

THETFORD ACADEMY STRATEGIC PLAN

for the Academic Years 2007 – 2009

PREFACE

Thetford Academy (TA) is an independent school located in Thetford, Vermont that serves approximately 400 students in grades 7 to 12. The Academy's mission is to produce graduates who are ready to be in charge of the next step in their lives. Graduates should be prepared to undertake lives of work, service, and continued learning, actively determining the quality of their experience after high school. To support this outcome, there are two essential conditions: a sense of community and belonging, and a sense of confidence and self-worth.

TA therefore provides young people with:

- *A challenging academic program designed to teach skills graduates will need to succeed in higher education and the workplace; and*
- *A strong sense of community intended to strengthen personal values and citizenship skills.*

Our campus community emphasizes caring and respect and offers instruction in small classes where faculty take a personal interest in each student's learning. In addition to an excellent core curriculum, TA strongly supports the performing arts, athletics, and community service.

TA serves as the public high school for the Town of Thetford and has forged long-term partnerships with Strafford, Vermont and Lyme, New Hampshire. While most students reside in these partner towns, one out of every seven students comes from another community and has chosen to attend TA because of the sound academic program and positive environment it offers.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Premise 1: Whether they are work-bound or college-bound, all students should master the essential skills and knowledge needed for success beyond high school. They should leave the Academy as proficient readers, writers, critical thinkers, and problem-solvers, with the capacity for continued learning and active engagement in the demanding world of the 21st century. We believe that every student can meet these challenging expectations.

Goal 1: Revise curriculum and instruction to ensure that all students actively demonstrate essential skills and knowledge in order to earn the diploma.

Objective 1.1 Establish new performance standards for graduation to define what all students should know and be able to do. (1st year) (Head of School)

Objective 1.2 Establish a system of assessment for students to demonstrate their mastery of standards. (1st year) (Head of School)

Objective 1.3 Coordinate instruction throughout the curriculum to focus on developing essential skills in a continuous sequence. (3 years) (Department Coordinators)

Objective 1.4 Coordinate curriculum with partner schools to extend the sequence of skill development. (3 years) (Head of School)

Premise 2: While there should be common graduation standards for all students, it is equally important to provide multiple pathways for individuals. Our question for students is not “How smart are you?” but “How are you smart?” TA must offer a rich curriculum with varied choices and many forms of support, so that students can discover and demonstrate their unique talents. A diverse and creative co-curricular program complements this aim by expanding the opportunities for exploration and challenge.

Goal 2: Foster curricular and co-curricular enrichment and innovation.

Objective 2.1 Develop a Personal Learning Plan program to support students in taking responsibility for their learning goals and pathways to graduation. (Years 1 & 2) (Guidance Director)

Objective 2.2 Enhance technology as a learning tool by expanding the quantity, quality and reliability of the computer network; continually reviewing the content and format of computer instruction; promoting use of the network as a communications tool among administrators, faculty, students, and parents; and streamlining administrative functions with appropriate applications of technology. (3 years) (Technology Systems Administrator)

Objective 2.3 In collaboration with parents and community residents, expand options for challenge courses and applied learning in order to promote greater course diversity and support the Personal Learning Plan program. (3 years) (Head of School)

Objective 2.4 Expand participation in co-curricular activities so that 90% of students are involved in wellness, athletics, performing arts, fine arts, scholastic challenges, service, and/or community building activities each academic year. (3 years) (Dean of Students)

Premise 3: Good teachers must also be learners. To serve students well, the faculty should have regular, high-quality professional development opportunities, both to expand their own knowledge and to support each other as members of a learning community.

Goal 3: Support continuous improvement for faculty as individual learners and a collaborative group.

Objective 3.1 Enhance faculty recruitment by expanding the methods and geographic scope of efforts to attract candidates. (3 years) (Head of School)

Objective 3.2 Implement an orientation protocol, including mentoring, for new faculty and staff, with a focus on best practices for supporting students' success. (1 year) (Department Coordinators)

Objective 3.3 Enhance both ongoing faculty supervision and peer consultation opportunities among faculty. (3 years) (Head of School & School Coaching Team)

Premise 4: In order to reach its full potential, TA must draw on the energy, expertise, and vision of many different leaders including Trustees, administrators, faculty, students, and parents. During the period encompassed by this strategic plan, a focus on the roles and functioning of the management team will be critical.

Goal 4: Promote continuous improvement in the leadership of Thetford Academy.

Objective 4.1 Conduct a functional analysis of Administrative Team responsibilities and identify any need for changes in leadership structure. (1st & 2nd years) (Head of School & Board Administrative Advisory Committee)

Objective 4.2 Prepare for transition in the Head of School position. (3rd year) (Head of School & Board Administrative Advisory Committee)

Premise 5: Quality facilities are essential to the learning environment. The Board of Trustees has completed a long-term master facilities plan and is committed to moving forward on its implementation.

Goal 5: Engage in continuous improvement of campus facilities.

Objective 5.1 Complete design work for and initiate construction of a capital project that encompasses a physical education complex, performing arts spaces, a cafeteria, and science classrooms. The design should have long-term viability, provide good value, and promote energy efficiency. (3 years) (Board President)

Objective 5.2 Publish a three-year schedule, with annual updates, of indoor and outdoor facilities improvements to make the physical environment of the school more functional and appealing. (3 years) (Director of Maintenance)

Premise 6: Reliance on local property taxes to fund education and a state-level commitment to educational cost containment require TA to maintain its focus on making itself an affordable as well as quality secondary school. Responsible partnership with local communities requires attention to developing sources of income beyond tuition revenue.

Goal 6: Strengthen TA's fiscal position.

Objective 6.1 Create and carry out an annual marketing plan that promotes TA's special identity and that focuses on student recruitment. (3 years) (Development Director & Board Community Relations Committee)

Objective 6.2 Develop and implement an annual plan to increase non-tuition income. (3 years) (Business Manager & Board Finance Committee)

Objective 6.3 Fund 30% of the construction (i.e., bricks and mortar) cost of the capital project with non-tuition dollars, with the expectation that fundraising will continue during and beyond the construction period. (3 years) (Development Director & Board Development Committee)

Thetford Academy Strategic Planning Committee 2005-06:

Curtis Richardson, Trustee, Chair
Laszlo Bardos, Faculty
Joseph Deffner, Faculty
Ellis Ganley '08, Student
Peter Herman, Trustee
Laurie Kinne, Parent
Matthew Postler '07, Student
Sophia Neirman '07, Student
Martha Jane Rich, Head of School
Sarah Shipton, Faculty