



Mayer Lutheran High School

Final Strategic Plan and Marketing Framework

March 2014

A moment of reflection.

Proverbs 16: 1-3

The plans of the mind belong to mortals,
but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord.
All one's ways may be pure in one's own eyes,
but the Lord weighs the spirit.
Commit your work to the Lord,
and your plans will be established.

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Your role as a board.

- Vision and Mission.
 - Definition of where we are headed and how we aim to get there.
- Executive oversight.
 - Who have we enabled to make this happen?
 - Support and evaluation.
- Planning.
 - A process that is thorough, real and followed.
- Monitoring.
 - Are the benchmarks met?
- Financial and legal.
- Advocate.



Section I: Process

Objectives

3.2.1 worked with Mayer Lutheran High School to accomplish the following objectives:

- To facilitate a process which builds a three- to five-year strategic plan for Mayer Lutheran High School, with a focus on differentiation and on creating and sustaining growth.
- To deliver a plan that will be a relevant guide, regularly utilized by the staff and Board in quarterly reviews and ongoing/annual planning.
- This process required that the Steering Committee and facilitators create a marketing plan as well, which will be used as a framework for tactical planning to increase revenues and grow Mayer Lutheran High School.

Strategic Planning Steering Committee

- Appointed by the Board of Directors, the following individuals serve as Strategic Planning Steering Committee members:
 - Joel Landskroener: Executive Director
 - Kim Bones: Board Chair
 - Dan Perrel: Admissions Director
 - Kevin Wilaby: Principal
 - Melanie Haubrich: Parent and Marketing Manager
 - Stefan Wismar: Staff Member and Pastor
 - Ann Gustafson: Parent and Community Member
 - Nathan Weber: Student Representative
 - John and Lori Trocke: Board Member (John), Parents; reviewed materials throughout process and were able to attend a few of our meetings as well

Critical Success Factors

We considered the following key to a successful process:

- That it was done in intentional Christian context, as faithful servants working diligently to discern God's will while also prayerfully relying on God's grace.
- That it welcomed and integrated feedback from crucial voices in our midst, including staff, students, alumni, parents, committee members and board members.
- That the end result is a plan that is clear, easily adopted and used, measurable, and, ultimately, successful.

Included in the Process

- **Assessment and analysis of current terrain** for Mayer Lutheran High School, including information gathering related to internal and external factors seen through a variety of key constituents' eyes. This work related to overall strategy as well as marketing.
- **Assessment of organizational building blocks** — vision, mission and values — and work with the Board and Strategic Planning Steering Committee on adjustments to vision and values in particular. We explored how to maximize the vibrant mission of creating the next generation of Christian leaders.
- **Establishment of strategic priorities for 2014-2017**, with a specific focus on those which differentiate, increase enrollment, and increase/diversify funding. Plan includes measures and accountability.
- **Creation of a marketing plan** that the staff and Board can carry forward as an actionable, accountable framework, applying practical tactics each quarter/year.
- Outside of scope but included in our process was the team development of a **marketing theme** and specific tactical ideas, which will be finalized and implemented in 2015.

Gathering Input, Preparing (June)

Gathering Input

- Our process started with a thoughtful assessment of the current internal environment and external terrain — not just by the Board, staff or leadership, but by a variety of key shareholders in the organization's current and future success.
- We met with staff, Board and Committee members, and conducted an online survey of current/former students, family members/parents, associated church pastors, members and school staff and interested community members.

Analyzing Data & Planning the Sessions

- Utilizing results from the surveys and having absorbed all Mayer Lutheran High School data and reports, 3.2.1 organized planning sessions 1, 2 and 3. The work included data analysis, findings and summary preparation and session planning (agendas, presentations, workbooks, databases, exercises).

Strategy Sessions (June-August)

Strategic Planning Retreat #1 - June 30: Foundational Brand Strengthening

- Aligned with Mayer Lutheran High School's Mission, we reviewed the survey results, and revised the vision and values using 3.2.1's Fuel brand-strengthening process. This resulted in a set of **Essential Values and revised Vision** that are a decision-making framework for the Board, staff and others and a springboard for strategic and marketing planning.

Strategic Planning Retreat #2 - July 30: Building the Strategic Plan

- Utilizing elements of 3.2.1's Kindle strategy process, we established strategic priorities in a number of categories for 2014-17, including internal (staff, students, efficiencies/tools, etc.) and external (stakeholders, new growth, etc.).

Strategic Planning Retreat #3 - August 7: Finalizing the Strategic Plan

- We then created action plans, timing, leaders and measures related to strategic priorities in the Mayer Lutheran High School strategic plan.

Marketing Planning (September-Current)

Information Gathering and Marketing Plan Draft

- 3.2.1 met with an appointed Marketing Sub-Committee, a sub-set of the Steering Committee, to discuss marketing at Mayer Lutheran, including: what's being done, what works and doesn't work, and what ideas would those present like to pursue.
- 3.2.1 received samples of all Mayer Lutheran communications materials and had follow-up conversation with Melanie Haubrich.
- 3.2.1 then utilized its Spark creativity process to create a draft marketing framework that identified key strategies for differentiation and growth.
- In addition, 3.2.1 created three creative execution concepts, presenting the framework and concepts to Board members (Joel and Jenni) and Sub-Committee Members (Kevin, Dan, Melanie, Joel, Lori).
- Following meetings with Board members (Joel and Jenny Erdmann) and Sub-Committee Members (Kevin, Joel, Melanie, Dan and Lori), 3.2.1 created final recommendations for review at the November 11 Strategic Planning Steering Committee.
- Members of the Steering Committee and Sub-Committee will continue to finalize and implement the creative campaign.

Reviews/Input & Approval (November-January)

- Steering Committee, including Executive Director: November
- Staff: December
- Stakeholders: January
- Board of Directors: January
- Delegates Assembly & Community: January



Section II: Strategic Plan

Components of the Plan

I BUILDING BLOCKS

Current State
Values
Mission
Vision

II PRIORITIES & PLANS

Assessment
Objectives
Strategic Priorities
Operating Plans, Budgeting
Accountability

III TACTICS & EXECUTION

Steps & Measures
Marketing Framework
Creative Execution
Communications
Launch

Current State: Assessment

- The Steering Committee used previously gathered information in its assessment, including the 15-mile radius demographic study, Board SWOT analysis, Board Planning Session, Administrator's Retreat Recommendations and 2013 Parent Survey.
- The Board also reviewed information from the online survey 3.2.1 conducted as a part of this process. About the survey:
 - 83 respondents, including current and former students, current and former parents, associated audiences (school staff, pastors and members), staff, Board members and community members.
 - Mayer Lutheran has a well-understood mission.
 - The school is **appreciated** for being Christian, and for its size, family atmosphere, academics and personal attention. Secondly it is appreciated for sports, friends, and being a safe environment.
 - Primary **concerns**: cost (what a family/student "gets" for the money). Secondly: distance/rural location, lack of awareness/understanding of school, competition and facility. Market concerns: declining enrollment due to feeder schools and secularization.
 - Primary **opportunities**: staying small (in feeling); figuring out our "and" (...we are Christian, and...); supporting the mission; pushing forward by staff; diversification of student opportunities; internal/external storytelling; parent/alum involvement.

Mission:

Why we exist; our purpose.

To prepare the next generation of Christian Leaders.

- Extremely well-known by key audiences and remains relevant, and current.
- Steering Committee opted to keep the mission unchanged for Mayer Lutheran.

Essential Values:

Our decision-making framework.

Christ Centered Equipping Nurturing Aspiring

- More than “core” values (basic expectations), Essential Values are guidelines for behavior that are unique to Mayer Lutheran.
- Essential Values help define what’s true and authentic at the core of Mayer Lutheran, while also serving as a springboard for action. They are the “how” in achieving our mission and vision.

Our Essential Values

At Mayer Lutheran, our Essential Values are guidelines for behavior and a springboard for action. We use these values as a decision-making framework as we prepare the next generation of Christian leaders.

Aspiring

There is a quality to Mayer Lutheran that is inspired, bold and creative: where plans are both made and implemented, and where students have the freedom to dream, explore, do, learn from mistakes and achieve. As such, it motivates the best impulses in its staff and students, inspiring all who join in the Mayer Lutheran journey to make real progress while acting with Christian courage.

Romans 12: 2

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Christ Centered

At Mayer Lutheran, Christ — His life, death and resurrection — remain at the center of all we do. The Gospel informs the values we hold, the choices we make, the way we live, and our focus, at school, at home and in our communities.

Ephesians 2: 21-22

Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Equipping

We prepare Christian leaders, providing students with opportunities to learn and grow as they build skills for Biblically-informed lives in a complex world. We surround our students with well-equipped staff, and engage with their support network, including parents, families and alumni. Our students apply skills learned at Mayer Lutheran throughout their lives, including discernment, creativity, problem-solving, communication and collaboration.

Ephesians 4: 15-16

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Nurturing

Our caring environment at Mayer Lutheran is focused on supporting, developing, encouraging, protecting and celebrating in each student the life God has given to them in Christ. We teach love and care for self, others and the world, today and for the future.

John 10: 10b

I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

Vision:

Our desired future state.

- Utilizing Mayer Lutheran's former vision and strategic plan, the Steering Committee revised the Vision.
- The Vision can now serve not only as a clearer set of goals, but as a frame of reference for all strategic priorities and related actions.

Our Vision

As a vibrant Christian ministry, Mayer Lutheran's vision is to increase its sphere of influence by maximizing student potential. By God's grace, we will increase the number of Christian leaders we equip for lives of faithful service by:

- Enhancing the quality and relevance of opportunities for students;
- Expanding Christian education locally and globally, and embracing real-world opportunities;
- Becoming known for our personal and effective approach to equipping students for life now and into eternity;
- Being recognized as a school of unique and vital value at any price.

Connecting Today with Tomorrow: 3-5 Year Objectives

- 3% annual, year-over-year growth in enrollment at Mayer Lutheran High School.
- 30% growth in class enrollment annually, year-over-year, in Genesis Virtual Academy.
- The completion of the Mayer Lutheran capital campaign and beginning of facilities work on campus.

Connecting Today with Tomorrow: 3-5 Year Strategic Priorities

- Through a set of exercises, the Steering Committee utilized assessments and materials, Essential Values, Mission and Vision to establish strategic priorities, action steps, leaders and measurement in four areas:
 - Those We Serve (Students and their Families)
 - Our People (Our Staff, Administration, Others “Internally”)
 - Over & Above (How We’ll Grow, Escape Status Quo)
 - Our Tools (Facilities, Processes, Systems, Technology)
- The strategic priorities were then aligned to the vision components.
- The Committee identified and finalized short- to mid-term action steps for each strategic priority, including who will lead each and outcomes by year.

Aligning Priorities to Vision

As a vibrant Christian ministry, Mayer Lutheran's vision is to increase its sphere of influence by maximizing student potential. By God's grace, we will increase the number of Christian leaders we equip for lives of faithful service as we:

Enhance the quality and relevance of opportunities for students; by:

- Equipping and expecting great teaching by staff who are well-trained, engaged and passionate;
- Further developing and expanding our Leadership Program;
- Developing a culture of self-directed learning where students have increased ownership of their own education.

Expand Christian education locally and globally, and embrace real-world opportunities; by:

- Offering and expanding spiritual growth opportunities for our community;
- Exploring, developing and implementing an international student initiative;
- Making Genesis Virtual Academy the online Christian school of choice.

Become known for our personal and effective approach to equipping students for life now and into eternity, by:

- Focusing on nurturing and equipping past, current and future students;
- Building and integrating meaningful technology, expanding our digital capacity and improving our communications.

Become recognized as a school of unique and vital value at any price; by:

- Fully realizing the preceding priorities listed here.
- Creating, implementing and measuring a marketing and communications plan;
- Exploring third-source funding and income;
- Completing our capital campaign.

2014/15 Tactical Plan: By Vision Component & Strategic Priority

1. Enhance the quality and relevance of opportunities for students.

Strategic Priority	Tactic/Action Step	Timeframe/Measurement
Equip and expect a well-trained, engaged, passionate staff. I.e., great teaching.	Survey faculty to determine areas of interest.	Survey developed in early 2015.
	Partner with area colleges to provide pedagogical training.	Mayer Lutheran determine a way pay 80% of tuition costs to get master's degree by 2016.
	Through inservice events, train faculty in technology integration focused on enhancing teaching and learning.	Two in-service events in 2014-2015.
	Set up Mayer Lutheran staff grant competition to help inspire a spirit of inquiry.	Set up competition for 2015/16 school year.
	Ongoing leadership training for staff to support students in leading Bible studies, building quality relationships, and communications skills.	Development funds are being fully used in leadership training.
Further develop and expand our Leadership Program.	Discussion regarding making "Defending the Faith" and "Christian Leadership" more frequently offered/required.	Decision on any curriculum changes for September 2016.
	Revamp Christian Leadership Summit to be more leadership specific.	
Develop a culture of self-directed learning: increase student ownership of their own education.		
	Increase blended learning opportunities. (Online with a teacher in a classroom.)	Success with Algebra I for 2014-15, determine follow-up curriculum.
	Equip freshman students to understand importance of their education (education ownership).	Part of Freshman Seminar for 2014-15, determine effectiveness for 2015-16.
	Train staff in how to lead students through self-directed learning activities.	Find outside expert to assist with getting traction. Set up expectation for staff to incorporate self-directed learning.

2014/15 Tactical Plan: By Vision Component & Strategic Priority

2. Expand Christian education locally and globally, and embrace real-world opportunities.

Strategic Priority	Tactic/Action Step	Timeframe/Measurement
Offer and expand spiritual growth opportunities for our community.	Bible Studies for the larger Mayer Lutheran community.	Success implementation for Fall of 2014, Spring of 2015, and evaluation for Fall of 2015.
Explore, develop and implement an international student initiative.	Website feels friendly to international students.	Website in place by July 1, 2015
	Secure permanent housing apart from home stay options.	Plan in place by July 1, 2016. One house obtained (rented/leased).
	Expand service to our international students, for instance, ESL.	Content for website by July 1, 2015.
Make GVA the online Christian school of choice.		
	Continue to fund needs around marketing and operations.	Serving 15 full-time students by September 1, 2015.
	Provide support staff.	Plan for staffing in place by September 1, 2015.
	Integrate GVA into immediate LHS locale.	3 feeder schools are enrolled in GVA by September 1, 2015.

2014/15 Tactical Plan: By Vision Component & Strategic Priority

3. Become known for personal, effective approach to equipping students for life.

Strategic Priority	Tactic/Action Step	Timeframe/Measurement
Support the nurturing and equipping of our students (past, current and future).	Hire Alumni Director/Development Director.	July 2015 begin active tracking of graduating seniors. Fall 2016, hire director position.
	Ongoing development of Koinonia Groups/Student Mentorship Programs	
Build and integrate meaningful technology; expand our digital capacity; improve communications.	Revise the Director of Technology to align with the needs and direction of Mayer Lutheran's technology as it impacts students, staff and community.	Meeting with new job description by August 1, 2015.
	Redesign and implement new website (LHS).	July 31, 2015, and maintained by office staff.
	WiFi and server infrastructure audit to determine next steps for access and bandwidth.	Infrastructure goals set by July 31, 2015.

2014/15 Tactical Plan: By Vision Component & Strategic Priority

4. Become recognized as a school of unique and vital value at any price.

Strategic Priority	Tactic/Action Step	Timeframe/Measurement
Fully realizing priorities 1-3 on the preceding pages.		
Create, implement and measure a marketing and communications plan.		
	Create a comprehensive strategic and marketing plan.	Plan implemented January 2015.
	Communicate plan with stakeholders.	Staff meeting in Dec 2014; Stakeholder Meeting in January 2015.
	Just do it (Create/Communicate/Implement)	Raise enrollment 3% by September 1, 2015.
	Communications that provide stories that promote Mayer LHS. (Email/Social Media/Website/SchoolReach)	
Explore third-source funding/income.		
	Create an advancement committee.	Formed and functioning.
	Continue to strengthen and encourage membership to Mayer Lutheran.	Add 1 new association church by July 31, 2015.
	Make sure gifts support what is really needed, and continue to emphasize those needs.	Ongoing.
Complete our capital campaign.		
	Continue to seek new sources of funding. "200for10" Campaign (5 year pledges of 2K a year).	Result by July 31, 2015 = \$2 million.
	Make regular agenda item for advancement committee.	Result by July 31, 2015 = \$2 million.
	Communicate situation and intentions.	2014-15 school year.
	Break ground.	Spring 2016.