

Village  
Community  
School

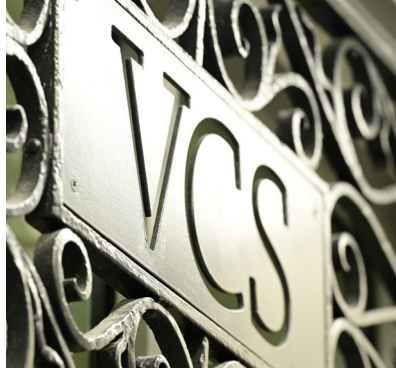
# STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2030

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Plus:

*A retrospective of the school's progress over the past five years (2020-2025)*



## Building From Strength

VCS is proudly a K–8 school and is preparing to expand our program to include Pre-Kindergarten, extending our commitment to children’s growth from their earliest school years through 8th grade. Our pedagogy is intentionally designed for motivated and capable learners and is grounded in research that supports cognitive development, academic achievement, social-emotional well-being, and independence.

To fulfill our mission, we are deeply committed to hiring and retaining outstanding educators - those who design mission-aligned curricula, deliver engaging and effective instruction, build strong relationships, know every student they teach, and nurture a vibrant school community.

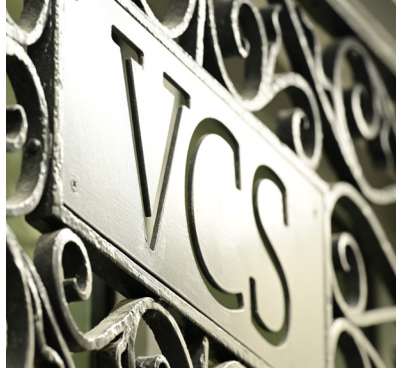
Through this Strategic Plan, we aim to: strengthen and expand our Academic Program - including the thoughtful integration of a Pre-Kindergarten program; invest in Faculty and Staff Development; foster greater Community Engagement and partnership; support sustainable Admissions and Enrollment growth and retention; and uphold strong Governance and financial stewardship.

To help realize these goals, the Board of Trustees will launch a capital campaign to fund key priorities that advance the next phase of VCS’s growth - including the launch of the Pre-Kindergarten program, enhancements to learning spaces, strategic investment in faculty and staff, and the continued growth of the school’s endowment.

In doing so, we will honor our history, elevate our present, and secure a bright and enduring future for VCS.

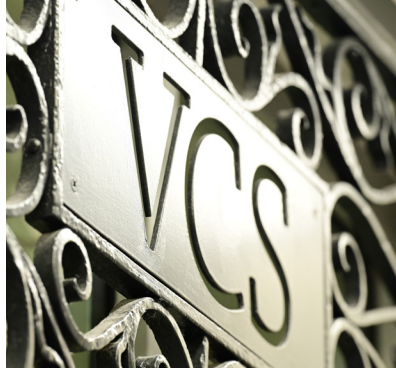
## Purpose of the Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan provides both a retrospective of the school’s progress over the past five years (2020–2025) and a forward-looking framework for the next five years (2025–2030). It directs our initiatives and supports the thoughtful and purposeful use of our most valuable resources: people, time, and funding. An overarching goal is to enhance the educational experiences of every VCS student while sustaining the best practices that are already in place.



## Strategic Planning Process

The 2025 Strategic Plan was developed through the collaborative leadership of the Head of School, Administrative Council, and Board of Trustees. It was informed by feedback from faculty and staff, and iterated through engagement with the Educational Council and Department Coordinators Group. This plan focuses on five key areas - our Strategic Priorities - and is grounded in data analysis and principles that leads to forward-looking recommendations. These recommendations shape implementation plans for the next five years.



**Looking Back: VCS Progress, 2020–2025**

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# Academic Program

Village Community School is committed to a rigorous academic program - one that nurtures students as critical thinkers, creative problem solvers, intellectual risk takers, empathic community members, and confident self-advocates. Our aim is to have every element of our academic experience reflect and support the school's mission:

*Village Community School develops self-motivated students who value the challenging and rewarding process of learning as an integral part of life. We choose to be a diverse community where equity, creativity, and critical thinking are essential to the rigorous education we provide. Our graduates are skilled and confident, able to advocate for themselves and others. They are well prepared for high school and for their futures in an increasingly complex and dynamic world.*

As the school reflects on the past five years, we cannot help but recall the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. After a long tradition of inter-aging, a collective decision was made to shift to straight-grade classrooms in 2020. To support this goal, we moved away from the generalist model, in which homeroom teachers were responsible for teaching multiple subjects across two grades in an inter-aged classroom. Under our current model, teachers focus on no more than two subject areas, allowing for greater depth of expertise, more thoughtful curriculum development, and more intentional instruction. In 2022–2023, divisional leadership was reintroduced to VCS after five years of the school operating with K–8 Directors, such as Dean of Faculty, Dean of Students, and Dean of Curriculum. Restoring dedicated leadership with divisional directors has brought meaningful benefits to faculty, students, and parents. It allows for more developmentally attuned decision-making, greater clarity in communication, and more consistent support across the school day. Divisional leaders are better positioned to understand the unique needs of their grade bands, support teacher growth, and partner closely with families.

To further strengthen academic leadership, we established a Department Coordinators Group in 2024–2025. In addition to leading department meetings and participating in departmental hiring, these teacher-leaders collaborate with faculty and Division Directors to design, document, implement, and evaluate curriculum. Their work includes developing and reviewing scope and sequences, establishing grade-level benchmarks, aligning assessments, and supporting professional learning within their departments. As part of this work, Department Coordinators will facilitate departmental reviews of the curriculum, with a focus on intellectual challenge, skill development, content relevance, and vertical and horizontal alignment. They will also lead the ongoing development of curriculum maps to strengthen continuity and build a shared understanding of academic content, skills, and expectations across grade levels.

The Guidance Team reviewed our standardized testing program, including CTP and MAP, to confirm that these assessments provide meaningful data to support individual student growth, inform curriculum and instruction, and help us understand student performance in relation to national norms. As we continue to strengthen the academic program, we will also examine how the structure of the school day can best support teaching and learning. Reimagining the daily schedule will allow us to create greater flexibility within

the school day, providing more time for collaboration, program expansion, and special projects, as well as a longer lunch period that allows students more time to eat, connect, and recharge. Our continued program development also includes the launch of Pre-Kindergarten in 2027–2028. This expansion will extend the values, pedagogy, and sense of community that define VCS to four-year-olds, creating a strong foundation for a 10-year educational journey from PreK through 8th Grade.

Learning *Beyond the Classroom* is an integral part of the academic program and reflects our belief that the city, and the world beyond it, can serve as an extension of the classroom. Through more than 40 field trips, overnight experiences beginning in 4th Grade, and an international experience in 8th Grade, students apply their learning in new settings, build independence, strengthen relationships, and develop new skills.

Guided by our Mission and pedagogy, each department is advancing meaningful work and setting goals to guide their continued progress.

The World Language program begins in 2nd Grade with Spanish instruction through 5th Grade. In Upper School, students can select a world language to study for the next three years between Latin, Mandarin, and Spanish. As we look ahead to the next five years, we have an opportunity to make thoughtful decisions about the future of our World Language program, including expanding language learning opportunities to students in our earliest grades. We are also exploring differentiated pathways for students in the Upper School with advanced or heritage Spanish language skills.

Our Performing and Visual Arts departments continue to reflect on their offerings and curricula. In 2024–2025, our music program was enriched by a new 4th and 5th Grade instrumental pilot, giving students agency to choose an instrument—trumpet, flute, clarinet, or saxophone—and gain valuable ensemble experience through specialized instruction and performance opportunities. Our goal is to inspire students to continue their instrument into Upper School (and beyond) and participate in our band. We are reviewing our Upper School Performing Arts Curriculum (PAC) to keep it dynamic, engaging, and rich in creative opportunities for students. The Visual Arts Department has also begun an audit of its K–8 curriculum.

In our Technology program, we are assessing how best to deliver digital literacy and problem-solving skills—either through our current stand-alone technology classes or a STEAM approach that emphasizes interdisciplinary, design-based learning. We are evaluating the stand-alone technology classes for Grades 2–4 to strengthen their alignment with and contribution to the technology integration occurring across the broader curriculum. We are also engaged in ongoing discussions about our use and boundaries around AI, and we are committed to approaching it with thoughtfulness, transparency, and a focus on supporting academic integrity and educational innovation. Overall, the school is committed to defining boundaries and seeking balance with student technology use during the school day. Policies such as “no personal devices during the day” and access to teacher-approved websites help us to achieve these goals. We will continue to adjust and pivot as the technology landscape evolves.

Our Athletics program now includes 5th grade participation in all three seasons (previously 6th–8th Grade) and continues to strengthen school spirit through pep rallies, sports banquets, and the introduction of our new mascot in 2023—the VCS Blue Jay. Athletic offerings include soccer and volleyball in the fall, basketball in the winter, and track and field in the spring, along with our newly introduced flag football program that launched in spring 2025.

Our Social Studies Department is examining the scope and sequence with an eye towards ensuring we maintain curricular alignment with NYS Standards. After careful consideration, 4th–6th Grade teachers have redesigned their curriculum to be age-appropriate, engaging, and to prioritize relevant content, while remaining thoughtfully sequenced and aligned with the existing curriculum.

Teachers in the ELA Department have prioritized defining a clear methodology for teaching writing. In the youngest grades, teachers have been trained in Handwriting Without Tears and began incorporating it into their curriculum in 2024–2025 in combination with the preexisting Foundations Program. As a next step, they plan to implement *The Writing Revolution (TWR)* as a framework for writing instruction in Grades K–8. In the Spring of 2026, all teachers across all subject areas were trained and will work collaboratively throughout the 2026–2027 school year to implement TWR throughout the academic program.

The Science Department has incorporated the NGSS standards fully into the curriculum and uses them to guide instruction. To achieve this goal, more instructional time was added for the Kindergarten and 1st Grade students—adding a second class each week that meets in half group size, beginning in the 2025–2026 school year.

Building upon the momentum over the past five years, the Math team is continuing to identify and align with targeted standards and to audit curricular resources. After a period of expansion of materials, the current team is now looking to refine and streamline.

We have revived and expanded VCS Beyond the Classroom, which deepens learning through experiential education and community connections, to include all grades, K–8, including new overnight trips for 4th and 5th Grades. In the future, trips abroad will no longer be limited to countries associated with our world language program. Instead, we intentionally keep all parts of the world open as potential destinations, allowing students to engage with diverse cultures, histories, and global perspectives in support of our mission.

In student support, we've restructured our Guidance Team to include two Learning Specialists and, starting in 2025–26, two Psychologists. Each Learning Specialist and Psychologist will support students across Grades K–4 or 5–8. This shift brings increased expertise in mental health, learning differences, and focused coordination and interventions.

# Faculty & Staff

We strive to live the school's mission of our's being "...a community where people care for and respect one another." This commitment is reflected in the way we lead, hire, and support one another—cultivating the thriving, purposeful, and professional culture that defines VCS.

The strength of Village Community School lies in the people who teach, guide, and lead our students each day. VCS has continued to prioritize attracting, hiring, and developing exceptional teaching and non-teaching staff who are highly qualified and aligned with our student-centered pedagogy and mission of the school. We thoughtfully craft each job description to reflect the ethos and mission of our school, while engaging administrators and faculty in a collaborative hiring process through our Staff Interviewing Committee. This approach allows every prospective staff member to be selected with thoughtfulness and care, based on demonstrated competencies and alignment with our mission.

Our support for staff doesn't stop at hiring. Every new employee participates in a robust onboarding process and is paired with a mentor—someone who helps them understand the culture, systems, and spirit of VCS. Prior to the full faculty returning, all new staff participate in a full-day orientation. This orientation includes workshops on child development, the school's mission, and other aspects of programming and pedagogy, which are important to all staff, regardless of their position. New teachers receive a set of anchor texts that reflect the school's beliefs and practices; these are collaboratively read and discussed with faculty teams to build a shared understanding of the philosophy guiding our classrooms.

Our teacher evaluation process reflects our commitment to growth and includes multiple touchpoints: it spans the first four years of a teacher's tenure and includes multiple touchpoints for feedback, support, and reflection. In their first two years at the school, all teachers new to VCS engage with our New Teacher Evaluation process, which includes four quadrants of excellence: Planning & Preparation, Instruction, Classroom Environment, and Professional Responsibilities. Division Directors work with each new teacher to assess their performance in all four areas and to set goals. In addition, all faculty engage in an Experienced Teacher Evaluation every four years, overseen by the Head of School. This process is an opportunity for faculty to reflect on their teaching, identify an area for growth, and to expand their teaching and learning practice.

Our Assistant Teacher program is another important part of our faculty model. Assistant Teachers currently work alongside head teachers in Kindergarten and 1st Grade, providing additional support for students and contributing to the daily work of the classroom. VCS also has a longstanding Assistant Teacher role in Woodshop. As we prepare to launch Pre-Kindergarten and consider the staffing needs of our youngest learners, we aspire to expand the Assistant Teacher model across PreK through 2nd Grade, while maintaining the Woodshop position. This expanded model would provide greater classroom support during these dynamic foundational years.

Equity and inclusion remain central to our professional culture. With a new DEIB

Coordinator appointed to guide our DEIB work, VCS continues to invest in sustained professional learning around equity, anti-bias practices, Dialogue Across Difference, and community-building. These efforts are interwoven into all aspects of our professional development and shape how we teach, learn, and lead.

A commitment to adult learning is a defining characteristic of our school culture. Weekly faculty and staff meetings create opportunities for ongoing professional development, reflective practice, and collaborative inquiry. We engage guest speakers to enrich our collective thinking and skills, and we prioritize resources to ensure that faculty and staff can pursue meaningful professional learning through external workshops, trainings, and national conferences.

At VCS, we dedicate significant resources to provide faculty and staff with meaningful opportunities for professional growth. For example, the VCS Venture Grant, established in 2023, is a powerful symbol of our school's ongoing commitment to fostering a healthy professional development culture and robust support for all employees—both teaching and non-teaching staff. The endowed Venture Grant fund is intended to empower staff to pursue self-directed projects, experiences, or studies beyond the classroom or office that inspire creativity, personal development, and professional enrichment. The Venture Grant embodies our belief in lifelong learning and underscores how investing in the whole person strengthens and sustains our vibrant school community. As another example, VCS offers an education grant which allows for continuing one's education in their field of work.

We also know that a thriving staff culture includes care, flexibility, and appreciation. The administration marks milestone events and small victories alike with gestures that remind our colleagues they are seen and valued. Examples include daily hot breakfast and lunch, dinners for late-night events, goodie bags at our opening reception, and our annual end-of-year "toast," where employees, who are celebrating milestone years, retiring or moving on are recognized. To complement the administration's efforts, the newly formed Celebrating Staff Committee—made up of parent volunteers—brings creativity and warmth to Staff Appreciation Week. In addition, all staff receive complimentary admission to school-wide events and are provided with two tickets for The Benefit.

We respect and value our staff's time and make thoughtful decisions around compensation and benefits. Through an ongoing review of salaries and benefits, by the school's Compensation Committee, we strive to remain competitive and attract and retain exceptional educators and administrators. For example, in 2024–2025, the school introduced structured compensation for faculty and administrators who chaperone international travel, supervise overnight experiences, or support evening and weekend events involving students.

We also approach scheduling with staff well-being and equitable workloads in mind. This commitment is reflected in practices such as maintaining virtual Parent-Teacher Conferences, regularly reviewing schedules and responsibilities, and seeking opportunities to increase flexibility where possible. For example, twelve-month employees

may work remotely when school is not in session and their responsibilities allow, supporting a healthy balance between professional responsibilities and personal well-being.

In recent years, VCS has intentionally expanded leadership pathways for faculty, creating more opportunities for teacher-leaders to shape school-wide culture and practice. Roles such as department coordinators, committee chairs, mentors for new staff, and athletic coaching invite teachers to lead from within and contribute meaningfully to decision-making, collaboration, and innovation across the school. In addition, two seats on our Board of Trustees and two on the Compensation Committee are reserved for staff members—a practice that speaks to the transparent, inclusive governance culture at VCS. As we look ahead to the launch of a Pre-Kindergarten program in 2027–2028, the Head of School convened a Pre-Kindergarten Think Tank Committee of faculty volunteers to offer their expertise and voice to this important programmatic development.

# Community Engagement

Community is more than just our middle name—it is the foundation of everything we do. We believe that building a strong community begins with knowing each student and family and nurturing the relationships that connect us all. From morning greetings to all-school assemblies, VCS is a place where every student and family is seen, known, and valued. Every adult in the building contributes to our warm and welcoming environment. We are accessible, supportive, and committed to walking alongside families throughout their journey at VCS—not only as educators, but as partners in the full development of every child.

We believe that listening is essential to building an inclusive and responsive community. We actively seek feedback through surveys, direct conversations, and community events to foster a culture in which families, students, and staff feel supported. This ongoing exchange helps us grow together, strengthen relationships, and shape a school experience that reflects the needs and voices of our community. These values come to life in the many ways we come together throughout the year.

In 2021, VCS expanded its physical footprint with the opening of the Eve K. Kleger building, adding over 22,000 square feet. Every space was intentionally designed to support teaching and learning, foster collaboration, and strengthen community. The new wing includes specialty spaces such as science, technology, and STEAM labs, a library, woodshop, and a student-regulation sized gym. It also includes a 5,000 square foot outdoor Sky Yard playspace with netting to allow for ball playing. Financing this new space requires the school to share its facilities with the wider community. VCS thoughtfully selects nonprofit partners whose programming aligns with our educational mission and supports student learning and enrichment.

In addition to the new building, recent initiatives have deepened our sense of school spirit and celebration. In 2023, we named our first-ever school mascot—the Blue Jay—adding a joyful and unifying symbol to the VCS identity. We held an inaugural athletics pep rally and sports banquet to honor student-athletes and build excitement around our growing athletics program. We opened an online spirit wear store and expanded our merchandise offerings, creating more opportunities for students, families, alumni, and staff to wear the VCS name with pride.

Our community gatherings reflect the joy and intention we bring to this work. In the Lower School, monthly community meetings are led by our 5th Grade students, giving them the opportunity to develop confidence while designing and emceeing these events. In the Upper School, weekly community meetings provide a space for student-led reflection, conversation, and celebration—an essential part of building community and belonging. Several times each year, we come together as an entire school for all-school assemblies. These moments, which include beloved songs and shared learning experiences, reinforce the values and traditions that define VCS.

Upper School students come together with peers from fellow Downtown Independent School Consortium (D.I.S.C.) schools for annual grade-level dances and athletic

competitions—building friendships, expanding community, and having fun along the way. A cornerstone of the Upper School experience is a three-day overnight trip in early September that brings together all 6th–8th Grade students and Upper School faculty. These experiences create additional opportunities to build community and lasting bonds.

Since 1980, murals have been a cherished tradition at Village Community School, created every 10–12 years as a reflection of our community’s creativity and shared spirit. Over the decades, six murals have now been completed, each capturing a moment in time. In 2025–2026, a new mural has carried this legacy forward, adorning the south wall of the Sky Yard. Designed by an alumna in partnership with Upper School students who took the mural-making elective class, the work is both rooted in VCS history and shaped by the imagination of its current students. As with past murals, the entire community of students, staff, and parents were invited to paint a portion of the design. For those who took part, the experience of contributing a brushstroke became a lasting memory and a meaningful connection to the school during these landmark moments in VCS’s history.

Just as murals reflect our collective spirit, parent engagement is another cornerstone of community life at VCS. We regularly host class coffee talks with Division Directors, our *Conversations with Jen* series, and *A Look Inside* events to offer insight into the VCS experience and foster meaningful connection. Our Fall Festival is a beloved community event featuring costumes, games, food, and activities for all ages, and our annual Book Fair and Book Swap celebrate our community of readers and welcome families into the joy of selecting new books and reading together. Lower School students enjoy an evening of music and movement at their own lively dance party. Every other year, VCS hosts Grandparents and Special Friends Day for our Kindergarten and 1st Grade students for a joyful day of connection and celebration across generations. Our largest community-wide fundraising event, known as The Benefit, is a spirited, adults-only evening that brings families and staff together in community and in support of our tuition assistance. We close each school year with a festive Summer Send-Off party in our Sky Yard and gym, giving families one last moment to gather and connect before summer begins. Capturing the community spirit, the school’s first ever school-wide yearbook was launched in the 2024–2025 school year.

Community service is woven into the fabric of who we are. Throughout the year, our Community Service Committee organizes donation drives and service projects that invite everyone to participate in acts of care and responsibility—such as canned food, toy, coat, and toiletry kit drives, as well as tree stewardship initiatives. These efforts are not only meaningful; they also reflect the shared values that unite us.

Parent volunteers are essential partners in building and sustaining the vibrant culture of VCS. Through a variety of committees and volunteer opportunities, families contribute their time, talents, and creativity to strengthen community connections and enrich school life. The Celebrating Staff Committee, for example, leads numerous initiatives throughout the year to recognize and support faculty and staff, including a robust Staff Appreciation Week. Parent volunteers also help organize holiday celebrations, school spirit activities, and other special events that foster connection and appreciation across the community. Their dedication exemplifies the collaborative partnership between families and the

school and contributes to the welcoming, joyful environment that makes VCS unique.

During the school year, we offer a robust after school program, for both LS and US students that is a blend of both scheduled and drop-in activities. These programs and classes offer additional learning and opportunities to expand one's interests, after hours. On average over two-thirds of our students stay for after school programming. In the summer, we offer a two-week summer camp, which has grown incrementally in enrollment over the past three years.

In recent years, VCS has significantly expanded its alumni engagement efforts, deepening our connection with former students and their families. We now host a growing number of alumni events throughout the year, including milestone reunions, decade-themed celebrations, and gatherings specifically for alumni parents. These events offer meaningful opportunities to reconnect with classmates, teachers, former teachers, and the VCS campus - keeping the spirit of the school alive long after graduation. In 2023, the school established the VCS Alumni Council, a group of dedicated alumni working in partnership with the school to help guide and shape alumni programming. That same year, we launched a dedicated Alumni Newsletter, providing regular updates on school news, alumni spotlights, and upcoming events. These initiatives reflect our commitment to celebrating the lifelong bonds formed at VCS and ensuring that alumni continue to feel like a vital part of our ongoing story.

This is what community means at VCS: intentional relationships, meaningful traditions, a deep commitment to our mission, and a steadfast belief that we are stronger when we grow, learn, and journey together.

# Admissions & Enrollment

We approach enrollment and retention with the same values that define our classrooms: a deep understanding of child development, inclusion, and intentionality. Our work in this area is grounded in strategies that help us attract mission-aligned prospective families and support the retention of current students and families who thrive in our PreK–8 environment.

Over the past five years, VCS has seen a positive trajectory in our admission metrics, driven by a more mission-aligned and values-conscious applicant pool. This refinement reflects the impact of targeted marketing efforts, direct outreach to Nursery School Directors and a clearer articulation of the VCS brand, helping prospective families better understand who we are and what we offer. Our admissions process continues to emphasize strong alignment with the school's Mission and Diversity Statements, as well as a student's readiness to thrive both academically and socially at VCS. As we sharpen our messaging and outreach, we strengthen our ability to attract a deep, talented group of applicants who are eager to contribute to and grow within the VCS community.

Our assessment practices, particularly at the Kindergarten entry point and, soon, in Pre-K, are designed to be thoughtful and developmentally appropriate. New assessment rubrics now enhance the accuracy and equity of evaluations, while maintaining VCS's signature warmth and care toward every applicant family, regardless of the outcome. For applicants in Grades 1st–8th, assessments are evaluated by our Math and ELA teachers to determine proficiency.

Our Kindergarten admissions process was distinctive among New York City independent schools, honoring a late age cutoff (December 31st), which allowed us to enroll children who are ready for Kindergarten before turning five. Our expertise with younger learners supported our decision to formally launch a Pre-Kindergarten program in 2027–2028. As we looked to offer families the opportunity to begin their VCS journey even earlier, the Head of School has spearheaded a Pre-Kindergarten Think Tank Committee composed of faculty volunteers whose expertise will guide the program's vision and curriculum development. We surveyed current and prospective families to assess interest and guide the program's development and launch to meet community needs. Our goal is to develop a Pre-Kindergarten program that reflects the same commitment to child development, nurturing relationships, and academic excellence that has long distinguished our K–8 program.

Admissions events have been reimaged to highlight the full arc of a VCS education, showcasing our academic program, PreK–8 model, and deeply rooted sense of community. In 2024–2025, we began using 8th Grade student ambassadors to offer authentic, student-led insights into the school, and our Parent Ambassadors began conducting personalized follow-up calls to prospective families. We continue to assess the needs of prospective families and are adding optional customized webinars. A fall Open House was reimaged to showcase our teaching practices and to immerse families in the VCS experience. We've also expanded opportunities for applicants to experience the VCS community firsthand by hosting visit days for accepted students in Grades 1–7

in the spring. These experiences deepen families' understanding of our program and strengthen their connection to the VCS community.

We are highly attentive to the experience of our newly enrolled families. We celebrate the families who choose VCS with welcoming events such as our Kindergarten Family Breakfast, a fall dinner for parents of new students, and joyful opportunities for connection across grade levels. We also assign each family a parent partner, which gives them a connection to the community.

Our marketing strategies continue to strengthen, reaching prospective families through targeted digital outreach on platforms like Google and Meta, focusing on key zip codes and demographics. We have developed a range of communications assets to highlight key aspects of the VCS experience, including drip-campaign emails and videos. These are complemented by an upgraded website, our annual magazine "The Mural," a school-wide yearbook, and a collection of descriptive brochures and curriculum guides.

With word-of-mouth being the most powerful marketing tool, we have also conducted significant outreach to our alumni base—including former students, parents, grandparents, employees, and non-graduates. We have established an Alumni Council, designed expansive alumni events, and created an alumni newsletter. Our Admissions team is active at NYC school fairs through NYSAIS and partner organizations, where we highlight VCS's unique strengths. We promote our rigorous academic program, inclusive school culture, and vibrant arts and athletics program.

We continue to prioritize the satisfaction and engagement of current families, recognizing that their lived experiences are central to shaping our school's reputation. While our average attrition rate has remained steady at 9% over the past five years—largely due to families relocating out of New York City—we remain focused on the factors within our control. In partnership with other downtown schools, we introduced a morning Brooklyn bus route in 2025–2026, a direct response to community feedback and an effort to better support and retain our Brooklyn families. We also nurture strong community engagement, offering opportunities for families to connect with one another and with the school through events like Fall Festival, Book Fair, Summer Send-Off, and The Benefit. We actively promote the long-term value of our PreK–8 model, the individualized care each child receives, the strength of our academic program, and the excellent outcomes of our high school placement process.

We keep families informed and engaged through curriculum evenings, two parent-teacher conferences each year, and *A Look Inside* events. We have also introduced a new system that provides timely updates from Lower School teachers on classroom content and skill development, along with regular feedback from Upper School teachers to parents following student assessments. We support families beyond the school day through a robust after school program, including both scheduled and drop-in options, that provides additional learning, enrichment, and care for children in our community. In the summer, immediately after the school year ends, we offer a two-week camp that has seen steady growth in enrollment over the past three years. These extended-day and summer offerings not only serve working families but also strengthen students'

connection to the VCS experience. Together, these initiatives help families feel connected—not just to their child’s progress, but to the broader VCS experience—deepening their investment in the full arc of our program.

We close the loop on every admissions season by surveying all applicant families, allowing us to refine our admissions process and ensure it remains clear, equitable, and centered on care. As we continue to strengthen enrollment and retention, we remain guided by the same principle that drives all of our work: to truly know, support, and partner with every child and family who walks through our doors.

# Governance

The Village Community School Board of Trustees seeks to demonstrate unwavering commitment to the long-term sustainability, ethical stewardship, and mission-driven governance of the school. Comprised of dedicated volunteers—including current and alumni parents, staff representatives, and members of the school's Administrative Council—the Board has focused its efforts on strategic planning, policy oversight, and ensuring VCS's continued financial strength.

Between 2020 and 2025, the Board of Trustees was instrumental in guiding the school through a period marked by significant milestones, transitions, and unprecedented challenges. In 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted daily life and education across the globe, the Board provided steady leadership during VCS's crisis response - supporting decision-making around remote programming, allocating resources to safeguard health and safety, and helping the school remain grounded in its mission throughout uncertain times.

In 2020, the Board successfully completed the 2014 Capital Campaign that funded the expansion of the school's campus, culminating in the opening of the Eve K. Kleger Wing. This 20,000-square-foot addition fulfilled a key pillar of the 2014 Strategic Plan: aligning VCS's physical campus with the needs of an evolving and expanding curriculum. The new building includes a state-of-the-art gymnasium, library, science labs, woodshop, and technology and STEAM classrooms. In addition to serving the needs of the school community, this new space also creates opportunities for alternate revenue streams through a thoughtfully designed rental program. Approved by the Board as part of VCS's broader strategy for financial sustainability, the program allows select non-profit organizations to rent the school's facilities after school hours, provided their missions align with the school's values and their programs support learning and enrichment.

As part of its commitment to financial sustainability, VCS actively pursues city and state grants to secure additional resources that supplement the school's programs and operational expenses. These grant opportunities provide valuable funding for areas such as instructional support, student services, and facility enhancements. This approach is reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees as a key component of the school's long-term financial strategy.

Also in 2020, the Board appointed a new Head of School, marking a leadership transition during a significant period for the VCS community. The Board also saw a leadership transition within its own ranks. In 2023, the Board underwent a planned transition, with the election of a new Chair to continue advancing its strategic priorities.

In 2024–2025, the Board undertook a comprehensive governance review and established a Bylaws Committee to review and revise the school's governing framework. As part of this work, the Board updated the school's bylaws and formally transitioned from its historical membership structure to a revised governance model. This shift, approved through a community-wide vote, reflects the Board's continued commitment to transparency, accountability, and effective governance.

As part of this transition, the Board developed a new policy document outlining the roles and responsibilities of trustees, further clarifying expectations and reinforcing a culture of purpose-driven leadership. These efforts align with the Board's annual duties, which include approving the budget, evaluating the Head of School, reviewing strategic and advancement initiatives, monitoring compliance and risk, crisis planning, and guiding succession. In the 2026–2027 school year, the Board implemented a self-evaluation process to promote ongoing reflection and improvement and align its governance practices with established best practices.

The Board's ability to advance its strategic priorities and accomplish significant work is supported by each trustee's strong commitment to active participation in both full Board and committee work. In 2024, the Board adjusted its meeting schedule from monthly gatherings to six meetings per year—prioritizing more intentional, strategic use of time and resources. While Board retreats have not occurred annually, they have proved invaluable when convened, offering space to engage deeply with governance development and long-term planning. In 2022, the Board hosted a day-long retreat facilitated by a Diversity Consultant who focused on the role of diversity, equity, and inclusion in governance. At the start of the 2025–2026 school year, the Board's retreat was facilitated by a Fundraising Consultant and focused on trustees' roles in Annual Fund messaging, donor cultivation and solicitation, as well as early strategic planning for future capital campaigns.

### **Capital Campaign Planning**

Building on the success of previous campaigns, the Board of Trustees is laying the groundwork for a new capital campaign designed to support the next phase of VCS's growth and programmatic excellence. This campaign will support the launch of the Pre-Kindergarten program by funding the addition of new teachers and administrators and the enhancements to the school's physical space required to welcome its youngest learners. In addition, the campaign will aim to advance VCS's investment in its faculty and programs by reimagining the daily schedule and expanding staffing where program expansion call for additional support. We are in active discussions about how to build a more sustained World Language experience, including the possibility of introducing language in Pre-K and creating a 10-year sequence of language learning through 8th Grade. We also aspire to extend the assistant teaching program across the early elementary years, from Pre-K through 2nd Grade, while maintaining the longstanding assistant teaching role in Woodshop.

The campaign will also provide resources to sustain key initiatives that have proven essential to the school's long-term success. These include maintaining competitive teacher salaries, helping VCS both retain its talented educators and attract new faculty whose expertise will enrich the learning environment; extending compensation for departmental coordinators beyond the current three-year pilot period; establishing a Speaker Series Fund to bring thought leaders and educators to the VCS community; creating a Theater Fund to provide Upper School students with the opportunity to experience a Broadway production with their classmates, taking advantage of the unique cultural resources of New York City and extending learning beyond the classroom; and growing the school's endowment to secure future stability and flexibility.

By approaching this next campaign with the same strategic vision and collaborative spirit that have characterized the Board's past successes, VCS seeks to deepen its mission impact—strengthening both the educational experience for current students and the foundation upon which future generations will learn and thrive.

**Advancement Committee:** Newly established in 2025–2026, this committee supports the school's development efforts, including strategy and engagement around the Annual Fund and leadership with capital campaigns.

**Bylaws Committee:** Reviews the school's bylaws and related governing documents, recommends revisions as needed, and supports a clear and effective governance framework for the Board and school.

**Committee on Trustees:** Supports the strength and development of the Board by overseeing trustee recruitment, nominations, new trustee orientation, and ongoing governance practices.

**Executive Committee:** Composed of the Board Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary, the Executive Committee supports the work of the full Board, helps coordinate Board priorities and meetings, and serves as a key partner to the Head of School on matters of governance and institutional significance.

**Finance Committee:** Oversees the school's financial health, budgeting, and long-term planning. Under Finance, are three subcommittees:

- *Compensation Committee:* Analyzes market data and considers the school's mission and strategic priorities in advising on staff compensation and benefits and making recommendations related to annual tuition, supporting VCS's financial planning and long-term sustainability.
- *Investment:* Manages the school's investment strategy and endowment performance.
- *Retirement:* Oversees retirement plan offerings and fiduciary responsibilities.

# Strategic Priorities



## Academic Program

We are committed to a rigorous academic program—one that nurtures students as critical thinkers, creative problem solvers, intellectual risk takers, empathic community members, and confident self-advocates. Our aim is to have every element of our academic experience reflect and support the school's mission.

### **Over the Next Five Years VCS Shall:**

- Launch Pre-Kindergarten in 2027–2028, creating a joyful, developmentally appropriate program for four-year-olds that builds early literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking skills through play, curiosity, and social-emotional development, while extending the VCS educational journey to 10 years.
- Strengthen curricular scope and sequence across grade levels through Department Coordinator-led reviews focused on skill development, content relevance, standards and benchmarks, and coherence within and across departments, all grounded in the VCS mission.
- Deepen Learning Beyond the Classroom through field trips, overnight experiences, and international travel that extend the academic program beyond our West Village campus. Design these experiences to provide meaningful opportunities for students to apply their learning, build independence, strengthen relationships, and develop new skills.

## Faculty & Staff

Our faculty and staff are central to the strength of VCS. We are committed to attracting talented educators and professionals, supporting their growth throughout their time at the school, and fostering a community in which people feel valued, respected, and connected to our mission.

### **Over the Next Five Years VCS Shall:**

- Cultivate collaborative hiring and retention practices while continuing to prioritize being a community that “cares for and respects one another,” in addition to offering competitive compensation and benefits that support VCS’s ability to attract and retain exceptional faculty and staff.
- Strengthen onboarding, professional learning, and leadership opportunities for faculty, assistant teachers, and non-teaching staff, with continued alignment to the VCS Mission and Diversity Statements.
- Reimagine the structure of the school day to better support faculty time, including opportunities for planning, collaboration, professional learning, program expansion, and the shared work of supporting students and the academic program.
- Enhance systems for feedback, reflection, and professional growth by continuing annual Employee Satisfaction Surveys, maintaining open communication between staff and administration, and developing effective evaluation processes for non-teaching staff.

# Community Engagement

Community is at the heart of VCS. We build it by knowing our students and families, creating meaningful opportunities to connect, and sustaining the traditions and shared experiences that bring us together. Through partnership, participation, service, and celebration, we strengthen relationships within and across generations of the VCS community.

## Over the Next Five Years VCS Shall:

- Strengthen opportunities for connection and participation across the VCS community, building on student-led community meetings, all-school gatherings, school traditions, athletics, celebrations, and other shared experiences that bring students and families together.
- Deepen partnership with families by maintaining accessible communication, seeking feedback through surveys and conversations, and creating meaningful opportunities for families to participate in and contribute to school life.
- Build upon our commitment to community service through age-appropriate opportunities for students and families to contribute to the broader community and put VCS mission into action.
- Expand alumni engagement by building on the work of the Alumni Council, strengthening outreach and programming, and creating more opportunities for alumni to remain connected to VCS and to one another.

## Admissions & Enrollment

We approach enrollment and retention with the same values that define our classrooms: intentionality, inclusion, and a deep understanding of child development. Our work in this area is grounded in strategies that help us attract mission-aligned prospective families and support the retention of current students and families who thrive in our PreK–8 environment.

### **Over the Next Five Years VCS Shall:**

- Continue to refine admissions practices to promote clarity, equity, and alignment with our mission while preserving the warmth and care that define the VCS experience for every applicant family.
- Continue to use our mission and diversity statements to attract and retain families from varied backgrounds.
- Strengthen retention efforts by upholding a rigorous and engaging academic program, offering innovative community events that foster connection and belonging, maintaining strong and transparent communication, and staying responsive to the evolving needs of our families.
- Elevate the VCS story through strategic communications that grow our visibility and word-of-mouth reputation.
- Welcome more families into the VCS community through Pre-Kindergarten, establishing an earlier entry point and a 10-year educational journey from Pre-K through 8th Grade.

## Governance

The VCS Board of Trustees provides strategic leadership and stewardship in support of the school's mission and long-term sustainability. Working in partnership with the Head of School, the Board focuses on governance, financial oversight, strategic planning, and the policies and resources that support VCS's future.

### **Over the Next Five Years VCS Shall:**

- Launch a Capital Campaign to support VCS's strategic priorities, including the Pre-Kindergarten program, investment in faculty and programs, enhancements to learning spaces, and growth of the school's endowment.
- Build upon the Board's strengthened governance structure through ongoing trustee development, self-evaluation, thoughtful succession planning, and regular review of governance practices and policies.
- Strengthen the Board's strategic focus and long-term planning through regular retreats and continued attention to the school's mission, financial sustainability, and strategic priorities.

**Village Community School**