



Building Youth Leadership for Social Change:
The City School's Next Five Years

The City School
Five Year Strategic Plan
Fiscal Years 2005-2009





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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: TCS BUILDS ON INNOVATIVE SUCCESS TO DEFINE ITS FUTURE*****"The City School shows you a bigger picture."******"The City School gives youth the tools to make a difference."***

The City School has become a powerful space in which Greater Boston's diverse youth learn about complex issues facing their community. Here, youth develop their leadership skills and go back to their communities armed with more knowledge, effective skills and moreover, a resilient hope to create change. The City School has fine-tuned its innovative model of developing youth leadership by combining education about social justice issues with hands-on learning, acting on its beliefs and--importantly--reflecting on its actions. We do all this with groups of young people who come together across lines that often divide-- race, class, school, gender, sexuality and neighborhood. Building bridges across these differences we create richer learning experiences, promote meaningful dialogue and help build strong alliances. Together, our strategies foster new and powerful voices for change in our communities.

Over the nine years of its existence, The City School has established impressive credibility in Boston as an out of school civic education center. We purchased and developed a home in Uphams Corner where we continually review and refine our unique programming and partner with many and varied local organizations. We take great pride in serving hundreds of students each year and in operating in line with our values. We have created a caring environment that nurtures staff and supports youth voices. In our day-to-day functioning we model the leadership that we teach. The City School is a growing family--a place where people feel safe to explore and implement new ideas.

As The City School moves into its next stage of development, we plan to build strategically on this strong foundation. Through a thorough, inclusive and aggressive strategic planning process, The City School has identified a direction, goals and strategies to follow over the next five years. Building on our educational approach, our track record and an exciting planning process, we commit to supporting a vibrant youth movement to create positive change in Boston and beyond. The City School will encourage stronger youth leadership and power in the organization, strengthen and expand its youth leadership programs supported by rigorous evaluation and





expand its external work through linkages with youth activism. We will begin to actively share our models of social justice education and promote meaningful dialogues across difference.

Our strategic plan was the result of an intensive, thoughtful and inclusive process. Because we believe that we must operate at all levels in ways that are consistent with our beliefs in social justice and youth empowerment, we took time at the outset to carefully build the structure and methods that would yield our final plan. We created decision-making bodies, committees and task forces to ensure that at every step of the way all of the many—and sometimes conflicting—viewpoints within our community would be heard and considered. We designed a four-phase process in which some 32 people actively participated for nine months.

This process yielded a Five Year Strategic Plan that identifies six major goals, with strategies, objectives and benchmarks. In Year One of our Strategic Plan, staff, board and students will develop a measurable and achievable action plan based on our strategies, objectives and benchmarks. We will focus on strengthening our youth governance models, expanding programming for court-involved youth, educating our board to strengthen our youth-adult model, adding action components to our programming, establishing an outcome evaluation plan for all current programs, raising funds and creating dialogue opportunities within TCS and the broader community. Among the steps we will take to implement our first year goals are to:

- make board meetings more inclusive and youth friendly;
- explore models of youth governance;
- develop ways to measure the impact that TCS has on participants,
- have youth identify an issue to work on collaboratively with another youth group;
- hold one youth-facilitated community dialogue about a key issue; and
- run five contracted programs to generate revenue and increase our student base.

Years two through five will see us developing an action plan and assessing how we are following through on our plans. Each year we will build on our goals moving progressively, for example, from researching youth governance models to revising





the composition of our Board of Directors, to fully training all youth and adult Board members on successful strategies for youth-adult collaboration. We will improve the board training to attain effective youth-adult collaboration and we will assess and revise our new practices as needed.

The exciting growth The City School (TCS) will realize over the next five years is summarized below in our goals and strategies.

FIVE-YEAR GOALS AND STRATEGIES

GOAL 1: The way The City School governs, operates and communicates will be consistent with our social justice values.

Strategy 1.1: The Board of Directors reflects our constituents and operates in a manner that allows for the full participation of all members.

Strategy 1.2: Staff policies and functioning are consistent with our values.

Strategy 1.3: TCS functions as a learning organization at all levels of the organization including staff, board, and students.

GOAL 2: The City School will prioritize youth power and leadership at all levels of the organization.

Strategy 2.1: The board operates in a way that empowers youth to fully participate in the governance of the organization.

Strategy 2.2: We explore models of youth power and governance at other organizations to implement best practices.

Strategy 2.3: We increase youth involvement in TCS operations.





GOAL 3: The City School will be a model and innovator of social justice education.

Strategy 3.1: We document the TCS model of social justice education.

Strategy 3.2: We develop a system of evaluation and publicize our findings.

Strategy 3.3: We expand the knowledge and skills of teachers and youth workers about the TCS model.

Strategy 3.4: We impact and influence curricula used in public schools and alternative education settings to include a social justice component.

Strategy 3.5: We increase public awareness about social justice education and bridging differences.

GOAL 4: The City School youth will take active leadership roles in building a Boston youth power movement for justice.

Strategy 4.1: We co-create a vibrant network of youth social justice groups.

Strategy 4.2: TCS youth collaborate with youth in other organizations for political organizing and action on social justice issues.





GOAL 5: The City School will be a leader in promoting meaningful dialogue and understanding across difference.

Strategy 5.1: We create and maintain a diverse environment that embraces difference.

Strategy 5.2: We increase the community's capacity to have meaningful dialogue across difference.

Strategy 5.3: We continually deepen TCS's learning about issues of oppression, its impact within the work, and youth-adult collaboration.

GOAL 6: The City School will be financially sustainable.

Strategy 6.1: We develop a long-term strategic financial plan that includes revenue generation projects, increased individual giving and expanded foundation and corporate giving.

Strategy 6.2: We more aggressively market our organization to increase our visibility.



**ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE: A VIBRANT EDUCATION CENTER THAT PRACTICES VALUES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE**

"Leadership means that I can change my community for the better." – Participant

The City School is a unique and exciting center offering civic education during "out-of-school" time. Through its four major programs and other offerings, The City School develops youth leadership skills using four core elements: creative education and critical thinking about social justice issues, hands-on learning, action, and reflection. Our programs combine classroom learning with education in the "real" world through internships, community service, and conversation with people experiencing the issues we study. TCS brings together young people ages 14 to 18 across race, class, and community lines to explore their society, neighborhoods and themselves and to form alliances to act on their observations and ideas. We give our youth tools and training so that they can address problems and inequities, and reconstruct their world in a way that is inclusive, supportive and just.

TCS Programs: TCS Meets Diverse Needs with Diverse Programs

The Summer Leadership Program (SLP) is the flagship program of TCS. It engages a diverse group of students in an experience of community and classroom learning over seven weeks. Students participate in a creative and exploratory research seminar (issues include housing, education, health/addiction, economics, violence and immigration), a volunteer internship, and diversity and leadership training to learn to bridge social barriers, serve others, and empower themselves. Balancing the hands-on, critical thinking classroom experience with action, students serve more than 30 agencies as volunteer interns (in such organizations as City Life, the Mayor's Office, Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation) and together plan a community event or action. Students receive weekly stipends and a transportation-pass as part of their participation in the program. Mentors in the service internship and teachers in the classroom evaluate their work. In 2004, 58 students from 30 urban and suburban high schools completed the program,





enriching the community with 4100 hours of volunteer work and an organized dynamic evening of art and celebration.

Youth Outreach Weekends (YOW), our longest running program, are intensive service retreat weekends that bring high school students together to explore issues of urban housing, homelessness and poverty. Students serve in one or more shelters or organizations, learn about homelessness, and engage in discussion and reflection activities. Examples of where our YOW participants have made a difference are: the Boston Family Shelter, the Shattuck Shelter, the Committee to End Elder Homelessness and Rosie's Place: A Positive Step. Our students have assisted folks in these places by preparing and serving meals, cleaning, sorting donations and talking to guests. As a family, students spend the night at TCS. During the 2003-04 school year, 106 youth participated in YOW.

Prison Empowerment Project (PEP) connects youth and adults who are inside and outside of the walls of Massachusetts's prisons for focused dialogue on crime, punishment and the criminal justice system. The program consists of classes at TCS and prison trips including workshops with prison inmates who discuss both personal and social issues and classroom sessions with youth. Students explore topics such as violence, drug laws, decision-making and prisoner re-entry. PEP also runs leadership development classes for incarcerated men and women who teach in our program. PEP collaborates with several area prisons and the Boston Police Department. PEP usually meets weekdays for three afternoons. Rose from Concrete is a new project emerging from PEP. It focuses on developing the leadership of court-involved youth, using former inmates as mentors. PEP had 131 youth and 28 adults participate during the 2003-04 school year.

The Graduates' Program offers an ongoing series of educational, service, cultural and fun opportunities for TCS graduates with the purpose of building on their knowledge, strengthening their leadership abilities, developing a network and providing support. TCS supports students' success in community activity, employment, and education. The major components of the Grads' Program are Community Courses, Grad Leaders United (GLU), events and a newsletter. 153 youth participated during the 2003-04 school year.





Community Courses are an opportunity for graduates to teach their peers about issues of interest and work on recruitment, curriculum development and teaching skills. Courses are held at TCS and at other schools and youth centers. Recent offerings include: Israel/Palestine, teen gangs and issues of addiction.

Grad Leaders United (GLU) is a focused weekly leadership development group for ten to fifteen young people. GLU includes community-building activities, skills training, and organizational and community projects. GLU members meet as a group once a week and work in small teams on projects such as community organizing, planning retreats, TCS's strategic plan and as board liaisons. Adult mentors provide guidance and help students develop and follow through with their learning goals.

Other Programming

TCS offers additional opportunities including monthly drop-in nights (FY04 offerings included a "Scary Story Halloween Party" for younger neighbors and a "Know Your Rights" session); collaborations with others in the community (a racism dialogue group with the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative and neighbors that grew out of needs identified in a youth survey); referrals to services for out-of-school youth; and offering our space to community groups. Highlights of our special programming during Fiscal Year 2004 follow.

Girls' Group. An exciting new initiative to work with young women, most of whom are involved in the criminal justice system. The group met weekly from April through June with 10-15 participants any given week. The group focused on learning about issues they identified (sexuality, HIV/AIDS, violence prevention) and building a supportive community.

Race Dialogue. Student leaders from GLU conducted a community teen survey. Based on the results, two areas for dialogue emerged: finding power for youth voices and working across ethnic/racial communities. TCS, in collaboration with the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, pulled together a group to dialogue about racism and cross-group alliances. The group met twice in May and June with 22 people. We will continue this work in some format.





Out-of-school youth project. TCS received a grant from the City (Jobs and Community Services) to work with young people ages 14-21 who are not in school or are in need of skill building to improve employment possibilities. Our outreach person identified 30 young people, worked with them to identify their needs and referred them to GED, education and employment training services at Youth Opportunities Boston, our partner on this project.

Leadership at The City School. Our graduates accept the ongoing challenge to practice leadership, which we define as activity that engages self and others in asking about and acting on moral dilemmas in society. We support the various ways leadership can be practiced: advocacy, community service, political involvement, community or school organizing, etc. Participants take on leadership roles in The City School and in their communities. A few examples: one graduate did a college internship on criminal justice issues in Washington DC, another volunteered on a prisoner re-entry program, and another continued the summer internship with a voting rights project in Cambridge.

Board and Staff Composition: Values of Diversity Reflected in our Governance and Operations

Our 2005 Board of Directors is comprised of nineteen members. Of these, seven are youth who have completed one or more TCS programs. We also have three parents of participants and members from different sectors and neighborhoods. Racially and ethnically diverse, the board is sixty three percent people of color, equally comprised of African-Americans, Latinos/as, and Asian-Americans.

In FY2005, the staff includes seven and a half full-time positions, five part-time, student-staff positions and two part time adult mentors who have experience in the criminal justice system. We hire additional staff for the summer and commit to hiring staff, vendors and consultants who reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of our student community. The staff is 13% white, 33% Latino/a, 47% African American and 7% Asian. We invest resources in staff and youth development.





Summary of Fiscal Year 2004 Participants: Programs July 2003 through June 2004

Numbers served. We worked with 570 young people during Fiscal Year 2004 (July 2003-June 2004), a 31% increase from the previous year. In our four core programs we served 453 young people between the ages of 14 and 18, a 7% increase from the prior year despite operating with fewer staff. In addition, we launched new programming, both drop-in events (serving 50) and more intensive work including an assessment and referral system for out-of-school youth and a leadership and learning group for young women who are involved in the court system (serving 67).

Program	FY2004	FY2003
YOW	106	135
PEP	131	125
SLP	55	55
Grads' Program	161	110
SUBTOTAL core programs	453	425
Drop-in events	50	10
Special Programming	67	0





INTRODUCTION: TCS Empowers Youth Through Innovative Planning Process

“To be a successful leader around social justice issues, young people must understand and know how to work with people from different backgrounds.” --Participant

The City School is a learning community deeply committed to empowering the voices of youth, developing youth leadership skills, and building effective youth-adult collaborative relationships to promote community and social change. Founded in 1995 through a partnership of three high schools, Cathedral High School, Boston Latin School, and Milton Academy, The City School became an independent 501 (c) 3 organization in 2001 and has expanded to serve youth from more than fifty area high schools and community organizations. For the past nine years, TCS has created after-school and weekend programs that combine community service, leadership development, and critical thinking skills to tackle social justice concerns.

We strongly believe that the way in which we administer and conduct ourselves within our organization should directly model our philosophy and practices of social justice and opportunity. Given our commitment to these principles, we initiated our strategic planning process to respond not only to our organizational needs, but also and importantly, to the concerns that our youth constituency was expressing about our direction.

To help us develop a meaningful process that would result in a five-year plan, we hired the outside consultant team of Curdina Hill, principal of ClearWays to Freedom and K.J. Ward of City Square Associates, Inc. It was critical that the process we used to develop our plan ensured a shared understanding of our mission, vision and values. Youth pointed out that “board members have very different background and experience than us (sic) and there could be barriers to communication.” Therefore, we wanted our planning process to be constituent-focused with a high priority placed on meaningful youth involvement. The consultant team and the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) followed a four-phase outline to guide this highly engaged process.





The Strategic Planning Process and Structure: A Well-Considered Process Yields an Achievable Plan

The strategic planning process included a design phase (July-September 2003), an assessment phase (October-December, 2003), a critical conversations phase (December 2003-January 2004) and a decision phase focusing on mission, vision, values and goals (December 2003-April 2004).

In the **design phase**, we first established an organizational structure to articulate how we would work through an intensive nine-month planning process. Phase One included forming the guiding entity: the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC), a nine-member group comprised of five adults and four youth who represented a balance of TCS staff, grads, and board members (members listed at end of report). It also included setting a schedule for research and community retreats.

The SPC convened regularly over a nine-month period, with the consultant team facilitating meetings during the first seven months. Using a consensus approach to decision making, the SPC formed subcommittees and task groups as needed throughout the strategic planning process. Additionally, the SPC played a major role in reviewing and refining all aspects of the plan.

The SPC proposed an innovative model to the board to create a community-wide group to develop our strategic plan. This was known as the Organizational Retreat Body (ORB). Specifically, the ORB was created with the support of the Board of Directors to: 1) address and actively work on developing the strategic plan, and 2) formally act on organizational discussions through an official voting process. It included the entire board as well as staff and additional students. This 32-member group (one-third of whom were TCS graduates) became the decision-making body and was empowered to create the five-year strategic plan on which the board would ultimately vote.

The ORB worked to develop the vision, priority goals and mission in three half-day retreats and one evening meeting. The values and guiding principles were generated





by the ORB, summarized by the SPC and given to all ORB members for comment and revision.

In the **assessment phase** we used a “strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats” (SWOT) model. Our extensive data gathering included:

- Five focus groups comprised of eight program participants (current and former); seven parents of program participants and eleven community partners;
- Questionnaires sent to 60 graduates representing the diversity of TCS;
- Interviews with local and national organizations whose work overlaps with that of TCS, focusing on social justice education, youth leadership, community development and anti-racist/oppression work in diverse settings;
- General data collection (demographic trends, a literature review on youth governance, social justice education and other key topics);
- Assessment of past reports and TCS documents (including the previous strategic plan and a statement of philosophy and pedagogy);
- A community survey of fifty youth in Dorchester to identify priority concerns and needs;
- A marketing and feasibility study of income-generating programs at TCS; and
- A written survey of all staff and board members (a total of 21 surveys) with selected individual interviews of four board members and all five full-time staff.

The consultants produced a comprehensive assessment report (available as Appendix A) summarizing their findings. This report was distributed to members of the ORB and used throughout the strategic planning process.

The **critical conversations phase** and **decision phase** were conducted in retreats of the newly formed ORB with additional work by the SPC and other community members. The first two Organizational Retreats focused on critical conversations and decisions around several challenging issues. At the beginning of the process our organization was facing internal tensions between board, staff and program graduates that reflected different perspectives in several critical areas, namely: the role of advocacy and action in TCS programs and its organizational stance; the role





and level of youth involvement in TCS governance and decision-making; the diversity of our target group(s); the organization's relationship to our new community; and questions about congruence between program direction and mission. Because we invested the time to thoughtfully consider these issues upfront we could move forward in the planning process with a spirit of unity and commitment.

At the second and third retreats we developed our mission, vision, values and goals. In developing the plan, the ORB and SPC worked hard to ensure our youth community was actively involved. Youth members were members of both the Strategic Planning Committee and the Organizational Retreat Body. Additionally, Grad Leaders United (GLU), a new TCS program, reviewed and commented on the evolving statements of mission, values, vision and goals. Several important mechanisms to empower youth voice and input emerged during this process. We: 1) established "youth space" in the discussions at the organizational retreats; 2) created strategic times for youth to caucus at the retreats; and 3) had youth co-facilitate with adults in small group discussions.

At times, youth ORB members struggled to convey their ideas in an environment that privileged adult voices. Youth members candidly shared their frustrations with the process and helped develop the mechanisms discussed above which prioritized youth voices. The difficulty the ORB encountered in having conversations that were youth-centered revealed issues of unexamined power and privilege. This tension exposed how much more TCS can do to create structures that encourage the full contribution of all members--especially youth--and the commitment of our organization to do this work. Consequently, the ORB prioritized addressing issues of power and privilege in the operating principles and strategic goals.

As a result of our thorough research, dialogues and planning we met our goal to achieve consistency of purpose across all groups within TCS. We emerged with a focused and energized mission and vision statement that will guide our work over the next five years.



**MISSION STATEMENT**

The City School develops the power of youth to work toward building a just society. We do this through:

- creative education and critical thinking;
- leadership development;
- action and service; and
- promoting understanding and relationships across difference.

VISION STATEMENT

The City School is a learning community where young people become leaders for a more equitable, safe, and just Boston. With a collaborative youth-adult effort, The City School is part of a vibrant youth movement in Boston, producing leaders who can tackle the complex problems of unequal education, housing, poverty, incarceration, racism, and discrimination in a strong, diverse and supportive community. Young people can exercise their reflective and visionary leadership at The City School, in our Dorchester neighborhood and in the wider community.

VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES REFLECT OUR CORE BELIEFS

The following three core beliefs were honed and voted on by the Organizational Retreat Body following our critical conversations about issues of education, action, political stands and constituency.

1. Educating and Promoting Action

TCS works to develop the leadership potential of its students through education and action toward social justice. This education includes classroom and experiential learning, reflection and practice where students engage in advocacy, direct action projects, and hands-on involvement with community-based organizations providing services and working toward social change. Action is an essential component of learning at TCS as young people develop leadership skills to become engaged in the issues they study. In all of our work we incorporate open dialogue respecting a diversity of viewpoints.





2. Taking an Organizational Stand

Through a deliberate process, TCS as an organization may take a stand (via public declaration or other means) on a particular social justice issue. The process will begin with a youth-organized TCS community meeting. Year One of our strategic plan includes refining the tasks to help us create a mechanism for taking stands as an organization.

3. Maintaining a Diverse Constituency

TCS actively promotes the participation of a diverse group of young people in its programs and activities. This diversity includes but is not limited to ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, religion, and geography (urban/suburban). Since we believe that resource sharing and building allies are essential in attaining social justice, we promote programs that make those connections happen. While creating change with youth representing a wide range of backgrounds, TCS focuses its efforts on and prioritizes the needs of disenfranchised and underserved youth in the city of Boston. TCS also seeks to benefit its immediate neighborhood, affinity groups, and other community and educational institutions in the City of Boston.

Through the strategic planning process we defined specific values and guiding principles that articulate our core beliefs about how best to develop leadership.





VALUE	GUIDING PRINCIPLE
Youth as Leaders and Agents of Change	We believe that having governance roles within the organization is one way we can show youth the power of their voices and that this helps to build strong and active leaders.
Activism and Taking a Stand	We believe that action takes many forms, including service, direct action, and advocacy and that the way TCS models the process of organizational advocacy develops its students’ leadership potential.
Liberation and Social Change	We are committed to addressing injustices in ways that lead to the liberation and self-determination of all people.
Social Justice Education	We are committed to teaching young people about social justice issues and believe that this knowledge moves them to transform and act.
Participatory and Experiential Education	We are committed to creating a learning environment that honors everyone’s experiences, that respects and prioritizes the voices of young people and that is interactive, hands-on and caring.
TCS as a Learning Community	We believe in a strong learning community where everyone is both a teacher and a learner.
Critical Thinking	We believe that we must deepen self-awareness as we think critically about societal issues and that this is essential to strengthening leadership skills.
Diversity and Anti-Oppression Work	We believe that the move toward justice means understanding, respecting, and including the ideas and experiences of individuals from all backgrounds as a way to build allies and combat oppression in all its forms.





INTERNAL CAPACITY AND CHANGING ENVIRONMENT: WE PLAN TO BUILD ON OUR STRENGTHS, MAXIMIZE OUR OPPORTUNITIES AND ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES THAT CONFRONT US

In the assessment process and based on extensive data analysis of our fiscal, social and political environment, TCS's key stakeholders described our internal capacity identifying our strengths and accomplishments, areas ripe for development as well as opportunities and threats we must address.

Strengths and Accomplishments

- The commitment and caring of the staff, board, and community supporters;
- Quality and reputation of the programs that bring diverse young people together to learn and think critically about social justice issues, and provide youth leadership development opportunities at all levels;
- The Board's fundraising skill;
- A learning environment that respects youth and promotes their leadership development;
- The organization's willingness to raise and engage difficult issues;
- Becoming a tax-exempt non-profit organization and purchasing a permanent facility in Uphams Corner; and
- Increasing participation of program graduates and establishing Grad Leaders United (GLU).

Areas for Development

- Clarify and build unity around mission, vision and values, and student outcomes;
- Enhance sustainability by strengthening revenue streams and infrastructure;
- Create better communication and trust between Board, staff and youth;
- Ensure consistency between program direction and mission;
- Expand and make more meaningful the role of youth in governance and decision-making.





Opportunities

- We are one of a handful of youth organizations focusing on education and leadership development around social justice issues across the United States;
- Federal/foundation funding is available for after-school initiatives aimed at improving students' academic achievement and enhancing neighborhood and community life;
- Now part of the Uphams Corner community, we are gaining new clientele, and expanding the use of TCS space for education on social justice;
- Interest in collaborating with social justice youth groups in Boston is growing;
- Potential for new school partnerships;
- Integration of TCS's model into one of Boston Public Schools' academies of public service;
- Few organizations bring young people together across race/ethnicity, class and community (urban/suburban) in a sustained and educationally grounded way.

Threats

- Competitive funding environment which makes it difficult to build the organization and can make collaboration more challenging;
- Disparity between potential funding source's requirements and TCS programming models;
- Existence of school system-based and faith-based programs as alternative venues and models for youth education and leadership programming that is more broad-based and anchored within institutions.





FIVE-YEAR GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND OBJECTIVES

We created six strategic goals through the strategic planning process. We then identified strategies, objectives and benchmarks for each goal (Appendix B lists benchmarks). Each year, groups within The City School community (staff teams, Board, students) will create action plans to meet our strategic goals.

Priority Goals

1. The way The City School governs, operates and communicates will be consistent with our social justice values.
2. The City School will prioritize youth power and leadership at all levels of TCS.
3. The City School will be a model and innovator of social justice education.
4. The City School youth will take active leadership roles in building a Boston youth power movement for justice.
5. The City School will be a leader in promoting meaningful dialogue and understanding across difference.
6. The City School will be financially sustainable

Priority Goals, Strategies, and Objectives

GOAL 1: The way The City School governs, operates and communicates will be consistent with our social justice values.

Strategy 1.1: The Board of Directors reflects our constituents and operates in a manner that allows for the full participation of all members.

Objectives:

- 1.1.1 Develop an annual board development plan that includes board training, orientation and mentoring encompassing information on “how to be on boards” and “how to approach anti-racism work” and “youth development and youth-adult collaboration.”





- 1.1.2 Convene board meetings that are accessible to and inclusive of all members.
- 1.1.3 Assess and reconstitute the Board of Directors to include members who are representative of the community and youth as well as those with targeted skills, such as parents of youth of color, community residents, fundraisers, and educators, thought leaders, community organizers and others.
- 1.1.4 Develop and execute an annual board evaluation as part of the overall organizational evaluation.

Strategy 1.2: Staff policies and functioning are consistent with our values.

Objectives:

- 1.2.1 Develop staff policies and a manual that reflect TCS principles in areas such as hiring, peer coaching and communication.
- 1.2.2 Conduct a periodic review to assess the operations and relationship within TCS for consistency with its values.

Strategy 1.3: TCS functions as a learning organization at all levels of the organization including staff, board, and students.

Objectives:

- 1.3.1 Create active learning plans for each staff member, student leaders and for the board.
- 1.3.2 Develop a board member learning plan that includes minimal requirements for board member participation such as active participation in at least one program per year.
- 1.3.3 Develop a committee and plan to address internal communication.





GOAL 2: The City School will prioritize youth power and leadership at all levels of the organization.

Strategy 2.1: The board operates in a way that empowers youth to fully participate in the governance of the organization.

Objectives:

- 2.1.1 Create system for training and mentorship of youth board members.
- 2.1.2 Develop board representation guidelines that support the empowerment of youth.
- 2.1.3 Assess and restructure board committees to include youth representatives and maintain their effective involvement.

Strategy 2.2: We explore models of youth power and governance at other organizations to implement best practices.

Objectives:

- 2.2.1 Research and develop report on other models of governance including representation, youth councils, and decision-making structures.
- 2.2.2 Develop plan for implementing approved changes to improve exercise of youth power.

Strategy 2.3: We increase youth involvement in TCS operations.

Objectives:

- 2.3.1 Develop and execute guidelines for youth participation in TCS operations (e.g. hiring, program development, and evaluation).
- 2.3.2 Create and carry out plan to involve youth in the program development and evaluation process.





GOAL 3: The City School will be a model and innovator of social justice education.

Strategy 3.1: We document the TCS model of social justice education.

Objectives:

- 3.1.1 Define and document the elements of the TCS model.
- 3.1.2 Develop curriculum and materials on social justice education.
- 3.1.3 Develop and document the theory of change, and integrate in work.

Strategy 3.2: We develop a system of evaluation and publicize our findings.

Objectives:

- 3.2.1 Create and execute an organizational evaluation that includes assessment of internal practices and work as defined throughout this strategic plan.
- 3.2.2 Develop a comprehensive program evaluation to promote rigor and excellence in all programming, assess continued relevance, and determine need for new programs.
- 3.2.3 Measure and report on short- and long-term impact on TCS participants.

Strategy 3.3: We expand the knowledge and skills of teachers and youth workers about the TCS model.

Objectives:

- 3.3.1 Provide training and professional development for teachers and youth workers.
- 3.3.2 Develop SLP as a social justice teacher-training institute.
- 3.3.3 Provide social justice education trainings to college, high schools, and youth serving organizations.





Strategy 3.4: We impact and influence curricula used in public schools and alternative education settings to include a social justice component.

Objectives:

- 3.4.1 Create a formal partnership with an alternative high school to institute an ongoing social justice internship site for their students with opportunities for curriculum development.
- 3.4.2 Create a formal collaborative partnership to develop the practical, life skills of youth that would combine social justice education programming with skill-based programming.

Strategy 3.5: We increase public awareness about social justice education and bridging differences.

Objectives:

- 3.5.1 Write, produce and publish curricula, articles and other materials on social justice issues and on bringing people together across differences.
- 3.5.2 Publish a regular social justice newsletter or newspaper for the community through collaborative partnership with DSNI or other neighborhood group.

GOAL 4: The City School youth will take active leadership roles in building a Boston youth power movement for justice.

Strategy 4.1: We co-create a vibrant network of youth social justice groups.

Objectives:

- 4.1.1 Continue organizing a gathering of youth social justice groups to network, share resources and collaborate.
- 4.1.2 Develop internships for TCS youth in community-based or social justice organizations throughout the school year.





- 4.1.3 Identify one or two issues for TCS youth to focus on each year, develop policy statements, and opportunities for speaking out and organizing in collaboration with other organizations.

Strategy 4.2: TCS youth collaborate with youth in other organizations for political organizing, and action on social justice issues.

Objectives:

- 4.2.1 Create and participate in a year-long organizing project with a group from our network.
- 4.2.2 Develop collaborative partnerships with other groups to create events, workshops or conferences on issues where youth have a passion.
- 4.2.3 Develop and document workshops on youth experiences & reflection of doing organizing.

GOAL 5: TCS will be a leader in promoting meaningful dialogue and understanding across difference.

Strategy 5.1: We create and maintain a diverse environment that embraces difference.

Objectives:

- 5.1.1 Develop recruitment plan to maintain a diverse staff, student and board.
- 5.1.2 Develop a process and guidelines to continue clarifying balance and representation around the population TCS serves.





Strategy 5.2: We increase the community’s capacity to have meaningful dialogue across difference.

Objectives:

- 5.2.1 Create series of public forums and community dialogues with youth as facilitators to hold conversations on important issues across difference.
- 5.2.2 Develop and jointly host a community forum through a partnership with another organization (neighborhood based or issue based) and commit to cross- learning about an issue.

Strategy 5.3: We continually deepen TCS’s learning about issues of oppression, its impact within the work and youth-adult collaboration.

Objectives:

- 5.3.1 Develop monthly staff meetings focusing on these conversations.
- 5.3.2 Make this reflection an integral part of the annual learning plans for board, staff and student leaders.
- 5.3.3 Plan and carry out an annual cross-constituency dialogue (ORB style).

GOAL 6: TCS will be financially sustainable.

Strategy 6.1: We develop a long-term strategic financial plan that includes revenue generation projects, increased individual giving and expanded foundation and corporate giving.

Objectives:

- 6.1.1 Build revenue generating projects and programs to at least 10% of revenue over three years.
- 6.1.2 Increase individual givers, both number of givers and percentage of revenue.
- 6.1.3 Increase income from fundraising events.
- 6.1.4 Expand foundation, family foundation, and corporate giving





Strategy 6.2: We more aggressively market our organization to increase our visibility.

Objectives:

- 6.2.1 Develop communication and marketing plan to increase media coverage and effective marketing and messaging to increase the visibility of the work of TCS.
- 6.2.2 Advertise all events and increase attendance by parents, graduates, funders, community leaders and prospects.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND THANKS

Developing the strategic plan brought together the community of The City School in an intensive process over a nine-month period. The Board of Directors, staff, and student leaders contributed most with input from parents, community leaders, past participants and others in the field. The energy and thoughtful ideas people invested in this process reflected their deep commitment to the philosophy and programs of TCS. Throughout the process, young people and adults were actively engaged as planning team members and as facilitators in some of the Organizational Retreat Body's small group discussions. Strategic planning became a focus of GLU's work.

This process was shepherded and guided with the assistance of the Strategic Planning Committee. We want to specifically acknowledge our deep appreciation for the nine people who formed and played such critical roles on the SPC: Alexandria Chiu, Salim Elijah, Ted Cullinane, Ethan d'Ablemont Burnes, Allentza Michel, Jheannell West, Ora Grodsky, Lisa Owens and Miriam Messinger. Together, they assisted in designing, facilitating and refining this process and the final plan. They met monthly in the initial months through the end of the third Organizational Retreat, and in the last few weeks met at least once each week to refine the strategies, objectives, and benchmarks.

The Organizational Retreat Body generously gave three Saturdays to shape the vision and direction for TCS. We thank them for their commitment, dedication and creative ideas throughout this period.

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STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS MEMBERS

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Ora Grodsky, Board Member
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All members of the SPC

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Jaime Noel
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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Surveys and Interviews

Surveys sent to all 16 Board members

Interviews with five Board members: Laurie Bencal, Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, Robert Keough, Pamela Murray, Amy Stewart

Surveys of all staff members

Surveys sent to approximately 60 TCS grads, distributed across years of participation, gender, ethnic/racial group. Responses received from eleven grads: Nate Bliss, Emily Baskin, Deborah Silva, Ashleigh Coren, Fatima Mahmud, Emily Baskin, Rebecca Cotugno, Sarah Kowitz, Judy Pamphile, Karina Sharif, Joanna Madsen

Focus Groups

With TCS Grads:

Shawn White, William Pimentel, Trysten Johnson, Alex Chiu, Joel Lewis, Arusha DePeiza Saldenha

With TCS Parents:

Jill Sofiyah Elijah (survey), Georgia Murray, Gretchen and John Graef, Sandra Cole, Gloria Coren, Neil Sullivan, Michelle Ekanem

Community Partners:

Ed Powell, PIC; Mariama White-Hammond, Project Hip Hop; Representatives from Boston Medical Center; Dottie Dunford, Suffolk County House of Correction, Education Department; Andrea Geyling, Milton Academy; Lucille DeCosta, Ayer High School; Colin Riley and Fernando Bosa, Uphams Corner Main St.

Phone Interviews with local and national groups

Chris Cato, YouthBuild

Jenny Amory, Teen Vocies

Elaine Johnson, Academy for Educational Development

Nicole Yohalem , The Forum for Youth Investment

Ruth Goldman, Merck Family Foundation

Wendy Wheeler, The Innovation Center

Lonnie McAdoo, AIDS Action Committee, Youth on Board

LaTonya Brown, NCCJ

Rachel Gunther, Youth on Board

Richard Murphy, Academy for Educational Development

Michael Goldstein, research on youth leadership models

Della Hughes and Susan Curnan, Center for Youth and Community (at Brandeis)

ROCA; CAPAY; BYOP; Teen Empowerment

Web research and other reports

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (www.servicelearning.org)

Academy for Educational Development; LISN; Diversity Works; Youthactionnet.org;

Public Allies; Youth as Resource (YAR); Center for Youth and Community (at

Brandeis), articles from CYD, Bonner Program

