HAMLIN 2017:
BE EXTRAORDINARY

COMPASSION | COURAGE | HONESTY | RESPECT | RESPONSIBILITY
NEW MISSION & VALUES

As part of our strategic planning process, the Head of School, Faculty and Staff, Board of Trustees, and Strategic Planning and Steering Committee determined that it was important to update our mission statement and values to reflect today’s reality and our strategic intent for the future. Here are the new mission statement and values:

OUR PROFILE

With a history of excellence that dates back to 1863, The Hamlin School in San Francisco is the oldest non-sectarian school for girls in the western United States, serving 400 students throughout the Bay Area.

OUR MISSION

(Approved by The Hamlin Board of Trustees; December 2011)

The Hamlin School educates girls to meet the challenges of their time and inspires them to become extraordinary thinkers and innovators, courageous leaders, and women of integrity.

OUR COMMUNITY

We are a vibrant, inclusive community where diversity of thought and experience is respected and viewed as essential to excellence. We welcome and benefit from the perspectives of people who differ in culture, ethnicity, family structure, financial capability, learning style, physical ability, race, religion, and sexual orientation. At Hamlin, myriad voices speak and are heard; active engagement of all is expected and important for the strength of the School community. Our shared values bind us together. Our interdependence and our individual differences are worthy of celebration.

OUR EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Our K–8 educational program aims to develop the intellect, character and citizenship of each girl to its highest potential. Passionate educators—architects of the student experience at Hamlin—design units of inquiry and study that inspire our girls to be innovative thinkers, collaborators, and leaders who demonstrate compassion, courage, and integrity. Hamlin girls are proud of their individual and collective achievements and embrace their failures as opportunities to deepen learning. The girls value hard work and accept struggle and ambiguity as necessary parts of the learning process. Over the course of their years at Hamlin, girls build confidence, tenacity, and resilience by engaging in an intellectually demanding and stimulating academic program.

Learning at Hamlin is purposeful, joyful, and expansive. Hamlin girls learn inside the classrooms of our urban campus and outside in the greater Bay Area: in national parks, museums, and online. Through service learning and community partnerships, our girls are taught that learning at school has immediate relevance in real-life.

We believe that success in the 21st century requires an intentional focus on critical thinking and problem solving, effective oral and written communication, collaboration, and creativity. While we embrace the importance of content knowledge in our program, we also are ignited by the words of our founder Sarah Dix Hamlin, who asserted that “the mere knowledge of the facts would be insufficient” to prepare the girls to meet the challenges of their time. Thus, our educational program emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge and its application in new and unfamiliar contexts. We strive for breadth and depth. We value engagement as well as reflection.

OUR VALUES — THE HAMLIN CREED

Compassion
Courage
Honesty
Respect
Responsibility
KEY ELEMENTS OF OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

The Hamlin School educates girls to meet the challenges of their time and inspires them to become extraordinary thinkers and innovators, courageous leaders, and women of integrity.

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES Our strategic plan is built on four strategic imperatives:
1. Academic and Ethical Excellence
2. Financial Strength
3. A Vibrant and Inclusive Community
4. Alumnae Engagement

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE #1: ACADEMIC AND ETHICAL EXCELLENCE

GOAL: Deliver an extraordinary educational program, characterized by innovative and interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning, a strong commitment to physical education and athletics, and an intentional focus on ethics and 21st century skills.

CONTEXT: The administration and faculty of The Hamlin School believe that successful leadership and active citizenship in the 21st century require multiple essential capacities: critical thinking and problem solving; proficiency in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) skills; effective oral and written communication; collaboration; and creativity among them. We embrace the importance of content knowledge and skill development in the program and hold fast to the best practices that have always supported educational excellence at the School. We also recognize that challenging traditional ways of teaching and learning will be necessary to prepare Hamlin girls for their futures. The rapid and complex changes in our world lead us to the belief that excellence in the 21st century demands re-envisioning daily instruction, curriculum planning, assessment tools, student grouping, school schedules, the length of the school year, the role of professional development, and the design of student learning spaces.

Now and in the future, the highest priorities for the Hamlin community are to ensure academic and ethical excellence. The School also seeks to create and maintain sustainable systems that attract, support, and reward faculty and staff excellence.

The following objectives are offered as a road map for the journey toward academic and ethical excellence:

OBJECTIVES

I. Ensure high standards of excellence and clarity of goals across all areas of the academic program

As educators who are called to action to educate girls to meet the challenges of their time, we will work vigorously to ensure that all academic disciplines that are taught at Hamlin meet the highest levels of excellence and are aligned clearly with best practices for girls and K-8 schools.

II. Enhance excellence in teaching through an increased focus on interdisciplinary approaches, innovation, and collaboration

We are committed to making sure that our girls are “T-shaped” learners—able to think broadly and deeply. This requires teaching them so that they understand the connections between disciplines and develop in-depth knowledge in a single area of study. Teachers at Hamlin will be strengthened and inspired by their collaboration across grade levels, departments, and divisions.

III. Grow the commitment to physical education and athletics

Physical education and athletics build a variety of important lifelong skills, including teamwork, goal setting, hard work, healthy competition, self-discipline, and sportsmanship. At Hamlin, we are committed to providing and sustaining a positive, joyful, and character-building physical education and athletics experience. We believe our program should provide ample opportunities for girls to learn and excel in competitive athletics, and become a greater source of school spirit and pride. We believe our physical
education program should teach the girls key concepts in fitness and health and encourage them to take pride in and responsibility for their personal fitness and physical strength. There is a well-documented relationship between exercise and improved ability to learn; therefore, we believe that this focus will also yield benefits to our academic program and enhance student achievement.

**IV. Strengthen the girls’ daily practice of kindness and courage**

As we move forward on the path of excellence in education, we will model ethical values for the girls and teach them to behave with compassion and moral courage. Learning to live a life of integrity matters a great deal at Hamlin; it is our fervent desire that the K-8 experience has a lasting impact on the girls’ lives. Our updated Creed and designation as a School of Ethical Literacy will be the cornerstone of our work.

**V. Extend and deepen the girls’ engagement in learning through new and creative uses of time and space**

To accomplish our goals, we must be creative about how we use the precious resources of time and space. More time—and better use of time—will be important to Hamlin’s success, as will a careful re-examination of our urban campus and exploration of the use of off-site facilities.

**VI. Ensure faculty and staff excellence**

A strong academic program placed into the hands of excellent teachers is a powerful and important combination of forces. While strengthening the program, Hamlin will also work to build and maintain a world-class faculty and staff. We will seek to create sustainable systems that attract, support, and reward faculty and staff excellence.

**VII. Reaffirm a sense of play in the culture of the School**

Sarah Dix Hamlin established clearly the School’s commitment to substantive work (the circle) as well as a sense of play (the triangle)—thus, an appreciation of childhood should always be a part of Hamlin’s ethos. We want to ensure that our message to the girls and our actions convey that academic excellence should not come at the expense of health and joy.

**STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE #2: FINANCIAL STRENGTH**

**GOAL:** A solid financial base is crucial to fulfilling Hamlin’s mission and strategic plan while ensuring long-term financial stability. We are committed to taking prudent and innovative steps to grow the endowment and annual revenues, while maintaining a disciplined approach to financial planning, annual budgeting, tuition setting, and debt management.

**CONTEXT:** Financial Strength refers to the overall financial health and ongoing sustainability of an organization. This is a critically important goal for schools, as it requires considerable financial resources to invest in the right programs, faculty, staff, facilities, and students. In addition, financial strength allows schools to moderate tuition increases and provide sufficient financial support to applicants in need of assistance. Many of the best universities in the world also set the standard for financial strength. These first-rate institutions leverage their financial strength to achieve their strategic objectives and to maintain their leadership. The same is true for grade schools and high schools—financial strength can have a direct impact on the overall quality of the program delivered and on the ability to deliver on strategic objectives.
OBJECTIVES

I. Grow our capital
Grow the endowment from $11 million to $21 million by 2017, through aggressive capital fundraising, implementation of a robust planned giving program, and disciplined investment management.

II. Create new revenue streams
Enhance existing non-tuition revenue and create a task force to develop alternative revenue streams. Attain 100% parent participation in the Annual Fund, and drive further revenue growth through an increased focus on alumnae, parent of alumnae, grandparent, and other non-parent giving.

III. Manage debt
Strategically manage the School’s debt obligations to achieve a favorable endowment-to-debt ratio and on-time debt repayment. We have met every single debt obligation to date, and we remain committed to doing so in the future.

IV. Measure, monitor, and track financial health
Continue to refine metrics to evaluate the financial health of the School. Establish a framework to evaluate the financial, operating, environmental, and community impact of any major curricular and non-curricular project(s) under consideration, thereby ensuring the allocation of financial resources to the most strategic and beneficial programs.

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE #3:
A VIBRANT AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

GOAL: To research, design, and implement a comprehensive plan for effective communication, inclusive community building, and meaningful volunteer engagement at Hamlin.

CONTEXT: At the heart of the Hamlin experience is a genuine commitment to building upon the existing strength of the community and nurturing the bonds that tie its girls, parents (past and current), grandparents, faculty, staff, administrators, alumnae, and residential neighbors together. The Hamlin community feels joyous and “alive” when adults feel both informed and inspired by a common vision of the future.

Moreover, we seek to create an inclusive community where all adults and families can be authentically themselves, yet feel closely connected to others. We want every person to know that his or her opinions and contributions matter greatly, and that our diversity makes us a stronger School community.

OBJECTIVES

I. Ensure effective communication
A School’s culture, the complex manner in which people develop shared identity, values, and customs, is largely dependent on effective communication. Ensuring that all communication is clear, reliable, and accurate increases good will and contributes to a vibrant, cohesive, and well-informed community. Moreover, we affirm the critical importance of the parent-teacher partnership and will work toward increasing transparency about the Hamlin program. We believe that the girls are the direct beneficiaries when parents and educators share goals, expectations, and information.

II. Re-envision community events
A School’s culture is also dependent upon how and why it comes together. In order to strengthen the ways in which members of the Hamlin community socialize, volunteer, and otherwise serve the School, we will continue to create meaningful opportunities for members of the Hamlin community to come together across a spectrum of events that reflect the community’s many interests and differing schedules.

III. Offer meaningful volunteer opportunities
Simply put, the School could not function at an optimal level without the dedicated support of volunteers. We are committed to establishing multiple pathways for various constituencies—parents (current and past), grandparents, and alumnae—to give their time and energy to the School. From once a year to once a week opportunities, and all points in between, we want all adults to find a way to support the School’s mission.
**STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE #4:**
**ALUMNAE ENGAGEMENT**

**GOAL:** To continue to strengthen Hamlin’s relationship with its alumnae by initiating purposeful communication, encouraging enduring relationships, facilitating leadership opportunities, and focusing on increased financial support. Alumnae are “Hamlin Girls for Life.”

**CONTEXT:** Alumnae are important custodians of Hamlin’s history, invaluable contributors to the School’s sustainable future, dedicated mentors to Hamlin students and each other, and essential ambassadors to the world at large. Hamlin’s Board of Trustees, Alumnae Board, faculty, and staff are committed to further enhancing the School’s relationship with its alumnae, facilitating networking amongst alumnae, and engaging their many talents in service of the School’s future.

In a continued effort to engage alumnae meaningfully in the life of the School, Hamlin is committed to delivering on the theme of “Hamlin Girls for Life” via three guiding principles: Reconnection, Relevancy, and Resources.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. **Foster reconnection to the School**

   Continue to build on the work that has already been done communicating and connecting with Hamlin’s entire alumnae body. Initiate a comprehensive effort to gather contact, demographic, and professional information for all Hamlin alumnae in order to reach and engage the entire alumnae body. Update the School’s database of physical and e-mail addresses accordingly.

2. **Increase School’s life-long relevancy**

   Cultivate lifelong relationships with alumnae via the continued creation of compelling programs, broad interaction with the Hamlin community, online social networking tools, and tailored events. Connect Hamlin alumnae with each other and current students.

3. **Recognize and involve alumnae**

   Promote alumnae leadership by encouraging alumnae participation in Hamlin’s voluntary leadership positions at the School. Continue broad community support of the Alumnae Board, maintain alumnae representation on the Board of Trustees at 25%, and broaden alumnae involvement in School events.

   Encourage increased alumnae giving. Focus on alumnae participation in Hamlin’s fundraising initiatives, including the Annual Fund and capital campaigns. Increase alumnae annual giving to 15% of annual fund revenues. Launch a planned giving program that honors the contributions of alumnae, encourages new commitments, and further cultivates existing donors.

   Establish a “Hamlin Alumnae Networking Program” which facilitates personal and professional connections and supports mentoring among Hamlin alumnae. Research best practices at peer schools as models.

   Establish a “Young Alumnae Employment Program” in 2011-2012 through which Hamlin girls, in the first few years after graduation, are encouraged to stay connected by being offered work in various, meaningful capacities at the School (i.e. mentoring younger students during the summer, acting as counselors in outdoor leadership programs).

4. **Develop metrics to assess progress and priorities**

   Develop an assessment process with guiding metrics that evaluate the effectiveness of alumnae engagement and prioritize alumnae events at the School.