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SCHOOL HISTORY

Pennsylvania School for the Deaf (PSD) was founded in 1820 as the third school of its kind in the nation and has become a leading resource in the field of Deaf Education.

Founded by Philadelphia merchant, David Seixas, the first principal, PSD held its first classes in his private home on Market Street, west of 16th Street.

About a year later, PSD relocated to a building on the southeast corner of Eleventh and Market Streets. The renowned Deaf Frenchman Laurent Clerc, who sailed to America with Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, became PSD’s second principal in 1821. Prior to PSD, he along with Gallaudet and Dr. Mason Cogswell, founded the American School for the Deaf in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1817.

In 1825, PSD moved to its first official school building, at the corner of Broad and Pine Streets. The site is now occupied by the University of the Arts. PSD classes were held in what is presently Haviland Hall.

Almost seventy years later, in 1892, the school moved again. Mt. Airy had a spacious thirty-three acre property. Fourteen buildings were constructed to accommodate all students and staff. PSD resided there for 92 years, until declining enrollment and related economic factors required that the school relocate.

In 1984, PSD purchased its current home, the former Germantown Academy Campus, and completely renovated it while preserving its unique historic character. Many of the buildings on PSD’s Germantown campus have a rich history. Some date back to the Revolutionary War times, when the school was used as a hospital during the Battle of Germantown. Six British soldiers are reportedly buried on the campus. During the Yellow Fever epidemic in Philadelphia in 1792, both the Pennsylvania State Assembly and the U.S. Congress took refuge in PSD’s buildings. President George Washington also set up a temporary office in our Administration Building and held cabinet meetings there.

After settling down on the Germantown Campus, PSD has continued a tradition of excellence in Deaf Education.
MISSION STATEMENT

The Pennsylvania School for the Deaf educates students to succeed by recognizing and developing individual strengths, building confidence, collaborating with families and communities in a nurturing, dynamic, and language-rich environment steeped in cultural awareness of Deaf, Hearing, and worldwide diversity.

VISION STATEMENT

PSD empowers children with hearing loss by providing fully accessible services and a quality education so that they can become educated, productive and responsible members of society.

OUR BELIEFS

Language is the key to opening the world of learning to every child.

American Sign Language and English are both essential to students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and/or use cochlear implants or other assistive technology to build literacy and develop understanding and knowledge of the world.

Strategies that enhance and deepen our students’ knowledge include early language development and a language rich environment: sign language, spoken language, speech reading, and other language/communication tools.

All students are capable of setting goals, growing and achieving when guided, nurtured and challenged.

Our students thrive when they have the knowledge and skills they need to self-advocate, pose and solve problems, and become critical and creative thinkers.

Every individual has strengths and the ability to contribute to improve their community and the world.

Our students thrive when the communities, which support them, partner with the school.

Our students are prepared for the 21st century by understanding multiple perspectives and valuing diversity.
STRATEGIC GOALS

A. Strengthen Students’ College and Career Readiness

B. Grow PSD as a Center of Excellence in Deaf Education

C. Enhance the PSD Experience

D. Leverage Our Financial Stability and Create Opportunities for Financial Growth
The Pennsylvania School for the Deaf educates students to succeed by recognizing and developing individual strengths, building confidence, collaborating with families and communities in a nurturing, dynamic, and language-rich environment steeped in cultural awareness of Deaf, Hearing, and worldwide diversity.

### A. Strengthen Students’s College and Career Readiness
1. Narrow the achievement gap for each individual student
2. Recruit and retain highly qualified staff in order to strengthen our instructional program
3. Beginning with Early Intervention: Solidify a language curriculum that scaffolds across the students’ years at PSD
4. Create an environment to enhance social and emotional achievement and growth
5. Create a comprehensive Transition Program

### B. Grow PSD as a Center of Excellence in Deaf Education
1. Obtain Accreditation
2. Create and promote public programming to cast a bright spotlight on PSD
3. Effectively engage stakeholders to regard PSD as a Language Rich Environment for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing

### C. Enhance the PSD Experience
1. Promote and deliver engaging experiences/events
2. Educate trustees, parents, staff and alumni to become ambassadors for the school
3. Leverage our rebranding efforts to improve our presence in social media
4. Family advocacy and effective support with raising their Deaf/Hard of Hearing child
5. Utilize the Deaf Culture & Heritage Center to educate the public about PSD’s rich history
6. Improve communication with stakeholders

### D. Leverage Our Financial Stability and Create Opportunities for Financial Growth
1. Increase Endowment opportunities
2. Construction and renovation of facilities to improve safety, academic outcomes, and overall PSD Experience
3. Revitalize the culture of philanthropy through the PSD Community
4. Create a 3-Year Financial Model
5. Enhance Emergency Preparedness Plan embracing a collaborative culture by leveraging and maximizing students, staff, parents, and community involvement

### E. Continue to increase a positive culture at PSD (Trust, Development, Training, Healthy Climate)

### F. Evaluate Ongoing Effectiveness and impact
STRATEGIC GOAL A

Strengthen Students’ College and Career Readiness
Objective 1: Narrow the achievement gap for each individual student.

1a. Continue to review, revise, and renew curriculum resources, to guide implementation of best practices.

1b. Gather and utilize data in instructional planning, progress monitoring and reporting out to families and other stakeholders.

1c. Create ways to support and guide our work with teachers regarding data-driven instruction.

1d. Provide professional development, modeling and coaching to strengthen teachers’/certified professionals’ use of progress monitoring, as well as expand their understanding of applications for instructional planning.

1e. Develop a tool to track student’s individual progress through the curriculum.

Objective 2: Recruit and retain highly qualified staff in order to strengthen our instructional program.

2a. Revise Professional Growth and Evaluation procedures to align with PDE expectations.

2b. Develop relationships with reputable college and university programs to recruit staff.

2c. Obtain PA Instructional Certification for all teachers and other certified professionals.

2d. Obtain Bureau of Special Education Credential for 100% of our paraeducators.

2e. Create a retention plan for retaining highly qualified staff.

2f. Provide professional development opportunities for support staff’s ASL and English skills.
Objective 3: Beginning with Early Intervention: Solidify a language curriculum that scaffolds across the students’ years at PSD.

3a. Ensure collaborative ASL and English Curriculum Committee work across departments that spirals and tracks students through their PSD years.

3b. Obtain/create resources and materials to support language curriculum implementation and assessment.

3c. Develop language planning profiles for each student to become part of the child’s IEP/instructional plan.

3d. Develop a plan to support a language rich environment in the home which includes all family members.

3e. Provide sign language programs for families schoolwide.

3f. Create deaf mentorship opportunities for our families.

Objective 4: Create an environment to enhance social and emotional achievement and growth.

4a. Provide training opportunities to ensure that staff understand the current students we serve, as well as potential future student population(s), and are comfortable with how to address their needs, including Diversity & Inclusion Training.

4b. Ensure that curriculum resources and materials represent our student population and serve to promote self advocacy, problem solving and independence as appropriate.


4d. Continue to grow enrichment programs, including After School Programs and Athletics.
Strategic Goal A: Strengthen Students’ College and Career Readiness

Objective 5: Create a comprehensive Transition Program.

5a. Communicate the new paradigm for how we define transition programming.

5b. Ensure that all of our students have transition goals, specially designed opportunities, capstone project and family supports.

5c. Create Mentorship opportunities for our students.

5d. Leverage partnerships and our Board’s connections with other entities (for example, organizations – profit and non-profit, schools, foundations, community banks, colleges and universities) to maximize opportunities.

5e. Establish a committee to identify staffing needs and define the curriculum and its applications across the school program.
STRATEGIC GOAL B

Promote PSD as a Center of Excellence in Deaf Education
Objective 1: Obtain Accreditation.

1a. Identify an expert/consultant to guide the process.

1b. Beginning in Fall 2018, work toward CEASD accreditation; goal of Spring 2020.

1c. Obtain Mid-Atlantic accreditation subsequently.

Objective 2: Create and promote public programming to cast a bright spotlight on PSD.

2a. Create a comprehensive STEAM program: coding and robotics, the arts.

2b. Promote our enrichment activities, including After School Program, Panthers Theatre Guild, Athletics, academic competitions.

2c. Invite Deaf experts to address students, parents, staff, and community members and promote their visits to PSD.

2d. Create a repository of videos capturing stories – Alumni, Trustees, Staff – to highlight their accomplishments.
Objective 3: Effectively engage stakeholders to regard PSD as a Language Rich Environment for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing.

3a. Define what we mean by “Center of Excellence” and Language Rich Environment.

3b. Identify what we currently do well.

3c. Identify areas in which we aspire to improve.

3d. Identify stakeholders – current and potential.

3e. Develop PSD talking points (Elevator Pitch).

3f. Identify and train ambassadors with PSD talking points.

3g. Leverage our partnerships with Professionals.

3h. Go forth and promote our “brand” as a Language Rich Environment.

3i. Invite educational partners to PSD to build strong relationships.
STRATEGIC GOAL C

Enhance the PSD Experience
Objective 1: Promote and deliver engaging experiences/events.

1a. Create an event planning committee/event planner to align and plan for all PSD events, which will ensure well-planned logistics for each event.

1b. Effectively promote school events through templates, social media, and electronic communication.

1c. Improve signage, sound equipment, lights, curtains.

1d. Host Deaf creative and performing arts events that engage the community.

Objective 2: Educate trustees, parents, staff, and alumni to become ambassadors for the school.

2a. Create committee/event planner and develop message to represent PSD.

2b. Identify and train ambassadors with PSD talking points.

2c. Dedicate time to reinforcing the message/talking points to ambassadors before established events and meetings at PSD.

2d. Identify and engage stakeholders at events/venues where PSD does not have a presence.

Objective 3: Leverage our rebranding efforts to improve our presence in social media.

3a. Develop marketing plan with consistent image across all materials and templates.

3b. Increase presence on social media through frequency and diversity.

3c. Include intentional communications regarding fundraising into social media – include a Donate Button.
Strategic Goal C: Enhance the PSD Experience

Objective 4: Family advocacy and effective support with raising their Deaf/Hard of Hearing child.

4a. Establish onboarding and annual events for Early Intervention families.

4b. Develop partnerships to support family advocacy.

4c. Promote PATCH&S and parent support groups among families with Deaf/Hard of Hearing children.

Objective 5: Utilize the Deaf Culture & Heritage Center to educate the public about PSD’s rich history.

5a. Promote open hours and tours for the public, as well as during every event held on campus.

5b. Incorporate technology to broaden visitors’ experience including language accessibility.

5c. Raise public awareness about the Bicentennial through an exhibition, book, documenting stories, and public events that will cast a spotlight on PSD’s unique contribution to Deaf Education in America.

Objective 6: Improve communication with stakeholders.

6a. Review and update our protocol and policies for social media.

6b. Document and review our current communication practices (internal and external) and enhance/revamp where necessary.

6c. Update the employee handbook and ensure that it is language accessible.
STRATEGIC GOAL D

Leverage Our Financial Stability and Create Opportunities for Financial Growth
Strategic Plan 2019 - 2022

Strategic Goal D: Leverage Our Financial Stability and Create Opportunities for Financial Growth

Objective 1: Increase Endowment opportunities.

1a. Endow Early Intervention program.
1b. Seek grant/donor opportunities for both restricted and unrestricted donations/funds.
1c. Finance Committee work to develop a strong investment policy to ensure steady long-term growth in our endowment.

Objective 2: Construction and renovation of facilities to improve safety, academic outcomes, and overall PSD experience.

2a. Create a 3-Year Plan - Short-Term Plan for facilities and technology, including preparations for the Bicentennial celebration, which incorporates related stakeholder feedback.
2b. Create a comprehensive 10-Year Campus Master Plan to identify and address school facility and technology needs and state-of-the-art safety protocols/best practices, which incorporates related stakeholder feedback.

Objective 3: Revitalize the culture of philanthropy throughout the PSD Community.

3a. Create a 3-year fundraising plan.
3b. Train stakeholders to become PSD Ambassadors to support Institutional Advancement with reaching our fundraising goals.
3c. Strengthen our culture of Community Service by creating opportunities to serve within PSD and the community.
3d. Engage stakeholders in their understanding of our 200-year education rich culture and history.
Objective 4: Create a 3-Year Financial Model.

4a. Identify our financial goals and plans to achieve them.

4b. Increase transparency across the organization.

4c. Engage the Finance and Development Committees of the Board to ensure long-term financial stability.

4d. Develop a budget for each department.

4e. Work with the State to procure annual revenue growth.

Objective 5: Enhance Emergency Preparedness Plan embracing a collaborative culture by leveraging and maximizing students, staff, parents, and community involvement.

5a. Invest in new safety and security technology on school campus.

5b. Enhance our emergency and crisis protocols as part of our Emergency Preparedness Plan.

5c. Train emergency team and stakeholders including students, staff, parents and contractors on an enhanced EPP.

5d. Collaborate with external partners such as police, fire, city and neighborhood schools and associations.
Continuing a tradition of excellence in Deaf Education since 1820!