

Strategic Plan

2018-2023



HORIZONS[®]

Dedham Country Day School

EXTRAORDINARY SUMMERS. POSITIVE OUTCOMES. TIME WELL SPENT.

MISSION STATEMENT

Horizons at DCD provides Greater Boston's underserved youth with an enriching curriculum of academic, arts and cultural experiences for ten consecutive summers. A public private partnership, Horizons prevents summer decline and closes the achievement gap. With nourished minds, students discover their full potential in school and beyond.

CORE VALUES

Connection:

We strive to develop strong relationships, partnerships and connections among everyone involved with our program.

Creativity:

We create spaces and opportunities to nurture our students' creativity and cherish creative teachers and leaders.

Continuous Growth:

We inspire all students, teachers and leaders to make learning a part of their lifelong goals, and we strive to instill a love of learning in all students.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Gita Iyer, President

Curt Burmeister, Treasurer

Maxwell Bardeen

Ben Cavallo

John Connors

Helena D'Angelo

Judi King, Clerk

Jennifer Krebs

Keith McCown

Skip McKee

Paul McMurtry

Lisa Mims

Audrey Nichols

Kathy Parent

Michael Sweeny

Allison Webster

Michael Welch

Thank you for the time and commitment of the Board in the development of this plan.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Meredith Laban

A special thanks to members of the Strategic Planning Committee:

Kathy Parent, Chair,

Curt Burmeister, John Connors, Alida Coo-Kendall, Gita Iyer, Judi King, Meredith Laban, Keith McCown, Lisa Mims

And to the members of the team from SOAR Management Consulting Group:

Susan Lloyd, Shelley Schussheim, Lexi Turner

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2009, we embraced the nationally recognized Horizons program and brought it to the campus of Dedham Country Day. We knew it would be transformative for underserved children from Boston and Dedham who are too often short on opportunity. Ten years later, we have delivered on this vision and our long-term commitment to our students. And as we enter our second decade, we are excited to build upon our program success and impact.

In the summer of 2017, we celebrated our first graduating class of eighth graders, and that September, Horizons at Dedham Country Day (HDCD) began an exciting new chapter, launching a High School pilot program to support these very first Horizons students. In 2019, HDCD will welcome over 160 students in Pre-K through Grade 10, and over 40 new and returning faculty members. Under the leadership of our founding Executive Director, our program is stronger than ever, and the results are clear: students who spend ten consecutive summers at HDCD are more curious about the world around them, more able to compete academically with their peers, and better equipped to begin High School from a position of strength – with lasting support.

Looking ahead, in our new Strategic Plan the HDCD Board of Directors is committed not only to sustain its program excellence and continued innovation, but also to apply our experience and track record of success to bring the Horizons experience to more students in the Greater Boston area. Specifically, HDCD plans to provide foundational and advisory support for the creation of an independently governed regional office—Horizons Greater Boston—and to initiate/foster the startup of Horizons programs at Boston Public Schools as well as independent schools throughout Greater Boston.

This Strategic Plan reflects an 8-month process among the Board, staff and key stakeholders to identify and prioritize the strategic goals for HDCD over the next five years. The strategies center on a vision of sustaining program excellence, supporting program innovation, and serving more students, and include:

- Sustaining students' positive academic outcomes through dynamic programming;
- Continuing to invest in and refine the High School program pilot;
- Diversifying and increasing funding sources to support program excellence and innovation;
- Strengthening and growing the HDCD Board of Directors; and
- Spearheading the regional expansion of the Horizons presence by catalyzing the start-up and/or growth of programs at the Boston Public Schools, the Lexington Montessori school and additional independent schools throughout Greater Boston.



PROGRAM OUTLOOK & OPPORTUNITY

Under the leadership of our founding Executive Director, HDCD's program is stronger and more dynamic than ever. In 2018, HDCD served 150 students in Pre-K through Grade 9, and students gained eight to twelve weeks in reading and math skills. For the fourth year, we employed a Project Based Learning (PBL) approach allowing more student self-direction and supporting strong math and reading gains. This year, our middle schoolers took an active role in assessing the Horizons curriculum, expressing content preferences through the "Voice in Choice" method. And for the first time, our elementary school students practiced daily mindfulness, known as "reflect and reset," to facilitate self-reflection and learning.



Now entering our second decade, HDCD is well-positioned and excited to bring the Horizons experience to more students. And, we do so with confidence in our capacity to maintain our commitment to program excellence and to our current students.



As documented by Boston After School and Beyond (BASB)¹, differential access to summer learning opportunities in the elementary and middle school years explains a substantial part of today's achievement gap. Summer is a time when school-age children can engage in learning beyond the school walls and connect with Boston's unparalleled natural and cultural assets. From outdoor discovery and real-world science projects to college and career immersion programs, stimulating summer programs reinforce in-school learning and can stem, or even reverse, the well-documented "summer learning slide" that most affects students from low-income families.

¹BASB is a public-private partnership that mobilizes further partnerships among Boston Public Schools and providers, philanthropy, business and higher education seeking to ensure that every child in Boston has the opportunity to develop to his or her full potential. HDCD is part of BASB's Summer Learning initiative among over 100 providers creating summer learning opportunities for Boston Public School students.

In addition to the compelling need to reach more students, there are several factors that make this an opportune time for HDCD to continue to innovate and to take a leadership role in making the Horizons experience available to more students in the Greater Boston area. These factors are:

1. BASB recognizes HDCD as a leading summer learning program and strong collaborative partner. This has led to interest in pairing Horizons programming with BPS summer learning resources at a Boston Public School;
2. Lexington Montessori School started a Horizons program in 2015, and is interested in joining with HDCD as part of a Greater Boston initiative, leveraging HDCD's experience and leadership, and supporting continued peer learning and program innovation;
3. The Greater Boston region is a market rich in independent schools, offering potential to expand upon HDCD's successful public-private partnership model to bring this kind of enriching summer learning opportunity to more communities; and lastly,
4. Serving more students throughout Greater Boston is aligned with Horizons National's growth plan to encourage strong and established programs to grow regionally.

In this context—a persistent need for summer programming for students from low-income families and a favorable funding and partnership environment—the HDCD Board of Directors is excited to support the start-up of a regional office and spearhead the development of new Horizons programs throughout Greater Boston. This regional office will have its own governance structure, and the new Horizons programs will be peers of HDCD and operate under their own governance boards (see *structure of regional model in Appendix 2*).



STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS & STRATEGIES

Outlined below are the goals, strategies, and specific action items for HDCD to sustain its program excellence; to continue to innovate its programming; and significantly, to lead an effort to bring the transformative Horizons summer learning experience to more students throughout Greater Boston.

1

Goal:
Sustain
Positive
Student
Academic
Outcomes

Strategy: Continue to strengthen and revitalize programming to engage, retain, and positively impact academic outcomes in grades Pre-K through 8

Action items:

- Explore and implement opportunities for new and innovative programming
- Conduct an annual review/assessment of programming, and identify opportunities for improvement

Strategy: Pilot program development for High School students through 2021

Action items:

- Explore opportunities and partnerships to enhance year-round enrichment, summer programming, and pathways to success
- Define goals and metrics to assess High School program impact and outcomes
- Determine High School program scope and feasibility



2

Goal: Serve More Students

Underlying this goal are key assumptions:

- The HDCD governance structure and scope of responsibilities will not change
- HDCD will continue to benefit from the fulltime leadership of the current ED through 2019
- Additional independent school and Boston Public school sites will be responsible for funding their own programming
- HDCD is prepared to commit seed funding for the start-up of a Horizons Greater Boston (HGB) regional office from its reserves
- Following a start-up phase (2-3 years), the HGB regional office will be self-sustaining and provide program oversight and supplemental fundraising support for program sites, including HDCD

Strategy: Define and implement a regional growth model to foster the start-up and development of new Horizons programs to serve more students in Greater Boston

Action items:

- Create an ad hoc committee (Growth Committee) for the 2018-2019 year
 - Growth committee works with HDCD Board committees, institutions and organizations, as needed, to create an implementation plan for the recommended growth strategy that includes the creation of a regional office (Horizons Greater Boston) and the addition of Lexington Montessori and one Boston Public school by summer 2019 and at least one other independent school by summer 2020. Details of growth strategy available upon request.
- Define and implement any additional strategic goals for HDCD that may emerge from the Growth strategy

3

Goal: Increase Funding to Sustain Program & Support Innovation

Strategy: Cultivate and diversify funding sources in support of long-term financial sustainability

Action items:

- Develop strategies for increasing annual fund contributions
- Hold best practices sessions with industry professionals to help determine scope and direction of the marketing and development plan
- Create a 3 to 5-year marketing and development plan
- Explore fostering young professionals for outreach and fundraising
- Grow corporate and foundation dollars
- Develop and enhance marketing strategy and materials
- Build relationships and engage employees
- Explore the possibility of an endowment campaign

4

Goal: Maintain Mutually Sustainable Financial Relationship between DCD & Horizons

Strategy: Review the standing formal multi-year agreement with DCD

Action items:

- Refine and renew the agreement and determine renewal timeframes



5

Goal:
Strengthen
Board
Operations

Strategy: Formalize governance policies and procedures

Action items:

- Review Board manual and propose needed changes to governance policies that include expectations around Board engagement, fiscal responsibility and accountability
- Review and refine nomination process
- Implement new processes and policies

Strategy: Diversify and grow the Board

Action items:

- Grow Board to a target of 20 board members
- Review Board composition to determine if any additional growth is required

Strategy: Explore non-Board member engagement

Action items:

- Form an Advisory Council
- Form a Young Professionals Board
- Create opportunities to engage Horizons families at the Board level



6

Goal:
Strengthen
Relationship
between
Horizons &
DCD
Community

Strategy: Increase engagement between Horizons and DCD students

Action items:

- Work with the DCD administration to identify opportunities for DCD and Horizons students to engage with each other

Strategy: Continue to build awareness of Horizons program within the DCD community

Action items:

- Create the role of a Horizons ambassador within the DCD community

CONCLUSION

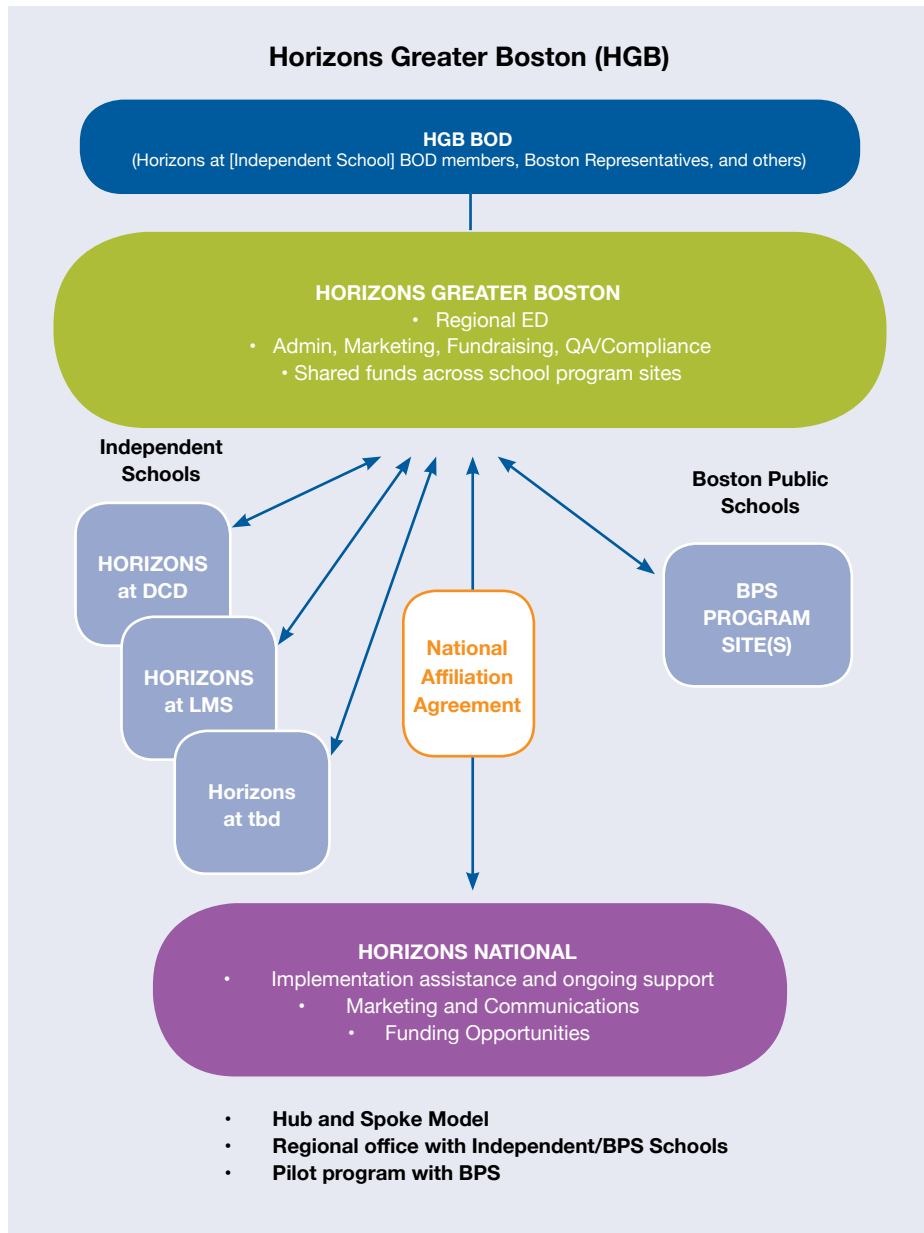
The success of HDCD since its start in 2009 is a testament to the relationship that Horizons enjoys with its partner institution, Dedham Country Day school, and its partner public school communities of Dedham and Boston. It is also the result of the dedication and excellence of its staff, the talent and drive of its Board, and the support of Horizons National. This Strategic Plan for 2018–2023 aims to sustain our program excellence and build upon our proven success by creating transformative impact as a catalyst for the start-up of additional Horizons programs throughout Greater Boston.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS HIGHLIGHTS

09/2017	Formed Strategic Planning Committee
10/2017	Informed Horizons National that Horizons at DCD strategic planning process commenced Reviewed strategic plans recently completed by mature Horizons affiliates Reviewed previously completed work on strategic initiatives
01/2018	Identified key strategic initiatives and recommended action items within all Board committees
02/2018	Engaged SOAR Management Consulting Group to assist with strategic planning process
03/2018	Conducted meetings and surveys to explore opinions, feedback, and expectations from various constituents; Horizons students and parents, Horizons faculty, Horizons Board, DCD faculty, DCD Board, Dedham/Boston public school faculty, major funders
03/2018	Conducted a Horizons at DCD strategic planning Board retreat
04/2018	Documented retreat discussions/feedback and identified next steps Identified growth to serve more students as a key strategic initiative
05/2018	Defined Horizons at DCD core values and tag line Revised Horizons at DCD mission statement
07-09/2018	Explored ideas and approaches to support strategic goal to serve more students Assessed opportunities and risks associated with various growth models Presented and received approval from the Horizons at DCD Board for the growth model recommendation
10-12/2018	Developed, reviewed and finalized the strategic plan document
12/3/2018	Obtained Board approval of five-year strategic plan

APPENDIX 2: GROWTH PLAN TO SERVE MORE STUDENTS



A multi-site, regional model that includes selected Independent and Boston Public Schools (BPS)





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