

Strategic Plan

2022 – 2030



GOLDEN VALLEY
CHARTER SCHOOLS

Approved by the Board of Trustees on November 9, 2022

Our History

Golden Valley Charter Schools (GVCS) originated in the minds and hearts of a handful of home-schooling parents. It was just before the turn of the last century that a small group of teachers and parents had a dream for their children and for all families living in the greater Sacramento area. Their dream was to open a public charter school inspired by Waldorf education. As a result of countless hours of thoughtful planning and hard work, they made this dream a reality with the establishment of Golden Valley Charter Schools. Over the last 20 years, teachers, parents, staff and community members have continued to work in partnership to grow our schools— which started with 40 students—into a multi-school charter organization with more than 550 students. From these grassroots beginnings, Golden Valley has become a leader in the movement to bring Waldorf education to the public sector.

Over the past 20+ years hundreds of families have contributed to and gained from the experience of being members of our learning community. Our success to date and into the future is built by our dynamic community. Our teachers, staff, and parents work together on the Board of Trustees to govern our schools guided by the values of Waldorf education. Our active Parent Circle has engaged the community to volunteer countless hours in and out of classrooms to support class plays, events, and fieldtrips; provide parent education; host seasonal festivals and celebrations; and create a strong base of advocacy for educational choice. Our Golden Valley Educational Foundation, a non-profit, parent-run organization, has worked tirelessly with our community to raise extra funds to supplement our enriched curriculum and support our teachers to receive their Waldorf Teaching Certifications. As a result of this dynamic community, our teachers are better able to provide our students with a well-rounded Waldorf education. Ultimately, our students graduate with a passion for learning and are well-prepared for life.

As we have grown and evolved, our committed community has succeeded by working together with creativity and compassion to make the most of any situation. Our resilience stems from our clarity of purpose – to prepare students to engage in a dynamic world. We are not strangers to change, and we look forward to continuing to learn and adapt our strategies while staying true to our principles as schools inspired by Waldorf education.



20th Anniversary School Photo at the River Campus.

Methods and Acknowledgments – Who Created This?

How we created the strategic plan is arguably just as important as what it says. We knew that we needed to honor the values and intent of our community and the Waldorf educational process in how we co-created a vision for our future.

The GVCS Strategic Plan was created through a collaborative, organic, and active process. The Board of Trustees initiated the process to build the 2030 Strategic Plan to update and clarify our vision and roadmap. A volunteer Strategic Planning Committee of parents, educators, and employees was convened from a cross section of the organization.

We leveraged a professional Strategic Management methodology to co-create our plan systematically and holistically. We surveyed the community and hosted Community Open Forums to get broad input on the elements of the plan and what is important to our community.



First Grade coming together for Courage Day.

We thank the volunteer Strategic Planning Core Team Members:

- Annie Bosque, River Teacher, Alumni Parent
- Caleb Buckley, Executive Director, River Parent
- Darryl Cragun, GVEF member, Orchard Parent
- Ekaterina Khmelniker, Board of Trustees Member, River Parent
- Jennifer Huetter, Board of Trustees Vice-Chair, Orchard Parent
- Jenny Wroblicky, Orchard Parent
- Jordan Todd, Orchard Teacher
- Marlene Laughter, Central Office Staff, River Parent
- Monica Eisel, Alumni Parent, Past GVEF President
- Stephanie Lorenz, River Teacher, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee Member, Alumni Parent

Our Community – Who Are We?

Golden Valley is a vibrant learning community of forward thinkers, open and enthusiastically moving toward a better future for public charter schools. Students, staff, teachers, administrators, and parents work together purposefully and respectfully, developing long-lasting and productive relationships. Teams of like-minded individuals work with care to produce outcomes beneficial for our children now and in the future. Developmentally appropriate education is at the heart of all our decisions and drives our speech and action in every encounter.



Eagle's Heart

Our Students — The heart and body of our schools are our students. All of us are entrusted as stewards to responsibly educate every one of them through head, heart, and hands experiences from kindergarten through 8th grade. They are the reason we are here.

Eagle's Head

Our Board of Trustees (BOT) — This group serves as the formal stewards for our schools. They govern the school by approving plans and policies and overseeing the administration of the school. They are represented by the mind and eyes of the eagle—keenly and thoughtfully managing the present and seeing clearly where we want to go as an organization. The Board is composed of volunteer community members who work closely with the administration and the faculty.

Our Leadership Team — Our Executive Director, Principals, and programmatic leadership are the formal leaders of our schools who orchestrate all other school and community leaders to collaboratively achieve our Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals. They are represented by the beak of the eagle—calling out a cadence for the wings and the tail feathers to work in unison to give flight to the student body. They are responsible for engaging employees and volunteers of our community to deliver an excellent educational experience for our students.

Eagle's Wings and Tail

Our Faculty & Staff — Our teachers and staff form one of the wings that uplift and inspire our students to greatness. They are professional and dedicated to delivering an amazing Waldorf educational experience. Guided by the principal, they work together with each other, the administration, and families to bring us closer to our vision, one school day at a time.

Our Families — Our schools are just one part of our students' education. Our students' families are their first teachers. Working together with the faculty, staff, and each other, families represent the other wing that makes it possible for our students to soar.

Our Central Office (CO) & Administrators

— Our office employees make it possible for our schools to exist and run smoothly. They provide precision operational expertise to navigate the legal, financial, and physical requirements of school life. As such, they are represented by the eagle's tail feathers, acting as a rudder to translate the power of our wings into a graceful flight towards our vision.

Parent Circle (PC) — The Parent Circle (PC) mission is to serve the schools and to create a sense of community. PC organizes volunteers for our seasonal festivals, community projects, and parent education.

Golden Valley Educational Foundation

(GVEF) — GVEF is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that performs fundraising for our schools. Funds go to nourishing the Waldorf-inspired curriculum. GVEF lends year-round support for the schools' [Annual Giving Campaign](#), as well as the Eagle Chase jog-a-thon and other events.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee

(DEI) — The DEI Committee comprises faculty, staff and families working collaboratively to advocate, educate and support inclusiveness in our community.

Our Future – Where Are We Going?

We illustrate our future with a summary Strategy Map (illustrated on page 8). It summarizes our Mission, Vision, Values and Goals, and shows how they relate to each other.

From the bottom up, it reads: “Our Core Values define how we will interact with each other as we work through our Rhythms and Projects to optimize our Strategic Goals to achieve our Vision in service to our Mission.”

From the top down, it reads: “Our Mission tells us why we are here, and our Vision describes where we are going. We assess our progress towards that Vision by optimizing the balance across our five Strategic Goals. We achieve those Goals by performing our ongoing Rhythms and delivering Projects. Our Core Values define how we interact with each other along the way.”

Our Mission – Why Are We Here?

Our mission reflects our shared commitment to the primary reason we exist as an organization. There are many things that we do as an educational community. Our mission does NOT try to summarize what or how we do it. Our mission defines why we are here to help us focus on those things that will have the greatest benefit towards that purpose. This is our compass. Our mission provides stability of our purpose over the long term, even as our specific strategies and methods adapt in the short term to navigate changing conditions.

Our mission is not just the purview of the teachers or students in the classroom. Our entire community, including all employees and all volunteers, serve as educators towards this mission. The way we speak and how we act shows as role models. We contribute our time and our donations directly in classrooms and on the playgrounds. We contribute indirectly by making the campuses safe and well equipped and by supporting the teachers and volunteers who are working directly with the students. It takes all of us working together every day to make this mission a reality.

Our Mission:

We nurture a passion for learning through head, heart, and hands experiences which prepare students to engage in a dynamic world.

Our Vision:

Expanding access for children and families to a community of public Waldorf Schools.

Our Vision – What Will We Look Like?

Our vision paints a clear and compelling future that we are excited to create together. It illustrates what we will look like when we arrive in 2030.

We recognize our role as a leader, among a growing number of others who are courageously pioneering innovative educational choices. We strive to create broader community access to public Waldorf education through leadership of charter schools, and we remain steadfast in our commitment to our core identity as a public Waldorf charter schools.

Our Core Values – How Will We Interact with Each Other?

The foundation of our Strategic Plan and the very fabric of our community is our set of shared Core Values. A value is a commitment to a behavioral standard or social norm for how we will interact with each other.

There are a few values that are prerequisites for being a member of our community. By choosing to be a member of our community, in ANY role, we commit to holding ourselves and each other to striving for these values in every interaction. None of us is perfect. We will fall short of these values at times. When we do, we gently remind each other and get back on track.

Curiosity

At GVCS we value and nurture curiosity and approach learning wholeheartedly with eagerness. We live with enthusiasm and are open to the wonders that each day holds.

Reverence

The GVCS community honors and respects each other, ourselves, our environment, and all living things. Through our rituals and actions, we demonstrate care and courtesy and nurture both our physical and emotional wellbeing. As lifelong learners we give our best to all we do and compassionately build honest relationships and appreciation of diversity.

Creating Community

At GVCS we invest in creating community. We see ourselves as part of the larger world, honor the value and diversity of each individual and invest in a community where we have compassion for and trust one another, are inclusive, build strong relationships, appreciate differences, seek common ground, and resolve conflict peacefully.

Joyful service

At GVCS we freely participate, share, and contribute with enthusiasm. Teachers, students, staff, and volunteers willingly share our time, our talents, and our donations to serve our students and our community.

Empathy

At GVCS we practice empathy and have compassion, care, and concern for one another's needs. We endeavor to be present for each other's thoughts and feelings and seek to understand their experience. With empathy we reflect on how our actions affect others and create spaces of safety and well-being.

Commitment

The GVCS community is committed to Waldorf inspired learning and the gentle unfolding of learning. We are willing to make and meet commitments to one another and carry responsibility for our agreements and our stated policies bridging school and home. We are faithful to our relationships. We endeavor to act in integrity with our values and commitments, be accountable and take responsibility for our choices with grace. People can rely on us.

Our Strategic Goals – What Outcomes Will We Achieve?

Our Strategic Goals describe the five long-term, ongoing outcomes that we commit to creating with our community. These five Goals are interdependent. We cannot completely jeopardize any one of them without jeopardizing all of them. At all times, we must maintain a minimum threshold level of performance across all goals. However, in any given year, specific challenges may require that we shift the balance of our focus more heavily towards some goals with a temporary sacrifice of other goals. By adapting to changes in a holistic fashion, we can best optimize the balance of our goals in the long run.

We begin with people first. All the other goals contribute to creating a **Vibrant Learning Community**. All our diverse members—from students and families, employees, and volunteers—work together as a unified team in alignment with our shared passion for lifelong learning and a few core values.

As a school, our primary purpose is education. For us, we emphasize delivering a **Holistic Waldorf Education** as our preferred method for developing the whole child through head, heart, and hands experiences.



Creating and **Sustaining Exemplary Rhythms** ensures that our administration, special events, and natural daily and seasonal processes flow smoothly and efficiently. This allows us to focus on delivering a great Waldorf education and helps our community to maintain morale and sustain their level of engagement.

We want to inspire learning through all the senses in **Accessible Harmonious Environments**. This includes safe, beautiful, and nurturing classrooms, campuses, facilities, gardens, and surrounding natural spaces. We are also physically and geographically accessible to Sacramento area families that want a public Waldorf experience.

Being **Responsible Fiscal Stewards** is a foundational goal. It is a prerequisite for even existing as a solvent, publicly funded institution. As stewards, we wisely invest the public money from the State and our donors in a transparent and accountable fashion. This enables us to deliver a **Holistic Waldorf Education**, operate with **Exemplary Sustainable Rhythms**, and learn in **Accessible Harmonious Environments**.

For each strategic goal, we have a specific long-term definition. We also have medium-term objectives to guide our prioritization of choices over the next 12-18 months. We expect that the objectives will be updated by the Board of Trustees each school year to reflect shifts in trends.

Our Strategic Goals (cont.)

Vibrant Learning Community

We are a unified mosaic of diverse students, families, employees, and volunteers committed to fostering healthy learning opportunities for all. We build meaningful relationships sustaining our shared lifelong passion for learning and growth.

Objectives

- Strengthen our GVCS community
- Increase engagement and partnerships
- Expand volunteer opportunities
- Increase accessibility to GVCS and Waldorf education
- Strengthen and showcase the middle school grades
- Balance and uplift Orchard and River

Holistic Waldorf Education

We inspire and educate our students by providing an engaging Waldorf education that integrates the head, heart, and hands experiences. Our highly qualified educators deliver a comprehensive and integrated curriculum. Within a collaborative atmosphere main lessons and specialty classes are taught to our thriving community of learners. As early advocates of public Waldorf education, we continue to be leaders in the growing Waldorf charter school movement.

Objectives

- Teacher and staff training and enrichments
- Expand learning programs and opportunities
- Family education and engagement
- Relationships and collaboration with other Waldorf schools

Exemplary Sustainable Rhythms

Our school operates effectively, efficiently, and comfortably. Employees and volunteers conduct our educational and administrative responsibilities at a sustainable pace. Our daily and seasonal rhythms cultivate a positive learning experience. We demonstrate exceptional ability to meet operational needs in service to our community. We prioritize our goals and objectives and measure our success.

Objectives

- Teacher support, resources & development
- Student support and enrichment
- Reestablish strong community rhythms
- Support inclusive family rhythms & accessibility
- Grow volunteer & school leadership programs

Accessible Harmonious Environments

Our learning environments include our classrooms, campuses, gardens, facilities, and surrounding natural spaces. Working together, we create a safe, sustainable, healthy, and vibrant atmosphere that promotes learning through all the senses. We are accessible to families in the Sacramento area who desire our public Waldorf educational model.

Objectives

- Improve our facilities
- Sustainable facilities
- Act as stewards of our neighboring parks

Responsible Fiscal Stewardship

We maintain a healthy and balanced budget. This enables our schools to achieve our short- and long-term educational and operational goals. The business team stays current on legal, political, and technological trends. We work together with GVEF and the community for developing beneficial fundraisers.

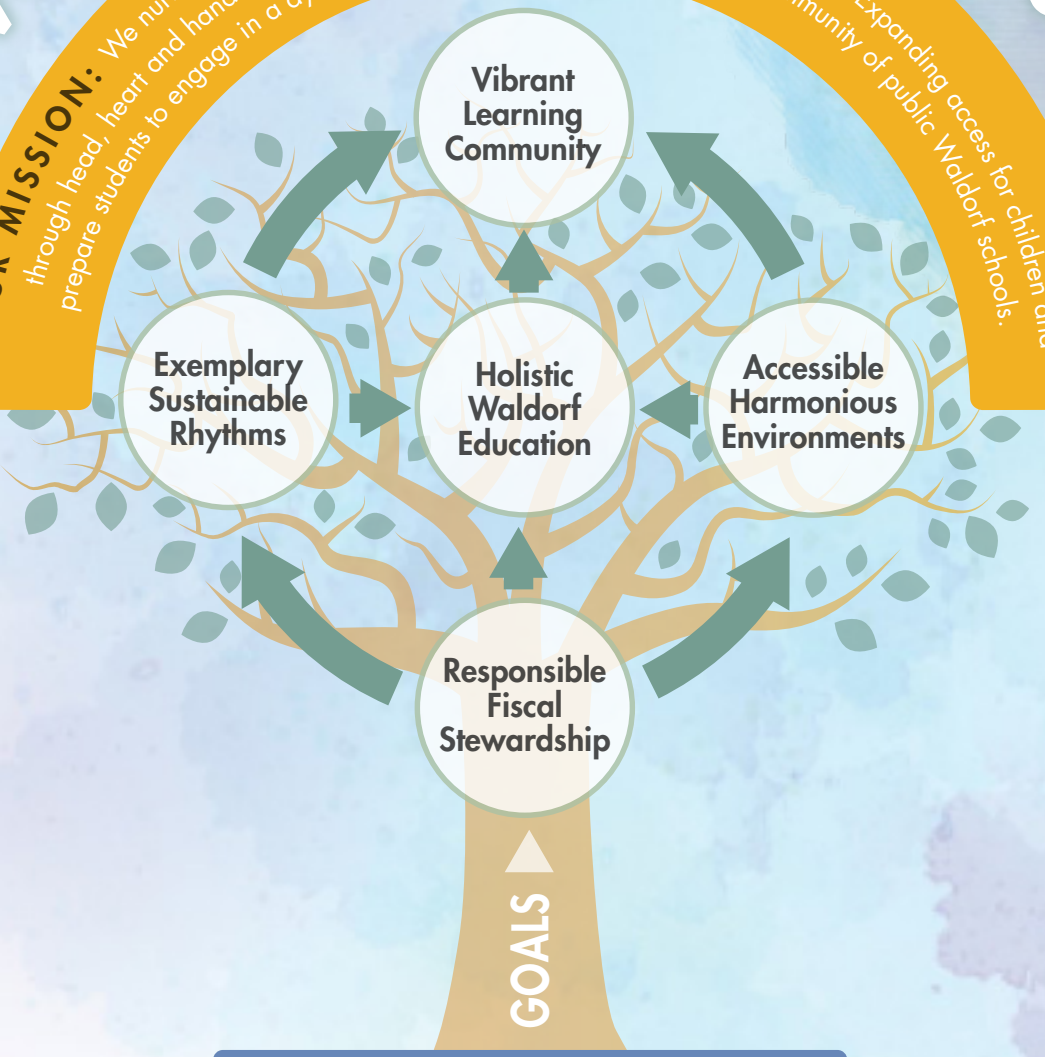
Objectives

- Fiscal balance and sustainability
- Grow fundraising
- Growth and expansion of programs

GVCS Strategic Map 2022 - 2030

OUR MISSION: We nurture a passion for learning through head, heart and hands experiences which prepare students to engage in a dynamic world.

OUR VISION: Expanding access for children and families to a community of public Waldorf schools.



CORE VALUES

