

# *Anchored in Excellence*

Long Term Strategy for Success



SARAH RAWSON SMITH

## *Who We Are*



*a neighborhood school  
with a strong tradition of  
academic excellence  
and student success*

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**S**ARAH RAWSON SMITH ELEMENTARY prides itself as a neighborhood school with a strong tradition of academic excellence and student success. Our students' test scores rank consistently among the top elementary schools in the state and we have been honored as a Georgia School of Excellence and a National Blue Ribbon School. In July 2006, the school was authorized as an International Baccalaureate World School, offering the highly respected Primary Years Programme.

It is our intent to deliver the very best instructional program possible to our students. Our curriculum is extensive, including effective student assistance programs, tutoring, and a variety of enrichment opportunities. We are proud of our students. They continue to achieve at high levels and make significant contributions to our school community. Just as important as academic excellence, a heavy emphasis is placed on citizenship, character development, and international-mindedness, as evidenced through our International Baccalaureate Program.

The faculty and staff are committed to excellence. We are recognized for this commitment at the local, state, national, and international levels. We have been named the Top Elementary School in Atlanta by Atlanta Magazine, a Georgia School of Excellence, a National Blue Ribbon School, and an International Baccalaureate World School. Sarah Smith has a highly talented and passionate faculty, and we are dedicated to taking the necessary steps to continue to attract and retain the best teachers, administrators and staff in the years ahead.

Strong parental and community support enhances the quality of education at Sarah Smith Elementary. Sarah Smith parents care profoundly about Sarah Smith's culture and environment, about our teachers, and about the learning environment their children are provided. It is this "stake" that parents and community members have in our school that sets Sarah Smith apart, and helps the school achieve a level of excellence that is unique.

SARAH RAWSON SMITH

*Past, Present, Future*

*a community*

*where learning is a passion,*

*excellence is achieved,*

*and dreams are realized.*



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**S**ARAH RAWSON SMITH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL today is at an extraordinary place in its 50+ year history. Since the school was first established in 1954, the school, and the community supporting it, have seen a tremendous amount of change, but perhaps never as sweeping and far-reaching as the change our school community has experienced in the last few years. From the 1990's, when a dedicated group of parents committed their efforts to turn Sarah Smith back into a neighborhood school serving its immediate community, our community's support of our school has continued to grow. In return, Sarah Smith has been very generous in paying our community back. The Sarah Smith community now encompasses many of the most sought-after neighborhoods in Atlanta.

Looking ahead, our biggest challenge will be preserving, and continuing to build on Sarah Smith's excellence, given a rapidly growing and changing community around us. Our school is at a pivotal point, and how we address the opportunities and challenges in the next few years will define the school's continued success for many years to come.

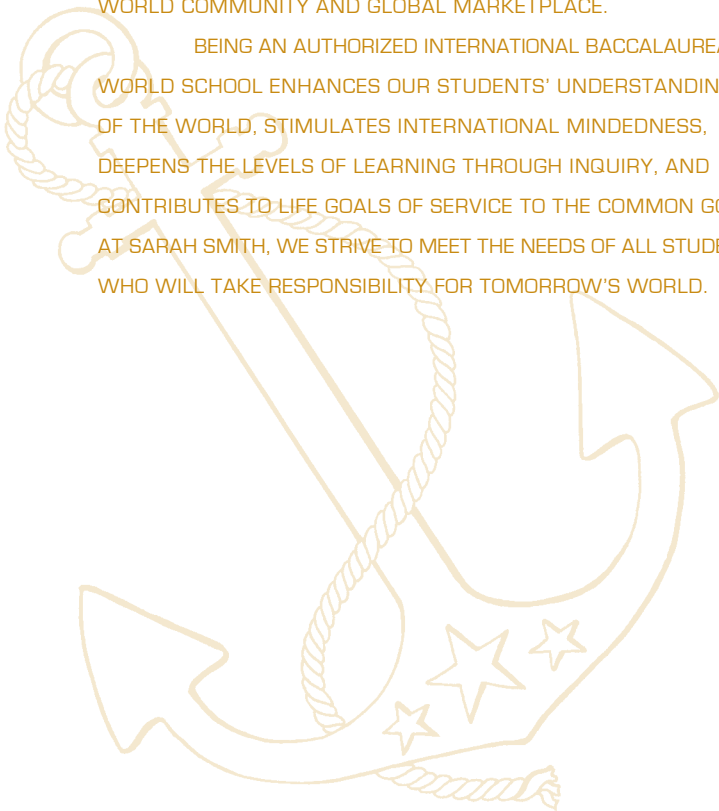
Recognizing the importance of ensuring Sarah Smith's continued success through proactive assessment and planning, a Strategic Planning Committee made up of Sarah Smith parents, faculty and community members was formed at the request of Dr. Sidney Baker, principal, in January, 2007. The Committee conducted an information gathering effort consisting of an online survey with Sarah Smith parents in the Spring of 2007, a similar survey of Sarah Smith faculty and staff in the Fall of 2008, and a series of parent focus groups, conducted in Spring of 2008.

Based on the research findings, Sarah Smith Elementary School has three core strategies, each with pertinent objectives for the school in the years ahead, as outlined in this plan. One of the principal features of the Strategic Plan is its accountability. The school's leadership team has developed and will maintain a set of specific action steps that will drive the success of this plan. An annual review will further aid the commitment to maintain strategies that are continually relevant. These strategies will help us build upon the promise and possibilities of the Sarah Smith Elementary School vision: to be a "community where learning is a passion, excellence is achieved, and dreams are realized."

*Provide all Sarah Smith students with a world-class academic foundation.*

A RICH EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE INCLUDES BOTH CHALLENGING CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES AND INTERACTION WITH A STIMULATING SOCIAL EXPERIENCE. THE SARAH SMITH CURRICULUM IS BASED ON THE GEORGIA PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND ENHANCED THROUGH THE PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAM OF THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE ORGANIZATION. TODAY'S STUDENTS NEED TO BE RESOURCEFUL PROBLEM SOLVERS IN A RAPIDLY EVOLVING WORLD COMMUNITY AND GLOBAL MARKETPLACE.

BEING AN AUTHORIZED INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE WORLD SCHOOL ENHANCES OUR STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD, STIMULATES INTERNATIONAL MINDEDNESS, DEEPENS THE LEVELS OF LEARNING THROUGH INQUIRY, AND CONTRIBUTES TO LIFE GOALS OF SERVICE TO THE COMMON GOOD. AT SARAH SMITH, WE STRIVE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS WHO WILL TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR TOMORROW'S WORLD.



OBJECTIVES

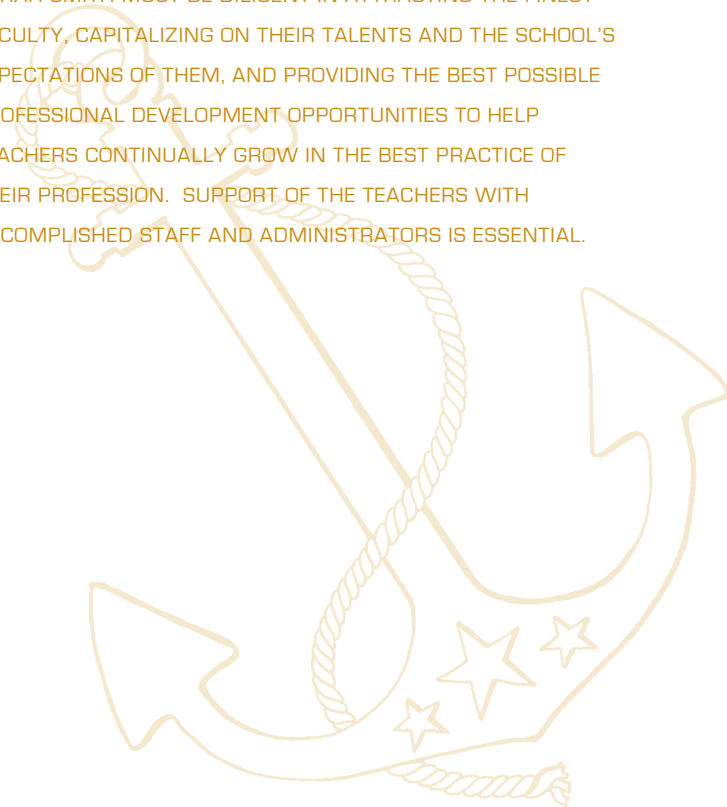
- Create and maintain a unified and sequential curriculum scope and sequence that will ensure the content of the Georgia Performance Standards is delivered in challenging and developmentally appropriate methods, while using the IB PYP framework.
- Balance and enhance students' focus on core instructional academic areas with a complementary focus on fine arts, health & wellness education, community service, and leadership development.
- Ensure curriculum is consistently executed across all grade levels.
- Utilize best practices and instructional resources in all academic settings.
- Engage parents in various ways that promote support of academics at home.
- Maintain an optimal learning environment that allows for greatest student success in an intimate, safe and secure environment.
- Offer quality technology instruction and opportunities for its use by students in order to prepare them for today's technological world.
- Enhance the passion for learning through a curriculum that addresses the whole child.

*Establish Sarah Smith as the elementary school recognized as having the best faculty, staff, and administrators in Atlanta.*

THE QUALITY OF THE FACULTY LIES AT THE HEART OF SARAH SMITH'S REPUTATION FOR EXCELLENCE. OUR FACULTY BRINGS EXCEPTIONAL ACADEMIC BACKGROUNDS INTO THE CLASSROOM, HAS A PASSION FOR INSTRUCTING AND SUPPORTING CHILDREN, AND IS COMMITTED TO ON-GOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. TO MAINTAIN AND BUILD ON THIS TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE, SARAH SMITH MUST BE DILIGENT IN ATTRACTING THE FINEST FACULTY, CAPITALIZING ON THEIR TALENTS AND THE SCHOOL'S EXPECTATIONS OF THEM, AND PROVIDING THE BEST POSSIBLE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP TEACHERS CONTINUALLY GROW IN THE BEST PRACTICE OF THEIR PROFESSION. SUPPORT OF THE TEACHERS WITH ACCOMPLISHED STAFF AND ADMINISTRATORS IS ESSENTIAL.

#### OBJECTIVES

- Attract, recruit, and retain a passionate and talented faculty (or teachers, staff and administration.)
- Provide professional development and growth opportunities for the faculty and staff to advance the school's academic mission and enhance the educational experience in the classroom.
- Energize and sustain a culture which promotes strong professional relationships among all of the faculty and staff and one in which support is offered to all, by all.
- Have teachers develop and demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the learning process, instructional methods, and assessments through professional development and research of current best practices.
- Expand the merit components offered to faculty and staff, which would help promote teacher job satisfaction and provide for a supportive work environment, acknowledging that the recognition of quality instruction by faculty is critical.
- Foster, recognize, and celebrate faculty initiatives that benefit the school and further the achievement of the school's mission.

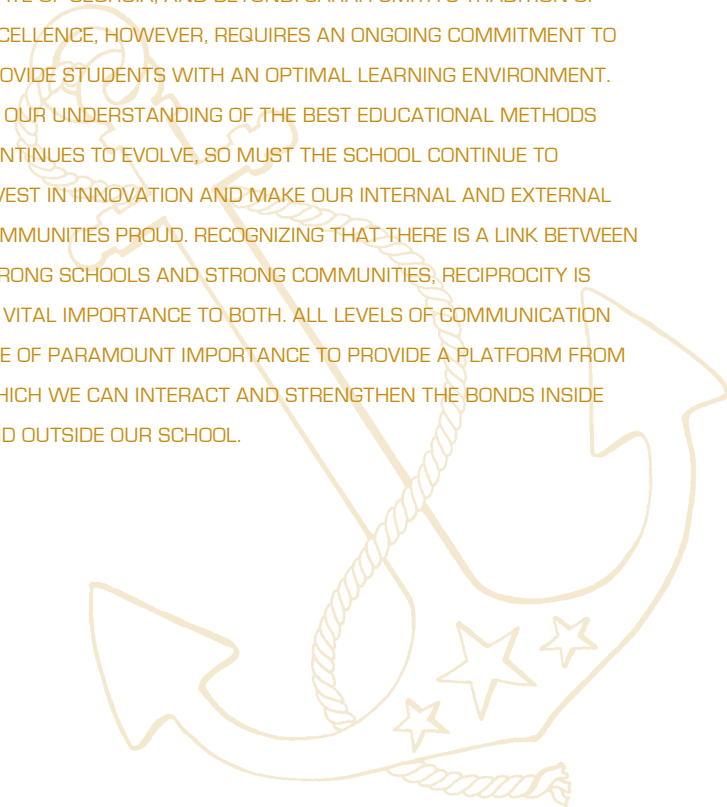


## *Contribute to the vitality of our community within our halls and beyond our doors.*

SARAH SMITH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CALLS FOR ALL OF ITS CONSTITUENTS – STUDENTS, FACULTY, STAFF, ADMINISTRATION, PARENTS, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS – TO STRIVE FOR THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT AND CHARACTER. THE SCHOOL VALUES ITS EXCEPTIONAL ACADEMIC RECORD, ITS NEIGHBORHOOD CAMPUS, AND ITS FINE REPUTATION WITHIN THE CITY OF ATLANTA, STATE OF GEORGIA, AND BEYOND. SARAH SMITH'S TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE, HOWEVER, REQUIRES AN ONGOING COMMITMENT TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH AN OPTIMAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT. AS OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE BEST EDUCATIONAL METHODS CONTINUES TO EVOLVE, SO MUST THE SCHOOL CONTINUE TO INVEST IN INNOVATION AND MAKE OUR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNITIES PROUD. RECOGNIZING THAT THERE IS A LINK BETWEEN STRONG SCHOOLS AND STRONG COMMUNITIES, RECIPROCITY IS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO BOTH. ALL LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION ARE OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE TO PROVIDE A PLATFORM FROM WHICH WE CAN INTERACT AND STRENGTHEN THE BONDS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OUR SCHOOL.

### OBJECTIVES

- Encourage leadership among faculty, students, and families.
- Advance the school's commitment to community service.
- Promote active involvement in the school by encouraging parents to become engaged by giving their time, talent, energy, and financial support in furtherance of the school's mission and goals.
- Work to further strengthen this bond by encouraging community support of Sarah Smith through financial support, including in-kind donations and in return actively show Sarah Smith's appreciation for this support.
- Value, preserve, and promote the school's strong, positive culture and environment.
- Actively communicate the school's achievements and successes through the community.
- Commit to continual improvement of communications inside and outside the school.
- Support the local public schools by strengthening connections with the middle and high schools served by Sarah Rawson Smith Elementary.



## *Sarah Smith Elementary Strategic Plan*

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR INVALUABLE  
ASSISTANCE IN DEVELOPING OUR STRATEGIC PLAN.

### STRATEGIC PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE

Dr. Sidney Baker, *Chair*  
Anne DelCore  
Adrian Epps  
Allyson Hage  
Beth Hoffman  
Mark Hoffman  
Tricia Israel  
Kim Lewis  
Greg Lowery  
Stacey McGrath  
Lori Oliver  
Elizabeth Payne  
Helen Rogers  
Tricia Skaggs  
Tommy Usher  
David White

### RESEARCH TEAM

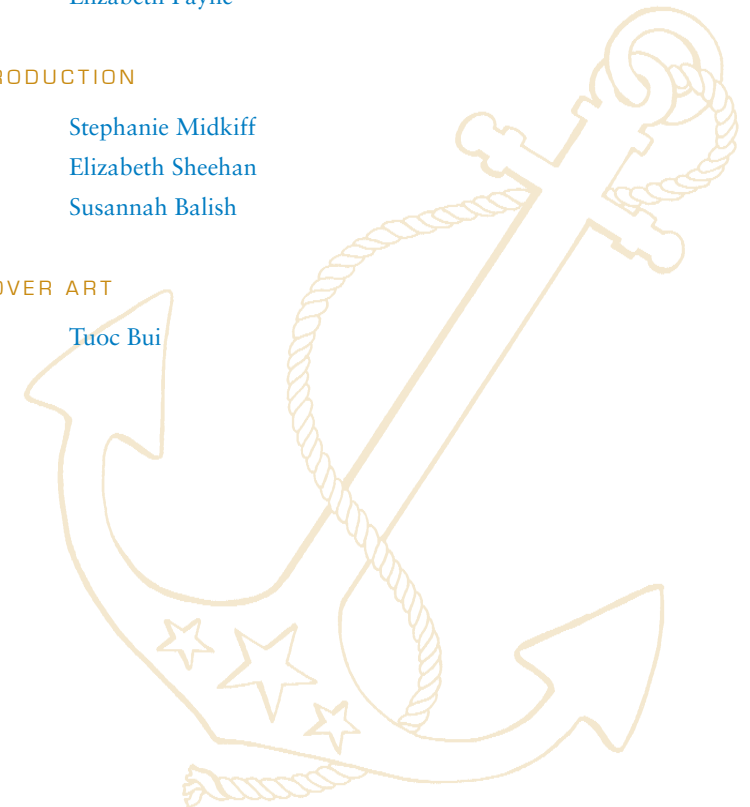
Anne DelCore  
Russell Harrell  
Beth Hoffman  
Andrea Leonard  
Stacey McGrath  
Stephanie Midkiff  
Elizabeth Payne

### PRODUCTION

Stephanie Midkiff  
Elizabeth Sheehan  
Susannah Balish

### COVER ART

Tuoc Bui



### VISION

The vision of Sarah Smith Elementary School is a community where learning is a passion, excellence is achieved, and dreams are realized.

### MISSION

The mission of Sarah Smith Elementary School is to promote a safe, nurturing environment grounded in a relevant, comprehensive curriculum. With a commitment to excellence, our staff will strive to ensure that students become critical thinkers, life-long learners, and responsible citizens in a global community.

### BELIEFS

- Students are our focus.
- Individuals are unique and valuable and must be treated with equality, dignity and respect.
- Every student has the ability to learn and the right to a quality education.
- A quality education meets the needs of individual learners.
- All members of the school community serve as role models by practicing professional ethics.
- Learning is a life-long process.
- Children are our greatest resource and the key to our future.

