state of the environment and what it can do in the 21st century.

In the Middle States Association Self-Study Report, the AIS Community made a commitment to address and improve our environment initiatives. The visiting team recommended continuation of this program and engagement of more members of our school community. In response, AIS has made a strategic goal to extend and improve Environmental Awareness through Academic Integration, Experiential Learning, Community Interaction and Participation.

Almaty International School will continue to appeal to students, families and other stakeholders to participate in environmental projects and endeavors to improve our community.

Strategic Initiatives

- Campus Nature Improvement and Beautification
- Academic Environmental Awareness Campaign
- Experiential Education Initiatives
- Improve AIS Carbon Footprint
- Increase Municipal Environmental Awareness

CLASSROOM

Integrating Lessons and Experiential learning opportunities within QSI Curriculum will enrich and emphasize the importance of Conservation, Ecology and Environmental Issues.

CAMPUS

AIS will continue to create habitat with additional foliage and the protection of green space. In addition, creating awareness, through different vehicles of media, will raise the level of participation in different projects.

COMMUNITY

AIS will become a leader in green initiatives in the Kalkaman Community. Our school seeks to protect and increase the quantity of trees, prevent pollution and use our resources wisely.
Professional Development

AIS is committed to developing its administration, faculty and staff with educational opportunities to strengthen its quality of instruction and methodology.

Our educators are committed to the Art of Teaching. They are consistently seeking out additional opportunities to enhance their classrooms with effective teaching strategies, resources and initiatives. Anyone joining our community knows each teacher dedicates himself to the success of every student. The level of success is also contingent on the ability to grow as an educator.

Almaty International School is committed to developing its administration, faculty and staff with time, resources and educational opportunities to strengthen its quality of instruction and methodology.

Offering higher quality professional development from knowledgeable educators, artists, coaches, authors, consultants, scientists and other experts gives teachers additional ways to raise the level of student success.

Strategic Initiatives

- Create a Professional Development Budget
- Establish Professional Development Committee
- Create and implement a Professional Development policy and monetary distribution system
- Solicit teachers and stakeholders about AIS Sponsored PD
- Allocate time for professional learning
- Foster a Campus Learning Community for Faculty/Staff
Alumni

AIS is committed to creating stronger relationships with our alumni from around the world.

Creating loyalty to one’s Alma Mater takes communication and effort. The bonds formed attending AIS as a student and the success of an AIS Alumnae in the global world, can be rewarding to any past, present and future member of our community. We should never forget the contributions they made as students and their potential to strengthen our community throughout adulthood.

AIS is committed to creating opportunities for alumni to contribute to the school community and create a culture of inclusion for future alumni.

Strategic Initiatives

- Establish an Alumni Organization
- Create Communication Conduits to connect alumni and celebrate achievements
- Create long term traditions and loyalty to Alma Mater
- Engage Younger Alumni and Prepare S3 and S4
- Increase Alumni Services and Support
- Create Activities at the Local, Regional and International Level

Development

AIS engages in a “tuition-based” institution of budgetary restraints. This limits the school to two options for developing new programs, initiatives or other improvements to the school. One, significantly increase tuition; or, two, increase enrollment. Neither are fiscally or socially responsible for our community.

Almaty International School is committed to becoming more financially independent by working with all stakeholders to make sustainable investments in the school’s programs, facilities, faculty, and families.

Strategic Initiatives

- Establish an Annual Fund for Special Projects
- Capital Campaign: Athletic Complex
- Capital Campaign: Fine Arts Facility
- Create an Endowment
- Create Alumni Services and Initiatives
- Continue to Develop Parent and School Group (PSG)
- Professional Development Fund for Faculty/Staff Educational Advancement

STRATEGIC PLAN 2015–2022

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- MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR
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- GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING
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- TECHNOLOGY
- COMMUNICATIONS/SCHOOL CLIMATE
- ENVIRONMENTAL
- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- ALUMNI/DEVELOPMENT

Success for All
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

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Analise Gartner  Sarah Lawrence  Dave Wilkinson
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Photos contributed by the Student Yearbook Photographers

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