



2020

DALAT
**Strategic
Plan**

Strategic Plan

Head of School Introductory Comments



When on a long journey, it is helpful to stop along the way and see how far you have come, determine if you are headed in the right direction, and assess what needs to be done to finish the trip. This document represents Dalat taking the time to pause and assess our progress on the 5-year journey towards our strategic vision. In 2016, Dalat dedicated a full school year to writing and developing a 5-year vision plan for the school community. This process involved parents, staff, board members, and students coming together. We hosted a number of retreats throughout the year, conducted surveys, formed committees, and spent time discussing and developing the vision. It was hard work, but when it was all done, we were proud of our vision and the direction the school was headed. Over the last three years, we have been working towards that vision and much has been accomplished. At the halfway point, the beginning of last semester, we took time to review what had been accomplished and to plan our next steps in achieving our vision. I would encourage you to take the time to read through this update. In this document you will be able to evaluate how we are doing and be informed on the plans for the final two years. The journey of 5 years might feel like a long one, but we have come a long way, we are headed in the right direction, and we are confident that soon we will reach our destination.

Karl Steinkamp
Head of School

We Believe Statement:

We believe that preparing students for life requires us to change how we do school.

Vision Statement

(For the Strategic Plan)

Dalat International School will promote authentic community engagement and attract and develop exceptional Christ-centered educators. We will foster spiritual growth, create relevant and innovative learning experiences, and inspire students to have a Biblical and global perspective in order to impact their world.



Innovative Learners



Goal Statement: Develop intrinsically motivated, inquisitive, global citizens who thrive in a changing world.



Strategies: Flexibility, Resources, Learners

Flexibility

Encourage institutional flexibility to facilitate innovative and dynamic learning experiences.

- Reimagine and revise institutional mechanisms by examining our schedules, grading practices, facilities, staffing, and graduation requirements to strengthen and sustain a robust culture of innovation.
- Create collaborative time within and across divisions for students and faculty such as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), mentoring relationships, Impact trips, and interdisciplinary learning opportunities to engage in nontraditional, bold learning.
- Review and improve our curricula and assessments by identifying core competencies that students need to be innovative learners.

Accomplished by March 2020

- Implemented the reflection/Flagship comments in the high school.
- Increased staffing by adding an educational technologist and Impact trip coordinator.
- Changed grade requirements (English, Physics) to add flexibility in scheduling for high school students.
- Hired a K–12 curriculum coordinator.
- Offered new high school classes, including Entrepreneurship, Spiritual Leadership, and Venture



Program.

- Implemented Impact trips in the high school and Impact Jr. trips in the middle school.
- Integrated departmental meetings into the monthly staff meeting rotation.
- Constructed an elementary school playground to encourage more intentional play and exploration curriculum.
- Created a staff innovation team (Project Inovasi).
- Increased student participation in the mentoring program.
- Implemented a new student leadership structure in the high school.

Next Steps

- Pilot a non-graded class in the high school.
- Research and possibly implement a badging program in the middle and high school.
- Change core competencies, assessment, and curricula to foster innovative learning.
- Study and research hybrid and flex scheduling options for the high school.



Resources

Develop the appropriate resources to realize our strategic vision for innovative learning.

- Equip teachers through specialized training such as vision trips and Innovative Teaching Academy to model and implement innovation in the classroom.
- Secure and invest in the necessary resources by hiring an innovation specialist and budgeting for necessary equipment to enhance the school's culture and operations.
- Create innovative spaces such as makerspaces or tinkerlabs to promote and facilitate design thinking.
- Pursue additional funding avenues such as corporate sponsorships and/or grants to support innovation initiatives.
- Strengthen and create internal and external partnerships such as guru networks, internships, and exchange programs to connect staff and students to innovative opportunities.

Accomplished by March 2020

- Developed a partnership with Penang Philharmonic Orchestra.
- Implemented Shadow a Student program.
- Sent teachers to numerous conferences (Deeper Learning, East Asia Regional Council of Schools [EARCOS], International Christian Educator Conference [ICEC]) for innovation training.
- Trained innovation team members with the Innovation in School (MIT) course.
- Established and funded an innovation grant program for Dalat staff.
- Developed and implemented Maker's Week for Grades 1–4.
- Partnered with Penang Science Cluster for middle school Makers class.

Next Steps

- Hire an innovation specialist.
- Increase the number of vision trips taken by teachers.
- Develop a makerspace at Dalat.



Learners

Foster the intellectual and cultural elasticity students need to adapt and thrive as global learners.

- Provide opportunities such as passion projects and genius hour for students to explore areas of personal interest and become intrinsically motivated learners.
- Engage students in solving real-world problems such as human trafficking, pollution, and poverty to provide purpose for innovation.
- Increase interdisciplinary initiatives in middle and high school, such as STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math), so that students are better equipped for the real world.
- Expand the way in which students showcase innovation, such as portfolios, presentations, and media productions, to demonstrate learning and provide more accountability.
- Develop a growth mindset by revising practices such as grading and award programs to encourage grit, risk-taking, and learning through failure.

Accomplished by March 2020

- Revised the high school awards program extensively.
- Developed Habits of Learning in middle school to nurture students' preparedness, initiative, and engagement.
- Implemented OneNote portfolios in high school initiative.
- Created a capstone class and partnered with TED-Ed to present student projects via YouTube.
- Implemented cross-disciplinary research papers in Grades 9–11.
- Developed and implemented an alumni/gap year internship program.
- Included growth mindset, grit, risk taking, and learning through failure in the student outcome statements (SOS).
- Encouraged Independent Study classes in high school and developed a scheduling process.
- Introduced growth mindset curriculum in the elementary school.

Next Steps

- Implement further growth-mindset curriculum into the middle and high school.
- Intentionally schedule and create opportunities for passion projects and pursuit of personal interests in the middle and high school.
- Integrate problem-based projects and learning into the classroom with the help of the curriculum team.
- Expand and integrate the OneNote portfolios process for high school students.
- Encourage development of video production skills by integrating it more into the curriculum and providing the needed technology resources.



Intentional Community



Goal Statement: Engage our culturally diverse community to nurture caring relationships, promote mutual respect, and encourage meaningful involvement.



Strategies: Engagement, Empowerment, Environment, Communication

Engagement

Leverage existing school events to optimize community engagement and involvement.

- Prioritize and enhance impactful events such as open house and divisional parties to build strong community.
- Consolidate activities like concerts, informational meetings, and community dinners to help manage time constraints and promote maximum involvement.
- Create unstructured social times within school events by providing refreshments and activities to encourage personal connections.

Accomplished by March 2020

- Added community opportunities to multiple existing events (i.e., food trucks at concerts, Family Fun Day).
- Hosted strategic community events led by the Parent-Teacher Organization (i.e., Family fun Day, International Food Festival, Christmas Party for parents, volunteer opportunities).
- Extended the 2019–2020 Fine Arts Festival to include Art on the Lawn featuring student-led fine arts.
- Engaged with new parents at breakfasts and face-to-face meetings with the Development director.



Next Steps

- Explore ways to increase family support between school divisions (i.e., free child's ticket for high school drama, have middle school band playing at elementary school open house, etc.).
- Encourage students to reach out to other divisions (i.e., middle school students invite other divisions to see MS band performances, elementary and middle school students invited to see high school dress rehearsals for plays and concerts).

Empowerment

Empower parents to work with the school as integral partners to strengthen the bonds within the school community.

- Encourage the Parent-Teacher Organization by providing tools and support to ensure the continued impact of the organization.
- Spearhead various efforts like host families and follow-up meetings to nurture and care for new Dalat families.
- Encourage parent involvement, such as parent liaisons and volunteers, to assist in the organization of events and bridge cultural gaps.
- Focus on nuclear groups and activities such as classroom moms and divisional parties to better develop grade-level relationships.

Accomplished by March 2020

- Encouraged grade-level parent groups to connect to offer support for teachers and create social events for parents.
- Provided space for parent groups to hold Bible studies on campus regularly.
- Empowered parents to volunteer with extracurricular activities, with increased parent involvement as a result.

Next Steps

- Consider creating and staffing a parent liaison position to provide support for non-English speaking families.
- Partner with parents to provide resources for fine arts, similar to the Athletic Booster Club.
- Continue expanding volunteer opportunities for parents in extracurricular activities.
- Explore ways, such as annual volunteer hours, to encourage more parent participation in school activities and events.

Environment

Create a campus-wide environment that is welcoming to families to allow meaningful networks of relationships to develop.

- Intentionally preserve and create flexible community spaces on campus such as the “white tables” and open playgrounds to maintain the positive social atmosphere of the campus.
- Value parent accessibility within campus security measures, such as providing easy parent identification, to allow families to enjoy campus life together.
- Include adequate parking on the master plan to allow convenient campus access for parents.

Accomplished by March 2020

- Built new playgrounds and basketball hoops with designated parent seating areas, encouraging families to enjoy the campus.
- Added community gathering spaces on all three floors of the Harbor building.
- Added brand new parking lot and pick up/drop off to the front of campus as part of the campus development.
- Created “The Deck” as a community learning space for students and parents.

Next Steps

- Explore requiring parent ID (lanyards) on campus, continuing to balance community openness with campus safety.
- Examine additional areas of campus that could benefit from more seating.
- Re-evaluate Friday night open campus. Consider supervision and hours, particularly for middle school students. Also, find ways to use the time more intentionally (i.e., Spiritual Life events, more structured events like game night).



Communication

Develop solid communication measures to increase active participation and strengthen unity.

- Manage a regular and consistent flow of information through Dalat News and utilize parent-preferred platforms to promote community engagement opportunities.
- Ensure that Dalat families have an avenue to share their concerns and needs through coffee chats, accurate surveys, parent-teacher communication, and translator provision to strengthen the school-parent partnership.

Accomplished by March 2020

- Completed a parent survey, which showed that parents prefer digital communication platforms (SMS, email, etc.).
- Hosted Parent-Admin Tea meetings for two years, but unfortunately had little participation.
- Hired an additional staff member to improve social media communication.
- Increased use of translators at school community events.

Next Steps

- Consider adding focused topical events rather than general divisional ones (technology, relationships, transitions, social-emotional health, discipline, etc.).
- Explore ways to improve the completion of the annual parent survey (enlist Parent-Teacher Organization support, computers available at parent-teacher conferences, provide incentives).
- Evaluate the parent survey calendar to avoid survey fatigue. Consider spacing out the annual parent survey and the individual teacher surveys.





Authentic Transformation



Goal Statement: Create engaging opportunities for students to experience God's love and deepen their understanding of Him.



Strategies: Encounter, Reflect, Lead

Encounter

Develop events and programs that are relevant to Dalat students, which will allow them to encounter and experience God's love, inspiring them to love others.

- Create and enhance experiential learning events such as Impact trips, Spiritual Emphasis Week, and retreats to help students encounter God's love.
- Ensure adequate support for transformative programs through providing dedicated divisional personnel and modifying academic calendars to allow for sustainability.
- Emphasize real-life application of Biblical principles such as practicing spiritual disciplines and belonging to a community that promotes spiritual growth.

Accomplished by March 2020

- Created and implemented Impact trips in the high school and piloted Impact Jr. trips in the middle school.
- Hired an Impact coordinator and elementary and middle school Spiritual Life coordinator.
- Added special events and stations during Spiritual Emphasis Week and Missions Emphasis Week.
- Established a weekly high school student-led worship night.



- Established a weekly spiritual leadership student lunch.
- Implemented a staff spiritual retreat.
- Provided retreats for the Spiritual Leadership class.
- Consolidated high school service programs with Impact.

Next Steps

- Review and consolidate all Dalat service programs and personnel in high school, middle school, and elementary school under the leadership of the Impact coordinator with the continued goal of students encountering God's love and then giving it away through service.
- Strengthen elementary school and middle school spiritual life programs that invite students to encounter God's love under the guidance of the elementary and middle school Spiritual Life coordinator.
- Set apart time and space outside of Spiritual Emphasis Week and Missions Emphasis Week for students and staff to encounter the love of God with the help of the Spiritual Life department and the administration.
- Plan and lead staff worship and spiritual retreat times led by the Spiritual Life department.
- Implement a school-wide initiative for best practices in spiritual transformation, led by the Spiritual Life department. (Susan Allen is training the team in 2020–2021, and the team will train others in subsequent years.)

Reflect

Strengthen opportunities for students to understand, reflect on, and express spiritual truth in a community that supports holistic growth.

- Surround spiritual life events with planning and reflection time to promote continued growth and a deeper understanding of God.
- Create safe and accountable environments by enhancing mentorship and small group programs to allow students to express doubts, seek answers, and communicate biblical truth.

Accomplished by March 2020

- Began development of sustainable high school small group curriculum by grade level.
- Created program guidelines for the high school mentoring program, which is growing.
- Implemented peer mentoring, with upper high school students reaching down to lower high school and middle school students.
- Integrated biblical worldview in all classes.

Next Steps

- Develop partnership between the Spiritual Life department and Bible teachers to assess and implement best practices for biblical instruction during the Bible curriculum review year.
- Invest significant time for the high school Spiritual Life director to support mentors and small group leaders.
- Train and utilize high school spiritual leadership students to mentor younger students in small group settings.
- Provide additional coaching and training for teachers in biblical worldview integration led by the Deputy Head of School and curriculum director.

Lead

Intentionally encourage & develop students to pursue Christian leadership on campus and in the community.

- Equip students through specific training sessions to develop their spiritual leadership capacity.
- Create opportunities such as student ministry teams for students to use spiritual leadership competencies across all facets of school life.

Accomplished by March 2020

- Developed and implemented Spiritual Leadership class.
- Nurtured student leadership as a component of Impact trips.
- Empowered students to lead spiritual life special events.
- Provided opportunities for students to share testimonies and lead in chapel.
- Enabled student-led ministry times to grow.

Next Steps

- Develop opportunities for students in elementary and middle school to develop spiritual leadership skills.
- Encourage students in the Spiritual Leadership class to invest in elementary and middle school student leadership development.
- Shift Impact service opportunities to be student initiated and led, as appropriate.
- Explore opportunities to equip younger high school students in spiritual leadership.



Passionate Personnel



Goal Statement: Attract, equip and retain, mission-minded faculty to provide stability and inspire excellence.



Strategies: Attract, Develop, Nurture, Retain

Attract

Attract faculty through the use of networks and innovative technologies to pursue a missional calling.

- Create and implement the use of new media products such as an interactive website, infographics, and videos to showcase the benefits of working at Dalat and living in Malaysia.
- Develop incentive programs that reward successful referrals to attract new staff through word of mouth and personal networks.
- Expand resources such as budget and personnel to improve the recruitment and hiring of exceptional staff.

Accomplished by March 2020

- Created staff recruiting video and posted it on the school website.
- Offered incentives for staff referring new hires.
- Added the Deputy Head of School position to focus on recruiting staff.



Next Steps

- Pursue student teachers and seek internship visas to allow them to be hired.
- Plan more speaking and recruiting trips to the United States. Have Dalat staff speak at Christian education events.
- Allow staff time to promote Dalat in churches.
- Host events for the Christian education community at Dalat to expand our reach.

Develop

Develop faculty through a holistic approach to enhance individual professional growth.

- Improve and enhance the mentorship program for new faculty and staff including consistent meetings to ensure a smooth transition to Dalat.
- Establish training and incentives for mentoring faculty to encourage and develop a team-building culture among staff.
- Provide and increase designated time including professional development meetings to foster cross-divisional collaboration.
- Evaluate and enhance the current professional growth practices such as funding and documentation to support and encourage faculty and staff development.

Accomplished by March 2020

- Offered a stipend to a teacher to oversee the mentoring program.
- Added annual training and gift cards for mentor teachers.
- Added departmental meetings to the monthly rotation.

Next Steps

- Consider allowing more adjustment time by not requiring first year staff to do extracurriculars.
- Prioritize common planning time in the schedule for new teachers and mentors.
- Consider additional release time for mentor teachers (i.e., no Kids Interest Clubs [KICs] at elementary school level).
- At the middle and high school levels, expand the role of department heads.
 - Department heads responsible to mentor and coach new teachers in their departments.
 - Department heads help principals in the Teacher Development and Evaluation Program (TDEP) process by doing peer observations and goal setting.
 - Department heads work together on vertical alignment and curriculum documentation.
 - Department heads' teaching load decreased (to four classes per day).
 - Department meetings scheduled during staff conference and staff retreat times.

- Re-evaluate the advanced degree program and consider making changes.
- Review and revise the TDEP process to better meet the needs of teachers. This was last done in 2013.

Affirm

Affirm and spiritually nurture staff to empower them to radiate a passion for Christ.

- Develop member care opportunities such as small groups or prayer partners to nourish and promote spiritual wellness and growth in our staff.
- Allocate resources such as funding and release time to affirm and promote spiritual growth.

Accomplished by March 2020

- Allowed professional development funds to be spent on spiritual growth.
- Encouraged staff to have prayer partners.
- Offered small groups and discipleship to interested staff.
- Included times of spiritual retreat during the staff retreat.
- Added quarterly staff worship times to the schedule.

Next Steps

- Develop spiritual leaders and mentors among the staff to minister to others.
 - Set up an action team to be equipped to support HR and Spiritual Life to nurture staff spiritual growth.
 - This action team would receive training with Capacity Ministries along with the Spiritual Life and Human Resources departments. (capacityministries.com)
 - Each action team member would intentionally invest in one or two other staff during the school year.
- Set an annual spiritual growth budget, similar to the budget for professional development, for each staff member. Include one day of release time annually for spiritual purposes.



Establish

Establish and maintain practices and programs to promote staff retention.

- Develop and facilitate financial planning opportunities, such as 401K retirement plans and increased child allowances for children in college, to promote adequate long-term financial stability for staff.
- Include wellness measures for staff, such as preventative health examinations, to improve physical and mental wellbeing.
- Provide and encourage regular, voluntary community building opportunities such as Mikasa trips to further inspire camaraderie and have more fun.
- Seek consistent feedback avenues from current staff such as conducting “staying” interviews to help administration better meet the needs of Dalat personnel.

Accomplished by March 2020

- Added EPF option for staff to save for the future.
- Added annual wellness benefit of RM500 to staff contract.
- Conducted annual “staying” interviews for staff with the Deputy Head of School.
- Expanded staff representative position to include more two-way communication.
- Formed an encouragement team and allocated a budget to support one another.
 - This group started a “secret encouragement pals” program.

Next Steps

- Adjust the extra-curricular program
 - Clearly define the expectations for extracurricular commitments for both staff and teachers.
 - Explore ways to limit the extracurricular requirements of full-time staff and teachers. Consider hiring more staff and/or eliminating some programs.
 - Consider making major extracurricular roles part of staff FTE.
- Regularly appreciate staff for doing their primary jobs well, not only for doing “extras.”
- Develop the personal days policy for staff.





Glossary

Classroom Parents: Parents of Dalat students in the elementary that volunteer to help the teacher with special events or small group work.

Dalat News: A weekly newsletter that is sent to the Dalat community every Friday.

Growth Mindset: A mindset by people that believes that they can grow, learn, and develop and are not limited or fixed by their circumstances or surroundings.

Guru Networks: A term used for finding specialists in your area who can be a resource for students and their school work.

Impact Trips: The name that will be used for Dalat's service learning trips in the high school. The trips will integrate community service with instruction and reflection.

Infographics: Visual representations of information, data or knowledge, intended to present information quickly and clearly. Used often in social media.

Intrinsically Motivated: The motivation to engage in a behavior that arises from within the individual and not because of external rewards or punishment.

Maker Space / Tinker Labs: A place where students can gather to create, invent, tinker, explore and discover using a variety of tools and materials.

Passion Projects / Genius Hour: A program within schools and corporations that reserves time for students/employees to pursue their passions and interests.

PTO: Parent Teacher Organization at Dalat

PLC's: Stands for Professional Learning Communities and is an effective tool used for teacher professional development and improvements in curriculum.

SEW: This stands for Spiritual Emphasis Week, which is a time each year where the school focuses on the spiritual development of students.

STEAM: An educational term that stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics and the integration of these topics together.

White Tables: Area on the Dalat campus near the ocean where parents, students, or staff can meet to talk and relax.

401k Retirement: is a retirement savings plan sponsored by an employer. It lets workers save and invest a piece of their paycheck before taxes are taken out.