



Mid-Year State of the School

March 2019



BALTIMORE LAB SCHOOL

THE DIFFERENCE IS EXTRAORDINARY

What is the BLS Strategic Plan?

Baltimore Lab School's Strategic Plan is in its third year of implementation. This plan has six tenets. These tenets are:

- Program Development & Enhancements
- Marketing & Communications
- Development
- Admissions & Financial Aid
- Human Resources
- Finance & Facilities



How does the BLS Strategic Plan work?

Our faculty, staff, Board members, and Parents' Association will continue to work together to achieve goals for each of these tenets through 2021 during the first five-year phase. The strategic plan will be:

- *Reviewed quarterly through a progress monitoring protocol,*
- *Updated quarterly by celebrating achieved goals and adding new goals for growth,*
- *Shared quarterly with the Board by the Head of School,*
- *Shared twice yearly with our families through mid-year and end-of-year State of the School addresses.*

This is an actionable plan and evolves as BLS does. There are no static elements to this plan except for the six tenets.



Our Mid-Year Update



TENET 1: Program Development & Enhancements

- BLS is in the process of creating a schoolwide curriculum map for all academic and arts subjects. This map ensures strong supports are in place for the sequential teaching of **(A) Essential Skills, (B) Cognitive Processes, and (C) Executive Functioning Strategies.**
- All teachers are in the process of creating unit planners that are the building blocks for our curriculum map. These unit planners support strong coherent, prerequisite pathways that connect Grades 1-12.



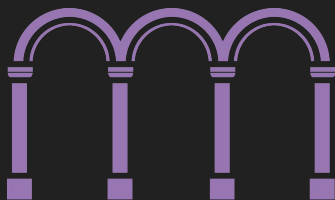
TENET 1: Program Development & Enhancements

- Teachers have been engaged in professional learning that supports the creation of a strong literacy building tool: *anchor charts*. Anchor Charts support deep learning of subject matter vocabulary and concepts.
- Several teachers in Lower School / Middle School are currently piloting Guided Reading: an instructional approach that involves teachers working with small groups of students who demonstrate similar reading behaviors and can read similar levels of texts. All teachers are actively contributing to and using reading resource progression tools that connect reading strategies and cognitive maps with arts integration ideas for all reading standards in Grades 1-12.



TENET 2: Marketing & Communications

- Three Dragon News issues have been shared with our community, seven Lower School News issues two Middle School News issues, and one High School News issue have been shared. At this time, we are currently unable to track readership and viewership of our newsletter, but other options are being explored in order to be responsive to readership.
- A Lower School video was shared via Facebook before winter break. The video had over 2,000 views and was shared over 25 times.
- Signage containing our Mission Statement has been created for each classroom to be displayed in March.



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TENET 3: Development

- During September, October, November, and December, donor prospect research has been conducted with Development Committee and Board members.
- Grandparents' and Friends' Day brought in 130 guests (our largest ever) and a follow-up solicitation was shared before departing for winter break.
- The 2018 Annual Report was shared with the BLS community.
- During #GivingTuesday, 45 BLS faculty & staff members contributed, qualifying an anonymous match.
- The first Alumni event of the year was held on December 18th and included 35 alums. A great showing!



TENET 4: Admissions & Financial Aid

- Members of the Admissions Committee will attend our bi-annual, off-campus Admissions Retreat in February 2019 in order to refine best practices in our admissions process and to ensure alignment of our process with our Mission, Beliefs, and Profile of a Graduate.
- In collaboration with the BLS Marketing Committee, we have updated and re-designed our admissions brochure to align with our Mission, Beliefs, our evolving innovative programming, MSDE requirements, and new logo.
- In an effort to gain professional capacity and foster referrals, Admissions hosted a number of professional clinicians, tutors, and advocates to learn about BLS' renowned arts methodology and multisensory approaches to instruction in our programs for Lower School, Middle School, and High School.



TENET 5: Human Resources (HR)

- BLS continues its focus on retaining and attracting high quality teachers and staff through various incentives and initiatives:
 - A multi-faceted employee perks program with a competitive benefits package, tuition discounts for continuing and higher education, and flexible comp time self-care opportunities for teachers/staff.
 - A mentor program with its own dedicated coordinator to support our newest teachers in their first three years and our mentors as master teachers.
 - An aspiring leaders program that focuses on building tomorrow's school leaders in education through experiences and engagements with national leadership standards.
 - Employee modules for annual trainings in sexual harassment prevention, child abuse and neglect reporting, suicide prevention, and technology acceptable use policies.
 - Providing a safe workplace for our staff and students has been paramount this past year to include staff-wide two-way radios and a public address system to use during emergencies as part of our emergency plan.
 - CPR training for all of our athletic personnel, as well as any Aftercare and club staff who work with students after school.



Baltimore Lab School was recognized as a Top Workplace by the Baltimore Sun Media Group for a fourth consecutive year.

TENET 6: Finance & Facilities

- **Finance:**
 - Baltimore Lab School continues to receive high accolades for its business processes and internal control procedures.
 - This is evidenced by BLS receiving an unqualified financial statement audit report from an independent (outside) accounting firm for the fiscal year ending June 2018. A deep evaluation of our internal control procedures was performed by outside auditors and resulted in no significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in our processes and procedures.
- **Facilities:**
 - Major improvements to our school were made during the Summer of 2018. The most significant change was, after two years of negotiation and planning, the installation of 132 new windows and blinds.
 - We also installed new stained glass windows and repaired the outside dormers.
 - Walkie-talkies were purchased for all faculty and staff.
- **Technology:**
 - We continue to maintain a high level of onsite and remote IT support for both hardware equipment and software applications, improved our tracking and reporting of IT support requests via an automated help desk platform, and provide operating reserves for technology expansion and support.



BLS Mission

Baltimore Lab School is an innovative learning community fostering scholarship and creativity in students with unique strengths and diverse learning needs. In an environment of inquiry, hands-on exploration, and the arts, Baltimore Lab School students learn to advocate for themselves as they become engaged and compassionate members of a global society.

