

CAIS

Strategic Directions

for 2017 to 2020

October 2017



Canadian Accredited Independent Schools
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Who We Are

CAIS (Canadian Accredited Independent Schools) is a community of 94 independent schools who choose to meet and exceed rigorous National Standards that inspire continuous whole school improvement. CAIS schools provide exemplary opportunities for their students.

Purpose Of This Document

The vision of CAIS is *“to be the standard of excellence in learning and leadership, shaping the future of education”*. This Strategic Directions document provides a high-level overview of how CAIS will continue to strive towards this vision over the next three years – 2017 to 2020.

Our Strategic Planning Process

In early 2016 the CAIS Board identified the need to initiate a renewal of the CAIS Strategic Plan. The previous plan timeline was 2013/14 to 2016/17.

The CAIS Membership Survey conducted in June 2016 told us that over the 2013 to 2016 planning period CAIS has matured to a new level. Through the Membership Survey we learned that:

- General satisfaction with membership in CAIS is up
- Members believe CAIS is improving its success in achieving its mission –
- There has been an increase in membership belief that CAIS is reaching to its vision as: The voice of excellence in learning and leadership, shaping the future of education.

Nevertheless there are many opportunities to continue to strengthen and build on the core work of CAIS and to ensure nimbleness to respond to new and emerging needs.

Through member consultation, we know that our schools face many challenges. The top 3 challenges identified by Heads and Chairs through the September 2016 survey included:

- Developing financial plans for long term sustainability
- Strengthening philanthropy
- Succession planning and leadership development

At the CAIS Heads and Chairs Conference in October 2016 there was support for CAIS enhancing its efforts in a number of key areas including professional development for boards as well as further research and sharing of best practices. At the same time there was clear direction to focus the energies of CAIS on its core services of National Standards and Accreditation, Leadership Professional Development, Research and Support, and National Collaborative Initiatives.

There was not support for CAIS further diversifying into new areas – for example professional development for teachers or public marketing.

Given this context, and the need to ensure scarce member resources are used effectively, the CAIS Steering Committee concluded that the primary Strategic Directions from 2013/14 to 2016/17 remain relevant and that CAIS should continue to focus its efforts on the key directions established in that plan. There are opportunities to continue to strengthen and build on the work being done in each of these areas, and work at the nexus of these three areas provides particularly high value. At the same time we know that CAIS needs to continue to evolve as the challenges facing our schools evolve.

Our Vision

To be the standard of excellence in learning and leadership, shaping the future of education.

Our Mission (Revised)

To pursue continuous whole school improvement through accreditation, exemplary leadership development, research, and national collaboration initiatives.

Our Values (Revised)

Student-centered: The students of our schools are the reason we exist. Strong schools can inspire students, who can, in turn, change the world. Everything we do must ultimately support the learning and development of students.

Leadership: Exemplary leadership is the essential ingredient to continuous improvement and innovation. Our role is to shepherd, steward, and serve school leaders.

Excellence: Excellence is a constant and deliberate quest. Our schools share a passion for continuous improvement and innovation to support their commitment to educational excellence and long-term sustainability. Our commitment is to deliver excellence to our members in everything we do.

Collaboration: Collaboration fuels creativity and leverages resources. By working together within our community and with others on common issues, we bring greater value to all of our schools and to our students.

Relevance: We best serve our schools by focusing on issues and programs that are relevant to our standards and support school improvement and innovation.

National & Global Perspective: We address national issues that affect our members within the context of a rapidly changing globalized world.

Inquiry & Understanding: We are committed to and promote life-long education, inquiry and independent thinking, the protection of human rights, and understanding and respect for differing perspectives and diversities among people.

Strategic Directions

2017 to 2020

Our focus over the next three years will be on enabling excellence in learning and leadership among CAIS schools by focusing on four strategic directions:

A)

National Standard & Accreditation

that inspire improvement and
innovation

Over the next three years we will
continue to refine and improve this
core program and ensure it provides
consistent high quality accreditation
and support for schools.



B)

Leadership Development & Engagement Programs

that equip leaders for the future

We will continue to refine our leadership development strategy and broaden engagement and development support for the boards of CAIS schools. We will continue to strengthen our national leadership networks – providing face-to-face and online opportunities for colleagues to connect. Through our “online all the time” strategy (e.g. CAIS Connect, webinars) we will provide easy just in time access to high quality resources and insights.



C)

Relevant Research & Resource Sharing

to support strategic thinking and address member needs

CAIS is well-positioned through its national and international connections to monitor and share key trends that may disrupt or influence the future of our schools. We will monitor and share emerging global trends affecting education, and continue to fund and support research projects of national relevance. We will continue to evolve and refine our benchmarking on key performance indicators. These indicators support the ability of our schools to: assess their performance relative to their peers; identify issues; and pursue continuous improvement.



D)

National Collaborative Initiatives

to support strategic thinking and address member needs

to maximize member value and support

CAIS will continue to support national initiatives (e.g. the Canadian Boarding Collective) where a collaborative national model is needed and viable. We will work cooperatively with regional organizations to explore how best to enhance member value and minimize the potential for duplication.



Organizational Strength & Permanence

Supporting Our Collective Success

As we embark on our next three years we recognize the need for CAIS to address its own development so that it is well-equipped to support the needs of its members. We will continue to focus on proactive member communications and engagement: monitoring changing member needs and continuing to raise awareness of the programs and services we offer. We will develop plans to ensure the underpinnings of our success as an organization: the articulation of a clear value proposition; ensuring long term financial sustainability; improving systems for volunteer recruitment, orientation, training and recognition; and ensuring effective succession and development of the CAIS staff and Board.

Measuring Results and Reporting to our Members

We recognize the importance of being accountable to our members for results. We will develop a refined set of metrics that enable us to track our progress based on the core measures of satisfaction and engagement.

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