

**Strategic Plan**

**2021-2023**

**Executive Summary:**

As we draft this Strategic Plan in the fall of 2020, we are in the middle of a pandemic. We are doing our best as a school to serve our children, families, staff, and community under unprecedented public health measures and restrictions. So many things have changed in the past eight months and there is no clear path back to normal yet. We miss each other and the way things used to be at RWCNS, especially the sense of community and connection we’ve enjoyed in the past.

In these unprecedented times, it can be reassuring to remind ourselves of what *hasn’t* changed. Our mission and values haven’t changed. We remain dedicated to educating and nurturing children in an enriching play-based environment and engaging families in a supportive community. But, *how* we serve our Ruth Washburn community has changed this year. And not all the changes have been bad! For example, this year we changed children’s orientation so that only one family is in the classroom at a time. We did this for public health reasons, but as it turns out, it provided fabulous opportunities for children and their families to familiarize themselves with their new classroom and form deep connections with their teachers. It’s a positive change we’ll keep for coming years. Another unexpected improvement happened with New Parent Orientation. Rather than crowding into Minnow’s Room for live events, we recorded the information for families to access at their convenience—a much more effective and efficient way to disseminate this important information.

Like everything else, the Strategic Planning process looks different this year. Our last Strategic Plan was bold and extensive, with ambitious goals and detailed objectives. In contrast, this year, Strategic Planning conversations have circled back, time and again, to the basics:

* How do we stay open?
* How do we stay relevant?
* How do we stay financially solvent and strong?
* How do we retain our extraordinary staff?
* How do we maintain “The Ruth Washburn Way”?
* How do we remain true to our mission and provide quality programming through an equity lens under such challenging circumstances?
* How do we take good care (physically and emotionally) of our children, families, and staff?

**Our overarching institutional vision for the next two years is to preserve “The Ruth Washburn Way”—our school’s culture and identity—so that we can return to normal as soon as possible, without losing the intangible essence of what makes Ruth Washburn such a special place.** To that end, the Strategic Planning committee has identified the following goals and activities to help guide us through the next 24 months, recognizing that remaining responsive, nimble, and flexible in our responses to unforeseen circumstances is critical to our survival as an institution and a community.

**GOAL:** RWCNS will remain financially solvent.

**ACTIVITY:** Every month, the Finance Committee reviews year-to-date and annual budget projections.

**ACTIVITY:** Every two months, Executive Director and Treasurer scale staffing levels and other programmatic expenses to move in parallel with enrollment.

**ACTIVITY:** Indefinitely postpone discretionary projects and expenditures.

**ACTIVITY:** Maintain at least $20,000 cash on hand from retained earnings each year.

**ACTIVITY:** Maintain access to Commercial Line of Credit of $250,000.

**ACTIVITY:** By July 2021, Executive Director and Finance Committee identify fundraising successes from 2020-21 school year to inform future fundraising strategy.

**GOAL:** RWCNS will maintain and strengthen its culture, “The Ruth Washburn Way,” for children, families, and staff.

**ACTIVITY:** By February 2021, form a “Ruth Washburn Way Ad-hoc Committee,” comprised of current and former families, staff, Equity Committee members, and Board members to define and document the “Ruth Washburn Way,” and update Vision and Values statements.

**ACTIVITY:** By Fall of 2021, Committee presents updated Vision and Values statements for Board approval.

**ACTIVITY:** By January 2022, Board of Governors approve Vision and Values statements and share with Cooperative.

**ACTIVITY (to serve children):** As soon as public health policy allows, re-instate classroom best practices to best serve children, including: family-style snack and parent-helper volunteers.

**ACTIVITY** **(to serve families):** As soon as public health policy allows, re-instate programming designed to increase connections between families and families and children, including: parent-helper volunteers, Sunday Fun-day playground hours, and Coffee with the Director.

**ACTIVITY (to serve staff):** As soon as public health policy allows, re-instate programming designed to increase connections among staff and between staff and families, including: team-building events, in-person parent/teacher conversations, indoor drop-off/pick-up, opportunities for teachers to visit other classrooms, collaborative planning, and hands-on mentoring regarding curriculum and classroom management.

**ACTIVITY (to strengthen community):** Continue to implement innovative opportunities for connection and support, including: virtual Coffee with the Director, virtual happy-hour events for families and staff, virtual parent support groups, and pairing new Cooperative families with mentor families.

**GOAL:** RWCNS recruits and retains high-quality teachers.

**ACTIVITY:** By March 2021, conduct “stay interviews” with long-term teachers, including recently retired teachers to capture what keeps/kept them at RWCNS.

**ACTIVITY:** By May of each year, conduct “stay interviews” with current teachers to assess any areas of improvement to support teacher satisfaction.

**ACTIVITY:** By May 2021, update job descriptions for lead teacher and assistant teachers, to include diversity and equity lens.

ACTIVITY: By May 2021, update staff recruitment strategies to include equity and diversity recommendations from the Equity Committee.

**ACTIVITY:** By December 2021, investigate possibility of alternate/additional job structures (e.g., full-time, full-year, etc.) to meet teacher’s needs (to be considered for implementation for 2022-23 school year).