

# LEAD THE WAY



BETHESDA  ACADEMY  
CELEBRATING 275 YEARS

**LEADERSHIP. ENTREPRENEURSHIP. SUSTAINABILITY.**  
The Strategic Plan for Bethesda Academy

# BETHESDA ACADEMY



## What We Do | Mission

Preparing tomorrow's leaders and entrepreneurs by inspiring young men to discover their academic, social, and spiritual potential.

## Ideas We Live By | Core Values

A love of God. A love of learning. A strong work ethic.

## Where We've Been | History

Bethesda Academy, originally named Bethesda Orphan House and Academy, began as a colonial orphanage. It has the distinction of being the oldest child caring institution in the country. Established in 1740 by Rev. George Whitefield, Bethesda was visited by many of the country's founding fathers, with one of its earliest supporters being Benjamin Franklin.



In 1900, Bethesda was re-named Bethesda Home for Boys. In 1992, Bethesda began educating students on the 650-acre campus, providing a wide range of learning experiences rooted in George Whitefield's founding values. In 2011, the school was officially re-branded as Bethesda Academy, reflecting the school's commitment to college preparatory learning. In 2015, we began our 275th anniversary by adopting a very ambitious strategic plan, **Lead the Way**.

## Where We Stand | Our Unique Context

Here's the Problem. America's young men are struggling at a concerning rate. Most research tells us that young men comprise a smaller demographic footprint in higher education today, face an alarming dropout rate, and are playing less significant strategic roles in civic and family life. We often hear parents express a concern for the future of their son if he continues to follow rather than lead.



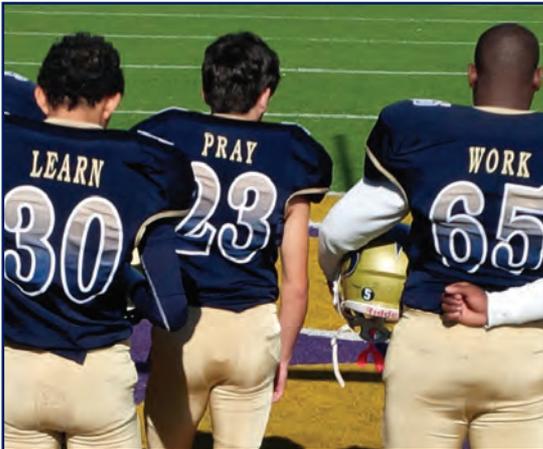
## Why We Matter | Our Unique Culture

What solutions does Bethesda Academy provide? Our young men experience a 95% on-time graduation rate from high school. 85% of our young men head directly into higher education, while another 7% provide service and duty to our nation's military. Most importantly, our young men are taught the skills and experience to be entrepreneurs and leaders in their next chapters of life. Bethesda provides tradition, a legacy, a sense of safety, and brotherhood. At Bethesda Academy brothers band as classmates, roommates, teammates, and workmates. Our values laden culture has stood the test of time since 1740.

## Where We're Going | Lead the Way

You've never seen a school quite like Bethesda. We are so much more than a traditional school.

We offer a student-centered environment, punctuated by a 1:12 teacher to student ratio, where young men get the focus and attention they deserve.



Boys need to be actively engaged with their learning in order to see the connection between class work and real life. The academic day includes structured internships on our campus of 650 acres. Our students learn responsibility, accountability, initiative, and punctuality are keys to developing a sense of personal industry.

Boarding students also have a home away from home in our boarding cottages. Caring cottage faculty are an extension of the academic day and facilitate holistic programming. Students master life skills they will need for college and beyond, and contribute to the family life of each cottage.

Bethesda also makes the experience attainable based on a generous financial aid program, to make sure that the qualifier of affordability is never the most pressing agenda at Bethesda.

Our future is bright through entrepreneurship, leadership, and innovation. Our legacy is preserved by our enduring mission and core values. **Lead the Way**.



**Background & Context**

the winter and spring of 2015, Bethesda Academy launched a strategic planning process. The strategic plan was developed to provide a long-range view of future school priorities created through a highly inclusive and participatory process. A steering committee was formed and focused on research, environment scans, SWOT analysis, committee exercises, and trends in the both the independent school and education world.

In order to build a base of sound information and to guide the planning process, the school enlisted the assistance of a research and planning firm, Ian Symmonds & Associates. A comprehensive research effort was completed, including stakeholder surveys, competitive and educational landscape analysis, market segmentation, and demographic trends.

In the winter and spring of 2015, the strategic planning steering committee worked collaboratively through a series of exercises designed to establish priorities based upon the findings of the research. This process culminated in June 2015, with the steering committee developing a small set of priorities for future focus. As strategic priorities were developed, the steering committee expanded upon them to outline specific initiatives, action plans, and immediate priorities.

Each of these strategic goals contains several strategic initiatives and numerous action plans. The strategic initiatives and action plans benefit from having additional implementation details, such as costs and metrics of success, recorded in the planning process and will be utilized as the school moves forward on the executing the strategic plan.



**Enhance the Student and Parent Experience.**

- Define, maximize, and differentiate our educational philosophy and culture.
- Define and clarify our unique educational value proposition and points of differentiation in the marketplace of schools.
- Define the portrait of a Bethesda graduate in the future, clarifying the attributes of the mission-appropriate student and preferred graduate.
- Define the mission-appropriate student profile for effective recruitment and retention.
- Enhance identified areas of academic improvement.
- Expand our academic program building additional depth, breadth, and rigor.
- Expand our complimentary offerings in athletics and arts that will provide breadth of programs and experiences.

**Reposition the School Around the Concept of Leadership and Entrepreneurship.**

- Reorganize curriculum and culture around the core concept of student leadership and entrepreneurship.
- Leverage our stunning location, setting, and heritage as a unique environment from which to build leaders and entrepreneurs.
- Develop a college preparatory diploma designate in the area of student leadership.
- Complete the continuation of the rebranding of our organization, including the school and all other brand subsidiaries, including considering a name alteration and graphic identity edit.

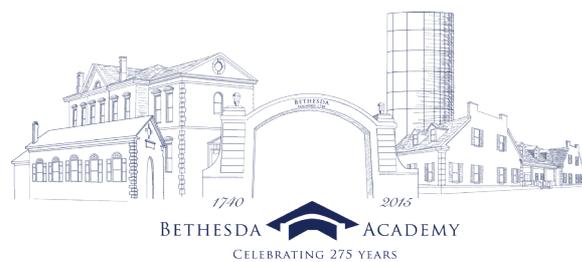


**Expand and Integrate Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Programs.**

- Fully integrate our efforts in both entrepreneurship and sustainability into our academic program, enhancing our heritage of work in a new and vibrant context.
- Establish Bethesda as a Southeastern academic leader with an intentional organizational focus on entrepreneurship and sustainability.
- Create branded stakeholder engagement programs, products, and services draw our community into our campus and that further establish our programs, position, and brand of work.
- Maintain continuity where possible of our unique programs traditions and services.

**Ensure Our Long-Term Sustainability.**

- Diversify and expand our student base through the aggressive recruitment of mission-appropriate day students, regional and domestic boarders, and international boarders.
- Revisit the existing pricing structure, strategic enrollment management systems, and net tuition revenue philosophy and policy.
- Create a more porous school by creating long-term strategic alliances within the local, regional, and national community highlighting our heritage, campus resources, and creating ongoing in-reach to our campus community.
- Complete a direct and indirect cost assessment and determine which income-generating programs and services should be enhanced, expanded, or eliminated as a result.
- Create an open and transparent dialogue with our broader community on where we have been, where we currently are, where we are going, and request their support in that endeavor.



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