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Process Overview
PROCESS OVERVIEW

In 2017 Charlotte Jewish Preschool hired The Lee Institute to partner in the design, facilitation, research and reporting of the Preschool’s new strategic planning process. The process honored and supported Charlotte Jewish Preschool’s plan to build on recent successes, plans for future growth, uniting of the board and staff around shared goals, and providing a shared road map.

The Lee Institute provided an inclusive three-part process to develop the Preschool’s new strategic plan. This process included stakeholder research, executive committee meetings and a full-day board retreat.

As stakeholder research, Lee conducted two online surveys, one for the board and one for the staff, to establish the strengths, challenges, opportunities and priorities of the Preschool. The Preschool independently conducted a parent survey and incorporated those results into the larger stakeholder research portion of the full-day board retreat.

With the CJP Executive Committee, Lee designed and facilitated three Executive Committee meetings, one falling before the full-day board retreat and two after the retreat.

The Full-Day Board Retreat was designed and facilitated by Lee on January 7th, 2018. The retreat was for the board of directors and Executive Director to create a high-level framework for CJP’s strategic plan. The agenda for the day included reviewing stakeholder research results, creating a long-term vision, prioritizing three to four goals to focus CJP’s work and brainstorming strategies for each goal. The four goals were generated through a series of exercises that encouraged the board to think about their ambitious dreams for CJP and what would need to happen in the short-term in order to achieve those visions. The final goal areas were: connection to communities, financial strength and sustainability, talent development, and long-range growth planning with a guiding principle of educational quality and innovation underlying the entire plan.

This report highlights Charlotte Jewish Preschool’s planning process overview and strategic planning framework.
Stakeholder Research: Key Themes

Board Survey: 16 responses  
Staff Survey: 36 responses  
Parent Survey: 77 responses

Key Themes from Board and Staff Surveys:
- The greatest strength of the Preschool is the high-quality, devoted teachers and staff.
- Other strengths are:
  - A culture of warmth, love, and community between all stakeholders.
  - Strong Judaic curriculum and focus.
  - Relationship to Shalom Park and access to nearby facilities.
- The greatest challenge for the Preschool is retaining teachers.
- The strongest factors in ensuring the long-term success of the Preschool are:
  - Hiring qualified teachers and staff,
  - Creating a sense of community with families, and
  - Deepening relationships with Shalom Park partners.
- Priority focus areas:
  - Recruitment and retention of high-quality staff
  - Expansion for additional classroom space
  - Clarification of fundraising/revenue plan
- Board self-assessment:
  - Strengths: Communication between board and ED, effective annual fund campaign, community partnerships.
  - Areas to Improve: Board member succession-planning, board member recruitment, collaboration and cooperation among board members.

Key Themes from Parent Surveys:
- Annual fund priorities aligned with the need to develop and retain teachers.
- Appreciation for the warm, loving, caring, committed environment at CJP and recognition of that culture as a key factor in the Preschool’s success.
- Low ranking for tuition as a factor parents considered in choosing CJP.
- There may be opportunities to improve communication between school and parents.

Greatest Strength of CJP: “The ability to help each child grow, develop and blossom while instilling excitement about Judaism.”

Factors in Long-Term Success: “Wonderful teachers who form relationships with parents and students.”

Best thing about CJP: “The teachers and staff are amazing! My son feels loved and safe each day...He appreciates music, physical activity, science and Judaica.”
Strategic Plan Framework
Mission: To provide young children with a secure and loving atmosphere in which to grow, develop a positive self-image and learn the joy of Jewish life.

Strategic Plan Framework
The Lee Institute
Version 5.0 / July 17, 2018

GOAL #1: Support, retain and invest in effective staff and board members.

Strategy 1.1: Create sustainable board leadership through intensive recruitment and succession planning.

TACTICS:
- Produce a detailed process map and timeline for recruiting founder representative board members.
- Produce a detailed process map and timeline for recruiting independent board members.
- Increase recruiting horizons for board membership and for communicating that process to founders.
- Increase recruiting horizons for board officers to name successors two years in advance.
- Create written transition plans for board officers to preserve knowledge and provide continuity.

Strategy 1.2: Increase board knowledge and skills through governance best practice training.

TACTICS:
- Produce a comprehensive annual workshop addressing board roles, member expectations, the school’s history and its operations.
- Allocate time in every board meeting for an informational module on early childhood development or education.
- Provide board members with full-semester calendars of trainings and staff meetings they can attend.
- Schedule and host guest experts at board meetings to share information on various aspects of governance best practices.
Strategy 1.3: Increase professional growth opportunities for faculty and staff.

TACTICS:
- Protect a minimum of 1% of the annual budget to support professional development.
- Create individual growth plans for all teachers and assistants.
- Research and design a sustainable staff performance evaluation process.

Strategy 1.4: Increase CJP’s ability to recruit and retain highly qualified staff.

TACTICS:
- Conduct a benchmarking study to guide CJP in providing competitive faculty and staff compensation.
- Research and obtain health insurance that is widely affordable for staff and faculty.
- Research and implement a voluntary 401(k) savings program.
- Create incentive structures (financial and non-financial) for staff and the Executive Director.
- Expand relationships with local colleges and universities to provide student teachers and other faculty support.
- Review and revise the staff structure to clarify reporting relationships and manage supervisory loads.
- Review and revise the ED job description to clarify reporting and supervisory responsibilities.
GOAL #2: Promote a culture of community.

Strategy 2.1: Strengthen communication and collaboration with CJP stakeholders.

**TACTICS:**
- Create a communication map outlining information to be shared with Shalom Park agencies.
- Craft detailed job descriptions clarifying the roles of founder representatives on the CJP board.
- Write full-year communication plans for each major group of CJP stakeholders: parents, staff, board, founders, donors and fellow Shalom Park agencies.
- Meet quarterly with fellow Shalom Park executive directors.
- Invite other Shalom Park agencies to collaborate closely on CJP’s long-term growth plan (Goal #4).

Strategy 2.2: Increase opportunities for parents to engage in school life and build relationships within the CJP family.

**TACTICS:**
- Institute a review process to ensure that the PTO is invited to plan and execute parent events whenever possible.
- Produce Clergy-led talks for parents on site in the CJP building.
- Create an annual calendar of expanded low-barrier opportunities for parents to be involved in school life.
- Leverage the PTO to produce a series of lectures on topics of interest to parents.
- Identify special days for parents to attend class, build relationships, and learn more about school operations.
GOAL #3: Increase financial strength and stability.

Strategy 3.1: Assess and identify high-potential opportunities for alternative revenue sources.
*TACTICS:*
- Engage a facilitator to help the board define its fundraising philosophy and boundaries.
- Identify potential new revenue opportunities within the current physical space.

Strategy 3.2: Explore and design creative programming models to maximize tuition revenue.
*TACTICS:*
- Conduct a benchmarking study of tuition in comparable schools.
- Design a proactive model for programming by room and spaces available.
- Assess the half-day program schedule for expansion possibilities.
- Refine, finalize, and execute the current plan for the tuition model.

Strategy 3.3: Develop a strategic endowment investment strategy.
*TACTICS:*
- Form an investment subcommittee with lay leaders, the ED, and the Finance Manager.
- Benchmark investment best practices with groups like the Foundation of Shalom Park, the Levine Jewish Community Center, and the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte.
- Utilize an investment advisor and select an investment strategy.
- Establish a five-year target for the endowment fund balance.
- Define specific goals for legacy giving to CJP.
- Name a board member to lead legacy giving initiatives.
- Meet with 5-10 potential legacy givers per year.

Strategy 3.4: Meet or exceed CJP’s long-term cash reserve goals.
*TACTICS:*
- Contribute _____% of budget to cash reserves each year.

Strategy 3.5: Increase annual fund revenue through customized and targeted requests.
*TACTICS:*
- Craft clear donor communications explaining what gifts support.
- Develop and publicize options for donors who wish to donate to specific funds and projects.
- Create an annual donor communication plan with strategies customized based on gift level.
- Establish five-year growth goals for increasing individual major gifts.
- Invest in fundraising training and skills for board and staff.

Strategy 3.6: Strengthen donor relationships through increased board stewardship.
*TACTICS:*
- Create and implement a board stewardship plan that assigns responsibilities and timelines, and clarifies board and staff stewardship roles.
- Produce donor stewardship training for board and staff.
GOAL #4: Engage in intentional, mission-driven growth planning.

Strategy 4.1: Conduct research on best practices, growth strategies and business models in comparable cities and preschools.

**TACTICS:**
- Consult with Sheva, the national early childhood development cohort, on best practices for growth and development.
- Conduct best practice research on growth in comparable preschools.
- Research business models at comparable preschools in similar markets.
- Meet with the LJCC CEO to discuss growth strategies and business models.
- Meet with other Shalom Park agency leaders to discuss anticipated and desired growth (both theirs and CJP’s).

Strategy 4.2: Define future facility needs.

**TACTICS:**
- Research and determine future demographics for Charlotte, growth in the Charlotte Jewish community, and demand for preschool programs in Charlotte.
- Research and determine the optimal class mix to meet this demographic forecast (grades, enrollment, schedule, etc.).
- Define the physical space needed to achieve an optimal class mix.
- Work with the Foundation of Shalom Park to address physical changes to increase security.
- Work with Temple Beth El to explore strategic re-allocation of shared space.

Strategy 4.3: Design and implement a multi-year growth plan based on the optimal class mix and future facility needs.

**TACTICS:**
- Define a five-year growth target based on strategies 4.1 and 4.2 above.
- Draft detailed year-by-year tactics to achieve the targeted growth.
GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Underlying all plan initiatives is CJP’s commitment to educational quality and innovation. This will serve as a guide for potential investments and new programs, as well as a framework for staff and board decision-making.
Appendices
Overview of Stakeholder Research

OVERVIEW OF STAKEHOLDER RESEARCH RESULTS

16 BOARD SURVEY RESPONSES
36 STAFF SURVEY RESPONSES
77 PARENT SURVEY RESPONSES (DISTRIBUTED / THEMED THROUGH CJP)
Greatest Strengths

1) Highly qualified and devoted teachers and staff
2) Culture of warmth, love and community between all stakeholders
3) Strong Judaic curriculum and focus
4) Relationship to Shalom Park and access to nearby facilities (board-specific)

“The teachers are the basis for what makes our school great.”

“The quality of the care/education is very high. It is a very loving environment that creates a great community for families.”

“The ability to help each child grow, develop and blossom while instilling excitement about Judaism.”

“Sense of community, understanding and appreciation for Jewish customs, traditions, and rituals, warm and loving staff.” (Parent)

Most Significant Challenges

1) Teacher retention
2) Space constraints: Inability to add classrooms or increase enrollment
3) Communication and teamwork between staff and teachers (staff-specific)
4) Qualified substitutes and a consistent procedure for teacher coverage (staff-specific)

“To attract and retain qualified teachers due to pay restraints.”

“Very little physical capacity to grow.”

“Communication. Somehow things always come up last minute.”

“Staff coverage. We need a well stocked supply of subs.”

Most Important Elements of Mission

1. Loving, caring atmosphere for children and families
2. Jewish values and curriculum

“Providing a warm and positive Jewish education”

“To provide a warm, loving environment and an understanding of Judaism”

“Whole child, Jewish values”
Priority Focus Areas

1) Recruit and retain quality staff (**strongest theme across both groups)**
   - Ongoing professional development for teachers (mentioned by both groups)
   - Improve teacher compensation and benefits (staff-specific)
2) Physical expansion: additional classroom space
3) Clarify fundraising/revenue plan (board-specific)

"Continuing to hire good staff and continued education for staff."
"Retaining staff, offering better compensation and benefits."
"Modeling within our current physical space that can increase capacity."
"Understanding and managing increasing costs."

Most Ambitious Dream

1. Physical expansion to meet increasing enrollment demand
2. Increase teacher pay and retention
3. Financial security

(Of note: Many board responses connected the need to expand to meet increasing demand with the need to remain affordable and maintain a strong reputation within the Jewish community.)

"Dramatic growth to meet the needs of the growing Jewish community."
"Work on retaining its best staff through better compensation and benefits."
"For it to be financially self-sustaining."
Describing Staff Culture  (staff only)

Three distinct, positive word clusters:

1. Loving, caring, positive, supportive, family, team, collaborative
2. Dedicated, devoted, determined, hardworking, committed, professional
3. Creative, innovative, intelligent, knowledgeable, inspiring

Very few negative responses (6 out of 102 total responses):

“difficult”
“pessimism”
“easily agitated”

One Organizational Change (staff only)

1. Increase teacher pay
2. Physical expansion: more classrooms
3. Improve playground

“To increase salary to keep high quality teachers from leaving.”

“Expanding the physical size of our school. We are bursting at the seams and it would be awesome to be able to accommodate as many families as we can.”

“Enhance playground…proper shade.”

Board Self-assessment

Highest-scoring questions:
- Communication between board and executive director
- Effectiveness of annual fund campaign
- Community partnerships
  - Note: There was a wide range of responses to this question

Lowest-scoring questions:
- Board member succession planning
- Board member recruitment
- Collaboration and cooperation among board members
  - Note: There was a wide range of responses to this question, including several neutral responses.
Future Employment Benefits (staff only)

- 94% said they would contribute to a 401K program if the Preschool had one
- 68% said that CJP meets their expectations for benefits currently
- 76% said that CJP’s benefits are competitive with comparable preschools

Partnerships within Shalom Park (board only)

- 56% said Preschool should collaborate more with other agencies in Shalom Park
- 44% said Preschool is collaborating the right amount
- No one said Preschool should collaborate less

Comments revealed the belief that partnerships could be more strategic and are not all equal:

- “Tricky question in that we have strong relationships with some but not all.”
- “I think we partner the right amount but it could be done more effectively.”
APPENDIX B

Charlotte Jewish Preschool
Survey Questions

Board Survey

What are the greatest strengths of the Preschool?

What are its greatest challenges?

What have been the primary factors in the Preschool’s success?

What is your most ambitious dream for the Preschool?

What are the most important elements of the Preschool’s mission?

What should the Preschool focus on accomplishing over the next 18-24 months?

How would you rate the effectiveness of the Preschool board on the following skills?

Radial choices from “not effective” to “very effective.”

- Understanding operations and business model
- Understanding budget and financial challenges
- Effectiveness of annual fund campaign
- Evaluation of the executive director
- Communication between Board and executive director
- Collaboration and cooperation among board members
- Board member recruitment
- Board member engagement
- Board member succession planning
- Community partnerships

Does the Preschool partner with other Shalom Park agencies: (choose one)

- Not enough; we should collaborate with them more
- The right amount; don’t change a thing
- Too much; we should collaborate with them less

What else would you like The Lee Institute to know as we begin our partnership with the Preschool?
Staff Survey

What are the greatest strengths of the Preschool?

What are its greatest challenges?

What have been the primary factors in the Preschool’s success?

What should the Preschool focus on accomplishing over the next 18-24 months?

What three words would you use to describe the staff culture?

What one organizational change (financial, programmatic, physical, etc.) would have the largest positive impact on the Preschool?

What is your most ambitious dream for the Preschool?

What are the most important elements of the Preschool’s mission?

As CJP thinks about possible future benefits for its staff, help us know:

- Would you contribute to 401k program if CJP had one? (Yes/No)
- Does CJP meet your expectations for benefits? (Yes/No)
- Are CJP’s benefits competitive with comparable preschools? (Yes/No)
- In what areas would you like more professional development and training? (check all that apply)
  - Judaica
  - Early childhood development
  - Working and communicating with parents
  - Working and communicating with colleagues
  - Planning your career

What else would you like The Lee Institute to know as we begin our partnership with the Preschool?
The meeting convened at 9:05AM and began with welcome messages and gratitude from Liz Naman and Brooke Amo. Lee Institute facilitator Andi Stevenson provided an overview of the agenda and offered working agreements for the group.

Participants then introduced each other to the group, including sharing one adjective to describe what they want CJP to be in five years. Those adjectives were:

- Welcoming
- Ground-breaking
- Recognized
- Brand-name
- Premier
- Connected
- Award-winning
- Highlight
- Unified
- Incubating
- Viable
- Self-sustaining
- Financially stable
- Vibrant
- Outreach
- Best
- Growing
- Community-creating
- Child-centered

Andi next reviewed key themes from the staff, board and parent surveys conducted over the last six weeks. The full results are available in the Power Point from the retreat. The group discussed how this snapshot of the preschool was different from what it would have been five years ago:
• CJP is getting better in terms of creating a sense of community. Comparing previous parent surveys from 3-4 years ago to these now, comments now are much more positive and more focused on community.
• CJP is getting better at teacher retention. We have a clear set path, and some of the turnover we do have now is intentional.
• Also need to take into account how the city is changing. The city continues to grow rapidly, and there are many Jewish families who have just arrived and are looking for a Jewish preschool.
• Previous staff surveys were much more negative, and there was more concern in the past about fair treatment of teachers.

When considering the question of teacher compensation and pay, the board noted that supervising faculty and staff is Brooke’s role, not the board’s.

Andi asked the group what stood out to them about these research results:

  o We are doing well. Parents seem pleased. With teachers, salary, benefits, recruiting and retaining are universal needs (across industries).
  o We want to keep supporting staff and paying for professional development opportunities or salary raises, but this costs money and we have a difficult discussion every time we want to raise tuition. The money has to come from somewhere. We will eventually have to look at how to achieve these goals financially.
  o Growth must be for a specific purpose. Double-edged sword when we tie this to community: we want to be as inclusive as possible but we don’t want to get so large that it feels like a machine and people lose the family feel that people value about us. **Why** do we want to grow, and what does grow mean to **us**?

The retreat next moved into a vision exercise asking board members for the publications and headlines that would recognize CJP with a national cover story ten years from now. The post-it transcriptions were:

**Publications:**

• Oprah
• Huffington Post
• US News and World Report
• 20/20
• Cheddar
• Jewish News Today
• New England Journal of Medicine
• 60 Minutes
• Wall Street Journal
• NAEYC
• CAJE or some Jewish Educators publication
• Jewish National News
• Vanity Fair
• Jerusalem Post
• USA Today
What do you hear or notice about these publications?

- Desire for wide distribution and recognition; we want everyone to know about us.
- There’s an even split between universal audiences and Jewish audiences.
- Few people listed education-based publications. Many considered it but chose broader-interest publications instead.
- We want to reach beyond our community and our religion; we want to have global impact.

**Headlines:**

- Doing it right: a superior learning environment for parents, staff and students
- Long-Reads: Transformational Early Childhood Development: An in-depth reflection on merging the preschool experience with the community through Jewish values
- CJP: the model for a thriving preschool education
- Teach them to love and genius will follow
- Groundbreaking model of first-ever collaborative Judaic institution becomes model for success
- Recognized for the most cohesive, enthusiastic and satisfied parent body
- Charlotte Jewish Preschool takes science, gardening and innovative education to a new level
- Jewish preschool in Charlotte rated top pre-school in USA
- Globally, most community-minded and socially aware kids going into kindergarten come from CJP
- CJP creates virtual trek through Israel for preschool
- CJP: An early childhood model for love, learning, arts and Jewish community involvement
- CJP known as incubator for successful, community-minded philanthropists
- CJP graduates lead mitzvah project supporting *something related to core Jewish values* which multiplies to all 50 states and beyond
- Charlotte Jewish Preschool play-based curriculum provides the best preparation for kindergarten
- Study of pre-school success and happiness

What do you hear or notice about these headlines?

- Some of us dream bigger than others. (laughter)
- Some of them are specific to living a **world** that is developed by our students, some about supporting students while they’re here at the **Preschool**.
- Many are about the strong reputation of the school.
- There’s a clear connection to what we are already good at (as described in the surveys).
- There’s also a slight competitive tone: We want to be a model/leader and be recognized.
Commitment to ensuring that the fruits of our labor have a lasting positive effect on the world.

The group next brainstormed potential core areas of focus for CJP for the next several years. (These will eventually become the goal pillars for the strategic plan.)

The first round of post-it notes were:

- Quality of education
- High quality early childhood program
- Interactive learning/technology
- Child growth and development
- Maintain sense of community
- Community-building
- More parent feet in the school, more often
- Maintain sense of community connection
- Community
- Community (meet the needs)
- Create community
- Operates under strong value system
- Child-centered, community-rooted culture
- Recruit/retain teachers
- Excellent work environment for staff
- Teacher retention
- Competitive teacher retention
- Teacher/staff recruitment and retention
- Business model/teacher compensation and healthier snacks 😊
- Teacher education/development
- Supports, educates and retains high-quality staff
- Collaborate with temples
- Foster increased Jewish community involvement
- Two-way partner commitment (discounts, perks)
- Growth plan
- Facilities/accommodate more students
- Expansion
- Expansion
- Determine limits of physical growth and get best use of physical space
- Accommodate growing demand
- Accommodate more students
- Accommodate more students from age 0-Pre K
- Sustainability
- Sustainability
- Sustainability
- Affordability
- Sustainable and intentional physical growth
- Legacy/endowment
- Financial stability
- Find additional revenue stream
- Snacks
What do you hear as the big categories in these post-its? (First pass at narrowing down the ‘buckets’ of goals.)

- **Sustainability**
- **Staff**
- **Community**
- **Expansion**
- **Education**

Key highlights from the discussion that followed:

- When thinking about strategic planning are all goals about growth or change or are some about maintaining? (Answer: “Maintain,” “sustain” and “keep doing” are not good strategic plan goals.)
- Ideally a strategic plan has four to five big goals/buckets/core areas of focus.
- Education is the soul of what CJP does and should be a goal somehow.
- Some of these need additional context and perspective. We keep talking about staff retention, but honestly, we do better than most preschools at retention. Nationwide, it is 35% turnover, but we have less and would be in top 5 in the state.
- What you define as a quality education can be very different. I think time needs to be spent talking about what a quality education is. Growth could come at the expense of a good education. We need to think about what that education looks like.
- I feel strongly that education needs to be a pillar because it is always changing. It should not go away.
- Is the definition of education the board’s or Brooke’s? I think it’s Brooke. How do we give her what she needs to do it?
- We don’t want to take for granted that we have Brooke as the ED. We want a way to check in on the curriculum and make sure it is current. We are in a good place right now to figure out the other buckets.
- To be vulnerable, ‘expansion’ makes me nervous as a goal. I would want to think about that term and maybe change it to something else like ‘growth’.
- What do you mean by growth? Quality, number of students.
- Step 1 - expansion has to be the outcome of analysis of a lot of data. If we need to grow, can we afford it?
- I think there are two issues with growth. What growth creates a successful CJP financially? The silent waiting list who hasn’t been able to be part of the surveys. Is that an area where we are failing the community? Is that a CJP advocacy problem?
- If we look at our mission there is nothing there that says we need to meet the demands of the entire Jewish community in Charlotte. It’s a strategic priority now, but we are in the midst of creating a new strategic plan.
- Connectivity to the broader community or the Jewish community? It’s connecting people.
- Within CJP, it’s also connecting families to each other.
- Don’t forget about the community that has already been created. Use it to develop other buckets; build on that strength.
- It’s the interrelationship within CJP, Shalom Park, Charlotte. It’s fostering of inter-relational development.
- This community is going to continue to grow and we need to be able to meet that need over the next 3-5 years. We need to be able to accommodate anyone who wants to come through our doors who is Jewish.
- We can’t figure it out without the larger context in the community. Need to talk with colleagues, with Shalom Park partners.
- When we do this long term planning analysis: what is it going to take for us to be sustainable and a viable part of the community? Population growth, demand, etc.
I agree that we have to grow to be sustainable. I want to do the analysis to figure out exactly what we need to be sustainable. We don’t know what the options are. We want to be able to plan as a board.

We have been growing at x % per year; we need to plan ahead. How many families on the waitlist are Jewish?

We have to do the analysis and think about planning. That should be a larger conversation with other orgs in the Jewish community.

If we are growing to fulfill our mission then yes, but if we are growing to make more money…There might be other avenues we can take to be sustainable.

We can’t wait another 3 years to talk about this. We’ll be behind the 8 ball.

Projecting where we will be in 5 years, go where it will be, not where it is now (skate to where the puck will be). The community has to look at this and say as young families grow, we won’t be able to serve them. Are we okay with that? How will we approach that as a community at Shalom Park?

Like the new senior center they are building here. We have a demand; what would you like to see? Maybe the bucket is to assess the needs. We need to stay on top of the pulse of the community.

If you don’t approach physical growth carefully, it can compromise everything you stand for. Being mindful of what growth can do to a community school.

Everyone wants us to be sustainable. We aren’t in a vacuum. Maybe self-sustainable isn’t the goal, maybe it’s being open to financial partnerships. This could be good for everyone- not just a CJP issue. There are a lot of ways to structure growth.

We are an independent org and we have to be able to pay our teachers their salaries.

**UPDATED buckets (after lunch):**

- Educational quality and innovation
- Connection to communities
- Financial strength and sustainability
- Talent development
- Long range growth planning

Next the group engaged in a lightning-round process to test whether strategies could be developed easily for each goal. This is one way to see if it’s a feasible goal for a strategic plan: Can you easily imagine the strategies that would go under it, and do they all make sense and respect board/staff boundaries?

After time spent in small groups, examples of strategies created included:

- **Connection to communities**
  - Fostering social interaction between parents
  - Encouraging parent involvement
  - Involve teachers and PTO in building community
  - Joint sub-committees with other boards
  - Coordinated talent development with the rest of the park
  - Board-level community leadership in Park

- **Long range growth planning**
  - Analysis with Shalom park about what the physical and structural growth can be
  - Analysis with Shalom Park of community and demographic changes
  - How does the size of the school affect the mission? (Answer the question.)
- Reach out to similar cities (Atlanta, Austin) to see what they did (models)
  - Base board talent dev on answers to these questions and what is found in the research
- Fundraising philosophy
- **Financial strength and sustainability**
  - Create sufficient reserve goals
  - Create endowment
  - Explore alternative revenue streams
  - Invest
  - Opportunities for fundraising
  - Market salary analysis for compensation
- **Talent development**
  - Allocate resources for effective staff development plan
  - Create and implement a board leadership development plan
  - Succession plan for board
  - Create and implement succession plan for ED
  - Allocate resources for succession plan for staff and leadership team
- **Educational quality and innovation**
  - Continue to invest money and time in ED, staff and teacher development.
  - Establish an ongoing committee (not board, per se) that evaluates emerging trends in education and balances the needs and wants of stakeholders (as a means to vet innovation).

There was much discussion of the ‘Educational Quality and Innovation’ pillar, agreeing that it needed more work and discussion about how to make this a board-level pillar and not interfere with Brooke’s authority and expertise to drive the curriculum and quality of education. The board agreed that in its next conversations, this would need to be resolved. (Excellent quote from a board member: “I think we are going to need to work on this one. People in the room think that this is really important, but can we actually write strategies about this or does it need to turn into an overarching principle?”)

The group adjourned at 1:30PM with the gratitude of the facilitator, board chair and executive director.