

Cristo Rey Atlanta Jesuit High School

Strategic Plan

Adopted May 2018

Cristo Rey helps young women and men become intellectually competent, religious, work experienced, open to growth, committed to justice, and loving. We want graduates who live according to their conscience and practice compassion, they have sparked the fire of change in their lives, their communities, and their whole world. And they do so in the name of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

When you join the Cristo Rey community, you become part of an educational tradition that is over 450 years old. The hope, the entire reason that the Society of Jesus invested itself in the education of young people, was because we believed then, and believe now, that the best way to follow the blueprint for building the Kingdom of God found in the Gospel is to help people realize the vast potential they possess. This desire to help people become the human beings that God created them to be, and in that becoming to give glory to God, is the spark that has ignited the educational flame that we of Cristo Rey have been entrusted with keeping.

The need for this type of education of excellence and care has attracted a whole community of people dedicated to fulfilling this challenge; a caring and skilled staff dedicated to the craft of teaching, a loyal and ardent community who experience the school as a home, parents who support the school and its mission, and, of course students who breathe life and spirit into the school to make it a warm and accepting place. All of these diverse groups come together to make the flame of the Spirit burn even brighter.

A Jesuit education is based on *cura personalis*, the care of the individual person. By modelling the care God has for each person, we seek to help every student fuel, ignite, and stoke the fire that dwells within every human person. In doing this we seek to create men and women who live most fully when they live not for themselves, but for others. We seek to deliver an educational experience that goes beyond academic achievements by helping young people become open to seeking and finding God in new and unexpected places, celebrating the life of the mind, entering into and nurturing their relationship with God, coming to an understanding that they are loved by God and living the Gospel value of Justice.

The document you now hold represents our communal attempt to speak about our plans to ensure that the fire of the Gospel entrusted to us burns brightly now and into the future.

Ite, inflamate omnia.

1. Quality of the educational experience that is Cristo Rey

A. Educational results

- I. Academic Achievement – The goal of Cristo Rey Atlanta is for students to acquire the knowledge and skills to graduate from high school, attend college, and persist through to college graduation. During their high school years, students need to acquire specific knowledge, skills, and competencies that will give them the tools to succeed in high school and college. Many of our incoming freshmen arrive at CRA behind academically, and even those who begin freshman year academically prepared do not necessarily possess the study skills to successfully take on the rigors of a college prep high school program. To ensure students are ready to enter college prepared to persist and graduate, the faculty and

administration must help students develop the habits of mind and work that lead to academic success. The faculty works to prepare students to succeed at CRA in the following ways:

- i. The majority of CRA freshmen students do not have the foundational math skills in place (determined by students taking a pre-Algebra math test upon entering CRA) to succeed in Algebra 1, so all freshmen take a math foundations class. The measurable outcome will be for CRA to increase the number of students who pass the Algebra 1 End-of-Course test with a 70% until 85% of students pass the test annually. The current pass rate for the class of 2020, the current sophomores, was 80%.
 - ii. Writing well is a critical high school and college skill, and CRA English teachers vertically align writing instruction and expect students to demonstrate appropriate grade-level writing skills. The rigor of writing expectations increases each year with writing projects graded by standards that are specific for each grade level. The measurable outcome to assess whether the writing program has been successful will be determined by 90% of students achieving a score of 8 or higher (out of a possible score of 12) on the Writing portion of the ACT taken in the fall of senior year. In the class of 2018, 92% of students earned a 6 or higher, and 42% earned an 8 or higher on Writing portion of the October ACT test.
 - iii. Advanced Placement (AP) classes help bridge the gap between high school and college, and all CRA students are required to take a minimum of three AP classes before they graduate from our school. The required AP classes are in science, English, and computer science. These classes prepare students for the academic rigor they will encounter in college. The measurable goal is for every CRA student to pass at least one AP test with a score of 3 or higher (out of a possible 5) before they graduate from our school. With the class of 2018's junior year AP tests, 30% of the students passed at least one AP test with a score of 3 or better.
 - iv. Student conscientiousness and diligence toward academic tasks predict college persistence, so CRA faculty and staff hold students to be accountable to complete and turn in assignments. Appropriate discipline, counseling, and academic support is imposed when students do not demonstrate the maturity and skills to achieve a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 80, the grade threshold that predicts academic persistence to graduate college. The school goal is for 85% of students to have a cumulative GPA of 80 by the time they finish senior year. In the class of 2018, the current seniors, 83% of students have a GPA of 80 or higher.
- II. ACT results - One measure of academic achievement that affects college acceptance and scholarship amounts is the score student earns on the ACT. The class of 2018 achieved an ACT average that was 4.6 higher than was predicted their freshman year. CRA is working to ensure all students achieve a junior year ACT score that is 4.5 points higher than was predicted for the students when they took an ACT-like test in their freshman year. Cristo Rey Atlanta will help students achieve 4.5 points of ACT growth from freshman to junior year by incorporating the following into the academic day:
- i. Creating faculty awareness of the specific knowledge and skills tested on the ACT test through faculty PD.
 - ii. Using released ACT questions in classes to help bridge the gap between the curriculum taught and the ACT
 - iii. ACT test-prep class for all juniors
 - iv. Calculators for all students while at Cristo Rey and after they graduate

III. Develop an Ignatian Curriculum- Develop the nature and rigor of an academic curriculum in the Jesuit tradition by:

- i. Encouraging independent, creative, critical and reflective thinking.
- ii. Continue to emphasize the pursuit of intellectual and emotional growth and understanding that leads to the discovery of God in all things.
- iii. Promote a preparedness in graduates for a more globalized future by drawing on our national and international Jesuit network.
- iv. Encourage in students the ability to discern fundamental truths and instill in them a love of lifelong learning.
- v. Develop a strong commitment to environmental sustainability that reflects the Gospel's call to respect and be responsible stewards of God's creation.

B. CWS

- I. Greater corporate satisfaction with the quality and level of contribution from the students Corporate Work Study Partnerships are both the primary source of revenue for the school and a key educational experience for all Cristo Rey students. It is therefore incumbent upon the entire staff to prepare students to excel in the workplace to ensure the success of program.

To ensure that CWS partners continue their support of Cristo Rey, student employees must produce work of tangible value for their employers. CWS jobs are billed as FTE positions, but will likely be among the first to be cut in an economic downturn unless students are contributing measurable benefit to partner companies.

Currently, approximately half of our students are doing work that would have to be covered by other employees, while the other half are doing more busy work. We need all students to be doing meaningful work.

Ensuring that all students add measurable value to their CWS positions can be done in the following ways:

- i. CWS staff work with Academics to plan a robust Summer Academy for incoming freshmen, and Business Training Institute for all students;
- ii. CWS staff plan and execute a meaningful curriculum for 9th-12th graders to reinforce workforce skills throughout the school year;
- iii. Further computer training be incorporated into all grade level curriculum;
- iv. CWS staff work with the Dean of Discipline and ALL members of the faculty and staff to ensure that students develop professional habits, including proper attire, timeliness, eye contact, etc.
- v. All members of the Cristo Rey faculty and staff participate in Draft Day, CWS Orientation and other events when possible to ensure that faculty feel a part of the CWS experience that their students are having.
- vi. CWS staff will work with companies that are under-utilizing our students to maximize the output of our students.

2. Forge a common vision and share culture among faculty and staff

A. Background/Why is this important:

I. Cristo Rey's success depends in large measure on the ability of faculty and staff to trust one another and to work together for a common goal. Agreement on the goal and the methodology to achieve the goal will enhance the effectiveness of the effort.

B. Current State

- I. There is wide-spread agreement among faculty and staff that we are a *Catholic learning community that educates young people of limited economic means, of any faith or creed, to become men and women for and with others. Through a rigorous college preparatory curriculum, integrated with a relevant work study experience, students graduate prepared for college and life.* However, the methodology to achieve this goal is not universally shared. Many argue that one or more domain of the whole person is not being adequately address – academics, athletics, spiritual, emotional. Trust issues among and between faculty and staff persist.

C. Measurable Objectives:

- I. Cristo Rey will establish and promote a culture of trust among all employees

- i. Year round team building exercises will take place, including the formation of a “sunshine committee” to recognize special occasions as well as three scheduled team building days during the year and several optional evening and/or weekend events
- ii. Faculty and staff will be given opportunities to explore difference in race, culture, economic conditions and religion
- iii. Sensitivity training will be made available to all who wish to participate and required for those who demonstrate gross unawareness of their own biases
- iv. More time will be allocated for staff to come together to discuss issues of common concern
- v. Staff will be invited to serve as an advisor to a cohort of 14 students and meet with this cohort on an individual and group basis during the year
- vi. Efforts will be enhanced to hire a more diverse faculty and staff
- vii. Staff members actively opposing the culture of trust will be counseled and if they fail to make progress will be dismissed

II. Students will graduate having inculcated the Jesuit Grad at Grad values (how measure)

- i. Students will be afforded opportunities to understand and value the cultural differences of their fellow school mates
- ii. Students will be exposed continually to the grad at grad values and given opportunities to put them into action
- iii. A peer mentoring program will be established whereby freshmen will have a junior or senior to help them integrate into the culture at Cristo Rey
- iv. CR will explore a Saturday option for re-directing student behavior
- v. Cristo Rey will promote awareness of the school’s heritage and identity as a Catholic, Jesuit institution.
- vi. Encourage the Jesuit provincial to maintain a strong Jesuit presence at Cristo Rey.

3. Instill a spirit of continuous improvement among faculty and staff

A. Growth

- I. Cristo Rey Atlanta has enjoyed enormous success during first four years of existence. On nearly all CRN measures for which we are eligible, Cristo Rey Atlanta is in the top three schools in the nation. While this success is wonderful for our community and students, we must continue to improve to maximize the opportunities for our students and to secure the future of the institution.

Therefore, Cristo Rey will redouble its efforts at continuous improvement, specifically we will

- i. Continue to host debriefing sessions after major Cristo Rey events (open house, enrollment, draft day, college night, etc) to solicit input from participant on improving the quality of future events.
- ii. Initiate a bi-monthly continuous improvement forum for admissions, campus ministry, human resources, CWS and Facilities/transportation in FY19. Forum details include:
 - i. Senior staff expected to attend forum; other staff invited as relevant; parents, students, volunteers and board members may be invited
 - ii. PPT prepared by lead staff and circulated to all forum attendees a week prior to the forum
 - iii. Lead staff, in conjunction with supervisor, identifies target areas for the forum
 - iv. Action plans developed at the forum with timeline and measurable objectives
 - v. Updates circulated to forum attendees periodically after the forum
- II. In FY20 conduct monthly forums adding academics, development, finance, athletics and communications to the departments to be reviewed

4. **Continue to secure the financial stability of Cristo Rey**

A. Financial state of the school

- I. The financial stability of Cristo Rey Atlanta Jesuit is of paramount importance to the longevity of the institution and should be of the highest priority to the Board of Trustees and Senior Staff of the school.

Without financial stability, the school will be unable to fulfill its mission. Furthermore, the school must prepare for a future economic downturn so that financial stability can be sustained in perpetuity.

The current financial state of the school is very strong, with a completed capital project, no debt, a growing list of donors and a small Endowment Fund.

Ensuring the financial stability of the school can be done in the following ways:

- II. Paid Corporate Work Study partnerships should constitute a minimum of 95% of all CWS positions;
- III. The Advancement Department should continue to raise \$2M in philanthropic donations annually;
- IV. The Advancement Department should set a goal of growing the Endowment Fund to \$10M by the end of 2020; and
- V. The Finance Department should continue to conduct an annual audit to ensure the strength and accuracy of the school's finances.

5. **Increase brand awareness within the Atlanta community**

A. Background/Why is this important:

- I. An increased awareness within the Atlanta community will ensure sustainability through continued CWS support, financial donations, volunteering and strong enrollment.

B. Current State:

- I. While we have enjoyed early success, we must continue to work diligently to increase the brand awareness of the school and continue to be engaged in the community that has so strongly welcomed us and our mission.

C. Plan for Future with Measurable Objectives:

- I. #iamCristoReyATL Marketing Campaign
- i. Goal- Increase awareness of the school while exploring the many components of the Cristo Rey community. What is our product (students), who are our supporters, how the business community can get involved
- ii. Launching in mid-April, a month prior to graduation, 30 day of media postings
- iii. Launching via social media outlets. Goal: 4,000 views, over 3 months

- iv. Video and Photo profiles will have a dedicated home on our website. Goal: 1,000 views, over 1 year

- II. Newsletters
 - i. Increase recipients from 4,200 (current number on Razors Edge) to
 - a. 6,000 recipients in year 1
 - b. 7,000 recipients in year 2
 - c. All Faculty & Staff should share contacts with Development to increase contacts in Raisers Edge

 - ii. Send out 6 newsletters per year

- III. Maintain number of stories/reports on media

- IV. Continue working with existing CWS partners to disseminate our school's mission through their internal channels.
 - i. Increase mentions in CWS internal newsletters from 5 to 10 in the first year
 - ii. Increase list of CWS Marketing/Communications Directors
 - a. from 18 to 30 year 1
 - b. from 30 to 50 year 2

- V. Work with corporate partners to engage and sponsor service projects with students
 - i. Increase service project sponsorship to 2 school wide service events – focus on positive impact they have had on our students and families

- VI. Work with business community leaders to increase their presence in our school. Good source of stories to publish/press releases/social media postings, support for teachers, learning experiences for students
 - i. in the classrooms – Economics, Science, and Math courses to bring in career perspective to students
 - a. 5 per year

 - ii. Coffee with Cristo Rey speakers
 - a. 7 in year 1

- VII. Continue CWS monthly newsletter to reach every CWS supervisor and company leader.

- VIII. All members of Faculty & Staff work together to ensure that students are in full and proper uniform. They are our brand!

- IX. Improve our mentor program to ensure we provide ample coverage safely and securely for those students wanting to engage in mentorships.
 - i. Establish a regular, monthly Mentor newsletter

- ii. Ensure that all students have a mentor who is fully engaged
 - iii. Explore hosting a Mentor only event where they can meet each other and share “best practices” around interaction with their mentees
- X. Grow our ministries that seek out those in the community in need and provide the dignity and pride deserved by all in forming these relationships.
- i. Continue to enhance the Come Worship with Me program
 - ii. Partner with organizations like Labra
- XI. Initiate a home visit program that seeks to meet with families in comfortable and loving spaces to help enrich the experience for the student as well as family here at Cristo Rey Atlanta.
- XII. Partner with organizations like Breakthrough Atlanta, C5 and others
- i. Set goal of partnering with other organizations who share our mission to justice throughout the year
- XIII. Continue to partner with feeder schools and local youth organizations to increase community awareness about the school and increase the number of applicants to the school
- i. Visit 40 of feeder schools/young programs each year
 - ii. Create events for Middle Schools to participate in at the Cristo Rey Gym facility.
- XIV. Continue to engage current parents in Open House and other Admissions programs to build community with our parent population
- XV. Continue to build volunteer opportunities for our parents
- i. Concessions at basketball and volleyball games
 - ii. Open House volunteers
 - iii. Chaperones for events
 - iv. Form a Parent Association

6. Cristo Rey Atlanta Jesuit High School will support 100% of its graduates while in college in order to ensure they graduate from a 4-year institution in a 4-6 year time span.

A. Background

- I. Cristo Rey schools gives access to college for underserved students, however, college graduation is our main goal as it is the door to financial independence and breaking the cycle of poverty. Many students in the CRN fail to complete college due to the lack of support from family and community. Cristo Rey Atlanta wants to bridge this gap by creating a strong alumni support group.

B. Current State

- I. No alum yet, but Cristo Rey Atlanta has an Alumni Coordinator in place. She has been helping heavily on the college counseling side of things to reach our goal of 100% of students accepted into college. By helping the students navigate the college application process, the Alumni Coordinator has been building meaningful relationships with the students and talking with them about their post-secondary options.

C. Plan for future with measurable objectives and financial considerations

- I. College 101 Seminar - starting on January 11, 2018, the Alumni Coordinator will have protected time with the seniors every week during a College 101 Seminar in which she will facilitate. The goal of the class is to prepare the seniors for the transition into college.
 - i. College 101 Seminar will meet every Spring Semester
 - ii. 100% of Seniors will complete this seminar
- II. Stay in touch with 100% of the alum through email, phone, and social media, tracking each interaction through alumni tracking tool (still TBD which tool this will be)
- III. Alumni coordinator will visit in person 100% of in-state students in the first year.
- IV. Alumni coordinator will visit in person at least 75% of out of state students considered "high risk" or needing additional support in the first year.
 - i. At risk students will be determined by a committee of identified faculty and staff which will include CWSP, Teachers, Principal, Counseling, etc. The committee will meet in April to identify students who will need additional support to ensure successful completion of the first year of college and beyond.
- V. Host events in order maintain contact with alumni and engagement with CR
 - i. Host a Senior Send Off BBQ in August before the seniors go off to college
 - ii. Host an event either before CR's Christmas break or at the end of May (end of 1st or 2nd semester)
- VI. Alumni Newsletter – Begin an Alumni Newsletter to keep students informed of what is happening at Cristo Rey, give tid-bits of advice, keep in touch with students, and build a sense of an alumni community
 - i. Newsletter – 3 time per year (August, December, April/May)
 - ii. Distribute to 100% of Alumni
- VII. Alumni Database – ensure we keep a database with 100% of students and their parents updated in Razors Edge
- VIII. Alumni Social Media Accounts – Create a Facebook, Snapchat and Linked in accounts for exclusive alumni use
 - i. Alumni coordinator will manage these accounts to foster a sense of community, share accomplishments and relevant research
 - ii. Goal: 1,000 views first year; 2,000 views second year.

7. Greater parental engagement

A. Background / Why this is important:

- I. To work towards parents being aware of and supportive of our academic, professional, and spiritual formation of our students as well as our support of the institution of the family and its well-being.

B. Current State:

- I. Cristo Rey administration has made many efforts engaging our parents in the past, however, we recognize the need to increase our efforts to keep our parents and families involved in our faith, in our school, and in our growth within the community.

C. Plan for future with Measurable Objectives:

- I. Cristo Rey will work towards programs that keep our families involved within our school activities on all levels.
- II. Admissions department will coordinate education sessions for our families which will include professionals from the specific fields that can discuss opportunities such as:
 - i. Legal Matters – Providing sessions with attorneys ranging through many topics and providing free advice forums.
 - ii. Housing opportunities – Education in regard to the opportunities provided by Habitat for Humanity within our communities.
 - iii. Career Workshops-Empower our parents with tools to achieve their economic goals via corporate success
 - iv. Mentor Programs-Partner with our families at home to build the network necessary to equip our students to excel in life
 - v. Class Moderator Liaisons-Join efforts with our CRA grade-level moderators to assist with events and initiatives that are specific to certain grades as they progress along in their high school career.
- III. Have Parents and families involved with the CRA Admissions group that can help recruiting efforts both inside and outside the school via:
 - i. Serving as volunteers and panelists for Open House dates providing prospective parents and students first hand knowledge and experiences throughout their tenure as a parent here at CRA.
 - ii. Attending high school open nights and fairs at various middle schools to discuss knowledge of the CRA experience to inquiring families.
 - iii. Attending worship services and community events with Admissions personnel discussing their relevant experiences with the school and corporate work study program.
 - iv. Bringing friends with middle school students to our Back to School Nights at the start of the year
- IV. In FY20 conduct annual “State of the School” updates in the areas of academics, development, athletics, finance, admissions, campus ministry, and CWS.
- V. Admissions department will provide exit interview with students who have left CRA for non-disciplinary reasons to help address parental concerns on culture and environment as well as address the overall retention rate for the school.