

RILKE SCHULE
German School of Arts & Science
Anchorage, Alaska

Academic Policy Committee - Goals Committee Report (12/10/09)

Process of Goals Committee Activities:

STEP 1: The Goals Committee was established by the Rilke Schule APC in the spring of 2009 to assist the APC in identifying and establishing priorities for Rilke Schule leadership and operations in fulfillment of the original Rilke Schule Mission and Values. APC board members Liz Crafford, Joe Weinberger and Frank Mächt were elected by the board to be on the committee. Frank Mächt served as chair.

STEP 2: In April & May 2009 the Goals Committee conducted in person on-site interviews with Rilke Schule's primary stakeholders: students, staff, and parents. Every classroom from K-8th Grade was visited once for about 45 minutes; every teacher and support staff met privately with goal committee members for about 30 minutes; and two open forums for parents were held on school grounds.

Typically **the students** were asked the following questions: What is your favorite part about our school? What is your least favorite? What do you think is important to do at school? What do you wish we had at the school? What are languages do you speak or would you like to learn at school? Would you like there to be a Rilke Schule High School? What makes a good teacher?

Typically **the teachers** were asked the following questions: What got you into education? Why Rilke Schule? What makes it good here? What do we need to improve on? What do you need to teach? What will it take to succeed in the future? What would your dream school provide and look like?

Typically **the parents** were asked the following questions: Why did you choose Rilke Schule? What is going well and what is not? What do you think is important in a teacher? What makes a good teacher? What do you think about multiple years with the same teacher (looping)? What are your future ideas and dreams for Rilke Schule? How big should Rilke Schule get?

STEP 3: Twenty-four pages of the comments made by Rilke Schule constituents were compiled. As the next step the goals committee scheduled a meeting on November 12, 2009 for APC board members to evaluate the information received. In preparation each board member was asked to read over all comments and select the five most important themes they hear in the feedback received from our students, their parents and our staff. The intent was to identify top priorities that give the APC board direction for developing a long range plan for Rilke Schule.

STEP 4: Presented at the APC board on Dec 10, 2009 was this attempt (see page 2) to summarize the overall input received into a few broad categories that capture the essence of what our constituents expect of and hope for Rilke Schule and to give direction to the APC board and all constituents in advancing the mission and vision of our school.

Rilke Schule students, parents, and staff experience & envision a school characterized by:

GERMAN IDENTITY & MULTILINGUALISM

This recurrent theme corresponds with our **vision** of *multilingualism* and preparing students for *world citizenship* by developing cultural competence through education primarily taught in German. Questions related to this theme may be: *How do we foster a German identity through curriculum development, involvement of interns, study trips, etc.? When and how do we best integrate a second and/or third foreign language into the curriculum and which ones? What does it mean to be German School in America preparing students in Alaska for world citizenship?*

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE & ARTISTIC CREATIVITY

This recurrent theme corresponds with our **mission** of *providing outstanding academic education* with an **instructional focus** on *language, arts and sciences, fostering creative expression through drama, arts, music, and sports*. Questions related to this theme may be: *How do we attract the most qualified staff and how do we assist them in getting better; how do we balance various priorities in the curriculum to optimize learning? How do we measure success? What is in our core curriculum and what can be offered in electives? How do we do justice to our name being a school of Arts and Science? What environment and resources do we need in our pursuit?*

RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUALS & A CARING COMMUNITY

This recurrent theme corresponds in our **vision statement** with the intent *to create a community* and the values of *respect, challenge and involvement* as well as high expectations for our students' study habits, staff's role modeling, parents' active involvement and how we relate to each other at the school and in the community. Questions related to this theme may be: *What is the ideal size of our school to foster that kind of community? What does our discipline plan look like? Can we evolve from a typical day school for children to a week-long cultural educational center for the whole family and community, e.g. do we offer a Samstagsschule and/or language classes and other cultural activities for children and their parents? How do we hold students, parents, staff and board members accountable and how do we support each other and celebrate successes? How do we involve our students and families in serving the local and/or international community? What does it mean for our school to be in Alaska, a very unique, but also transient community?*

HEALTHY VITALITY & ORGANIZATIONAL STABILITY

This recurrent theme corresponds with our **instructional focus** on *fostering creative expression* and our vision of *practicing healthy lifestyles and sustainability*. Questions related to this theme may be: *What are our priorities regarding physical education and nutrition? How do we make school fun so we can develop life long learners? What shape does our commitment to environmental stewardship take? How do we make decision regarding responsible financial stewardship to assure our school's long term viability while providing a facility, staff and educational resources for every school year? How do we manage our desire to have security and stability while being flexible enough to adapt to necessary changes and function within given limits? What kind of building do we need and what can we afford? Can we clarify roles and responsibilities for APC members, staff, and other stakeholders so as to improve the level of organization and communication in the school and among its constituents?*

Respectfully prepared and presented by:

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