

TUSCALOOSA ACADEMY  
STRATEGIC PLAN

The Tuscaloosa Academy Mission Statement

The mission of Tuscaloosa Academy is to provide a college preparatory education in a supportive environment of intellectual freedom, to cultivate a love of learning, and to maximize each student's potential for academic achievement, character development and a readiness for life in a global environment.

Index  
Tuscaloosa Academy  
Strategic Plan

Philosophy of Tuscaloosa Academy.....3

Objectives of Tuscaloosa Academy.....4

Program.....5

Students.....9

Faculty.....11

Administration.....13

Parents.....14

Alumni.....15

Community.....16

Physical Plant.....17

Finance and Development.....18

Marketing and Public Relations.....19

Governance.....21

## PHILOSOPHY OF TUSCALOOSA ACADEMY

Tuscaloosa Academy is an independent, co-educational, college preparatory day school with classes from pre-school through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. In order to provide our community a superior educational institution and accomplish our overall mission, Tuscaloosa Academy strives for excellence in governance, administration, faculty and staff, academic curricula, extra-curricular activities, facilities and equipment, and, in partnership with the parents of our students, endeavors to enhance each student's opportunity for intellectual growth, academic achievement, emotional maturation, character development, physical health, and the development of social skills and leadership ability.

Tuscaloosa Academy combines traditional educational methodology with technological advancements and innovative teaching strategies to prepare each student for high levels of personal achievement at outstanding colleges and universities. The school maintains clean, safe and comfortable facilities where teachers and students cooperate to provide an environment which supports each student's opportunity to learn and emphasizes the paramount importance of academic achievement. Tuscaloosa Academy seeks to maintain an atmosphere of intellectual freedom where diverse ideas and life views may be expressed in appropriate ways and exchanged in appropriate forums.

Tuscaloosa Academy strives to provide an educational experience which informs and imparts knowledge, but perhaps more importantly, stimulates logical thinking and creativity, cultivates understanding and wisdom, and enriches each student's appreciation and enjoyment of life.

Tuscaloosa Academy encourages high standards of mutual respect and integrity in all relationships and throughout all constituencies of the school, and seeks to enhance the development of character, honor, and moral and ethical values by the students. Tuscaloosa Academy encourages its students to assume personal responsibility for their actions and to become active and responsible leaders in the community.

Tuscaloosa Academy endeavors to prepare its students to live and work successfully in a community of increasing diversity, and it is our aim to have a multicultural student body and to teach our students to think on a global basis. In keeping with this philosophy, the school welcomes applications for admission from all persons and adheres to a policy of non-discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, or national or ethnic origin.

## OBJECTIVES OF TUSCALOOSA ACADEMY

The objectives of Tuscaloosa Academy are:

To provide a superior college-preparatory education in pre-school, elementary school, middle school and secondary school for students with average and above-average academic aptitude;

To prepare our students for high levels of academic achievement at outstanding colleges and universities;

To maximize each student's opportunity to learn and to emphasize the paramount importance of academic achievement;

To nurture and develop our students' intellectual curiosity, personal growth, creativity, imagination, leadership abilities and self-confidence;

To develop our students' integrity, character, sense of honor, moral and ethical values, and respect for others;

To enhance our students' ability to make thoughtful, well-reasoned, independent decisions consistent with their goals;

To teach our students to reason, solve problems and communicate effectively in oral and written form;

To maintain curricula which combine traditional teaching methods with technological advancements which challenge each student intellectually;

To prepare students for leadership roles in the economic, political and social activities of the community;

To provide an atmosphere which is conducive to open and honest intellectual inquiry;

To develop in our students an appreciation for the importance of personal wellness and physical achievement;

To field competitive interscholastic athletic and academic teams, and to teach good sportsmanship, teamwork, persistence, and the importance of doing one's best in the context of competition;

To develop our students' research skills and provide library resources which will enhance the educational experience of each student;

To offer our students opportunities for growth and development in music and the arts and encourage their participation in these enriching activities;

To maintain multicultural representation in the student body and adhere to a policy of non-discrimination.

## TUSCALOOSA ACADEMY STRATEGIC PLAN

### I. PROGRAM – Education Committee

#### Policy Goals:

Tuscaloosa Academy is committed to providing for its students the finest college-preparatory experience available in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

#### Rationale:

To this end, we endeavor to offer our community the most excellent governance, administration, faculty, curriculum, extracurricular programs, facilities, and equipment. We are committed continuously to improve and develop the quality of Tuscaloosa Academy in every dimension and aspect.

#### **A. To Provide College Preparatory Education**

The Academy seeks to teach its students to think logically and creatively, to read perceptively, and to learn through questioning, observing, and investigating. Success occurs when the students develop critical judgment, love for truth, open-mindedness, a sense of academic achievement, and a joy in learning.

#### **B. To Provide A Supportive Environment**

Good education couples two factors in a positive, dynamic partnership: the influence of supportive parents and the influence of committed and valued faculty and staff.

The Academy acknowledges the primacy of parental influence in the development of the students. Parents ordinarily, and rightly, are the greatest influences in the lives of their children! Only with strong parental support and encouragement will the student move most efficiently toward fulfilling his or her potential. The Academy values, solicits, and expects parental support in the education of the students.

An atmosphere conducive to learning is also crucial for maximizing our students' educational experience. The Academy strives to offer a caring environment in which the student experiences security, safety, and encouragement, while being very conscious of the challenge of academic expectations. Toward this end, the Academy seeks to provide and develop gifted and effective faculty and staff.

The Academy seeks to maintain an atmosphere of intellectual freedom where diverse ideas, life views, philosophies, or opinions, couched in temperate language and stated respectfully, may be expressed and exchanged. No staff member, faculty member, or student should ever be mocked or disparaged for views sincerely held and respectfully expressed. Individuals should treat each other with mutual respect and encourage each other toward intellectual growth and better understanding of the world in which we live.

### **C. To Cultivate A Love Of Learning**

Tuscaloosa Academy seeks to plant within the student not only a storehouse of information coupled with effective learning skills but, also, a positive and enthusiastic love of learning! The Academy believes that to cultivate such an attitude is to prepare the students for a lifetime of learning.

The Academy encourages parents to take part regularly and consciously in fostering joy for learning through such means as encouraging comments to the students, reading and learning along with the students, and cheerfully, participating in the full activities of the Academy.

The Academy is concerned for the whole person: body, mind, and spirit. To this end, the Academy seeks to develop the whole person, producing in the students an appreciation for their total being, an awareness of their potential contribution to the world community, and a sense of leadership responsibility. Toward such ideals the Academy aims to equip students for leadership and encourages them to strive for the highest, most excellent standards. Such attitudes and equipping are part of the foundation of hope for their future.

The Academy recognizes the importance of physical education and athletics. Through the athletic and physical education program, the school endeavors to develop physical fitness, self-confidence, wholesome competitiveness, a good work ethic, and a life-long enjoyment of exercise.

The future for our students will demand on-going education. Their future will probably be more technical, more multicultural, more global, and, therefore, more rapidly changing than ever before. Continuing intellectual growth and learning may be even more desirable and more necessary than ever before. The Academy will challenge each student toward a love for truth, intellectual development, and personal integrity.

### **D. To Maximize Each Student's Potential**

1. Academic Achievement – The Academy intends to focus on the individual student (as well as the group dynamics of a normal educational process) to maximize each student's potential. The challenge of college preparatory education should be tailored as much as possible for the individual students so that each student is encouraged to reach his or her potential.

2. Character Development – The Academy will seek to maximize character development. Education unavoidably involves the development of character as well as

intellect. Attention to such virtues as pursuit of truth, respect for individuals, and disciplines of self and time is required for successful intellectual and educational progress and nurturing of the person. The Academy aims to work with parents to assist in the character development of students. High standards of mutual respect and integrity will be encouraged within all the constituencies of the Academy.

3. Readiness For Life – While the Academy is a college-preparatory school, we also aim to maximize the student’s preparation for the whole of life. In all academic disciplines and extracurricular programs, the Academy wishes not only to inform the students, but to stimulate sound, logical thinking and the greatest appreciation, enrichment, and enjoyment of life. As an academic institution, we wish to provide an educational experience which thoroughly sharpens the minds of our students, cultivates understanding and wisdom and imparts knowledge. This will equip students for the whole of life.

Implementation Suggestions:

**A. Curricular:**

1. Expand the support system for student achievement by
  - a. providing **achievement**/aptitude testing and test interpretation;
  - b. improving the student/parent orientation program through periodic evaluation;
  - c. effectively monitoring student performance and communicating difficulties to parents through interim reports, and
  - d. providing resources (tutors, faculty guidance, etc.) for students who need assistance;
2. Develop an on-going plan for the implementation of technology into the curriculum.
3. Explore ways to expand and improve the fine-arts program.
4. Continue to improve the quality of the mathematics program.
5. Continue the emphasis on the sciences.
6. Explore the expansion of the foreign-language program.
7. Increase knowledge and awareness of global affairs; enhance programs such as overseas studies and student exchanges.
8. More closely coordinate the curriculum and provide for closer integration of subjects (for example, history with English, mathematics with physics).
9. Emphasize writing, speaking, critical and creative thinking, and classroom participation throughout the curriculum.

10. Reevaluate the curriculum to ensure that teaching methods, course materials, and assignments are appropriate for the age and development of the students in the class. Utilize vertical teaming and curriculum mapping necessary to align and assess the curriculum (McRel Standards).
11. Constantly evaluate the grading system to ensure that it reflects student ability and performance. Promote fairness and consistency in grading and avoid inflating grades.
12. Seek consistency in goals and objectives among teachers of the same course while encouraging individual teaching styles.
13. Explore expansion and improvement of library.
14. Study additional ways to utilize the assets of the school for the benefit of the school community by
  - a. opening the library on weekends and during the summer;
  - b. offering continuing-education programs;
  - c. offering an after-school program; and
  - d. expanding summer programs.
15. Develop specific ways to make learning fun, stimulate a life-long interest in learning, and encourage innovative teaching techniques.

**B. Extracurricular:**

1. Involve students, parents, faculty, alumni, and the administration in the honor system throughout the school.
2. Survey and interview the school community periodically to determine whether the curricular and extracurricular activities of the program are accomplishing the goals set out in the Mission Statement and the Statement of Philosophy.
3. Enhance the moral and spiritual growth of students by acknowledging the diversity of students' beliefs while emphasizing the spiritual and ethical maturation of each individual.
4. Maintain high-quality lower school, middle school and varsity athletic programs.
5. Explore ways to integrate physical education programs with health and wellness.
6. Develop specific strategies for incorporating parental support in areas such as curriculum, mentoring, career exploration, extracurricular activities and volunteerism.
7. Provide an opportunity through the increased participation in service and civic organizations for meaningful involvement in the Tuscaloosa community.

## II. STUDENTS – Education Committee

### Policy Goals

The Academy seeks to attract and retain a diverse group of motivated students who seek character development and academic excellence. The school will invest in each student by providing the programs and environment that allow each student to reach his/her potential.

### Rationale

In order to accomplish the mission of the Academy, the school must develop in its students a commitment to integrity and compassion as well as maturity in the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and physical dimensions of their lives.

### Implementation Suggestions:

#### A. In the composition of the student body:

1. Seek, aggressively, the best qualified students from as diverse a background as possible.
2. Establish and periodically evaluate admission criteria.
3. Maintain a student body of approximately five hundred students and explore the possibility of additional growth.

#### B. In counseling students:

1. Institute a teacher advisor program to monitor more closely the academic and personal progress of students.
2. Promote more involvement of students in extracurricular activities, intramurals, and community service through required participation with a revised point system.
3. Maintain a qualified, professional, full-time counselor who bears no teaching load and who maintains complete confidentiality.
4. Maintain a “big brother/big sister” program for new students.

#### C. In the Honor System:

1. Promote responsibility through a clear understanding of honor and through a respect for our honor system.

D. In accountability:

1. Clarify what is expected of Tuscaloosa Academy students in terms of academic performance, school participation, and behavior.
2. Develop guidelines of student-parent-teacher responsibilities, and orient parents and students to grades and personal success.
3. Promote the personal responsibility of the student.

E. In monitoring and recognizing students:

1. Establish a system to pair seniors with alumni or parents who share similar career interests.
2. Explore further ways to recognize students for outstanding character and integrity.

F. Conduct follow up studies of Tuscaloosa Academy graduates – where they enroll and how well they perform in college, graduate schools, and careers.

1. Publicize results.

### III. FACULTY – Executive Committee

#### Policy Goals:

Academic excellence and strong character development are central to the mission of Tuscaloosa Academy. The school is committed to recruiting and retaining a qualified faculty with high ethical standards, who are diverse in professional experience, ethnic and cultural backgrounds and teaching styles, and who maintain an atmosphere which encourages strong faculty/student relationships. The school will ensure that excellent teaching is appropriately compensated and that professional development and revitalization are supported.

#### Rationale:

The goal of recruiting and retaining a highly qualified and dedicated faculty is critical to accomplishing the mission, philosophy and other goals of the school. This objective will be reflected in a supportive and open environment maintained by the administration, the recruitment of highly qualified faculty, a competitive benefits package, and the encouragement of professional growth and development.

#### Implementation suggestions:

1. Explore ways to create high morale and foster trust and openness within the school community.
2. Recruit regionally and nationally for faculty members of outstanding ability who are willing and able to meet the diverse needs of the student body.
3. Develop a clear-cut, constructive evaluation process for the faculty.
4. Seek to increase diversity and gender balance among the faculty, in accordance with the policy goals.
5. Explore ways to improve effectiveness of communication and follow-up with parents and students.
6. Continue to promote communication and social interaction among the faculty, administration, parents, and trustees.
7. Review and recommend opportunities for faculty to engage in summer study, exchange programs, and summer employment.
8. Offer an attractive and competitive salary-and-benefit package which approaches parity with comparable schools in the southeast using NAIS salary averages as a benchmark.

9. Maintain small classes.
10. Provide faculty support in clerical and research areas.
11. Provide training for faculty in the applications of technology to the instructional programs.
12. Provide summer teaching for faculty when possible.
13. Encourage faculty membership in professional organizations.

#### IV. ADMINISTRATION – Headmaster Evaluation Committee/Personnel

##### Policy Goals:

The Tuscaloosa Academy administration will serve the needs of its students and faculty by providing positive leadership for the TA community. The administration will ensure that the school's resources are used prudently to implement the mission philosophy and objectives of the school consistent with its tradition. The Administration will seek to expand the resource base of the school.

##### Rationale:

The school administration cooperates with the Board of Trustees and faculty to serve the needs of the school and all of its constituencies. The school's goals and decisions will be guided by policies established by the Board of Trustees in collaboration with the administration. The administration will regularly review the organization and budget of the school to provide for maximum effectiveness and efficiency in the use of its resources in fulfilling the school's objectives.

##### Implementation Suggestions:

1. Establish and maintain clear lines of communication, follow-up, responsibility, and accountability among students, faculty, parents, administrators and alumni.
2. Recruit administrators of outstanding ability who are willing and able to meet the diverse needs of the faculty and student body. Gender balance and diversity representation in this area is seen as an important goal.
3. Manage the school's financial and other resources effectively and efficiently in order to implement the policies and goals established by trustees.
4. Develop a clear-cut, constructive evaluation process for administration and staff.
5. Continue to promote involvement by the administration in professional organization at regional and national levels.
6. Continue to offer supportive programs to encourage and foster the professional development and morale of the faculty, administration and staff.
7. Provide for a strong college admissions placement program.
8. Represent the Academy in the Tuscaloosa community.

## V. PARENTS – Education Committee

### Policy Goals

In order to support students in their development, Tuscaloosa Academy will foster partnership with parents.

### Rationale:

Tuscaloosa Academy needs informed, appropriately involved parents to support the educational program and meet the needs of the students and families we serve. Informed and involved parents improve communication between the school and the home while providing valuable resources to meet the mission and goals of the school.

### Implementation Suggestions:

1. Establish better communication through parent surveys, exit interviews, the Parents' Association, TAKS, Women's Auxiliary, and other means.
2. Provide a thorough orientation for parents of new students.
3. Encourage parent support in student recruitment, fund raising, and the dissemination of accurate, complete information about the school.
4. Encourage participation in the Parents' Association, TAKS, and Women's Auxiliary.
5. Provide on-going parent orientation and education concerning the school programs and expectations, such as the honor system, discipline, extracurricular activities, academic standards, grades, college guidance, and personal counseling.
6. Sponsor programs for parents on topics relating to teenagers, such as alcohol/drug abuse, parent networking and coping with violence.
7. Encourage parents' active involvement in functions such as continuing education, athletic events, theater, pre-game and post-game activities, and grade-level social events.

## VI. ALUMNI – Development Committee

### Policy Goals:

Recognizing the alumni as one of our most important assets, Tuscaloosa Academy will foster and expand their active involvement in and support of the school.

### Rationale:

Alumni are the product of a Tuscaloosa Academy education. Their academic record, career and life success are an important measure of the merits of our experience. Careful examination of these experiences help guide the focus of changes and improvements in the school. They confirm strengths and pertinent areas in need of improvement. In addition, alumni provide an essential resource for all schools of substance. Alumni, in appreciation to their Alma Mater for superior academics, career and life preparation, give back to the school time, talent and financial support. Alumni also serve the school as guardians of the meaningful traditions that define a school's specific character.

### Implementation Suggestions:

1. Expand alumni activities through reunions, pre-game events, and continuing education.
2. Explore alumni interaction with students through career guidance, coaching and summer work opportunities.
3. Involve alumni in the search for qualified students from diverse backgrounds.
4. Involve alumni in the dissemination of helpful and accurate information about Tuscaloosa Academy.
5. Expand significantly alumni support to the annual fund and capital drives.
6. Continue the active involvement by alumni as solicitors and fund raisers for the school.
7. Maintain a system of communication through surveys, data base, newsletters, and a directory.
8. Encourage faculty and staff participation in alumni activities.

## VII. COMMUNITY – Development Committee

### Policy goals:

Tuscaloosa Academy will be an active participant in the greater Tuscaloosa community and will be seen as a valuable resource in support of meaningful community activities.

### Rationale:

It is essential that Tuscaloosa Academy be seen in the community at large as a source of compassionate, motivated, creative, and ethical young leaders. It is equally important that our students are educated in and given opportunities for community leadership.

Tuscaloosa Academy should be a lighthouse for the values of tolerance, inclusiveness, and compassion.

### Implementation Suggestions:

1. All TA students will be expected to provide community service in areas of their personal interest each year.
2. Twenty (20) hours per year of community service are required in high school for graduation.
3. A school-wide service project will be selected annually with support from student body and faculty.
4. Efforts should be made to collaborate with local educational institutions to sponsor a speaker or forum on a topic of community importance.
5. TA will regularly open its campus and facilities for appropriate community events.
6. Community leaders will be invited as assembly speakers on topics of local interest.

## VIII. PHYSICAL PLANT – Buildings & Grounds Committee

### Policy goals:

Tuscaloosa Academy will provide facilities that support and enhance the educational program.

### Rationale:

Facilities are the physical expression of a school's commitment to excellence. They impact and challenge the expectations of standards and offer enriching opportunities for the TA community. The physical plant reflects our pride of achievement and confirms high expectations in the academic, athletic, and artistic areas.

### Implementation Suggestions:

1. Develop and implement a master plan of the physical plant and the campus, including landscape, signage and technology, that is based on the present and future needs of a five-hundred student school, with the strong lower, middle, and upper schools.
2. Conduct capital fund drives to implement the master plan.
3. Develop a combination auditorium, auxiliary gym with stage, weight room, dressing rooms, common areas, concession stand, and better utilization of Tuscaloosa Academy existing property.
4. Add to or improve the school library facility.
5. Construct track and field complex with a soccer field.
6. Increase outdoor lighting.
7. Improve access to building and other facilities at Tuscaloosa Academy.
8. Improve landscape and attractiveness of grounds.

## IX. FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT – Finance/Development Committees

### Policy goals:

Tuscaloosa Academy will provide the resources to maintain its sound financial structure and to allow the school to meet its long-term objectives.

### Rationale:

In order to provide additional facilities, to renovate older buildings, to expand operations in the future, and to sustain current programs in all areas, the development effort of Tuscaloosa Academy must be directed towards increasing its capital-improvement support, annual fund drive, and endowments.

### Implementation Suggestions:

1. Improve fund raising techniques through creative and unique approaches, such as reunion-year alumni drives, planned giving, and additional corporate and foundation grants.
2. Consider a long range financial plan that would be revised periodically.
3. Continue to manage the school's resources responsibility.
4. Maintain a balanced operating budget funded by the appropriate mix of tuition, annual support, and endowment.
5. Staff the development office sufficiently in order to meet the development goals of the Academy.
6. Educate parents and alumni regarding the financial structure of Tuscaloosa Academy and its needs.
7. Involve grandparents in financial development.
8. Maintain adequate reserves.
9. Minimize debt with the ultimate goal of becoming debt free.

## X. MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS– Development Committee

### Policy Goals:

Tuscaloosa Academy seeks to enhance the reputation and image of the school in the community.

### Rationale:

Because some segments of the community do not generally take advantage of the school, we must constantly seek ways to communicate a positive, accurate and attractive image to all potential applicants.

### Implementation Suggestions:

1. Communicate to all people associated with the school or considering the school that Tuscaloosa Academy is interested in being attentive to every student and that TA views each student as an asset.
2. Maintain communication and contact with the Academy feeder schools.
3. Encourage school sponsorship of community, educational, and cultural programs.
4. Increase awareness of Tuscaloosa Academy in the community among those not knowledgeable about the school, especially among community leaders.
5. Involve alumni as ambassadors for the school.
6. Promote Tuscaloosa Academy more aggressively in minority sectors of the community.
7. Communicate to the community the volunteer work done by Tuscaloosa Academy students.
8. Improve responsiveness to parents and students when a student is considering leaving or does leave.
9. Express to the community the high quality of Tuscaloosa Academy's academic education concentrating on traditional college preparatory education in the context of a "high-tech" world.
10. Make known Tuscaloosa Academy's commitment to develop the overall character of the student by teaching and encouraging the worth of every individual, self-discipline, respect for authority, respect for peers, love of truth, learning and integrity.

11. Seek ways to positively involve at least one parent of each student in the Tuscaloosa Academy educational process in order to broaden their understanding, encouraging their involvement in the marketing of the Academy

12. Express to all constituencies a commitment to the “well-rounded” student (concern for social, arts, athletics, physical, and other talents, as well as academics).

13. Actively seek prospective students and families who are associated with business, industry, higher education, and the professional working community.

## XI. GOVERNANCE – Committee of Trustees

### Policy Goals:

The Tuscaloosa Academy Board of Trustees is responsible for defining the mission of the school, providing a supporting statement of philosophy, and establishing the policies of the school. The Board of Trustees will seek as trustees the most qualified people of the highest moral character who will actively contribute their expertise, time, and financial support to the school.

### Rationale:

Leadership and management of the school are absolutely critical. The Board holds in trust the future well-being of the school. It is also responsible for maintaining the financial stability of the school. Communication among the constituencies of the school—parents, students, alumni, faculty, administration and trustees – is considered vital to the well being of Tuscaloosa Academy.

### Implementation Suggestions:

1. Evaluate the performance of each board member standing for re-election at the expiration of his/her term in the same manner as a prospective new member.
2. Recruit qualified board members while encouraging diversity.
3. Annually survey the constituencies of the school and evaluate the results against the goals of the Mission Statement. The Headmaster should provide a “state of the school report,” incorporating the results of the survey, to the Board and the community. The Board should use the survey results in developing its future plans for the school.
4. Have an active committee system such as committees on Trustees, Education, Planning, Buildings and Grounds, Development and Finance.
5. Ensure implementation of this Strategic Plan and periodically review and update it to help anticipate and meet future challenges. This plan should be used to create a development plan to provide the financial resources necessary to support the school over the long term. The Strategic Plan should be communicated to the various constituencies of the school.

