

CULTIVATING FUTURE LEADERS

*The Strategic Plan for Hill Country Christian School
2021-2026*



PURPOSE:

We educate, inspire, and prepare the next generation of leaders to impact the world for Christ.

MISSION:

We partner with Christian families to impart truth, cultivate character, and inspire service while preparing college-bound students to think logically, communicate effectively, and impact the world with the love of Christ.

VISION:

Hill Country Christian School will be a recognized leader among Christ-centered schools that aspire to deliver an excellent liberal arts and sciences education in the classical tradition.

CORE VALUES:

At Hill Country Christian School of Austin, we are:

Focused on Christ. We believe knowing Jesus Christ and choosing to serve Him as Lord are essential for redemption and regeneration, and that this choice is necessary for human beings to realize their purpose and full potential. (Col. 1:15-20; Heb. 1:1-3; Rom. 3:21-24; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Prov. 3:5-6)

Rooted in Scripture. We acknowledge the truth and authority of Scripture and hold it to be foundational. As such, we strive to teach all subjects from a biblical worldview, based firmly in the revelation of God's Word. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 4:2; 2 Pet. 1:19-21; Matt. 4:4, 7, 10)

Cultivating Leaders. We believe in cultivating students to be humble servant leaders, preparing them to impact others through selfless service. Becoming such a leader requires a firm identity in Christ, an understanding of culture, and development of a unique, compelling voice. (John 13:12-15; Mark 10:45; Phil. 2:3-11; 2 Cor. 3:2-3)

Promoting Scholarship Informed by Classical Thought. We inspire academic curiosity, growth, and confidence in students as we train them throughout the learning process to think logically, communicate effectively, develop character, and value scholarship. (Prov. 9:10; Rom. 12:2; Matt. 22:37; 1 Kgs. 4:29-34)

Forging Authentic Relationships. We invite families into Christian community, in which we strive to live with integrity, resolve disputes biblically, hold each other accountable in love, and build deep, meaningful relationships, as we work together to raise the next generation for Christ. (Heb. 10:23-25; 1 Thess. 28; Col. 1:28-29; Matt. 18:15-17)

Making Disciples. We embrace the biblical call to "*make disciples*." This includes teaching biblical truth, sharing the love of Jesus, training older students and providing opportunities for them to mentor younger students, and encouraging one another in prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit to take the next step in our journey. (Matt. 28:18-20; 2 Tim. 2:2; Mark 12:28-31; 1 Cor. 15:3-8)



Dear Hill Country Christian School Community,

I am pleased to release the Hill Country Christian School of Austin 2021-2026 Strategic Plan!

This document represents the culmination of 18 months of prayer, and the collaborative efforts of well over 200 stakeholders, including feedback from 135 high school students, 42 parents, 60 faculty and staff, 29 diverse members of a strategic planning task force, a strategic planning consultant, and the school board.

The final version of the strategic plan was formally approved by the Board of Directors on November 30, 2020. This document represents a summary version of that plan, crafted for public dissemination.

We begin by articulating the school Purpose Statement, Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Core Values, Portrait of a Graduate, and Characteristics of Faculty Excellence. Except for the Vision Statement, all of these guiding documents underwent revision in the 2019-2020 strategic planning process.

The body of the 2021-2026 strategic plan begins on page three. It includes the following four Key Areas, each with associated Initiatives and specific Action Plans:

1. Long Term Financial Sustainability
2. Full Enrollment
3. Facilities
4. Teaching and Learning Excellence

God is moving at Hill Country Christian School! He is doing amazing things in our community and expanding our territory to serve rapidly growing north Austin with the option of an excellent Christ-centered education. We endeavor to proclaim His name for years and decades to come – in His honor and for His glory.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Marx', written in a cursive style.

Dr. Jeff Marx, Head of School

SCHOOL EXECUTIVE TEAM

Dr. Jeff Marx, *Head of School*
Carmen Hamilton, *Director of Advancement*
Susan Dehnel, *Director of Business Services*
Craig Bland, *Director of Christian Life*
Matt Donnowitz, *Upper School Principal*
Jessica Tracy, *Lower School Principal*
Scott Horne, *Director of Athletics*

2020-2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Dr. Jeff Marx, *Head of School (non-voting)*
Greg Meyer, *HCBC Elder Board Representative (non-voting)*

PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE:

The ideal Hill Country Christian School graduate...

- 1. seeks God and abides in His will.
- 2. communicates effectively.
- 3. building on a foundation of lifelong learning, thinks logically, critically, and creatively.
- 4. leads with integrity and humility.
- 5. is equipped to persevere amid challenges.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FACULTY EXCELLENCE:

A Hill Country Christian School teacher...

- 1. builds authentic relationships.
- 2. communicates effectively.
- 3. cultivates a Christ-centered worldview in students.
- 4. demonstrates content mastery.
- 5. ignites a desire and love for learning.
- 6. inspires students to excel.
- 7. leads humbly and courageously.
- 8. lives with integrity.
- 9. loves students and serves them sacrificially.
- 10. nurtures the gifts and talents of all students.

KEY RESULT AREA #1: LONG TERM FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Rationale: As we follow the Lord Jesus Christ, Hill Country Christian School will develop and implement a plan of financial stability to strengthen the school against economic downturns, develop our donor pool and make the best use of all revenue streams. Funding and stability goals are an act of stewardship over the school's resources and mission. We seek to apply the same thoughtfulness, creativity, and care over the school's funding that is found in our curriculum, culture, and staffing decisions.

INITIATIVES

1.1 Develop a sustainable five-year plan for the school.

Action Plan 1.1.1: Fund the 2021-2026 strategic plan sustainably in the form of a five-year strategic financial plan.

Action Plan 1.1.2: Plan for development resources necessary to build a high school academic building in five years.

Action Plan 1.1.3: Develop a revised annual donor development plan, with an eye toward another capital campaign in approximately five years, to be measured by the total number of donors each year participating in the Annual Fund (faculty, staff, parents, alumni, et al.), and the total number of donor contacts per year.

Action Plan 1.1.4: Hire a full-time Development Director.

Action Plan 1.1.5: Hire a full-time Operations Manager.

Action Plan 1.1.6: Establish and define the usage of an endowment fund.



KEY RESULT AREA #2: FULL ENROLLMENT

***Rationale:** Hill Country Christian School aims to demonstrate the long-term value of its Christ-centered education by developing critical processes to reach full enrollment.*

INITIATIVES:

2.1 Revise and update the school's marketing and enrollment plan.

Action Plan 2.1.1: Develop and adopt a new comprehensive marketing and enrollment plan. Hire a consultant to assist.

Action Plan 2.1.2: Hire a full-time Marketing and Communications Director.

2.2 Open satellite PreK and Kinder campuses to feed K-5th grade enrollment at the Lakeline campus.

Action Plan 2.2.1: Conduct a feasibility study to open a satellite campus at HCBC Steiner Ranch in the fall of 2022.

Action Plan 2.2.2: Develop a preliminary budget for a satellite campus at HCBC Steiner Ranch in the fall of 2022 to include in the preliminary 2022-2023 budget.

Action Plan 2.2.3: Plan and execute a targeted marketing and enrollment plan for Steiner Ranch.

Action Plan 2.2.4: Approve, staff, and prepare to launch a remote site PreK and Kinder program at HCBC Steiner Ranch in the fall of 2022.

Action Plan 2.2.5: Launch a remote site PreK and Kinder program at HCBC Steiner Ranch in the fall of 2022.

2.3 Initiate busing to the Lakeline school campus from remote site locations.

Action Plan 2.3.1: Build and launch a plan to bus students from Steiner Ranch to Hill Country Christian School Lakeline campus.

2.4 Consider changes in programs and processes that encourage re-enrollment at critical transitions.

Action Plan 2.4.1: Consider changes to programs and processes to encourage retention from PreK and Kinder to Kinder and 1st grade.

Action Plan 2.4.2: Consider changes to programs and processes to encourage retention from 5th grade to 6th grade.

Action Plan 2.4.3: Consider changes to programs and processes to encourage retention from 8th grade to 9th grade.

2.5 Investigate language immersion programs to enhance Lower School enrollment.

Action Plan 2.5.1: Investigate the feasibility of adding a Lower School language immersion program through Add-a-Lingua.

2.6 Develop a plan to attract, hire, and retain minority faculty and staff.

Action Plan 2.6.1: Engage the professional community, our existing minority faculty and staff, and the school community to develop a plan to attract, hire, and retain minority faculty and staff.





KEY RESULT AREA #3: FACILITIES

Rationale: Our high school is growing and will reach capacity soon, forcing the school to turn away mission-appropriate families. Existing high school classroom facilities in portables are dated, unappealing, and an impediment to continued enrollment growth. Upper-level science laboratories and music facilities are deficient. A new high school building is needed in the near future.

INITIATIVES:

3.1 Complete an updated school site development plan at the Lakeline campus.

Action Plan 3.1.1: Collaborate with HCBC to review and update the existing school site development plan for the Lakeline campus.

Action Plan 3.1.2: Interview and select an architect to produce updated site plan drawings for the phase 2 project.

Action Plan 3.1.3: Communicate the updated Lakeline site development plan as groundwork for a phase 2 capital campaign to build a high school building.

3.2 Review, update, and modify existing high school (phase 2) building plans.

Action Plan 3.2.1: Collaborate with HCBC to review and modify existing high school building plans from Fields & Associates along with other site development changes (Hatch field expansion) associated with phase 2.

Action Plan 3.2.2: Estimate the high school (phase 2) building cost.

Action Plan 3.2.3: Engage a consultant to estimate community giving capacity.

3.3 Launch a capital campaign to construct a high school (phase 2) building.

Action Plan 3.3.1: Collaborate with HCBC and obtain permission to proceed with the phase 2 (high school) building campaign, and agree on a total pledge threshold for a go or no go decision on the project.

Action Plan 3.3.2: Engage a fundraising consultant and prepare promotional materials and events.

Action Plan 3.3.3: Execute the silent phase 2 capital campaign.

Action Plan 3.3.4: Execute the public phase 2 capital campaign.

3.4 Bid the phase 2 project, select a builder and civil engineer, and break ground.

Action Plan 3.4.1: Go to bid and select a builder for phase 2.

Action Plan 3.4.2: Interview and hire a civil engineer.

Action Plan 3.4.3: Secure phase 2 funding to construct a high school building.

Action Plan 3.4.4: Break ground on the phase 2 high school building project.

KEY RESULT AREA #4: TEACHING AND LEARNING EXCELLENCE

***Rationale:** The Hill Country community will continue to grow toward its vision to become a leader among Christ-centered schools by adding, changing, or augmenting programs and curriculum to best fulfill its mission and purpose.*

INITIATIVES:

4.1 Enhance programs to foster spiritual formation.

- Action Plan 4.1.1:** Expand the Hill Country Leadership Academy (HCLA) by offering a Washington DC/NYC trip associated with the new required 8th grade leadership course.
- Action Plan 4.1.2:** Require each Upper School House to adopt an entity to serve throughout the school year.
- Action Plan 4.1.3:** Provide student leadership the opportunity to plan and lead chapel.
- Action Plan 4.1.4:** Develop a plan to transition Lower School spiritual portfolios into Upper School.
- Action Plan 4.1.5:** Track senior thesis scores for biblical integration annually to assess the efficacy of the Upper School Bible and Theology scope and sequence.

4.2 Build engagement, collaboration, and support among the community beyond the walls of Hill Country Christian School.

- Action Plan 4.2.1:** Grow the school's nascent alumni relations program, as measured by year-to-year alumni participation rates in events (in-person and digital media), annual giving, and contacts per year.
- Action Plan 4.2.2:** In collaboration with existing school programs (chapel, academic cohort program, parent education seminars, etc.), invite speakers from outside the school community to participate and build relationships at least twice per year.
- Action Plan 4.2.3:** Produce a Hill Country Christian School customized version of the Journey to Manhood curriculum and annually encourage middle school fathers to engage in it together with their sons.

4.3 Grow STEM curriculum, facilities, and awareness.

- Action Plan 4.3.1:** Introduce an annual STEM unit for each Lower School grade level.
- Action Plan 4.3.2:** Enhance dual enrollment programs through the Cockrell School of Engineering at the University of Texas by adding a second class.

4.4 Build a robust Upper School vocal music program.

- Action Plan 4.4.1:** Budget and hire an experienced teacher/administrator equipped to develop an excellent voice and choral program and move the school toward developing an orchestra program. Consider appointing this new hire as Director of Fine Arts.
- Action Plan 4.4.2:** Engage students in annual vocal competitions.
- Action Plan 4.4.3:** Develop performing choirs.
- Action Plan 4.4.4:** Consider changes in scope and sequencing to leverage and enhance the school's musical theatre program.
- Action Plan 4.4.5:** Introduce instrumental training as a preface to a future orchestra program. Consider starting as early as 4th grade.
- Action Plan 4.4.6:** Re-evaluate the Upper School music scope and sequence and push necessary changes downward into Lower School music scope and sequence.



KEY RESULT AREA #4: TEACHING AND LEARNING EXCELLENCE (cont.)

4.5 Rebuild and rebrand the Hill Country Learning Differences program as the Academic Resource and Counseling Center (ARCC) to support mission-appropriate students with minor learning differences.

Action Plan 4.5.1: Complete an ARCC handbook and improve documentation to facilitate program confidentiality and make data-driven decisions.

Action Plan 4.5.2: Send select faculty and staff to learning difference (LD) training (NILD, Austin Dyslexia Institute, etc.) and require them to train the broader faculty during in-service meetings.

Action Plan 4.5.3: Hire additional ARCC staff to offer services to more students and reduce the teaching burden on the Lower School principal in the recently launched ARCC program.

4.6 Investigate implementation of an Academic Cohort Program at Hill Country Christian School

Action Plan 4.6.1: Investigate best practices by conducting a study of benchmark cohort programs at other private schools, and develop a high-level bullet list of goals and objectives associated with implementing academic cohorts at Hill Country.

Action Plan 4.6.2: Present an overview of best practices and the vision (goals and objectives) for establishing an Academic Cohort Program, including rough parameters (personnel, cost, and timeline). Obtain school board approval to proceed with detailed planning.

Action Plan 4.6.3: Include career exploration programs as part of the cohort placement and selection process and as an integral part of the program itself (consider seminars, internships, and career fairs).

Action Plan 4.6.4: Develop a detailed, multi-year phased plan to introduce an Academic Cohort Program at Hill Country Christian School. Obtain school board approval to launch the program and to make associated policy changes (as necessary).

Action Plan 4.6.5: Engage the Hill Country parent (and broader school) community in cohorts to leverage their professional expertise and build community support for the program.

4.7 Investigate scheduling changes to facilitate new programs and allow Hill Country to best deliver its purpose, mission, and core values.

Action Plan 4.7.1: Launch a diverse (representing all stakeholders), year-long task force charged with studying Lower School academic scheduling (consider hiring a consultant such as ISM), and recommending changes.

Action Plan 4.7.2: Launch a diverse (representing all stakeholders), year-long task force charged with studying Upper School academic scheduling (consider hiring a consultant such as ISM), and recommending changes.

*"And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to **grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,** and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

*Now to him who is able to do **immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine,** according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!"*

Ephesians 3:17-21

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Hill Country Christian School admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

