



The
LINDEN SCHOOL

Building
OUR FUTURE

STRATEGIC PLAN 2016–2019



2016 Parent Survey: How would you describe The Linden School?



A school with small class sizes which empowers young women to speak for themselves, identify their interests, and pursue them without judgment.”

—2016 Parent Survey Respondent

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

On behalf of The Linden School’s Board of Trustees, faculty, and staff, I am pleased to share our new strategic plan, which will help us set the course for the next three years and beyond. Our strategic planning process began in spring 2016 when my first year at Linden was nearing completion. The school’s Board of Trustees and I spent much of a two-day retreat in April focusing on the plan, and this work was then carried forward by a smaller working group. With representation from the Board, parents, alumnae, faculty, and staff, the working group conducted research, generated and prioritized key initiatives, and through multiple meetings developed our three key strategic priorities: Sustainable School, Program Excellence, and Student Success.

Our plan is specifically aligned with 2016 parent survey results, which provided valuable feedback from 80% of our parents in the following areas:

KEY STRENGTHS:

- Girl-centered teaching
- Academic excellence
- Small class sizes
- Outstanding faculty
- Nurturing environment
- School communication of news and events
- Excellent parent volunteer experience
- Enrollment at Linden was the right decision

KEY GROWTH AREAS:

- Higher enrollment for some grades
- More guidance support
- Parent engagement and overall satisfaction
- More communication about how integrating social justice topics better positions graduates for success at university and beyond
- Improved facilities
- More communication about the Board and its activities
- More awareness about volunteer opportunities that match volunteer interests

Our new 2016–2019 Strategic Plan builds on Linden’s many accomplishments and strengths to date and also proposes a renewed mission and values. Having a clear strategic plan that will be implemented by our exceptional faculty and staff ensures that The Linden School will continue to deliver an inspiring program that motivates every young woman who walks through our doors to become a trailblazing changemaker wherever she goes.

Sincerely,



Janice Gladstone
Principal

SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL

2016 Parent Survey: How would you describe The Linden School?



Linden is the place for girls to discover their potential and understand how girls should stand for themselves... it teaches girls that anything is possible by showing them real examples in the world.”

—2016 Parent Survey Respondent

SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL

With Linden's 25th anniversary around the corner, we are deeply committed to securing a sustainable future for our unique school. Although we own our building, we must expand enrollment to increase our revenue base and support our innovative programming initiatives. Through careful stewardship of our funds, we must strive to create teaching spaces that are technologically equipped to support our vibrant and collaborative classrooms. Our 25th anniversary provides us with the perfect opportunity to rebuild connections with the wider Linden community and our alumnae. Word of mouth marketing continues to be an important source of new students at Linden, and we must expand and cultivate our network of supporters amongst current families, alumnae, friends, and partner organizations. In order to do so, we must also revisit how our brand resonates with our community and use the strategic planning process to refine and promote our identity amongst key stakeholders.

WHERE WE WILL FOCUS

- Strengthening Linden's brand by differentiating our mission and values, showcasing our successes, and refining our marketing strategy
- Streamlining our admissions process with new staff, redesigned processes, and a prospect tracking system
- Boosting junior school enrollment by building a vibrant early learning program
- Developing our students and parents to be effective ambassadors for the school
- Improving school facilities, with a focus on smart use of technology
- Strengthening volunteer support and increasing parent and alumnae engagement by revising Board and volunteer committee structures
- Improving communication amongst stakeholders through ongoing surveys, new Parent Forum, annual business meeting, and other venues

INTENDED OUTCOMES

With a stronger organization, increased stakeholder engagement, distinctive brand, and enhanced marketing, we will increase enrollment and ensure a strong foundation for future growth.

SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL

2016 Parent Survey: How would you describe The Linden School?



Linden is an academically rich environment that promotes personal growth, mutual respect, and social awareness.”

—2016 Parent Survey Respondent

STRENGTHENING THE LINDEN BRAND: REVISED MISSION & VALUES

With ever-increasing pressure to remain competitive in a city filled with other independent schools, we must recognize the importance of differentiating our brand in a way that is strongly market-relevant while remaining true to our foundational values. Linden's very foundations broke with tradition—we are the only all-girls school in Canada that was specifically created to meet the learning needs of girls. Our ground-breaking philosophy placed girls at the very centre of our school when we made a conscious decision to move away from hierarchy-driven and tradition-bound school structures. In doing so, we chose to empower girls by ensuring that every girl's voice was counted in our decision-making, whether it was setting school policies and traditions, program offerings, or hiring teachers. Linden has thrived and survived because of the strength it has derived by allowing everyone within its walls to question the status quo and join the leadership team in building a school that reflects what girls really want in their school, their teachers, their curriculum, and their classrooms. It's no wonder parents repeatedly tell us how much their daughters love attending Linden.

Linden's new strategic plan gives us a compelling opportunity to differentiate ourselves from others by recognizing that our future sustainability can only be derived from the very creativity, innovation, and stakeholder engagement that helped build our school in the first place. In fact, our alumnae also tell us that it's our non-traditional approach that gives our socially engaged graduates a cutting-edge over their peers in today's job market.

Therefore, as part of the strategic planning process, revisions to the school's mission and values are being developed to refine our identity and marketing approach by highlighting Linden's differentiating strengths and foundational values:

The Linden School is a socially progressive community where innovative best practices in girls' education promote and strengthen student voice, well-being, academic excellence, and global engagement.

INCLUSIVITY

We support a genuinely student-driven culture; students are empowered to actively seize leadership opportunities and confidently contribute to the making of our academic and social community.

DIVERSITY

We work within an anti-oppression framework by approaching the curriculum from multiple perspectives; our academic inquiry includes equity and social justice issues from feminist and anti-racist viewpoints.

INTELLECTUAL RISK

We support respectful dissent and encourage an enthusiasm for inquiry and interdisciplinary exploration; we challenge ourselves and others through independent thinking, well-informed opinions, and critical debate.

PROGRAM EXCELLENCE

2016 Parent Survey: How would you describe The Linden School?



Linden prepares your daughter for the real-world challenges that lie ahead—an empowering approach to learning across all subjects.”

—2016 Parent Survey Respondent

PROGRAM EXCELLENCE

The Linden School is committed to enhancing its academic reputation by offering a differentiated, high-quality program strengthened by its innovative pedagogy, enriched curriculum, and student engagement. To this end, we will invest in the professional growth of our faculty, and ensure they receive the support needed to develop and deliver a curriculum responsive to the needs of girls in a rapidly transforming, increasingly diverse, and interconnected world. Linden will continue to be a dynamic learning community that intentionally fosters socially engaged students who value critical discourse, diverse viewpoints, and a desire to improve the world.

WHERE WE WILL FOCUS

- Enhancing professional development for faculty with additional PD days to ensure we continue delivering excellence
- Strengthening our interdisciplinary curriculum to reflect today's rapidly changing, diverse, and digitally connected society and provide a high quality and relevant educational experience to our students
- Emphasizing inquiry and problem-based learning to explore major issues of our time, including social justice, technological change, economic empowerment, sustainability, and globalization
- Empowering student voices by encouraging deep discussions, dissent, debate, and the development of critical thinking skills by utilizing diverse viewpoints and exploring ways to improve our world
- Continuing to develop Linden's reputation for feminist pedagogy research through partnerships with universities
- Initiating an annual School Improvement Plan (SIP) to streamline the annual planning process

INTENDED OUTCOMES

Linden's program will inspire confidence, academic excellence, and progressive values, enabling tomorrow's leaders and changemakers, and advancing feminist pedagogy. This, in turn, will lead to higher academic achievement, improved student and parent satisfaction, and increased student retention.

STUDENT SUCCESS

2016 Parent Survey: In your opinion, what is Linden's single greatest strength?



Devotion of the teachers. Teachers and administrative staff who actually care and want to ensure the girls achieve to their best ability. Who encourage girls to achieve what they never think they can.”

—2016 Parent Survey Respondent

STUDENT SUCCESS

As a school that was specifically founded to address girls' learning and developmental needs, we must remain highly responsive to emerging student needs and issues. Today's students face an increasingly competitive world, with a greater focus on university and career preparedness. The Linden School must ensure that our graduates have the academic competence, support, and guidance to achieve their aspirations. To be successful, our students must take advantage of Linden's interdisciplinary educational experience, along with our differentiated support and guidance, so that they become comfortable navigating today's complex and rapidly evolving society where they will be challenged to think across multiple disciplines and draw connections using diverse perspectives.

WHERE WE WILL FOCUS

- Increasing academic guidance resources (staffing and tools) to enhance academic advising and support for university entrance
- Developing a more robust and relevant academic advising program that is integrated with our academic program and keeps abreast of evolving student needs, changes in university admissions, and career options available to our students
- Strengthening support for differentiated instruction
- Enhancing special education skills among faculty

INTENDED OUTCOMES

Linden's girl-centred educational environment will enable girls' social, emotional, and physical well-being, while supporting their academic and career goals. This, in turn, will lead to higher academic achievement, improved student and parent satisfaction, and increased student retention.



10 Rosehill Avenue, Toronto, Ontario

416-966-4406

www.lindenschool.ca