

A sepia-toned photograph of a schoolyard. A large, mature tree with dense foliage stands in the center. A path of white, rounded rocks leads from the foreground towards the background, curving around the tree. The ground is grassy, and a paved area is visible on the left. The overall atmosphere is calm and natural.

**NINE GOALS FOR LONDON**



# **NINE GOALS FOR LONDON**

LONDON SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLAN



**Adopted by The Board of Trustees**

MAY 22, 2006

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**THROUGH THE EMBRACING AND  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE  
NINE GOALS, THE LANDON SCHOOL  
COMMUNITY WILL:**

**(1) Recommit ourselves to the values of our Mission Statement.**

More than just a statement of lofty aspirations, it is the standard against which all decisions and policies—program, admissions, employment and discipline—must be measured:

“LANDON SCHOOL PREPARES TALENTED BOYS FOR PRODUCTIVE LIVES AS ACCOMPLISHED, RESPONSIBLE AND CARING MEN, WHOSE ACTIONS ARE GUIDED BY THE PRINCIPLES OF PERSEVERANCE, TEAMWORK, HONOR AND FAIR PLAY.”

**(2) Perpetuate our longtime emphasis on ethics and character education,**

which we deem to be integral to—and even more important than—the academic, artistic and physical development of our boys.

**(3) Sustain Landon’s long tradition of intellectual rigor,**

through which our boys develop discerning, imaginative and questioning minds, preparing them for success in college, career and civic leadership.

**(4) Strengthen our sense of community,**

by building bridges among school constituencies; reducing excessive busy-ness; and fostering civility and respect for all people, whether from backgrounds similar to or different from one’s own.

- (5) Attract and retain exceptional teachers who have diverse life experiences, all of whom are committed to Landon's "teacher/coach/mentor" model.** In this cherished Landon tradition, teachers serve after class as athletic coaches and advisers to student activities, enabling faculty to bond with our boys in a variety of ways.
- (6) Enroll and nurture talented boys from a wide variety of backgrounds,** chosen for their potential to thrive at Landon and to contribute to the growth of their peers, through their embracing of the values in Landon's Mission Statement.
- (7) Maintain a careful alignment of our programs with our resources,** by living within our means and regularly assessing every program and facility—both current and proposed—for its relevance to our mission, excellence, cost in money and time, and benefit to our boys, when compared with alternatives.
- (8) Boost the financial resources of Landon,** with significantly higher levels of annual giving and major gifts to endowment. This will enable Landon to continue improving our programs while moderating tuition hikes, increasing financial aid and making Landon more affordable to talented boys from all income levels.
- (9) Deploy our growing financial resources to favor enhancement over growth** (in enrollment or added grade levels); quality of experience over quantity of activities; and improvement of current programs and facilities over the addition of new ones.

GOAL

**RECOMMIT OURSELVES TO THE VALUES OF OUR MISSION STATEMENT.** More than just a statement of lofty aspirations, it is the standard against which all decisions and policies—program, admissions, employment and discipline—must be measured:

“LONDON SCHOOL PREPARES TALENTED BOYS FOR PRODUCTIVE LIVES AS ACCOMPLISHED, RESPONSIBLE AND CARING MEN, WHOSE ACTIONS ARE GUIDED BY THE PRINCIPLES OF PERSEVERANCE, TEAMWORK, HONOR AND FAIR PLAY.”

**TO IMPLEMENT THIS GOAL, LONDON WILL:**

- (a) Communicate our Mission Statement clearly to everyone: Landon students, faculty, parents, applicants, college admissions offices and the general public.
- (b) Show confidence in our values, traditions, program and requirements, and resist the temptation to be all things to all people.



- (c) Emphasize that the primary mission of Landon’s program is preparation for a productive, honorable life—a broader, more ambitious and worthier goal than simply preparation for college.
- (d) Regularly monitor each student’s progress and commitment to Landon’s values; remind students and their parents that attending Landon is a revocable privilege, not a right; and counsel out those who are not meeting the School’s high standards of performance, conduct and attitude.
- (e) Continue to develop well-rounded boys, young Renaissance men who are competent in numerous fields—scholarship, community service, the arts and sports—rather than specialists in one.
- (f) Prepare our boys for success in the global community, by fostering in them the courage to lead, to innovate and to take risks.

GOAL

**2 PERPETUATE OUR LONGTIME EMPHASIS ON ETHICS AND CHARACTER EDUCATION,** which we deem to be integral to—and even more important than—the academic, artistic and physical development of our boys.



**TO IMPLEMENT THIS GOAL, LANDON WILL:**

- (a) Devote ourselves to assuring that it will be said of future alumni, as it is said today: “A Landon man’s word is his bond.”
- (b) Make our Honor Code and Credo central to the life of Landon, through frequent discussion of their requirements and broader meaning, so that Landon is a boy’s training ground for an ethical life.
- (c) Make it clear to the entire Landon community—employees, students, parents and alumni—that they are expected, as representatives of Landon, to conduct themselves honorably both at school and off campus.
- (d) Through the Paul Landon Banfield Program in Ethics, the George Boiardi’oo Forum for Ethical Reflection and similar programs, continue to integrate character education into all aspects of Landon’s program, in class, on the athletic field and in the community.
- (e) Help our boys learn how to use Internet resources with academic integrity and social responsibility.
- (f) Encourage our boys to be responsible stewards of the natural environment and Earth’s resources.
- (g) Build upon the School’s growing national reputation as an authority in the development of boys, especially in character education.

GOAL

**SUSTAIN LANDON'S LONG TRADITION OF INTELLECTUAL RIGOR** through which our boys develop discerning, imaginative and questioning minds, preparing them for success in college, career and civic leadership.

TO IMPLEMENT THIS GOAL, LANDON WILL:

- (a) Continue to hold our boys to high academic standards, while resisting national trends towards “grade inflation.”
- (b) Ensure that our boys develop strong communication skills, by emphasizing clear writing and speaking.
- (c) Recognize the various ways that bright students learn; identify, as early as possible, those who process information in different ways from their peers, and help them find ways to thrive.
- (d) Train our teachers to use techniques that stimulate all aptitudes and senses in the learning experience.
- (e) Support students who have exceptional aptitude and interest in a given subject in their desire to explore it at an accelerated pace.
- (f) Integrate technology—audio, video and interactive software—into classroom education, as core features of course content, from science labs to history and languages.



GOAL

**4 STRENGTHEN OUR SENSE OF COMMUNITY, by building bridges among school constituencies; reducing excessive busy-ness; and fostering civility and respect for all people, whether from backgrounds similar to or different from one's own.**

TO IMPLEMENT THIS GOAL, LANDON WILL:

- (a) Celebrate the universal human values—integrity, compassion, hard work, fair play, loyalty—that are common to, and shared by, all the cultures, faiths and races in the Landon family. This will assure that, in the words of our Credo, “Landon will remain a community in which each person is valued, cultural diversity is celebrated, and individual differences are accepted.”
- (b) Support the efforts of our volunteer groups—Fathers’ Club, Mothers’ Executive Committee, Azalea Festival leadership and Alumni Association—to reach out to all Landon families and encourage their participation in School life.
- (c) Implement the new student-centered daily schedule that creates more “down-time” and “breathing room”—intervals for casual interaction among students and teachers, academic help, exercise, study halls and student club meetings.



- (d) Encourage more interaction (involving students and faculty) among Landon’s three divisions: Lower, Middle and Upper School.
- (e) Foster more balance and less stress in student life, with fewer scheduling conflicts among after-school activities, such as arts rehearsals, sports practices and student publications.
- (f) Reduce the number of Landon-related evening and weekend commitments, to give our families more free time for their own leisure activities and travel.
- (g) Seek more opportunities for alumni to get involved with students in mentoring, coaching and career counseling.

GOAL

5

**ATTRACT AND RETAIN EXCEPTIONAL TEACHERS WHO HAVE DIVERSE LIFE EXPERIENCES, ALL OF WHOM ARE COMMITTED TO LANDON'S "TEACHER/COACH/MENTOR" MODEL.**

In this cherished Landon tradition, teachers serve after class as athletic coaches and advisers to student activities, enabling faculty to bond with our boys in a variety of ways.



**TO IMPLEMENT THIS GOAL, LANDON WILL:**

- (a) Engage an accomplished faculty and staff whose composition reflects the diversity of our Washington community and who also share a common commitment to Landon's Mission Statement.
- (b) In recruiting educators, clearly communicate the School's teacher/coach/mentor tradition, so that applicants understand our expectation that they will be much more than just classroom instructors to our boys.
- (c) Foster a collegial working environment in which faculty and staff can grow in their professional competence, assume leadership roles, achieve personal satisfaction, and know that their voices are heard and their opinions valued in shaping Landon's program.
- (d) Evaluate the faculty and staff on a regular basis, for their professional growth and motivation, and to give special credit to those who go the extra mile to mentor our boys.
- (e) Maintain the level of compensation that has put Landon in the top tier of Washington area peer schools, so that faculty and staff can make a career at Landon and enjoy a comfortable standard of living worthy of their profession.
- (f) Explore new ways to help faculty and staff cope with the high cost of housing in the Washington area.

NINE GOALS FOR LONDON



GOAL

**ENROLL AND NURTURE TALENTED BOYS FROM A WIDE VARIETY OF BACKGROUNDS**, chosen for their potential to thrive at Landon and to contribute to the growth of their peers, through their embracing of the values in Landon’s Mission Statement.

TO IMPLEMENT THIS GOAL, LANDON WILL:

- (a) Seek applicants who exhibit the potential to become well-rounded Landon boys, by participating in the breadth of our program and enriching their peers and our School through their efforts.
- (b) Publicize Landon’s unique strengths to the entire Washington area, through open houses, independent-school information fairs, contacts with our traditional feeder schools, outreach to communities that might not be aware of Landon, and relationships with student recruitment groups.
- (c) Communicate clearly to applicants and their parents Landon’s expectations for hard work, integrity, civility and responsible conduct, both at school and off-campus.
- (d) Give wholehearted support, both academic and psychological, to all our students, especially those for whom the rigors of Landon may prove to be difficult, giving every Landon boy the chance to succeed.

GOAL

**7 MAINTAIN A CAREFUL ALIGNMENT OF OUR PROGRAMS WITH OUR RESOURCES**, by living within our means and regularly assessing every program and facility—both current and proposed—for its relevance to our mission, excellence, cost in money and time, and benefit to our boys, when compared with alternatives.

TO IMPLEMENT THIS GOAL, LONDON WILL:

- (a) Balance our revenue and expenses every year, including allowances for debt repayment and funding the depreciation of the physical plant.
- (b) Evaluate all programs, both current and prospective, for their excellence, value to our students, and advancement of our mission. Invest more resources in programs deemed to be core and “sunset” those deemed least important: “Make it great or make it gone.”
- (c) Assure that all major new initiatives—whether new facilities or expansion of programs—are 100% pre-funded by operating revenue or earmarked donations. In the case of the physical plant, funding must also cover future maintenance.
- (d) Resist “addism”: the ill-considered proliferation of elective courses, student activities, and “arms race” competition among peer schools to build more-elaborate new facilities.



NINE GOALS FOR LONDON



GOAL

**BOOST THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES OF LANDON**, with significantly higher levels of annual giving and major gifts to endowment. This will enable Landon to continue improving its programs while moderating tuition hikes, increasing financial aid, and making Landon more affordable to talented boys from all income levels.

TO IMPLEMENT THIS GOAL, LANDON WILL:

- (a) Motivate our parents, alumni and friends to increase the size of their annual donations, so that the average gift to Landon ranks in the top tier of peer schools.
- (b) Maintain, and ideally raise, Landon's admirably high percentages of giving by all constituencies.
- (c) Launch a comprehensive capital campaign, with emphasis on significant enlargement of the School's endowment.
- (d) Reduce annual increases in tuition to a percentage not much higher than inflation.
- (e) Continue to raise student financial aid as a percentage of tuition revenue.
- (f) Gradually lessen the School's budgetary reliance on summer programs and volunteer-led fundraisers, which may be nearing their maximum revenue potential.

GOAL

**DEPLOY OUR GROWING FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO FAVOR ENHANCEMENT OVER GROWTH— in enrollment or added grade levels— quality of experience over quantity of activities, and improvement of current programs and facilities over the addition of new ones.**

TO IMPLEMENT THIS GOAL, LONDON WILL:

- (a) Focus our resources on enhancing core missions: academic instruction, character education, recruitment of highly qualified students and staff, community service, and guiding our boys to a college choice that suits their individual needs and interests.
- (b) Hold enrollment to no more than the present level, 675 boys, and also consider whether the School would benefit from a gradual reduction in enrollment, if financial resources permit.
- (c) Maintain the present School structure of Grades 3 through Form VI.
- (d) Assess the technology resources and infrastructure of Landon— hardware, software, and administrative staffing, in both curriculum and school management—and budget for appropriate enhancements.
- (e) Steadily reduce the backlog of deferred maintenance on our physical plant (for example, HVAC, roofing, energy efficiency, improved handicapped access and paving).

- (f) Give preference, in setting priorities, to maintaining our fine campus and buildings at the highest level, before considering the addition of new facilities. Where appropriate, refurbish and remodel, rather than build anew.
  
- (g) As donor funding makes possible, consider renovation and/or expansion of the following facilities, among others: the Wilson Building, Keith Laboratories in the Banfield Academic Center, Perkins House, Buchanan Library, the Farmhouse, and athletic facilities within the T. Edward Barton Alumni Sports Center.



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## ABOUT THE CREATION OF THIS STRATEGIC PLAN

**Numerous Landon studies, going back several years, served as source material for this plan.** These included a 2002-03 trustee study of the culture of the School. In addition, consultant John Bird (who taught at Landon in the 1960s) prepared an analysis of Landon's strengths and challenges for prospective headmaster candidates, in preparation for the last head search.

A key source document for this Plan is the Landon School's Response to the AIMS/MSA Evaluation Report, issued in March 2005. This report was the culmination of the School's re-accreditation process, which spanned two academic years and involved dozens of members of the Landon faculty, administration and Board of Trustees.

The accreditation process began with Landon's Self-Study Steering Committee, which coordinated the School's description and analysis of its current mission and programs. This was followed by the arrival of the Visiting Committee of the Association of Independent Maryland Schools (AIMS), which spent several days at Landon, interviewing faculty, staff, students and trustees, and observing the School's programs first-hand.

After the AIMS Visiting Committee submitted its Evaluation Report, which included a number of recommendations, Landon prepared its Response, in which it accepted or demurred on the suggestions. This process resulted in the School's formal re-accreditation for the next decade.

Simultaneously, the Landon Board of Trustees was working on a “strategic audit” of Landon’s programs and management systems, to gauge their effectiveness and their consistency with the core mission and values of the School.

This process was coordinated by the Board’s Strategic Planning Committee, which includes faculty and staff as well as trustees. Virtually all Landon Board committees—including those on Education, Outreach & Scholarship, Finance, Development and Building & Grounds—were assigned portions of the Strategic Audit, and they fed their reports back to the Strategic Planning Committee.

Trustees were asked to identify and communicate their preferred priorities for Landon’s future, and the Strategic Planning Committee reported on its findings and recommendations to the full Board in June 2005.

All of these materials, spanning two years of intensive self-study, were distilled by Headmaster David Armstrong and Board Chair Knight Kiplinger into a draft Strategic Plan, *Nine Goals for Landon*.

An initial draft of this Strategic Plan was submitted to the Board before its December 12, 2005, meeting. That meeting was devoted to a section-by-section discussion of the draft Plan. Suggested changes were solicited from all trustees before and during that meeting, discussed at length, and, if supported by a consensus, incorporated into the second draft.

That second draft was presented on January 4, 2006, to the Strategic Planning Committee, which suggested further improvements to the document and sent the document again to the Board of Trustees.

With a few additional editorial changes, this third draft was approved by the full Board of Trustees at a meeting on January 17, 2006, with the understanding that it would be shared with the broad Landon community, for review and comment.

Meetings with the leadership of faculty, alumni, parent and student organizations were held throughout the spring of 2006. In addition, the draft was reviewed at meetings of the Landon Ambassadors Council and the Board's Committee on Outreach & Scholarship.

Comments and suggested changes were collected at these meetings and referred back to the Board's Strategic Planning Committee for its further consideration at a meeting on May 9, 2006.

The suggestions approved by the Committee were incorporated into a final draft submitted to the Board of Trustees at its May 22, 2006, meeting. After a few more editorial changes, the Board unanimously approved the Strategic Plan that evening.



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