

A Crash Course

The Kent Place Strategic Plan

Empower Girls. Advance the World.

Creating and implementing an ambitious strategic plan takes serious, sustained commitment, and Kent Place has been up to the task. Over the course of more than two years, members of our community dug into the institution's history. They talked to hundreds of teachers, alumnae, students, and families. And they dreamed bigger than ever before. The result is an ambitious strategic plan that will carry the school through the next five years. Take our crash course to learn (in minutes, not years!) exactly what it means. ILLUSTRATIONS BY ABBEY LOSSING

KENT PLACE SCHOOL MISSION (AN ANNOTATED GUIDE)

Kent Place School empowers girls to be confident, intellectual, and ethical leaders who advance the world.

1 "Data informs us that as girls move through adolescence, their self-confidence can wane. We aim to buck that trend by having a strong emphasis on developing leaders. We also know that self-confidence can be the key to success and happiness in life," says Head of School Jennifer Galambos.

2 "We want students to be able to analyze data, synthesize information across disciplines, and see how what they're learning has real-world applications," says Assistant Head of School for Teaching and Learning Julie Gentile.

3 "We have a prominent ethics program, but it's not just about teaching. We want to create a climate of ethical decision-making and skills: to think about any issue broadly, listen generously, and understand the ethical implications to make decisions in life," says Karen Rezach, Founding Director of the Ethics Institute.

4 "At Kent Place, we want to create leaders who are cognizant that they are part of a larger world — and we want to position them to serve it," says Assistant Head of School for Enrollment and Strategy Julia Breen Wall P '23 '27.



Four Strategic Priorities

To be effective, focus is essential. Here are the four strategic priorities that Kent Place will pursue with vigor — turning lofty goals into real action.

PRIORITY 1

Learning with purpose

What it says: Transform academic structures and practices to further develop intellectual leaders who think critically and ethically.

What it means: Kent Place is known for its academically robust, dynamic education. But aiming toward high test scores or grades is never the goal. Increased emphasis on problem-based learning as well as anti-bias and culturally responsive learning will help students see their education as something that connects them to the world outside the classroom and prepares them to lead empathically and critically.

Priorities in action: A recent Middle School project had students come together to solve a real problem:

our old water fountains. They analyzed the problem, crafted a solution, and presented ideas to the school leadership for environmentally friendly new fountains to replace the old ones. The students succeeded in their task. Julie Gentile, Assistant Head of School for Teaching and Learning, says the lesson was simple but powerful: “Students can make change if they do their research and apply it.”

Other projects have woven together Spanish, environmental studies, and community engagement as well as history, art, and English. Whereas these types of initiatives are happening across the school “in small bubbles,” said Ms. Gentile, the strategic plan will open up more opportunities for silo-busting collaboration and meaningful, joyful learning.

PRIORITY 2

Leading with ethics

What it says: *Advance the Ethics Institute and Girls' Leadership Institute to become renowned K–12 community incubators for developing ethical leaders who take action.*

What it means: Kent Place has long been known for both its ethics and its leadership programs and initiatives. This priority will support efforts that more directly meld these two strengths. “This is a moment in time that calls for the KPS brand of ethical leaders,” says Ms. Breen Wall.

Priorities in action: Kent Place will expand and improve its ethical-citizenship and leadership-development curriculum, which includes the development of a robust Be Ethical Everywhere (BEE) Primary School program. It will broaden access to a significant portion of its leadership and ethics programming to give other schools and classrooms around the world the chance to benefit from Kent Place’s distinctive work.

It will also build on unique programs such as the Bioethics Project, which is produced under the guidance of Georgetown University’s Kennedy Institute of Ethics. The school will augment its work with extracurricular events and programs such as the Middle School Ethics Bowl, Ethics in the Arts, and Ethical Entrepreneurship.



“This is about incorporating ethics into every aspect of life,” says Dr. Rezach. “How do we give students real-life situations so they can think about what they value most and how they apply those values?” Kent Place will bring many of these initiatives beyond campus borders, helping the school become a nationally recognized voice on ethics in K–12 education.

PRIORITY 3

Thriving in community

What it says: *Prioritize a healthy and balanced school climate in which each member of our community can thrive.*

What it means: Kate DeOssie '04, a Trustee and cochair of the Strategic Design Team and Mission and Vision Committee, believes Kent Place’s community has always been the institution’s key to success. “Kent Place is a community of ambitious, high-achieving, awesome girls who take their education and endeavors very seriously,” she says. At the same time, she says, “the atmosphere is entirely collaborative and supportive — a sisterhood in which people lift each other up.”

Priorities in action: Kent Place wants students to pursue many things — from biochemistry to modern dance, from athletics to the arts — at a high level, but not at the expense of their health. In coming years, Kent Place will improve its current wellness programs for all of its students and build on its expertise linked to emotional health for girls. It will aim to meet an array of diversity, equity, and inclusion goals. “We believe that focusing on the balance of academics, ethics, leadership, and empowerment will enable us to raise girls who have a strong sense of well-being and centeredness in the world,” says Dr. Galambos.



PRIORITY 4

Investing in one another

What it says: *Invest in an enduring culture of philanthropy and stewardship with all constituencies to achieve Kent Place's strategic priorities now and ensure a bright future for generations to come.*

What it means: The strength of the Kent Place experience lies in the relationships built within the community. Kent Place was founded by local families joining together and meeting a need for their own daughters and all other girls in the area. This spirit of vision and community remains a hallmark of KPS well into its second century. This priority will ensure that the school continues to partner with alumnae, parents, grandparents, and friends in sustaining an exceptional education for current students and for generations to come.

Priorities in action: In recent years, we have welcomed a tremendous number of alumnae into meaningful engagement in the life of the school. This has had a wide impact, ranging from assistance in college selection, to participation in ethics, leadership, and entrepreneurial programs, to providing an inside look at vocations that didn't exist a decade ago — in technology, medicine, and international diplomacy, for example. “The women of Kent Place are changing the world in every arena,” says Coral Butler Brooks P '25, Director of Advancement. “The leaders of industry whom I've met in my tenure continue to inspire and humble me. Our alumnae are vibrant, thoughtful, empathic leaders whose generosity of time and resources is second to none. We hope to continue to connect these remarkable women with our students in meaningful ways.”

Kent Place has also experienced strong growth in financial support, which enables the school to expand curriculum, increase financial aid, and achieve even higher levels of excellence in recruiting the best faculty and staff in their fields. All of these critical areas of growth are the direct result of donors who believe that girls and young women prepared with a world-class education will be the change-makers for a bright and more just future for us all. “Further fundraising opportunities will come naturally from the aspirations of the strategic plan, which in turn will equip Kent Place with the resources and facilities needed to fulfill our mission,” says Ms. Brooks.

Tough question

You spent years developing a strategic plan. Months before its public rollout, COVID-19 struck. Is the plan still relevant?

Jennifer Galambos: Over the summer, we took a few months off from our strategic-planning process to concentrate on preparing the campus for this academic year. But when we came back to it, in September, we marveled at how relevant it remained. We didn't want to create a “COVID strategic plan” because a vaccine would mean that we'd be able to see the coronavirus in the rearview mirror. I do believe the strategic plan will hold up to the test of time. I also think the pandemic may make us willing to think even more broadly about the ways we might be able to carry it out.



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As Kent Place looks ahead, the strategic plan serves as both a reminder and a road map. It's a touchstone for the values that have made Kent Place what it is today. And it's a guide to becoming an even better version of itself in the years to come. “We incorporated the best of tradition, innovation, and flexibility,” says Dr. Galambos, “and it crystallizes what the next few years are going to look like.”