



WASHINGTON LATIN

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS



STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2026



Washington Latin Public Charter Schools

5200 2nd Street NW, Washington, DC 20011

711 Edgewood Street NE, Washington, DC 20018

www.latinpcs.org

MESSAGE FROM WASHINGTON LATIN



It is with great pleasure that we share the Washington Latin Public Charter Schools 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, One Latin.

This plan will serve as our north star for the next three years, focusing us on a shared vision for Latin and outlining our path to achieving it through collaborative action and collective responsibility.

As an organization with the motto, “words matter” and a commitment to understanding the ways our modern world connects to the ancients, we note how the etymology of the word “strategic” is particularly fitting for this plan. It combines two roots from ancient Greek: the idea of “spreading out” from the root *stere* and the concept of leading or “driving forth, moving” from the root *ag*. Washington Latin is at this moment in our history focused on both driving improvements in our schools while also “spreading out” - expanding our reach and deepening our impact. Our goals focus on serving more students, particularly those with the highest needs, and serving them better. In addition, we aim to extend our impact beyond our immediate community of students and faculty, sharing our approach with other educators so that we help more leaders create schools that support discussion-based learning and foster human flourishing.

One Latin represents the collective work and vision of a great many members of our community. Our Board of Governors, leadership, faculty, partners, students, and families - both current and alumni - have contributed to identify our most pressing challenges and identify ways to address them. Just as this process has been collaborative, we know that we can only accomplish our ambitious goals with the same sense of shared responsibility and commitment to collective action.

We are excited to work together with the extended community of Washington Latin to make our vision a reality.



Peter Anderson
*Head of Schools &
Chief Executive Officer*



Kenneth Merritt
*President
Board of Governors*



ABOUT WASHINGTON LATIN

OUR MISSION & VISION



Our Mission

To provide a challenging, classical education that is accessible to students throughout the District of Columbia.

We seek to develop students who will become thoughtful citizens and leaders, contributing to the public good in their lifelong quest towards a fuller humanity. Ours is a school where words matter, ideas matter, and people matter.



Our Vision

Washington Latin envisions a diverse and integrated school community in which:

- ❖ All members value truth, beauty and goodness
- ❖ All students, regardless of background, can develop the habits of mind, content knowledge and self-efficacy to thrive
- ❖ Teachers, counselors, deans and other staff members can grow in their careers and in the development of their craft
- ❖ We nurture ambition for lives that are personally fulfilling and of service to others
- ❖ We can serve as a model for exemplary public education.

THE LATIN WAY

In our 16th year, Washington Latin faced two significant changes: a new campus was to open and new leadership was at the helm of our original campus. These changes were long-planned and exciting, and inevitably brought new challenges.

Could the school's educational model and culture bend and stretch with this growth and change?

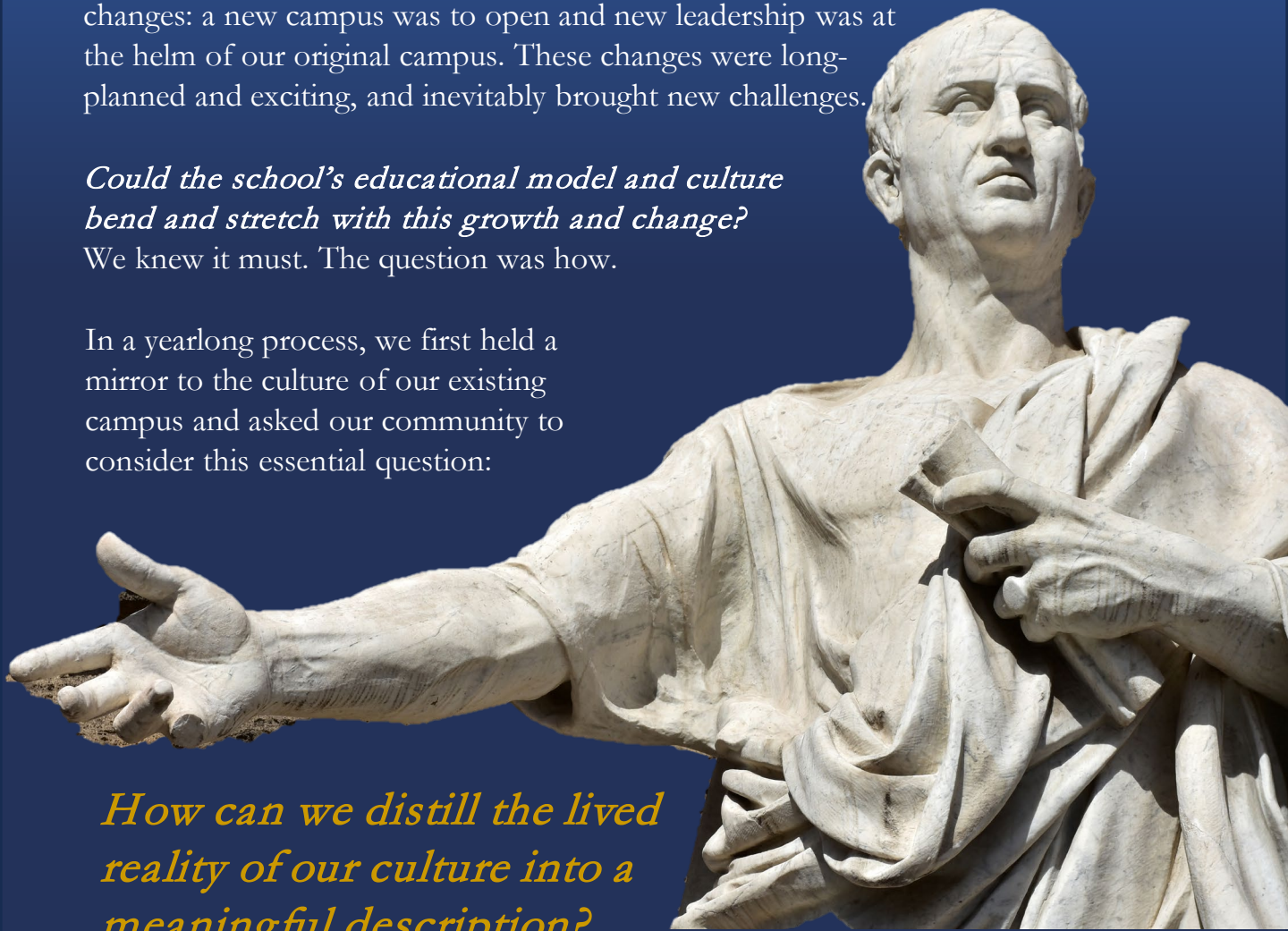
We knew it must. The question was how.

In a yearlong process, we first held a mirror to the culture of our existing campus and asked our community to consider this essential question:

How can we distill the lived reality of our culture into a meaningful description?

The result is The Latin Way, a set of four principles that are both a description of our culture and the ideals to which we aspire.

Each principle is expressed as a memorable phrase with an additional brief explanation. Each is also accompanied by an icon, a unique graphic image that has come to represent and hold the deeper meaning of that principle. These elements are used in a variety of ways, including in our faculty professional development sessions, new student orientations, leadership meetings, and more. The Latin Way principles are at once reflected in our daily work on our campuses and remind us of our aspirations.



Fall in Love with Enduring Ideas

Our education is an invitation to fall in love with deep, enduring ideas -Truth, Beauty and Goodness -and so to be changed. We believe that education should be transformational, involving both mind and heart; at their union character develops. Our curriculum introduces students to truths beyond their context yet within their grasp; our pedagogy of questioning opens ideas to critique and



Seek the Conversation

Words matter and we teach students to use them with care. Our school is built for conversation, and we aim for students to embrace the idea that many perspectives and voices are the means to a richer learning experience for all. We believe that a true education sparks discussion and provokes thought; conversations –with each other and with the thinkers of the past and present –are the crucible for all learning. The exchange of ideas is a moral act: it catalyzes the character development of the speaker and the listener, calling on both to be reasonable, informed, and flexible in their opinions.



Trust Courageously

Our school is built on relationships rather than hierarchy -trust is at the heart of everything. We courageously trust each other to do good in the world. We trust in our teachers to do right by our students and by each other. We trust our students and give them the freedom to be courageous themselves -to try, to make mistakes, and to realize over time how to direct their own paths.



Serve the Common Good

Non nobis solum natisumus. We are not born for ourselves alone.

We believe education is the path to a fuller humanity, only possible when we weave ourselves into a tapestry broader than our own individual interests. Our school aims for students to understand and celebrate our shared humanity, so that they can see themselves as both individuals and as part of a whole.

Ultimately education's greatest purpose is to guide our students in their development as citizens committed to contributing to the common good.



OUR HISTORY



Washington Latin Public Charter Schools is a liberal-arts college preparatory small network of schools with a classical mission serving more than 1,000 students on two campuses in grades 5-12 from all eight Wards of Washington, DC.

Founded in 2006, Latin remains the District's only classical charter school. As a new school, we opened our doors in the 2006-07 school year with just 179 students in grades 5-7, occupying a church in Northwest DC. We began with little more than a commitment to our mission and the essential characteristics that continue to define our program today: classical curriculum, faculty excellence, small class size, and a diverse student body. In each of the next five years, we added a grade until reaching our full complement of grades 5-12. As we built the school and hired faculty, we occupied six locations in our first seven years before settling in the former Rudolph Elementary School building, now known as our 2nd Street Campus.



Over the first decade, we developed both our program and positive reputation among DC families. By 2018, more than 2,000 applications in MySchoolDC (DC's common public school lottery) included Washington Latin as a top three choice for 125 available seats. Such demand, coupled with the relatively low number of non-selective top tier seats in DC public middle and high schools, led to our commitment to expand.

OUR FUTURE



In 2019, the DC Public Charter School Board approved our request to open a second campus for 720 students in grades 5-12. The Anna Julia Cooper Campus opened in 2022-23 with 156 5-6 graders and will add a grade each year to reach 5-12 by the 2028-29 school year.

This expansion presents both opportunities and the inherent in any major organizational change, including impacts on culture, systems, and finances. The primary opportunity afforded by expansion is to increase access to our high-quality education to more families from across DC, particularly to those traditionally underserved by public education. Our growth is also an opportunity to strengthen our model to ensure the academic success of all students, regardless of their background, with a focus on narrowing achievement gaps and supporting students who would be first-generation college students in their families.

Our work, including the establishment of a second campus and the more specific priorities outlined in this strategic plan, is guided by our mission and vision, as well as the philosophical beliefs that undergird both our ideals and practices.

EXPANDING OUR IMPACT



We believe that our high-quality education should be accessible to any family in DC.



With one of DC's longest waitlists, we know there is demand for what our schools offer and consider expanding access to be our moral obligation. As such, Washington Latin has focused in recent years on this key question: how can we increase access to a Latin education?

The most important answer to this question has been to establish a second campus that will grow to serve the same complement of grades 5-12 and thus add an additional 740 “seats” to the DC educational offerings. Our growth plans have not only focused on increasing seats, however: we are especially focused on increasing access for students with the highest needs. The Anna Julia Cooper Campus of Washington Latin opened in the 2022-23 school year with grades 5 and 6, and it will continue to add a grade each year until we reach our full 5-12 enrollment in the 2028-29 school year. Our work to enroll a diverse student population at both the 2nd Street Campus and our new Cooper Campus continues to be top priority.

Even as we continue to focus on growing our Cooper Campus and expanding access to more students from traditionally underserved groups, we are also considering two important strategic questions:

- ❖ *How can we ensure access to the full promise of our classical education for the modern world for all our students?* That is, beyond creating more Latin “seats,” how can we refine, strengthen and enhance our model to better serve all students?
- ❖ *How can we expand our reach beyond our schools and students,* demonstrating the ideas of Latin and sharing key elements of our model with others (such as fellow educators, policy makers, etc.)?

Instant Decision Day



washingtonlatinpcs
Washington, D.C.



STRATEGIC PLANNING



12,000,000 likes



#accepted #igotin #collegebound



THE PLANNING PROCESS



Our planning process has been grounded in who we are: inclusive and relational, aspirational yet pragmatic.

In 2022-23, Washington Latin Public Charter Schools embarked on a systematic strategic planning process to identify current needs and future possibilities in order to establish clear priorities and goals to serve as a roadmap for the next three years.

❖ ***Inclusive and relational*** - Hundreds of community members participated in the process through focus groups, individual interviews, and detailed surveys. This initial feedback flowed into a collaborative planning process that ultimately led to four priorities for which each member of the Latin leadership and faculty shares responsibility.

❖ ***Aspirational*** - We used the icon from the first Latin Way principle, Fall in Love with Enduring Ideas, as the touchstone for this plan. As the icon shows, our aspirations are beautiful and far away, like the sun. Reaching them takes concerted, collective work.



❖ ***Focused and Pragmatic*** - While reaching for the highest aspirations, this plan reflects a disciplined approach to remain focused on the most critical improvement priorities, with clearly articulated theories of action and specific, measurable goals so we can measure our progress and hold ourselves accountable. This strategic plan outlines an ambitious vision and how to make deliberate and meaningful progress over the next three years. It focuses on our most critical improvement priorities, identifying specific and measurable goals that build our capacity for continuous improvement and increased accountability, and outlines the steps necessary to get there.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Washington Latin Strategic Priorities 2023-2026

Priority 1

Challenge ALL learners to grow and achieve rigorous standards of excellence through collective responsibility and differentiated support.

Priority 2

Fulfill the founding idea of Latin as a truly diverse and integrated community that is accessible, equitable, and inclusive for all students, families, faculty, leaders, and board members.

Priority 3

Articulate and more deeply implement Latin's beliefs about human flourishing as the aim of education

Priority 4

Ensure long-term fiscal, operational, human, and cultural sustainability as we continue to expand our impact.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1



Challenge all learners

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1



Challenge ALL learners to grow and achieve rigorous standards of excellence through collective responsibility and differentiated support.

The most central goal of our organization is to ensure that all our students can be successful and flourish, both academically and personally, while enrolled at Latin.

For students to perform at their highest level, we must offer academically rigorous programming, provide appropriate support and interventions as needed, and ensure that students feel a sense of belonging in our community. This priority is at the heart of our work, with particular focus on ensuring that our lowest performing students make exceptional academic progress and that there is a consistently high level of rigor in all content areas and across all grades.

This priority relies on teaching excellence. We are therefore committed to ensuring that Teaching in the Latin Way, outlining our vision for teaching excellence, is our shared language as well as the standard around which our training and evaluation programs are organized.

GOALS

- Strive to ensure that all students make significant academic growth, and our lowest-performing students make exceptional growth, so that all students leave middle school on grade level.
- Ensure academic rigor for all students across all core content area classes.

TEACHING IN THE

Washington Latin relies on excellent teaching, a statement virtually any school could make. What sets our school apart from many public schools today is a commitment to granting our faculty a degree of autonomy in the classroom, reflecting our respect for them as decision-makers and intellectuals.



At Washington Latin, there are **no pre-designed curricula**, other than the topics and approach demanded by Advanced Placement courses.

We have long sought to achieve academic **consistency and rigor through shared philosophies** rather than standardized texts and materials.

Crucial to this approach is a **shared understanding of those philosophical beliefs**, particularly important during periods of growth and change.

LATIN WAY

Teaching in the Latin Way expresses our vision of excellent teaching.

In this framework, six “universal” beliefs anchor the whole - universal in that they stem from one’s deepest values and can apply to situations outside of the classroom. Under each universal belief are four to five pedagogical beliefs that are applicable to the classroom specifically. Each of these belief is expressed through behaviors or teacher “moves” that we consider to represent excellent teaching practices.

Universal Belief #1

We all possess inherent dignity, which is the foundation for trust.

Universal Belief #2

We can all progress, with humility and support, on our paths towards a fuller humanity.

Universal Belief #3

We form our character by learning to live harmoniously in a community. .

Universal Belief #4

We pursue enduring truths by inviting and questioning a diversity of views.

Universal Belief #5

We live in a world of beauty and mystery; there is so much to know and love.

Universal Belief #6

We are not born for ourselves alone.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2



A diverse and integrated community

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2



Fulfill the founding idea of Latin as a truly diverse & integrated community that is accessible, equitable, and inclusive for all students, families, faculty, leaders, and board members.

Our vision is for a diverse and integrated community.

A diversity of ideas - and thus a community of students with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and beliefs - is essential for our classical education model. We believe that a school that encourages respectful engagement with different ideas may be an answer to increasing racial polarization, political tribalism, and a lack of civil discourse and engagement.

We have work to do to realize our vision and commitment to being a truly accessible, equitable, and inclusive community, in which people from all backgrounds feel a sense of belonging and can flourish. As such, we are prioritizing diversity, equity and inclusion work for our Latin community through targeted programming that emphasizes open dialogue and increased cultural awareness.

GOALS

- Increase the diversity of our student enrollment.
- Engage families of enrolled students with varied programming that supports our diverse community and builds connections across differences.
- Build a more diverse leadership through targeted recruitment, retention and development of faculty of color.

DIVERSE AND

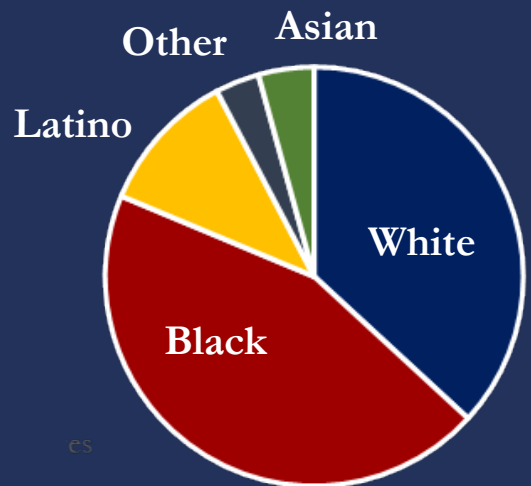
Since our founding, Washington Latin has been diverse by design, enrolling students from all eight Wards of DC and closely mirroring the racial demographics of the District.

We have seen a decline in the diversity of our student enrollment in recent years. **Ensuring our school is accessible is a key part of our mission**, particularly for communities that are less likely to have access to our classical, liberal arts model.

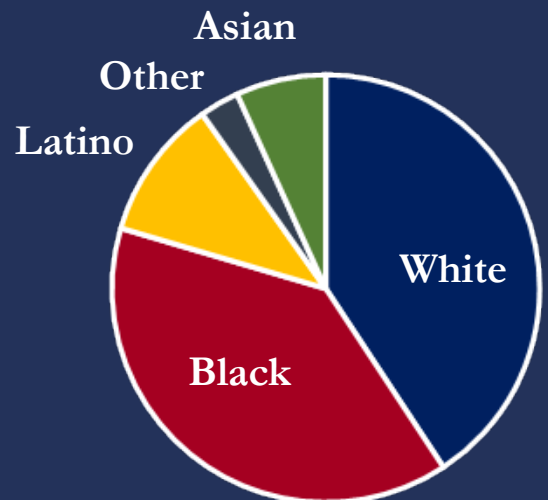
We are committed to **increasing the racial and socio-economic diversity** in our student body to include more students from historically underserved communities, as well as for our faculty and staff to better reflect the demographics of our students.

With the DC-wide **Equitable Access Preference**, for which Latin advocated and immediately adopted after DC Council passage, we are able to enroll a higher percentage of eligible students at both campuses.

Washington DC



Washington Latin



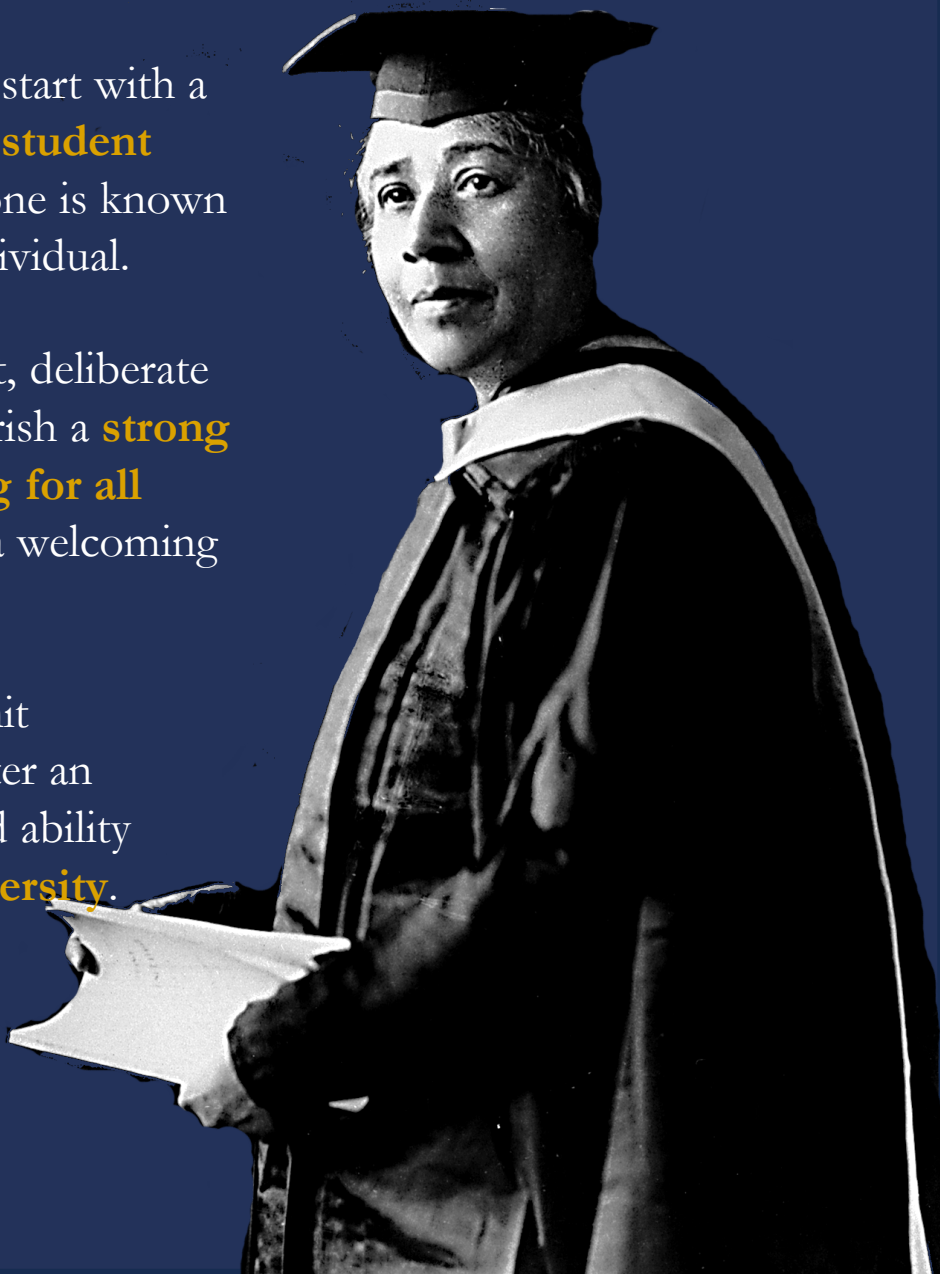
INTEGRATED

Diversity is not an end unto itself, however. We begin with diversity but **aim for the ideal of a truly integrated community**, one that recognizes the value of diversity; works to eliminate barriers, prejudice and discrimination; and ultimately fosters a community where every person can flourish.

To achieve this, we start with a **deliberately small student body**, where everyone is known as a scholar and individual.

We make significant, deliberate investments to nourish a **strong sense of belonging for all** students and build a welcoming community.

Within this close-knit community, we foster an appreciation for and ability to **work within diversity**.





STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3



*Focus on human flourishing as
the aim of education*

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3



Articulate and more deeply implement Latin's beliefs about human flourishing as the aim of education.

Latin is a voice for a different kind of education in the nation's capital, where the purpose is intellectual and moral formation for students and adults.

Our philosophical principles, pedagogical approach and relational norms enable us to facilitate connections across lines of difference and make it possible to have authentic discourse and engagement.

At the heart of Latin's classical model is our signature pedagogy, the Socratic Seminar. Through the Seminar, Latin invites faculty and students into an exchange that deepens their thinking.

The Socratic Seminar is our engine for change; it uniquely promotes intellectual and moral development, both for students and faculty. We want to show the power of civil discourse and engagement with challenging moral questions.

GOALS

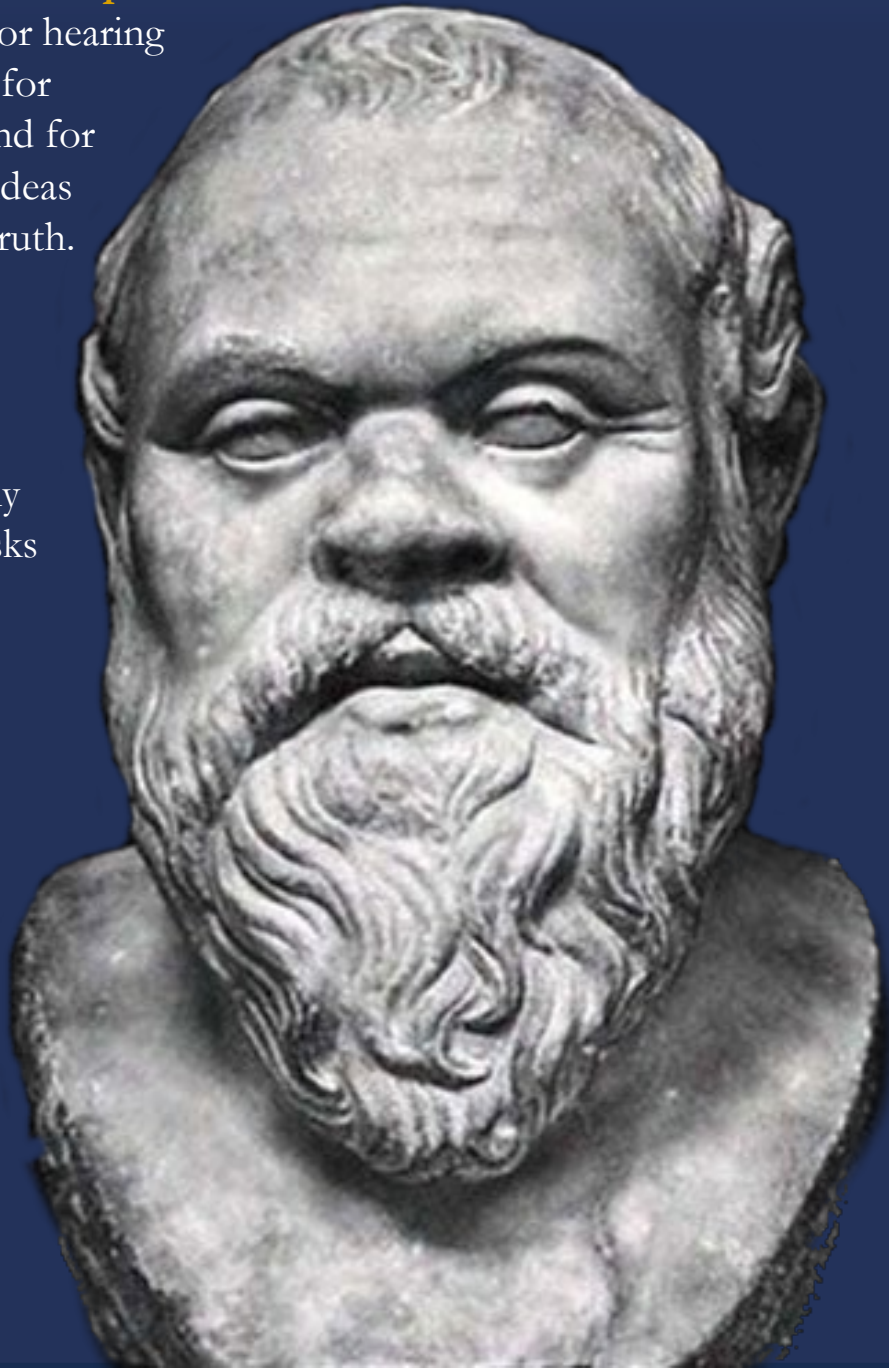
- Broaden and deepen our education of Latin's faculty in *The Latin Way*.
- Inspire more teachers and leaders, locally and nationally, to embrace the Seminar as a means for deepening thought and developing character.

THE SOCRATIC

Through examining a moral question, the Socratic Seminar provides a space and practice for experiencing nuanced ideas, potentially conflicting opinions, and dissenting beliefs.

Both facilitator and participant grow their capacity for hearing different perspectives, for tolerating ambiguity, and for suspending their own ideas in pursuit of a higher truth.

The exchange of ideas requires that each participant speak clearly and listen intently; it asks that all participants acknowledge the presence and worth of the other, and calls on everyone to **be informed, reasoned, and flexible in their opinions.**



SEMINAR

We are keenly aware of the need for our young people to be accomplished in this kind of discussion, given the fractious state of the world they will soon enter as adults.



A good seminar can expose, complicate, and ultimately clarify a participant's thinking. Seminars have been used for centuries as a way to engage students in deep discussions of issues that matter. Through the use of the Seminar, we aim to teach the values of respectful dissent, decency, civility, and connection.

Done well, the Socratic Seminar can become the cornerstone of a school's character development program, thus uniting academics and character work.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4



*Long-term fiscal, operational, human, and
cultural sustainability*

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4



Ensure long-term fiscal, operational, human, cultural sustainability as we continue to minimize risk and expand our impact.

We are committed to building and sustaining our organization to support Latin’s mission and vision, especially through this period of expansion and change.

This includes ensuring the organization’s overall fiscal sustainability, optimizing our operational systems, and - above all - ensuring that our faculty are provided the resources they need and have opportunities to flourish.

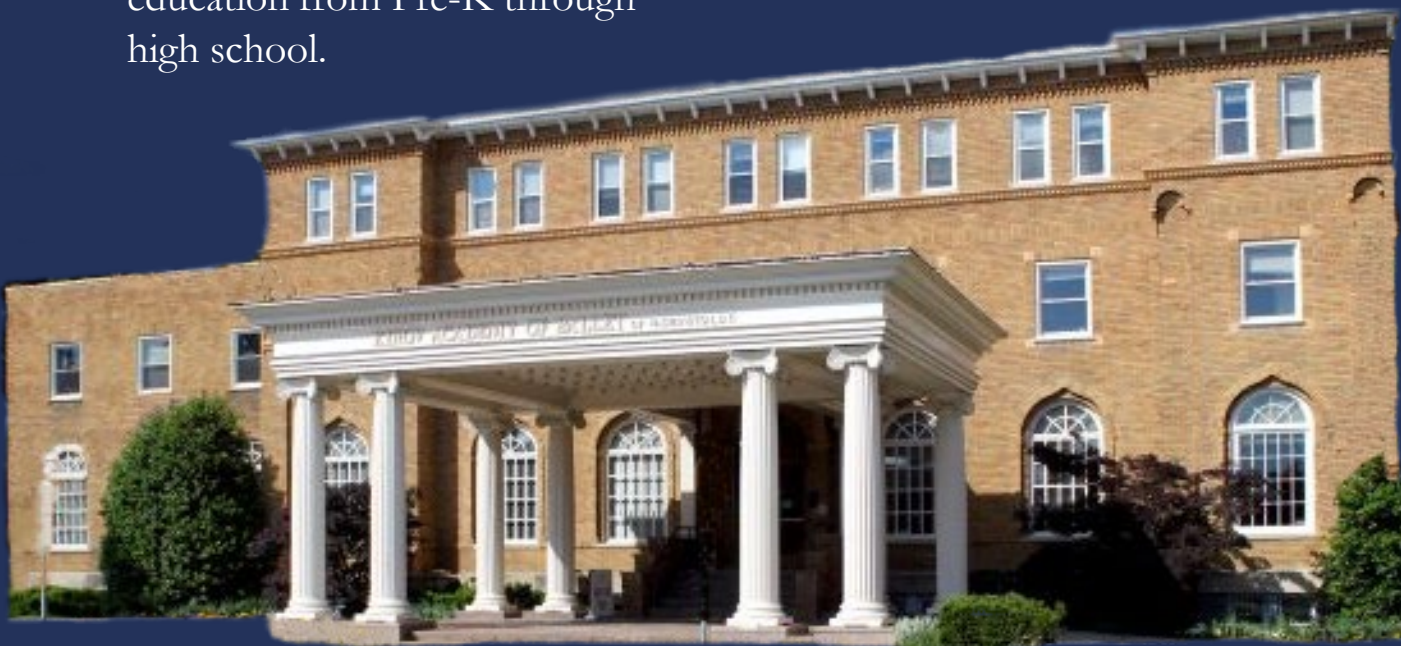
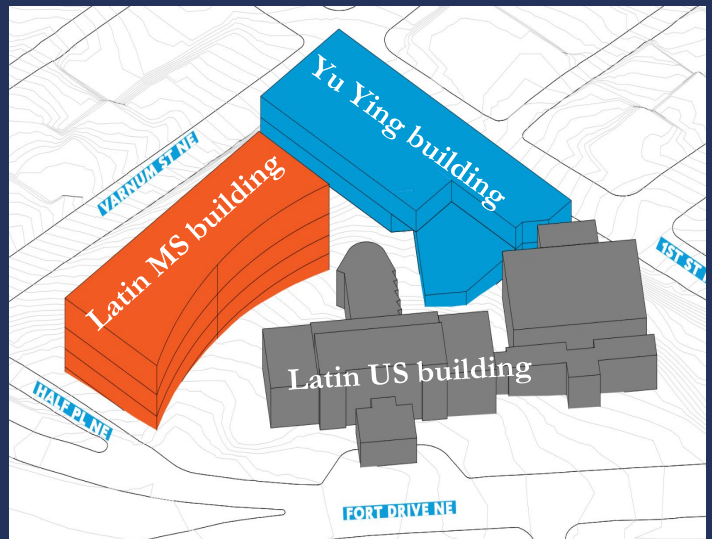
GOALS

- Maintain and expand our commitment to creating a sustainable workplace for all in order to support the recruitment, retention, and development of dedicated, diverse, and excellent faculty in service of our mission.
- Diversify our sources of revenue to achieve our fundraising targets. Make fundraising a broadly shared and supported goal.
- Evaluate our current operational platforms and processes to support the increasing needs of our growing organization and identify the most pressing priorities.

THE FUTURE

In September 2022, Washington Latin had the rare opportunity to purchase a school site in Ward 5 of DC, the future permanent home of our Anna Julia Cooper Campus.

To make this purchase feasible and leverage the opportunity to create a state-of-the-art learning campus, Latin has partnered with Washington Yu Ying Public Charter School to purchase and develop the site at 4301 Harewood Road NE in Ward 5, formerly the Kirov Academy of Ballet. Working together, we will reimagine the site as a public school campus that will provide a high-quality education from Pre-K through high school.



OF LATIN



The purchase, new building construction and renovation of the historic structure is an investment of more than \$50 million. The project due to be completed by the fall of 2025. This will be the home of all grades for the Cooper Campus.



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