

Carolina Friends School Trustee Annual Report

To the January 20, 2019 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business.

Carolina Friends School's stated mission is:

Carolina Friends School is a vibrant and inclusive learning community empowering students to think critically, creatively, and independently. We foster active exploration and quiet reflection, individual endeavor and collaborative engagement. Inspired by Quaker values — pursuit of truth, respect for all, peaceful resolution of conflict, simplicity, the call to service — we teach our children that it is possible to change the world.

One of the charges of a Quaker school, and of its trustees, is to constantly ask, "Are we living our Quaker values? How do we do this each day?" This is a question encountered working on, and with, the board, teachers, administrators, staff and students. An example of how this happens is seen in the Peaceful Schools initiative. Led by CFS staff, the mission of Peaceful Schools NC is to empower other schools to create and sustain their own healthy learning environments. The aim is to support and nurture schools as they create and sustain healthy school climates, incorporating their unique needs as well as Quaker values. Presently CFS is working with the Carter Community Charter School and Central Park School both in Durham, Exploris School in Raleigh, Experiential School of Greensboro, Hawbridge School in Saxapaw and the Susie King Taylor Community School in Savannah Georgia. This past year CFS hosted the third *School to Peace Pipeline Conference* for approximately 200 educators. Undergraduate student teachers from UNC and Appalachian State also participate in this program.

It has been noted by the Friends Council on Education (FCE) that the reserve of seasoned Quaker educators and mentors is diminishing due to age and retirement. In response FCE, along with CFS and other Quaker schools, offers training in Quaker education to new teachers. The goal is to build understanding of Quaker pedagogy, decision making, and other fundamentals of Quaker Education. This training is becoming mandatory in some schools. It has also been noted by an FCE leader visiting CFS, that CFS is an example of a school that truly lives its Quaker values.

CFS maintains ties with schools Quaker and non-Quaker in China, Bolivia and Australia. As you know we were a host to a Friends teacher from Bolivia last fall.

The opening of awareness and understanding of Quaker Education and Quakerism does not stop at the educators and students but rather extends to the greater school community. A constant query and challenge for the board and staff is: "How do we provide forums for parents to learn about Quaker Education and Quakerism? Last year there were information sessions, and mini-Quakerism courses were provided. But do not discount the everyday encounters with teachers, and all staff, that demonstrate Quaker values in action. As we know, no one solution fits all. The truth is an alive, ever-revealing experience at CFS, as in our lives.

One evening last week, CFS Head of School, Karen Cumberbatch, presented the next five-year strategic vision to the members of the school community. Her presentation of [The Dream that Drives Us](#) received a warm welcome, evidenced by long applause from the room. The school, with help from the board and the wider school community, has been crafting this vision for several years. Details are given below and on the school website.

During the question and answer period after the presentation, a father stood up and asked how he, and other parents, could learn more of what their children are learning at the school. He stated that he believes that this knowledge is what our world needs now in this time of political and environmental crisis.

Is this a request which the school, the Board, and also our Meetings, should rise to answer?

The three pillars of the strategic vision are for CFS to be:

A Beacon of Inclusion and Equity

In continuing our work toward becoming more representative of the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic realities of our greater community, we aim to set a new standard for inclusion and equity in independent schools.

We will build on the successful outcomes of our [adjusted tuition program](#) (currently serving 171 students, 33%) by expanding our endowment support, further increasing the socio-economic diversity of our enrollment pool. Develop a set of specific, achievable goals in recruitment and retention of staff and students of diverse backgrounds

- Support and fund additional professional development in equity education
- Increasing staffing to support Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work
- Increase endowment support for our adjusted tuition program
- Create plans for enhanced revenue streams
- Build community connections and partnerships to increase visibility and provide opportunity for revenue generation

An Enriched Learning Environment for Now and for the Future

We will examine staffing, space, and resource needs to meet current and future opportunities in providing access to our education to families while ensuring our ability to create and nurture the relationships at the heart of our educational experience.

Reflecting a greater need to serve our academically diverse students and provide support for increasing levels of anxiety and depression in today's children, we will pursue additional training and staffing.

- Engage in a self-study with Upper School staff, supported by research on effective learning spaces
- Develop new campus master plan and assess demand
- Complete a compensation study
- Expand student support resources in technology, learning needs, and counseling

A Global Resource and Exemplar for Child-Centered Education

For five decades, Carolina Friends has pioneered and modeled educational practices that honor the authentic voice of children in their own learning, including supporting teaching professionals in honing their craft.

This will make elements of our extraordinary educational approach more visible and accessible to other schools and organizations, provide new and deeper experiences for inquiry and leadership for our students and staff, and enhance revenue for the School.

- Enhance staff support for existing Extended Learning, Peaceful Schools NC, and professional development programs
- Research and explore existing models for teaching and learning centers
- Create a business and communications plan and launch a timeline for an institute for teaching and learning