



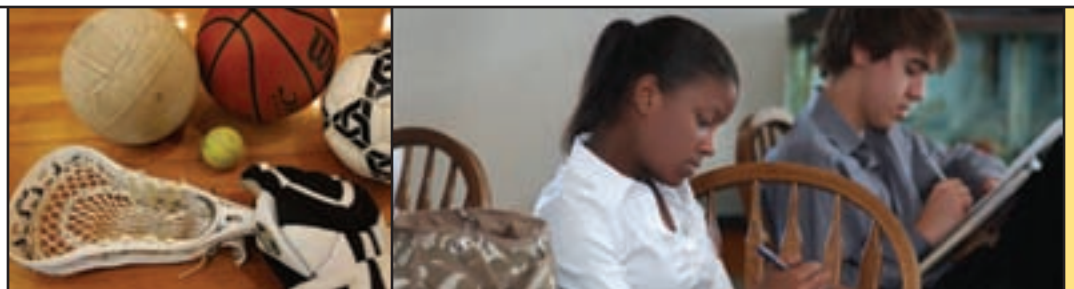
# Cape Fear Academy

STRATEGIC PLAN 2006-2011

*Capturing the Energy*

*of the*

*Cape Fear Academy Hurricanes*



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April 2006

Dear Members of the Cape Fear Academy Community:

Throughout the history of Cape Fear Academy, there have been pivotal moments that have defined the level of comprehensive educational excellence of our school, thus insuring its success. We have the opportunity to embrace such a moment now. There are critical decisions to be made and programs to be implemented in order to continue being the premiere educational school in our area.

The philosophy of our school states:

“Cape Fear Academy, an independent coeducational day school, provides a challenging college preparatory program and a developmentally-appropriate curriculum within a stimulating learning environment. The Academy considers scholarly achievement, character development, creative expression, and physical wellness the components of true excellence.”

As stewards of this philosophy, the Board sought input from the administration, faculty, alumni, parents, and students to assess where we have been successful in achieving this goal and where our energy and resources should be directed within these parameters to make Cape Fear Academy even stronger. This diverse group has identified specific needs which have been incorporated in the Strategic Plan, *Capturing the Energy of the Cape Fear Academy Hurricanes*, which we are pleased to share with you.

Just as the identification and assessment phases of the Strategic Plan incorporated the input of Cape Fear Academy’s constituents, the successful implementation of the programs will only be achieved through a community effort. As an important member of this community, your involvement and support will be vital. Together, we now face the challenge to ensure that the Cape Fear Academy educational experience will be the best it can possibly be, and we look forward to your partnership in this effort.

As you read *Capturing the Energy of the Cape Fear Academy Hurricanes*, please closely note how the Mission, Philosophy and Core Values have driven every item in the document. While it includes input from many individuals, it is not an arbitrary collection of individual wish lists. It is a plan that will continue to intensify “community, respect, integrity, and excellence” that are the Cape Fear Academy Hurricanes.

Beth Cherry  
Board President

John Meehl  
Headmaster



# THE EYE OF THE HURRICANES

## MISSION

Cape Fear Academy strives to be a learning community sharing a commitment to respect, integrity, academic excellence, and service to others.

## PHILOSOPHY

Cape Fear Academy, an independent coeducational day school, provides a challenging college preparatory program and a developmentally-appropriate curriculum within a stimulating learning environment. The Academy considers scholarly achievement, character development, creative expression, and physical wellness the components of true excellence.

Students make a strong commitment to their own education while enjoying a close relationship with their teachers. The faculty is the cornerstone of the learning community and is committed to developing students who are knowledgeable, reflective, creative, caring, and active participants in a complex global society.

Each student is an individual with diverse skills, interests, and needs. With that in mind, the faculty employs teaching methods that engage the varied learning styles of students.

The Academy promotes a sense of community where students live as responsible persons whose word is their bond, whose work is their own, and around whom the property and well-being of others are safe.

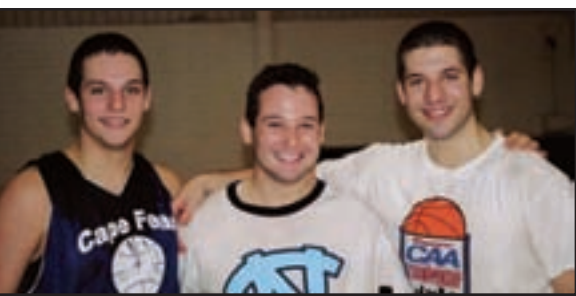


## CORE VALUES

Though school life can feature both perfect weather and choppy seas, Cape Fear Academy's Core Values are the "rudders" that keep individuals and the school community navigating a steady course toward the horizon of the Mission and Philosophy.

### Academics

Even though high test scores and college acceptance rates are a source of pride for CFA, these accomplishments are a by-product of good education. The real objective of a CFA education is to teach students how to be good thinkers and lifelong learners. The Foundations Program and academic instructional units are driven by the fact that content can be memorized and often forgotten, but what remains well after the last test is the mental structure to process future knowledge. Our graduates can think critically, solve problems, and continue to learn fields of knowledge that they have yet to meet or that do not yet exist. These attributes are the real crux of education and at the heart of why Cape Fear Academy exists.



### Community

Parent and student surveys taken over the last few years have indicated that the feeling of community at CFA is our number one positive attribute. This feeling of community derives from one word: trust. Students trust that their teachers really care about them as well as their subjects. Parents trust that teachers will deeply listen to and thoroughly investigate any concerns or issues they may have. Teachers trust that students, if given privileges, will respond by showing responsibility. Obviously such trust must be maintained by such measures as clear and frequent communication, consistent application of standards, and hundreds of caring conversations every day. Trust must be constantly maintained as well as merely established. Trust can sometimes be a fragile trait. That is why "communities" like Cape Fear Academy are becoming increasingly rare today in America. Clearly, our sense of community is what sets us apart from most other groups and most other schools.

### Opportunity

The third reason Cape Fear Academy exists is opportunity. Although there are elements such as professional growth for faculty and informative seminars for parents, opportunity at CFA is primarily about our students. Research shows that next to having adults care about them, the key factor for positive student motivation and school success is having a passion for something he or she really enjoys. Although this passion can develop early in an academic course, it is much more likely that a child's first passion will develop in a co-curricular activity such as fine arts or a sport. It is important educationally for each student to find a school passion that makes a new school day something to be anticipated. If a student can find one enterprise to feel positive about, this momentum spreads to many more facets of his or her school life.

### Respect, Accountability, and Perspective

These values indicate how we live at CFA and promote important attributes for the future: responsible choices, respectful interactions, and a safe environment. Within this environment students can feel safe to try new things, challenge themselves, and develop self-confidence based on real achievements of which they and adults are proud.

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2006-2011

The cooperation of warm water temperatures and atmospheric conditions combine to form tropical storms known as hurricanes. There is great energy and momentum as hurricanes form. Similarly there is great energy and positive momentum within the Cape Fear Academy community. We are poised on a wave that will carry us forward into the future. This Strategic Plan, *Capturing the Energy of the Cape Fear Academy Hurricanes*, is a map of the path of this energy and how we will focus that energy to accomplish our goals. Join us as we chart the course of the CFA Hurricanes!

## CATEGORY 1: Student Programs

### Strategies:

- 1 Establish CFA as a Mel Levine "School Attuned"
- 2 Review entire CFA curriculum
- 3 Expand performing arts and video educational opportunities
- 4 Increase physical education opportunities
- 5 Establish a writing laboratory
- 6 Expand marine science within an environmental science program
- 7 Add additional foreign languages to curriculum

## CATEGORY 2: Faculty Sustenance and Improvement

### Strategies:

- 1 Begin a merit compensation system
- 2 Increase faculty and staff salaries
- 3 Increase faculty and staff professional development opportunities

## CATEGORY 3: Facilities Planning and Management

### Strategies:

- 1 Improve and increase academic classroom space
- 2 Improve and expand athletic facilities
- 3 Build a new fine arts center
- 4 Finance and manage new facilities

## CATEGORY 4: Financial Soundness and Institutional Advancement

### Strategies:

- 1 Increase support of the Annual Fund
- 2 Develop an alumni program
- 3 Develop a stewardship program for major donors
- 4 Increase communication and marketing efforts
- 5 Increase scholarships and financial aid
- 6 Develop and implement an Integrated Campaign

## TRACKING THE PATH

It takes years to unfurl a Strategic Plan. The following timeline details those years.

### FEBRUARY 2003

Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS) planning meeting composed of trustees, administrators, faculty and parents, was led by an independent school facilitator. Recommendations from this meeting were the following:

1. Emphasize and expand Foundations, Marine Science, and Performing Arts/Video Literacy
2. Increase maximum enrollment goal to the low 600's
3. Develop a Strategic Plan after accreditation process completed

### APRIL 2003

Mission and Philosophy were revised and reaffirmed by the Cape Fear Academy Board of Trustees.

### JULY 2003

Accreditation was renewed by SAIS and by South Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

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# STUDENT PROGRAMS

## Goal

Within the constructs of a traditional college preparatory program, we will refine, expand, and enhance our academic program to offer our students the best quality education with an emphasis on critical thinking, cutting edge subject matter, and life-long learning tools.

## Strategies

### 1 Establish CFA as a Mel Levine “School Attuned”

The Schools Attuned Program, based on the research of Dr. Mel Levine of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, is a professional development program for educators. Teachers, then students, are taught to understand how people learn differently and what specific methods are best for each boy or girl. The Schools Attuned Program will give every CFA teacher advanced tools to analyze concerns of struggling students and to facilitate progress for advanced students. Additionally, a student will, with teacher coaching and varied lesson approaches, benefit by knowing the most effective ways he or she personally can learn. This self-knowledge will be cultivated in whole class activities, group discussions, and individual sessions with staff members across subjects and school divisions.

### 2 Re-examine and revise, where necessary, the entire CFA curriculum with an emphasis on scope, sequence, and suitability for inclusion

It has been some time since the CFA curriculum has undergone a complete review. New courses of the last ten years must be integrated. Scope and sequence should be streamlined, particularly between Divisions. Higher order thinking skills will be emphasized.

### 3 Expand performing arts and video educational opportunities

Participation in dramatic and musical presentations breeds self-esteem, confidence, and passion in many students who may not gain these in the traditional classroom or on the athletic field. By tying dramatic presentations to specific academic unit objectives in various Middle and Lower School classes, students learn more easily, retain concepts longer, and see interconnections better. Recent research relative to video indicates that 80% of information received by this generation of students will be from video sources rather than the written word. These video sources include the Internet, television, movies, and performer videos. To restrict learning to written sources would be tantamount to condemning students to partial illiteracy.

### 4 Increase physical education opportunities

Researchers in child and neurological development have proven that increased activity in this area has a number of beneficial effects on academic performance, attention, focus, social progress, and physical health.

### 5 Establish a Writing Laboratory for the Upper and Middle Schools

Studies show that writing skills are one of the two or three best predictors of adult success in the working world. The best writing needs a lot of attention to revision, development of a personal style, and individual personal encouragement.

### 6 Within an Environmental Science program, expand Marine Science to additional grades

Skills in critical thinking and the scientific method can be more easily taught with attractive themes and accompanying first-hand experiences. Furthermore, experiences which include Upper School science students teaching younger children have school community benefits beyond the subject matter itself. Continued collaborations with the UNCW Marine Science Center will facilitate practical and college-level opportunities.

### 7 Add additional foreign languages to curriculum

Global thinking suggests immersion into non-Western cultures, especially cultures that will be of world importance in the immediate future and be occupationally advantageous. Chinese, as well as some European languages such as French, German, and Latin will be offered online as demand and resources permit.

## JANUARY 2004

Long Range Strategic Planning Retreat composed of trustees, administrators, faculty, and parents was led by an Independent School facilitator. The following facets of the school were examined and recommendations were offered:

1. Educational programs
2. Personnel
3. Governance
4. Finance
5. Facilities
6. Advancement

Trustee Committees continued developing priorities for Strategic Plan.

## JANUARY 2004-JUNE 2004

Trustee Committees composed of trustees, administration, staff, and parents developed items thought worthy of inclusion into a Strategic Plan for the next five to ten years.

## JUNE 2004-JUNE 2005

CFA sought local, state, and federal approval for utilization of land on south end of campus.

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## FACULTY SUSTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

### Goal

Retaining, recruiting, mentoring, and development of top, motivated faculty is recognized by all relevant studies as the number one correlation with school excellence and student performance. The school will identify and hire the best faculty available, nurture and retain them wherever possible, and support them in making the solid living they deserve for fulfilling this noble work.

### Strategies

- 1 Begin a compensation system that involves a merit component**  
Teaching is one of few professions in the world that typically does not have rewards for merit other than leaving the classroom for administration. The best teachers should be rewarded. Among other by-products, such a system will allow the school to improve retention of its star teachers.
- 2 Increase faculty and staff salaries**  
Raising compensation greatly increases the chances the school can attract and retain high-quality faculty when alternatives exist in public schools or private business. For such important work, we should provide our teachers a solid living which keeps pace with comparable opportunities and the chance for a sustainable retirement.
- 3 Increase faculty and staff professional development and enrichment opportunities**  
Ten-year studies by Independent School Management, the nation's leading independent school consulting group, indicate that a culture of professional growth and life-long learning among the faculty is the single best indicator of student and school success.



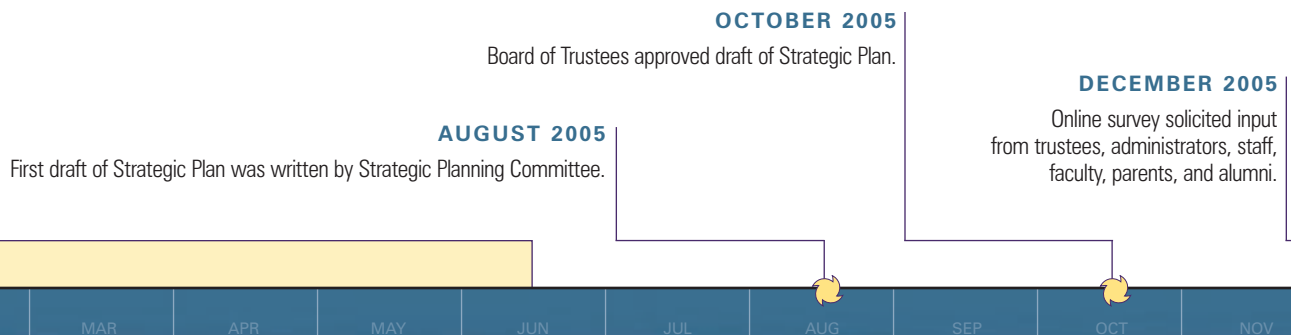
## FACILITIES PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

### Goal

CFA will provide quality facilities necessary to serve its growing number of both students and programs. Research shows that more activities and options increase the likelihood of not only positive participation in school programs, but also increased opportunities for students to find new passions and self-esteem.

### Strategies

- 1 Improve and increase the academic classroom space**  
Dedicated classroom space is needed for the Foundations Program as it serves the needs of more and more students. As waiting lists of potential students for each grade level continue to grow, the need for additional classrooms will increase proportionally.
- 2 Improve and expand athletic facilities**  
Currently, an expanding CFA has more teams than practice spaces. Building additional outdoor athletic facilities, either adjoining the campus or off campus, could allow three fields instead of the current two, while opening space on the present campus for future construction and/or campus parking. In addition, a new indoor facility will lessen off-campus and late practices. Furthermore, it will allow increased physical education.
- 3 Build a new fine arts center**  
The performing arts department has one of the school's strongest programs. We currently experience success despite the hindrances of our limited space. At present, there is an overuse of Cameron Commons resulting in scheduling conflicts that are not easy to resolve without diminishing some facet of school life.
- 4 Finance and manage any new facilities after their construction**  
A school must plan adequately to fund new construction and also to manage and fund operations and upkeep of these new additions in the same responsible manner in which the existing assets are currently managed. This will be done by increasing Endowment and/or Reserve Funds.





## FINANCIAL SOUNDNESS AND INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

### Goal

Implementation of the Strategic Plan and associated campaigns will be supported by additional personnel and systems to facilitate information gathering, prioritizing, and planning. Cape Fear Academy will reach our optimal current enrollment of 632 and develop waiting lists. Future enrollment expansion will be examined in Summer 2006.

### Strategies

- 1 Increase support of and participation in the Annual Fund prior to the launching of an Integrated Campaign**  
Continued support will be necessary to supplement the Operating Budget.
- 2 Develop a program to include, integrate, and educate alumni**  
Drawing alumni closer to the school will increase shared vision, enthusiasm, and support for the school.
- 3 Develop a formal, ongoing stewardship program for major donors**  
Long-range cultivation of major gifts and increased parent support will be crucial to sustain a large Integrated Campaign.
- 4 Continue communication and marketing efforts to explain the “Cape Fear Academy difference” to current and prospective families**
- 5 Increase scholarships and financial aid**  
These enrollment actions will diversify the student population leading to more comprehensive sharing of life experiences.
- 6 Develop and implement a well-planned, ongoing Integrated Campaign**  
The campaign will include support for programs and staff, needed facilities, ongoing Annual Fund needs, and a component to increase the school’s Endowment and Planned Giving. A striking presentation of what has and will be done is necessary to spread the vision and excitement crucial to the successful financing of the plan.



#### JANUARY 2006

Board of Trustees charged the committee to write final draft of the Strategic Plan.

#### MARCH 2006

Executive Committee of the Cape Fear Academy Board of Trustees approved final text of the Strategic Plan, CAPTURING THE ENERGY OF THE CAPE FEAR ACADEMY HURRICANES.

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# CHARTING THE FUTURE

The path of the CFA Hurricanes has been mapped out before you. A hurricane comes together under the right conditions of energy sources. The Cape Fear Academy community is experiencing the perfect conditions to capture the energy and continue the forward motion of being the premiere educational institution in southeastern North Carolina.

In anticipation of an approaching hurricane, communities are advised to reach a state of preparedness. In the near future, we will have the opportunity to assist our school prepare for the future. We will all need to consider and determine the depth of involvement we wish to commit toward the continued success of Cape Fear Academy.

This preparation plan, *Capturing the Energy of the Cape Fear Academy Hurricanes*, will channel the favorable circumstances to assure that our children will continue to receive the most important preparation of all – the academic and personal preparation for college and life.







# Cape Fear Academy

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