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1. BACKGROUND

The Lord God has met every need of the Association for Christian Education, enabling it to provide distinct, Christ-centred education for families at Rehoboth Christian College. As stewards of the assets and resources God has entrusted to the Association, it is the responsibility of the Board to ensure that a plan outlining its vision, strategic intent, and mission for Rehoboth is developed and implemented.

As the 2011-2015 strategic planning cycle came to an end, the Board conducted an initial review and education session on 8 June, 2015. At its subsequent meeting of 29 June, the Board ratified the motion that: “The CEO work with the Leadership Team and the Administration in order to develop a draft Strategic Plan for the Board’s approval. The draft Strategic Plan should be developed taking into account the Association’s Constitution, the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan, the publications entitled “Foundational Principles” and “Rehoboth Distinctives”, Policy 401 Board Objectives, the history of the College, future developments in education, and recent developments in other schools (particularly Christian schools). The CEO will present the draft Strategic Plan for the Board’s consideration by 5 October 2015.”

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Locus2019 has been prepared by the College’s Senior Leadership Team at the request of the Board. Its aim is to describe a series of strategic initiatives that will provide direction for the College over the next four years and allow the Association to achieve its Constitutionally-mandated Objects.

Strategic goals were identified and defined by the Senior Leadership Team in consultation with senior staff members over a number of workshops. The resulting set of strategic initiatives strongly emphasise the current and future educational needs of the College while anticipating broader developments in education over the 2016-2019 period, and take into the account the unique heritage and model of Christian Education employed at Rehoboth.
3. INTRODUCTION

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” – Ephesians 2:8-10

We view this world as God’s and recognise Him as sovereign over it and over our lives. This extends to the education of our children, as it is our responsibility as Christian parents and educators to equip them with the skills and abilities they will need for the good works which God, in His wisdom, has prepared for them.

Rehoboth Christian College aims to assist parents in fulfilling this responsibility by providing a learning environment that develops the whole child, nurturing not only academic achievement, but spiritual, emotional, physical, and social growth as well, in order that our learners may be ready and able to answer God’s calling in their lives.

Rehoboth has a well-deserved reputation for delivering Christ-centred curriculum, and to date this has been achieved using traditional methods of education. Perhaps the most significant area of focus on our Vision for the Rehoboth of 2019 is the transition from this traditional, industrial-based model to a 21st century model based on the current information economy. This involves shifting our thinking across almost every aspect of the College; what we call a turn in our locus that enables us to embrace a set of emerging practices that, once reconstructed through the rubric of our Christian curriculum, can better equip learners for the current age.

Because we are committed to helping learners achieve educational outcomes that are both personally significant and thoroughly Christ-centred, we want to shift our locus from a teacher-centric learning environment, to an active, or participatory learning environment which aims to engage students more deeply in, and to take greater responsibility for, their own learning. This is one of the realities of growth we will need to address as we move from the category of a small school to that of a medium school, and which we regard as vital in working towards a future in which our strategic goals can be achieved in visible and innovative ways.

Locus2019 shares this Vision with the Rehoboth community, outlining the strategic initiatives necessary to achieve it while building on the successes of our 2011-2015 Strategic Plan. Why have we opted for a four year plan? There are three main reasons:

- Four years provides reasonable accuracy when planning for the future and provides us with the ability to re-evaluate our strategy and structure in more manageable ways.
- The education landscape is a rapidly changing one, with new research and field work being continually conducted. We want to be able to take advantage of the innovations such work produces.
- The College is currently registered with the Department of Education Services through to 2020, and it is our intention to enter that re-registration year with a revised and updated Strategic Plan.
4. PROCESS AND STRATEGIC THINKING

We believe that it is our role as educators to orient students Biblically towards the knowledge of God, humanity, and the rest of God’s creation, so that they would seek His will to see things as He sees them, and to engage with and influence the culture in which we live. We believe in partnering with parents to develop the whole child (that is, spiritual and moral growth, academic growth, and personal and social development), to inspire them to excel, to be intolerant of mediocrity, and to make wise choices.

Locus2019 has been developed by drawing on a range of planning resources and models, and in consultation with staff and Board to create a picture of Rehoboth “now” in 2015, and Rehoboth in the “future” of 2019. The overarching development framework can be summarised visually as follows:
5. 21ST CENTURY LEARNING

Underpinning the strategic initiatives in Locus2019 is the notion of 21st century learning. This is the idea that learning is most effective when it takes place in a context that promotes collaboration, interaction, and community, and where decisions regarding the resourcing, staffing, and environments in which learning takes place are geared around these contexts. It is driven by the shift from an industrial-based 20th century model of education (which typically aimed to “impart” knowledge to students), to a recognition of a “knowledge economy” and an accompanying skills-based model of education that emphasises collaborative approaches to problem solving and the student’s own “discovery” of knowledge via the application of learnt skills. We believe this model of education lends itself well to developing an understanding that there is no area of life which can be considered neutral or where God is not Lord and King. The table below contrasts some of the features typical of a traditional model of education with those of a 21st century model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRADITIONAL LEARNING</th>
<th>21st CENTURY LEARNING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher centred</td>
<td>Student focussed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fragmented curriculum</td>
<td>Integrated curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorising</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time based</td>
<td>Outcome based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbook driven</td>
<td>Research driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive learning</td>
<td>Active learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed determined by the whole class</td>
<td>Self-paced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are easily bored</td>
<td>Students are highly motivated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects irrelevant to students</td>
<td>Subjects connected to interests and real world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are treated all the same</td>
<td>Individual strengths are discovered and built</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

There are four skill sets a 21st century learner can be expected to develop within such an environment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMUNICATION</th>
<th>COLLABORATION</th>
<th>CRITICAL THINKING</th>
<th>CREATIVITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ability to effectively share thoughts, questions, ideas, and solutions</td>
<td>The ability to recognise the God-given talents of others and be able to work together to achieve shared goals.</td>
<td>Looking at problems, tasks, and issues in fresh ways by linking ideas and concepts across disciplines to find solutions.</td>
<td>Trying new approaches and resources to achieve solutions (innovation and invention).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When we say we want learners to develop the skills to find “new”, “fresh” or “innovative” ways of achieving learning goals, we do not mean that their solutions have never been done before. The goal is not the solution itself or how to measure the innovativeness or uniqueness of the solution, but the process the learner has undertaken to arrive at the solution. These are the skills that will translate beyond their learning in the present moment into future endeavours.
6. VISION AND MISSION

A Vision statement should paint a picture of where it is we are headed, while a Mission statement should provide a filter through which decision-making can be passed to assess whether it will be a step towards realising that Vision.

6.1 VISION

By 2019, Rehoboth Christian College will be recognised for excellence in the provision of a distinctly Christian education program that honours Jesus Christ as Lord of all, utilising the best innovations and resources of a 21st century learning environment.

6.2 MISSION

Our mission is to partner with parents as a covenant community in order to support them in their task of nurturing and educating their children. We achieve this by developing structures that support and promote dynamic 21st century learning, immersion in a Christian worldview, and stimulating the God-given creativity and curiosity of lifelong learners.
7. STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

These are the initiatives we believe are best suited to drive the change necessary to achieve the Vision for the Rehoboth of 2019. They are not ready-made solutions; their design should be tailored to the needs and realities of the College, and their implementation part of a four year cycle of development, testing, and re-shaping. Each initiative is driven by Rehoboth’s Christian ethos, as shaped by our Christian heritage, which is the desire to orient our students Biblically towards the knowledge of God and train them to seek His will.

7.1 INITIATIVE 1: FOSTERING STUDENT INQUIRY AND ENGAGEMENT

Project-based, collaborative learning will become an essential teaching technique in order to promote such 21st century learning skills as teamwork, the connection of learning to real-world issues and challenges, and effective communication of ideas and solutions. This will be achieved by:

a) developing teaching programs that will more fully integrate current and future strategies for differentiated learning (such as peer teaching, flipped classrooms, and quality feedback);

b) teachers facilitating inquiry and project-based learning activities that will, over time, replace a 20th century style of teacher-centric education;

c) selecting ICT and other learning resources for their ability to augment, modify, and ultimately redefine learning activities that will be facilitated by the Learning Management System;

d) providing opportunities to engage students in a broad range of experiences that link the classroom to all of life;

e) providing students with opportunities to develop leadership qualities across a broad spectrum of student life.

7.2 INITIATIVE 2: ENHANCING STAFF COLLABORATION AND WHOLE-COLLEGE PLANNING

Existing hierarchical management structures will be transitioned to more open and collaborative cross-Campus teams with the aim of promoting greater participation, discussion, and more intentional whole-Campus planning. This will be achieved by:

a) setting clear goals for each team established and have teams report regularly at staff meetings;

b) restructuring and enhancing teams and adding capacity in order to provide greater support to teachers.

7.3 INITIATIVE 3: MAXIMISING STAFF CAPABILITIES

A culture of continual improvement and accountability among colleagues will assist in identifying creative solutions to challenges and areas of improvement among staff. Enhanced recruitment processes and increased opportunities for staff to explore areas of God-given talent and personal interest as part of a continual cycle of professional development will help to retain excellent teachers and support staff. This should include:

a) greater use of staff strengths and gifting in their areas of responsibility;

b) identification and recruitment of staff who are recognised for their excellence and professional practice and are able to fill particular strategic needs;

c) employing “teachable teachers”;

d) benchmarking of teacher performance against AITSL or other recognised evidence-based standards;

e) systematically developing leadership capacity in current staff.
7.4 INITIATIVE 4: MOVING BEYOND NAPLAN AND ATAR

We recognise that all students are made in the image of God and are uniquely gifted. Our aim is to draw out that gifting and assist students to realise their potential. Consequently, we believe standardised testing only provides part of this picture, and while we will continue to draw on this data to inform our planning and practice and to identify at-risk students, we will augment it with innovative assessment practices and pastoral care techniques that aim to draw out a learner’s God-given gifting by developing their potential and the skills necessary to be a successful 21st century learner. This will be achieved by:

a) conducting a thorough review of teachers’ beliefs and practices surrounding assessment, which is open to all teaching staff and aims to identify and provide a vocabulary for the current culture and thinking that informs assessment in the College;
b) establishing cross-Campus teams to investigate innovative assessment methods and complimentary pastoral care practices. These teams are to be equipped with a brief that is based on the review outlined above;
c) moving from summative to formative assessments and increasing collaborative and skills-based testing;
d) refining internal assessment methods based on current and future best practice;
e) assisting teachers in interpreting and applying data from standardised testing;
f) establishing a collaborative team for the purpose of investigating and recommending innovative methods for the application of testing data, assessment methods and complimentary pastoral care approaches;
g) extending the Learning Extension @ Rehoboth (LEX@R) Program to Years 4-10.

7.6 INITIATIVE 6: FOSTERING PARENT PARTNERSHIP

Parents will be provided with opportunities that support and enable them to participate in more meaningful ways in their children’s education and in the life of the College by:

a) establishing a Parent Resource Centre that provides current and practical information on a range of relevant subjects;
b) communicating in clear and relevant ways with parents about how their children’s progress is enhanced beyond the standard reporting format via the introduction of parent-facing modules of a Learning Management System and more streamlined access to teachers and pastoral care services.
c) A standardised volunteer program provides greater coordination and increased opportunities for parents to be involved with day to day activities.

7.7 INITIATIVE 7: APPLYING FAITH AND LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Our desire is to see our learners grow into a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus and to be able to live out this faith in ways that positively impact and influence the culture around them for His glory. We regard their Christ-centred schooling to be a fundamental aspect of this, and to that end we will provide opportunities for learners to test and apply their skills and knowledge in a variety of personally challenging and socially aware circumstances by:

a) extending our Missions Programs to include Years 6-12;
b) establishing partnerships with church leaders and providing training and experience in a variety of local ministries;
c) emphasising and exercising servant leadership as modelled by Jesus Christ (Matthew 20:26-28), this being leadership that involves the head (thoughtfulness), heart (empathy), hands (practicality), and habits (Christian discipline).
8. INTERACTION OF STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL PROCESSES

Strategy is just one of a number of areas that need to work in unison in order to enable change and produce growth at Rehoboth. For strategy to be effective, the Vision and Mission driving it should be embraced by all stakeholders and become an integral part of the thinking and decision-making processes that inform the College’s systems and structures. These processes subsequently generate the systems (plans, policies, routines, and infrastructure) used in the day to day operations of the College and will typically include:

a) Governance and Risk
b) Financial Planning
c) Property and Facilities
d) Human Resources
e) ICT
f) Community Relations and Marketing

The interaction between the various strategic, operational, and system-specific components is represented in the diagram below:
9. CONCLUSION: ALIGNING VISION WITH PRACTICE

If a strategic plan is to be more than simply words on paper, a commitment must be made to honour the vision it describes by being open to change, embracing a spirit of innovation, and working together to find creative ways of delivering on the strategic initiatives outlined. Achieving the goals described in Locus2019 is therefore not the work of any one teacher, Board member, or interested parent, but an effort of the whole Rehoboth community willing to operate in unison and under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Some of the initiatives described will require a shift in the underlying culture to implement them, which is not always a comfortable process as it challenges us to examine our assumptions and to ask whether our practices are the best they can be. Many, however, build on our existing strengths and those things which make us distinct – our Christian ethos, Christ-centred curriculum, and community united by its shared love of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. These are the things that we wish to preserve as we move ahead in aligning current culture and practice with our vision for the Rehoboth of the future. Locus2019 describes the trajectory we might take to achieve this, as we seek to equip our learners not only to engage with, and excel in, a 21st century world, but to be thoroughly grounded in their faith and prepared for the work God has in store for each of them.
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