



State of the School - February 12, 2019

TEA Mission and Vision

We believe all young people can make a difference in the world now. To make this happen, our intent is to pull education forward by creating one of the most innovative learning approaches in the world. [View TEA Vision Document Here.](#)

TEA Learner Outcomes

As we have since the very beginning, we follow a three step process that involves thought (Academics), experience (Real-World Adventure), and action (Character) to hardwire the brains of young people to become creative problem solvers with a social conscience. This learning model, powered by real-life and supported by brain science, balances tradition and innovation like no other school.

TEA is built on the foundation of Academics to provide a solid foundation of essential knowledge, skills and ideas. Our commitment to providing Real-World Adventure connects learning to real life. And our Character development continues to place emotional learning and grit at the center of what we do.

To demonstrate mastery in the areas of Academics, Adventure, and Character we have developed these six learner outcomes that allow us to scaffold the TEA Student Experience from Pre-K through graduation.

ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

- I solve problems creatively
- I think critically
- I communicate persuasively

ADVENTURE OUTCOMES

- I survive and thrive in the real world
- I live a healthy and active lifestyle

CHARACTER OUTCOMES

- I act as a global citizen

ACADEMICS: I SOLVE PROBLEMS CREATIVELY

- Elementary students solve Problem Based Math Tasks which require students to apply mathematical understanding to real life situations. Students discuss how their solutions show that their “math brains” work differently and look for opportunities to learn from others.
- MS Students analyze solutions to real-world problems to identify what works and what doesn’t as they scaffold up to their high school years. Students [continue to develop problem solving skills in math class](#) and begin to apply their creative problem solving skills to expedition themes. For example, Middle school students are highlighting and troubleshooting potential solutions to issues related to the Balance of Power in an NPR Podcast competition.
- The HS utilizes guiding questions and curriculum aligned to real-world problems to provide students with the opportunity to analyze problems and propose solutions. [11th and 12th graders](#) creatively problem solve a real-world problem of their own choosing. Students have been creating institutional solutions and personal solutions to mass incarceration and high recidivism rates in the United States. The personal solution they have identified is the need to break down the stigma society has about formerly incarcerated.

ACADEMICS: I THINK CRITICALLY

- Elementary students begin by using higher order thinking to extend story endings that answer the question “if this story had one more page what would it say.” Next, students [learn to look critically at the food they are eating](#) and where it came from. Then our elementary students begin diving into real-world issues like investigating educational equality issues such as the availability of education for girls and school structures around the world.
- MS students continue to learn to think critically through text analysis in their core classes. Students apply this skill by critically thinking about water and land designations and use by multiple government, private, and public entities related to their expedition [Balance of Power](#).
- HS Students are asked to critically think in each of their classes including thinking about mathematical equations, labs and experiments, text analysis, and multiple perspectives on a variety of topics. 9th graders use this skill when participating in a civilization game in Human Geography when they have to critically think about hypothetical situations that mimic real world and coming up with creative new solutions.

ACADEMICS: I COMMUNICATE PERSUASIVELY

- Elementary students recently took their persuasive communication to the next level by working with our 11th and 12th graders to write letters to the senate foreign relations committee in support of the Protecting Girls' Access to Education in Vulnerable Settings Act. The students were thrilled to learn that the act they advocated for [was passed in congress](#) in January of this year.
- MS students learn to communicate persuasively in each of their classes, including through the creation of films for their intensives. In addition, students apply their persuasive communication skills by writing an article on the Balance of Power topic that interests them for a New York Times contest as well as submitting a podcast for an NPR Podcast competition.
- HS students develop persuasive communication skills in each of their classes, including through the creation of films for their intensives. Students participate in debates, socratic seminars, and structured academic controversies. Students are frequently asked to present in front of a wide audience. 10th graders applied this skill [in a roundtable discussion with a mayoral candidate in Chicago](#).

ADVENTURE: I SURVIVE AND THRIVE IN THE REAL WORLD

- Elementary students learn to survive and thrive in the real world by camping among the fossils in freezing temperatures while exploring Berlin Ichthyosaur State Park, study animal defense mechanisms [in the Muir Woods](#), and explore the [Martian-like landscapes around Mt. Lassen](#).
- MS students navigate a variety of terrains on fieldwork including scrambling up rocks on a hike in Red Rocks, [exploring the Channel Islands](#), navigating the Strip in Las Vegas, and hiking Shirley Canyon as they discuss the Balance of Power between people and nature and people and people.
- HS students navigate the world further afield combining urban and rural environments to prepare them for life after TEA. 9th graders [paddled the Colorado River](#), 10th graders [conquered winter in Chicago](#) navigating a variety of urban environments, and 11th and 12th graders [navigated San Francisco via public transportation](#) completely self-directed. Seniors go out into the world by themselves for 10 days for their Individual Senior Intensive including local, regional, national, and international locations.

ADVENTURE: I LIVE A HEALTHY AND ACTIVE LIFESTYLE

- Our preschoolers and kindergarteners are the students who are most likely to be outdoors [exploring our natural wonders on foot or on skis](#). Our older elementary students build their winter camping muscles with a hut trip before heading out on their first real winter camping overnight.
- MS students continue to develop their ability to meal plan within a budget, prepare meals, and keep a clean kitchen while in the field by selecting between a variety of meals, working together to prepare meals and clean up after themselves. MS students also complete crew fitness challenges to prepare for MS/HS Crew Olympics.
- HS Students continue preparing for life after TEA by self-directing their meal plans, prep, budgeting, grocery purchases, and clean-up. Students train and compete in MS/HS Crew Olympics. Students enroll in Health and Wellness to teach them [how to make healthy lifestyle choices physically and mentally](#).

CHARACTER: I ACT AS A GLOBAL CITIZEN

- Elementary students collaborate with local non-profits and educate the public on the importance of environmental stewardship [by preserving bird habitats](#) via an outreach product. Older elementary students recently shared an understanding how [High Fives athletes with life changing injuries want to be seen](#), treated, and understood through the lens of the heroes journey.
- MS & HS crews identify service projects they work with for the year. Students complete service work with BLM, National Fish Hatchery and Santa Cruz Homeless garden to learn about the Balance of Power. Students focus on multiple perspectives and civic duty lessons in Humanities classes to learn about and better understand the importance of an engaged citizenry.
- [Criminal Justice](#) was a high school student created expedition where 11th and 12th graders identified a real-world problem they wanted to dig into and help to mitigate. Students identified mass incarceration and high recidivism rates in the United States. After researching and working with experts, they are creating a film, book, and event that seek to break down the stigma of formerly incarcerated in society.
- [Individual Senior Intensives](#) ask students to identify a problem they want to become an expert on and help address by themselves. This year, students have identified topics ranging from creating a plan for the Town of Truckee to uphold their pledge of becoming completely renewable by 2030, creating a program to improve youth mental health, and seeking to improve conditions in ICE deportation camps and improve VISA procedures.

TEA Strategic Vision

We've aligned our entire organization around achieving our mission to develop creative problem solvers with a social conscience.

TEA is working closely with Martis Valley Education Foundation to ultimately expand its reach far beyond the shores of Lake Tahoe. Our intent is to positively benefit as many young people as possible with our powerful education model and our commitment to the greater good.

TEA Strategic Goals

We have 5 strategic goals to focus our efforts. These goals relate to (Students, Our Ideas & Impact, Our People, Resources & finally but centrally, Place - i.e. this campus). Here's our 5 strategic goals.

- Goal #1 - Grow and Diversify TEA Student Body
- Goal #2 - Refine TEA Magic & Amplify TEA Reach
- Goal #3 - Attract, Develop & Retain the best TEAm
- Goal #4 - Thrive Financially
- Goal #5 - Develop a World Class Campus

As some of you may have seen in our board reports, we report on our progress towards each goal during the open portion of our Board Meetings. We wanted to take this opportunity to give you a year-to-date update on our Strategic Goals.

Goal #1: Growing and Diversifying the TEA Student Body

Thank you to everyone who has completed their re-enrollment agreement for the 2019-20 school year. Based on those re-enrollment agreements, we are projecting a 95% retention rate going into school year. With this in mind, here are our available spaces in each grade alongside existing inquiries in each grade. Note grades with a * will each have 2 sections next year.

Grade	Available Spots	New Student Inquiries
Pre-K 3	15	24
Pre-K 4	7	30
*Kindergarten	19	36
1st	5	29
2nd	9	29
*3rd	10	27
4th	6	27
*5th	17	32
*6th	6	37
*7th	17	23
*8th	7	22
9th	5	24
10th	2	10
*11th	6	19
Total	131	369

We are pacing towards our enrollment goal of 275 students next year, with a stretch goal of 300 well within our sights. The goal for 2020-2021 is 325 students, with a stretch of 350.

In 2019-20 we are allocating \$1.4M in Flex Tuition Awards to create accessibility for value aligned families and students who demonstrate aptitude in Academics/Character/Adventure.

Goal #2 - Refine TEA Magic & Amplify TEA Reach

Innovation in education needs to happen. Our intent is to lead this change for the greater good. Our kids deserve it. The world needs it.

The Martis Valley Campus will attract people from all over the world. This innovation hub benefits all of those who use it, including local students, families, community members and educators as well as the corporate sector.

2019 Goal - Reach 1,000 kids

- Tahoe Expedition Academy
- Tahoe Summer Camps

2021 Goal - Reach 100,000 kids

- TEA Summer Experience
- TEA Executive Training
- Software Development

2025 Goal - Reach 1,000,000 kids

- Super Camp
- Un Conference
- TEA Films / National Student Film Festival

Interested in learning more about these programs and pilots, then please contact Taylor @ tsimmers@tea-mail.org

Goal #3 - Attract, Develop & Retain the best TEAm

Administration

Head of School

- We are searching for a Head of School to replace our current Interim Head, Ken Martin. We are looking for someone to lead us to further achieve the school's mission and vision and challenge us to continue to reach higher.
- This individual will be aligned with the school's values, vision, goals and culture, however they will need to push us out of our comfort zone. They will also need to enhance the school's acumen and expertise in business development, finance & fundraising, PR, marketing & communications as well as overall operations.
- Timeframe: The position is included in the budget for the 2019-2020 school year, and we are looking to find the right person to start by the beginning of 2019-2020.
- We have compiled lists of like-minded schools and organizations and begun to gather data around possible candidates.
- This process is being led by the TEA Board of Trustees and supported by the Administrative Leadership Team. If you have any questions, please contact Taylor Simmers @ tsimmers@tea-mail.org

Elementary Program

New hires this year:

- Regine, Debrah, Marisa, Carolyn, Callie, Susan, Mia, Stan

Teachers transitioned to new roles to support their goals and professional development:

- Katie, Colleen, Matt, Loren

Anticipated New Hires:

- Based on enrollment projections, we will be adding a second crew in both rising kindergarten and rising fifth grade.

What we're working on in the Elementary Program:

- We are determining the best placements for our returning teachers.
- We are currently screening and interviewing candidates for upper and lower elementary positions. Final candidates will be invited for model lessons and parent meet and greet sessions when possible.
- We would like to have offers to new teachers by the end of March.

MS/HS Program

New full-time hires this year:

- Natalie, Ted, Lindsey

Anticipated New Hires:

- Based on enrollment projections, we will be adding a new Humanities Teacher, Math & Science Teacher, and a full-time Spanish teacher.

What we're working on in the Middle School & High School Program:

- Current teachers are continuing to identify professional goals and professional development opportunities outside of TEA to bolster their own abilities and further develop our program.
- We are currently screening and interviewing candidates for Middle School and High School positions. We have done over 20 phone screens so far, 8 Guided Storytelling Interviews, and three model lessons. We have more set-up in the coming weeks.
- We would like to have offers to new teachers ASAP.

Goal #4 - Thrive Financially

There are three primary drivers for our financial plan and business model:

- Enrollment and Tuition
- Additional Revenue Generation
- Fundraising with TEA's Summit Push and Martis Valley Campus development

TEA's Summit Push is critical to providing funding to get the organization to forever sustainability by 2021.

Campaign Details:

- Launched March 2018. Completion date: January 2021.
- Targeted Fundraising Goal: \$14,000,000.

- Capital Fundraising Target: \$10,000,000.
 - Helps fund short term facilities to accommodate TEA enrollment growth and legacy classroom buildings to house 350 students and add to the overall campus development.

- Payroll and Operational Fundraising Target: \$4,000,000.
 - This amount covers the total shortfall amount in payroll and operations until June 2021, after which time it is projected the school will achieve forever sustainability via enrollment / tuition and additional revenue generation.

Campaign Progress:

- Over the last 12 months, we've received a new cohort of support with several incredible supporters coming in at the \$100K to \$1M level.
- We have raised \$2.25M in this fiscal year for short term facilities and ops.
- We have solid committed pledges for \$1.25M more this fiscal year and verbal pledges for \$1.75M more in the coming years.
- We are in the process of locking down all of these pledges and keep driving full steam ahead to be successful.

Opportunities to Invest:

- Scholarships
- TEAcher compensation
- Campus Development and Legacy Buildings

TEA's Summit Push Strategies

1. **Develop and Enhance a TEAm** who can continue to innovate and execute the school's mission and vision at a high level. This includes a Head of School and business leader, financial expertise and more talented educators and staff.
2. **Program Innovation and Execution** is what drives tuition and enrollment for TEA, which means long term fiscal health.
3. **Additional Revenue Generation** provides a sustainable way to fund education, rather than just using a traditional Annual Fund and increasing tuition.
4. **Major Investments from Our Partners** through the TEA's Summit Push Campaign are critical at this time to provide the organization with payroll, operational funds and infrastructure to get to break even by 2021. After that time, Major Investments from our Partners will be more elective and vision driven.
5. **Foundations, Grants and Corporate Sponsorships** are key to the future growth of the organization. These sources are already being accessed but will be much more attainable and impactful once TEA really begins to expand its reach.

Goal #5 - Develop a World Class Campus

What are the 3 purposes for this campus?

- 1) National innovation hub to influence education for today's world
- 2) A community resource
- 3) A home for TEA

How did we get where we are today?

A year ago today we had students in 3 different locations (Truckee, Kings Beach & Tahoe Vista) and business operations in 2 additional locations, both in Tahoe Vista. Getting our whole community in one place took a sustained effort over several years and there were a lot of false starts and dead ends. But we did it.

Our search for a permanent home tremendously accelerated when Sean O'Toole joined the effort using his company's software to look at all the suitable parcels for a school from the north shore to Truckee. Our deepest gratitude must go to the Martis Valley Education Foundation whose vision and investment have literally and figuratively laid the foundation for a world class campus.

What's ahead?

This spring (and ongoing for the next 18 months), we are working to raise funds for our Martis Valley Campus Development for both classroom buildings and amenities. If you are interested in learning more or supporting this development, then please contact Taylor @ tsimmers@tea-mail.org.