

January 20, 2017

Dear Yinghua families,

The health of a school is most often measured and continuously improved on a day-to-day basis through teacher relationships and feedback exchanged between your child, you, and the school. The best schools are also committed to developing their longer-term health through strategic planning. It's hard to find the time to do this work while also running a successful school. Yinghua is committed to taking on this challenge every five years. Our strategic planning process is a thorough, thoughtful 9-12 months of reflection, research, and planning that involves many stakeholders. The purpose of the plan is to define our strategic priorities, acknowledge external changes, and commit to measurable goals.

As you may know, last spring Yinghua began work on its new **Strategic Plan**. We had achieved many of the goals set forth in our [2011 plan](#), and it was time to lay the groundwork for the coming years. In this letter, we're pleased to offer an update on this Strategic Plan and to invite your continued involvement in Yinghua's future.

On November 21, the School Board approved a [Short Form of the Strategic Plan](#). This one-page brief summarizes the work of multiple learning groups and focused initiative task forces and is the result of much good thinking by dozens and dozens of parents, teachers, administrators, and board members. It addresses how we should sustain and extend current excellence and strengthen our school while balancing scale, scope, and opportunities for innovation. We offer here an update on what has been done and identify further steps which will take place in the next few months to strategically support our mission.

### **School Growth**

Yinghua Academy's student retention rate has been approximately 96% since the 2014-2015 school year. The data that we examined as we planned for the 2014 building expansion assumed higher attrition. In fact, we have reached our student enrollment capacity ahead of schedule. In order for us to remain in our current facility without leasing supplementary space, the board and administration have recommended we limit future student enrollment: 2017-18 kindergarten enrollment will be three classrooms and lateral entry (enrolling in Yinghua after kindergarten) will also be adjusted. The board will vote on enrollment at its January 23 meeting. This does not change things for current families. Incoming kindergarten siblings of currently enrolled students have enrollment priority as long as families properly submit the [Student Application](#) during Open Enrollment, which, for the 2017-18 school year, closes at 5 p.m. on Friday, February 10, 2017.

### **History of the New Strategic Plan**

Many of you participated in the *Community Forums* convened in late spring and summer to launch this process. With the guidance of consultant Anne Sturdivant we asked our community: What are we best at in the world? About what are we passionate? From where does our vitality come? What are our wishes? A seven-person steering committee composed of teachers, staff, parents, and board members analyzed responses to the questions and recommended *Learning Group* topics for summer research:

1. Diversity in Our Student Body;
2. Growth;
3. Following up with Graduates;
4. Sharing Our Expertise;
5. Educating for the Future;
6. Understanding our Competition; and
7. Middle School Chinese Language Arts.

These *Learning Groups*, which again included a mix of parents, teachers, staff, and board members, researched the topics to uncover opportunities, insights, and potential risks. Their work was extensive and impressive!

In August and September, the School Board reviewed *Learning Group* reports in two **Board and Leadership Retreats**. The goal was to give strategic shape to the themes that emerged from the *Learning Groups*. Five initiatives, described in the Short Form, emerged for strategic focus:

1. To increase Chinese proficiency;
2. To increase student engagement academically, socially, and emotionally;
3. To lead Chinese immersion education;
4. To manage growth; and
5. To align infrastructure with strategy.

Note that as a result, two topics, diversity and graduates, moved from strategic to tactical. Leaders determined that these issues are not *new* areas for strategic development but that the school should continue to enhance its work in these areas. Specifically, an equity policy that is mindful of the needs of all learners will be adopted; the school will actively work to attract a diverse applicant pool through promotion of Open Enrollment and advertising the school; and we will continue to provide differentiated intervention for all learners, particularly those who struggle. In addition, we will continue to provide high school and college search assistance through advising classes, collect information on Yinghua graduates, and guide and assist alumni to sustain Mandarin language skills.

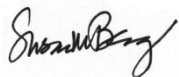
### Next Steps

Over the next two months, we'll be developing a **Long Form of the Strategic Plan** to further define the objectives in each of the five areas for strategic growth. We will identify desired outcomes, measures of progress, action steps, a timeline, and a budget relative to each initiative. Our Plan is meant to be a *living* document that we expect to evolve and assess on a yearly basis.

We have already begun work on a number of initiatives and have scheduled a parent forum to discuss our approach to increasing Chinese proficiency and advancing a deeper understanding of Chinese immersion education at Yinghua. Please plan to join us on Tuesday, May 16, at 6:30 p.m., for the forum, titled "What Curricular Changes Do We Anticipate?" School leaders will discuss the first four points of the Strategic Plan with a focus on Chinese Language Arts and supporting students socially and emotionally.

Thank you to everyone who participated in this process. Let us know if you have questions and comments!

Yours sincerely,



Sue Berg  
CEO/Executive Director



Karen Lu  
School Board Chair