



## Mountain Song Community School

### 2023 - 2028 Strategic Plan

**MISSION :** *Mountain Song Community School is a Waldorf-inspired public charter school that incorporates a developmentally appropriate, holistic education to nurture the body, mind, and heart of each student and to foster a sense of wonder, goodness, beauty, and truth in the world.*

**OUR VISION :** *To cultivate healthy, confident, independent-thinking children who are passionately engaged with their education and empowered to contribute positively to their community through cultural, ecological, and social renewal.*

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### **Strategic Goals**

- 1) Financial Sustainability (Financial Goal)
- 2) Academic Excellence (Student Performance Goal)
- 3) Operational Effectiveness (Governance Goal)
- 4) Engagement and Collaboration (Culture Goal)

Year 1: 2023-24

Year 2: 2024-25

Year 3: 2025-26

Years 4-5: 2026-2028

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### **GOAL #1 Financial Sustainability**

**SMART Goal:** From SY 2023-24 to SY 2027-28, the Board will oversee and implement a plan for financial sustainability that allows the school's reserves to increase by at least a \$25,000 per year from the operating budget surplus, and that also ensures safe, adequate, and viable facilities for the school to operate and expand.

**Why this matters:** MSCS is a business, and making smart, informed business decisions will benefit our school's viability, financial health and overall growth. Especially important in State Charter Schools as they receive up to 20% less funding.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) Develop an Annual Fund to augment the Operational Budget in unrestricted funds to A) invest in staff; B) invest in programming; and 3) increase current reserves for near future refinancing.
  - a) Year 1 Fundraising Goal \$85,000



- b) Year 2 Fundraising Goal \$100,000
- c) Year 3 Fundraising Goal \$125,000
- d) Year 4-5 Fundraising Goal \$150,000
- 2) Expand enrollment in existing facilities, focusing on retention of students and growing homeschool program.
  - a) Year 1 Increase enrollment by 10 students
  - b) Year 2 Increase enrollment by 8 students
  - c) Years 3-5 Target enrollment at 420 students
- 3) Ensure Safe, Adequate, and Viable Facilities for the School to Successfully Operate
  - a) Years 1 and 2: Oversee, Monitor, and Ensure Compliance for BEST Grant Implementation
  - b) Years 1, 2, and 3: Plan and implement plan for further current facilities upgrades.
  - c) Years 1, 2, and 3: Explore new facilities for expansion into early childhood program and high school.
  - d) Years 3-5: Launch expansion plan for early childhood program.
- 4) Develop a Capital Fund Strategy to invest in facilities and grounds, and facility expansion
  - a) Year 1 Create MSCS Foundation non-profit 501(c)3
  - b) Year 1 Create Strategic Capital Funding Plan with targeted goals (Farm, Playgrounds, etc.)
  - c) Years 2-4 Implement Capital Funding Plan

STRATEGIES (ED & Board):

- 1) Development of Annual Fund
  - a) Hire Advancement Officer who will oversee the Annual Fund and help lead a Fundraising Committee.
  - b) Develop an initial strategic plan to begin implementing in 2023-24
  - c) Review and revise each year thereafter to meet fundraising goals
- 2) Developing a Capital Fundraising Strategy
  - a) These restricted funds will be housed within the new Foundation and will be cultivated through fundraising and Grants.
- 3) Enrollment Expansion
  - a) Focus on student retention in Middle School
    - i) SWOT analysis of current Middle School program
  - b) Increase Homeschool Program Enrollment
    - i) Working with the current Homeschool development group to determine strategies to increase visibility and enrollment, including but not limited to online marketing.
  - c) Develop a Healthy Food Program for all students



- d) Investigate demand and feasibility for early childhood and high school programs

## **GOAL #2: Academic Excellence**

**SMART Goal: From SY 2023-24 to SY 2027-28, the Board will oversee a plan for academic excellence aligned to the Waldorf holistic educational model that results in all MSCS students making adequate yearly progress as measured on interim assessments (DIBELS, MAPS, IEP goals, ALP goals, etc.).**

**Why this matters:** An exceptional education experience and instructional practices are essential to future growth and positively impacts behavior and social interactions amongst peer groups and family members.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) The Executive Director will ensure that high quality teachers aligned to the Waldorf model are hired, trained and retained each year.
  - a) All years: Retain 85% trained Waldorf and licensed in-field teachers.
  - b) All years: Support full Waldorf training of teachers.
  - c) All years: Invest in Waldorf-aligned professional development experiences for special subject teachers.
  - d) All years: Increase engagement of K-3 teachers in early reading.
- 2) The Board of Directors and ED will strategically eliminate opportunity gaps to enhance equitable and accessible experiential learning opportunities for all students regardless of differences.
  - a) Year 1: Strengthen Data Committee to analyze data and identify opportunity gaps.
  - b) Establish Food Program so all students are nourished, eliminating hunger as a barrier to learning.
    - i) Years 1 and 2: Establish an interim food program.
    - ii) Years 3-5: Establish permanent food program.
  - c) Year 1: Establish tiered system of supports (MTSS) for chronically absent students.
  - d) Strengthen integration of Special Education Department with General Education Teachers
    - i) Year 1: Reorganize Special Education Department to enhance services to students with disabilities who have IEPs.
    - ii) All years: Provide ongoing teacher support and training to operationalize accommodations and modifications..
  - e) All years: Strengthen and support SEL program at MSCS to support students' social-emotional learning and health as integral to a holistic education.
  - f) All years: Strengthen Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
    - i) Provide ongoing teacher support and training during in-service and faculty meetings to operationalize MTSS at MSCS (four times per year).



- ii) Retain 75% of high quality interventionists at MSCS.
- 3) Provide high quality and consistent core instruction throughout all programs and grades using a Waldorf model and curricula aligned with a Waldorf model in order to ensure all students make adequate yearly progress as measured on interim assessments (DIBELS, MAPS, IEP goals, etc.).
- 4) Strengthen middle school programming so MSCS students are adequately prepared for high school as indicated on family surveys.

STRATEGIES:

- 1) Hire, train and retain high quality teachers aligned to the Waldorf model.
  - a) All years: Support full Waldorf training of teachers by continuing to underwrite tuition for K-8 lead classroom teachers and requiring such training, or enrollment in such training, for K-8 lead classroom teachers.
  - b) All years: Continue to provide retention incentives, including bonuses when able, to returning teachers.
  - c) All years: Invest in Waldorf-aligned professional development experiences for special subject teachers in Agricultural Arts, Music, Handwork, Spanish, and Games/Movement.
  - d) Engage K-3 teachers in early reading efforts.
    - i) Teachers (rather than interventionist) test and progress monitor students using DIBELS.
    - ii) Teachers collaborate with interventionists to target Tier 1 classroom instruction to meet needs of students.
- 2) Eliminate opportunity gaps
  - a) Year 1: Strengthen Data Committee to work with Director of School Performance to analyze data and identify opportunity gaps.
  - b) Establish food program for all students
    - i) Years 1 and 2: Raise funds through grants and fundraising to establish an interim food program with vendor.
    - ii) Years 3-5: Establish permanent food program in scratch kitchen and cafeteria.
  - c) Year 1: Establish tiered system of supports (MTSS) for chronically absent students.
    - i) Conduct research regarding patterns, trends, and causes related to chronic absenteeism.
    - ii) Based on findings, establish referral system to alert SEL team, Homeless Liaison, class teachers, or others as appropriate to address chronic absenteeism.
    - iii) Communicate to families and train teachers.
  - d) Strengthen integration of Special Education Department with General Education Teachers



- i) Year 1: Review and, based on data, reorganize Special Education Department to leverage special education staff efforts to enhance services to students with disabilities who have IEPs.
    - ii) Target all years: Provide ongoing teacher support and training during in-service and faculty meetings to operationalize accommodations and modifications (four times per year).
    - iii) Year 1: Assign School Counselor as 504 Plan Coordinator, train, implement, and interface with classroom teachers.
  - e) Strengthen SEL program at MSCS.
    - i) Provide 2 full-time mental health providers to support students' social-emotional learning (SEL) and health as integral to a holistic education
    - ii) Manage K-5 SEL Grant to meet goals, provide funding, and provide evaluation.
    - iii) Work with CSI to implement Mental Health Plan.
    - iv) Strengthen SEL MTSS by coordinating with CSI and K-5 SEL Grant Personnel.
  - f) Target in all years: Strengthen Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
    - i) Provide ongoing teacher support and training during in-service and faculty meetings to operationalize MTSS at MSCS (four times per year).
- 3) Provide high quality and consistent core instruction
  - a) Year 1: Pilot the Gradalis Waldorf Curriculum Framework to synthesize Waldorf approaches with Colorado State Standards, English Language Arts Curricula, and Math Curricula.
  - b) Year 1: Pilot and review the Core Knowledge English Language Arts Skills Curriculum throughout grades 1-8 to strengthen scope, sequence, and instruction of ELA skills that can be synthesized with Waldorf content.
  - c) Year 1: Pilot and review the Mindset Mathematics Curriculum in grades 1-8 to strengthen scope, sequence, and instruction of mathematics skills that can be synthesized with Waldorf content.
  - d) All Years: Implement the Heggerty Curriculum for phonemic awareness in grades K-3.
  - e) Years 2-5: Evaluate, Review and Revise curricular approaches
  - f) Year 2: Hire full-time Principal to focus on implementing Waldorf pedagogy and school programming
- 4) Strengthen middle school programming
  - a) Year 1: Revive Electives program to provide enriching experiences with choice.
  - b) Years 1-2: Develop and pilot plan to strengthen computer and technology education.
  - c) Year 1: Develop middle school sports program.
  - d) Year 1: Provide lockers for middle school students.
  - e) Year 1: Create middle school handbook with higher expectations for homework accountability, opportunities, and responsibilities.



- f) Years 3-5: Provide the ability to have homeroom teachers and subject teachers which allows students to be exposed to a myriad of Waldorf methodologies and structures per subject.
- g) All years: Review and revise middle school program to ensure MSCS students are adequately prepared for high school.
- h) Year 1: Middle school teachers coordinate with TLC and ED to create a handbook with higher expectations for homework accountability, opportunities, and responsibilities.
- i) Years 3-5: Provide the ability to have homeroom teachers and subject teachers which allows students to be exposed to a myriad of Waldorf methodologies and structures per subject.

### **GOAL #3: Operational Effectiveness**

**SMART Goal: From SY 2023-24 to SY 2027-28, the Board will oversee and implement a plan for operational effectiveness that is reflected in a 10% increase in related annual community survey scores and a *Performance* rating in CSI's annual CARS report.**

**Why this matters:** Operational effectiveness will not only improve the performance of the school, but it will help it become more stable and productive and in turn unlock new opportunities.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) MSCS Board of Directors and Executive Director will make effective data-driven decisions in alignment with the school's Strategic Plan by monitoring and tracking relevant data, and using such data in making decisions as reflected in a public Strategic Dashboard.
  - a) Years 1-3: Relevant data regarding implementation of Strategic Plan will be identified, tracked, and made publicly available by Board leadership.
  - b) All years: Board of Directors and ED will report on decisions made and data used in regular reports.
- 2) MSCS Board of Directors and Executive Director will retain high quality Waldorf-trained teachers at an 85% retention rate.
- 3) MSCS Board of Directors will establish and implement an Executive Director Retention Plan.
  - a) Year 1: Provide adequate support for ED to take at least 2 unencumbered weeks off during the summertime.
  - b) Year 2: Provide adequate financial support to the school so the ED can hire full-time Principal to focus on implementing Waldorf pedagogy and school programming, freeing the ED to attend to executive director duties.
- 4) MSCS Board of Directors EDSEC Committee, with guidance from CSI, will develop a clear and comprehensive plan for Executive Director succession at Mountain Song, assuring that when the



need arises, the Mountain Song Board of Directors can smoothly engage in a search for a new director.

- a) Year 1: The EDSEC Committee, with guidance from CSI, will develop a clear and comprehensive plan for administrator succession at Mountain Song, assuring that when the need arises, the Mountain Song Board of Directors can smoothly engage in a search for a new director.
- 5) The MSCS Board of Directors will review, revise, and implement enhanced strategies to cultivate a high quality Board as recognized in CSI's annual CARS report.

#### STRATEGIES:

- 1) Data-driven decisions in alignment with Strategic Plan
  - a) Years 1-3: Board and executive leadership will develop a Strategic Dashboard to monitor and analyze comprehensive success to determine necessary modifications/changes that need to be made.
- 2) Teacher Retention
  - a) Continue to provide retention bonuses based on years of service at MSCS.
  - b) Implement collaborative leadership practices resulting in faculty engagement in committee, teacher leadership, and governance opportunities.
  - c) Support full Waldorf training of teachers by continuing to underwrite tuition for K-8 lead classroom teachers and requiring such training, or enrollment in such training, for K-8 lead classroom teachers.
  - d) Provide ongoing teacher support and training during in-service and faculty meetings to operationalize accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities, and to enhance teachers' trauma-informed approaches.
- 3) Executive Director Retention Plan
  - a) Year 1: Board leadership will provide adequate support for ED to take at least 2 unencumbered weeks off in summer.
    - i) EDSEC will ascertain support needs.
    - ii) EDSEC will develop plan.
    - iii) EDSEC will implement plan.
  - b) Year 2: Provide adequate financial support to the school so the ED can hire full-time Principal to focus on implementing Waldorf pedagogy and school programming, freeing the ED to attend to executive director duties.
- 4) Executive Director Succession Plan
  - a) Year 1: EDSEC will work with CSI to develop a clear succession plan.
  - b) All Years: ED and EDSEC will cultivate a candidate pool of qualified successors by identifying leadership candidates through providing incremental or smaller leadership opportunities for motivated individuals.



- 5) High Quality Board of Directors
  - a) Improve board recruitment strategy to build a diverse group of potential candidates over time who can take MSCS to the next level.
  - b) Cultivate a pool of board candidates by having potential members work in board committees prior to serving on the Board of Directors.
  - c) Improve board onboarding and training processes.
  - d) Increase board engagement and involvement by allowing board members to contribute in various ways that fit their skillset.
  - e) The Board will create an ad hoc committee to brainstorm strategies for advertising, recruiting, and building a robust community engagement with its committees.

#### **GOAL #4: Engagement and Collaboration**

**SMART Goal: From SY 2023-24 to SY 2027-28, the Board will oversee and implement a plan for engagement of and collaboration with both students and families to foster a school culture of healthy relationships, minds, and bodies; effective communication; and meaningful engagement of the community as reflected in a 10% improvement in scores on annual community survey.**

**Why this matters:** Strong family engagement is linked to increased student achievement, reduced absenteeism as well as social, emotional and physical health.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) School staff will maintain the current high level of relationships so that our community survey scores reflect that all students feel they have at least one safe adult as an advocate at school.
- 2) The Board and ED will strengthen the school's whole child approach by increasing health, nutrition, and wellness services.
  - a) Years 1-2: Secure funding to launch a school lunch program based on using a vendor to deliver cold lunches to students no later than Fall 2024.
  - b) Years 1-2: Ensure BEST Grant Project progresses adequately to ensure a scratch kitchen and cafeteria are constructed that the school can utilize.
  - c) Years 3-5: Launch and implement school food program available to all students using new scratch kitchen and cafeteria.
- 3) The Board of Directors and ED will improve communication with families so that community survey results are improved by 10%.
  - a) All Years: ED will continue to ensure ongoing communication is maintained and enhanced online, through weekly newsletters, and through social media.
  - b) All Years: ED will publish and distribute an annual report by November 30.





- c) Year 1-2: Board of Directors and school leaders will create additional avenues for feedback to utilize in Unified Improvement Plan.
- d) All Years: Board of Directors will communicate with community to:
  - i) Inform them of, and invite them to, each monthly board meeting;
  - ii) Send news to community after every board meeting that includes important news and information from each committee.
- e) Year 1: ED will launch weekly Coffee with the Director series each Friday following Assembly.
- f) The Board will schedule and host two community town hall meetings, one per semester, to engage community members in discussions around important/current topics.
- 4) Family and Community Engagement will increase by strengthening meaningful committee and event opportunities so that committee membership and event attendance increases by 20%.
  - a) Board of Directors will strengthen its committees by communicating to the whole community and personally inviting specific community members. This includes the following committees:
    - i) Parent Circle
    - ii) Family Engagement Committee (School Accountability Committee)
    - iii) Fundraising Committee
  - b) Board of Directors, through the committees above, and the ED, through staff engagement, will create community festivals and events that include:
    - i) Stone Soup Harvest Festival
    - ii) Winter Faire
    - iii) May Faire
  - c) ED will work with staff to create Community Education events to include:
    - i) Fall Parent Enrichment Weekend
    - ii) Winter Art Night Open House

STRATEGIES:

- 1) Strong student relationships
  - a) See objectives and strategies in Goal 1.
- 2) Whole Child Approach
  - a) ED engages grant writer to strategize and write grant proposals to fund interim lunch program (which will operate at a loss).
  - b) Board and ED continue to engage Owner's Rep and Design-Build Team to move forward with BEST Grant Project, and fulfill all required duties to do so.
- 3) Improve Communication
  - a) ED will delegate Songbird newsletter to other staff members.



- b) ED will engage Marketing and Communications Director to create, publish, and distribute Annual Report.
  - c) School staff will launch and maintain new website.
  - d) ED will engage Marketing and Communications Director to keep social media posts fresh and timely.
  - e) The Board will ensure that email blast information is sent to the responsible person to set up a community email blast regarding upcoming meetings on the Friday before each Board meeting. Social media will be updated to reflect the same information.
  - f) The Board will ensure that email blast information is sent to the responsible person to set up a community email blast after each monthly meeting that includes important news and information from each committee.
  - g) The Board will schedule Town Hall meetings in the fall and spring at least 6 weeks in advance.
  - h) ED will garner staff support to implement Coffee with the Director each Friday after the school assembly.
- 4) Family and Community Engagement