

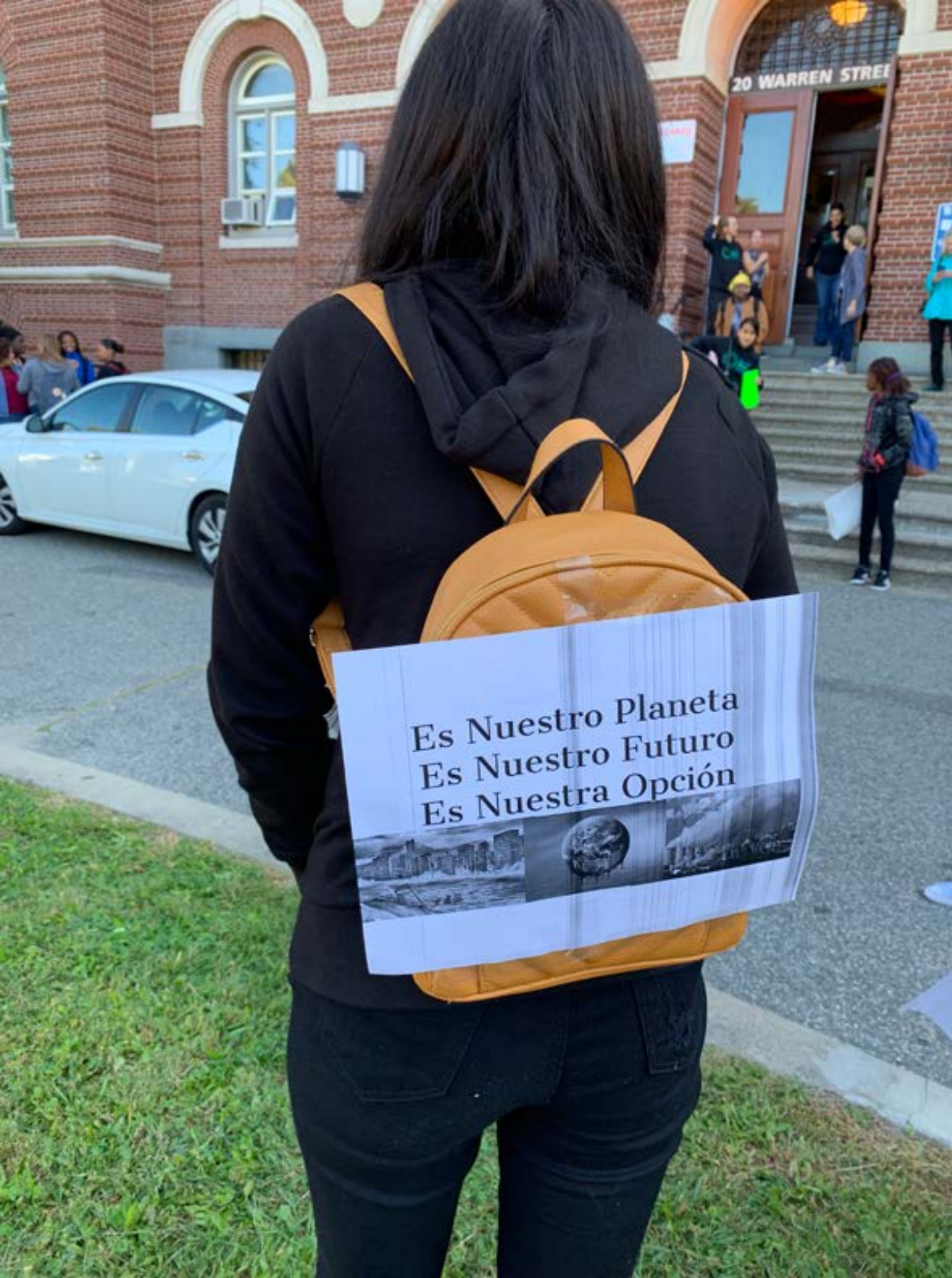
# Boston Green Academy

## Strategic Plan 2021 - 2026

Boston Green Academy welcomes diverse students of all abilities, educates and empowers them to succeed in college and career, and prepares them to lead in the sustainability of our community and world.







## Framing Our Plan

It has been hard to think about strategy in the historic and cultural “moment” of the year 2020, even as we move into another decade. The twin pandemics of COVID-19 and racial injustice thrust an urgency in our daily lives that forced us to acknowledge and address real suffering happening daily in our community. The relentlessness of these moments risked closing us off from our purpose- limiting our mission by focusing only on the moment. It is exactly these times, though, where a strategy is critically important; a strategy provides the pathway for how our community moves forward- envisioning a more just and healthy future- where students play leading roles in advocating their values. It offers us hope for a better tomorrow, and the steps we need to take to get there. But most important, it reflects the values of our community. It reflects how our decisions- in times of joy and struggle- guide our work to enliven the creativity and broaden the horizons of our students. It is for that reason I am honored to share with you the following strategic plan for Boston Green Academy.

Founded in 2011 as an in-district Horace Mann Charter school, Boston Green Academy (BGA) today serves over 500 students in grades 6-12, from every neighborhood in the city of Boston. As Boston’s only school focused on sustainability, we are proud to prepare the next generation of leaders for success in college and green careers, and our recent adoption of a Massachusetts Chapter 74 Career Technical Education program in Environmental Science, and our 2019 Department of Education Green Ribbon School Award reflects both our ongoing commitment to excellence and our nationally-recognized best practices. Our academic progress has reflected our growth as well. Since 2011, we have raised graduation rates by 30%, reduced the dropout rate by 75%, and doubled the college acceptance rate to 90%. For our work, BGA is now recognized across the district as one of the most successful Boston Public School secondary schools that does not select students.

Seeking to build on this success, BGA undertook a comprehensive planning process in the fall of 2019. BGA engaged deeply with stakeholders across the community including students, parents, faculty, community partners, funders, and board members. Our goal was to envision a best-in-class school- one that celebrated our successes, and acknowledged the work required to grow and address challenges. The initial phase of that work, concluding in March 2020, reflected the collective vision of our community over the next five years.

As the pandemic and the cultural awakening of racial injustice in our country emerged over subsequent months, our planning committee wrestled with how the vision adopted almost a year prior reflected a changed world. Do we change our plan? Do we start over? How do these challenges change our approach to educating students? In the end, our values provided the framework for our most important work ahead. While the twin pandemics may have changed the equation for how we implement our work day-to-day, our objectives- those principals reflecting the work and our values- remain constant.

I am so proud of the work our community has done- and continues to do- to support our students and families during an incredibly difficult year. Time and again, I have seen the passion, empathy, and joy our educators bring in supporting the holistic needs of our students whether in a classroom, or behind the screen. I am equally proud even amidst that chaos, they created this beautiful strategic statement that gives us our next steps to welcome diverse students of all abilities, educate and empower them to succeed in college and career, and prepare them to lead in the sustainability of our community and world.

With Gratitude,

Alex Chu



## Overview

BGA's strategic planning process presented the school with an opportunity to assess our programming, policies, and procedures; to explore pathways for improving upon our practice over the next five years; and to improve the engagement and support strategies that will guide that process. Our strategic plan was created to be a living document, referred to regularly at administrative and board meetings, and to guide the work of the school beyond the daily mission of teaching and supporting our students.

Here, we outline the measurable steps we will take to strengthen our current program, build new pathways and partnerships in response to identified needs, engage key stakeholders in mission-aligned opportunities, improve upon data assessment tools, and grow our revenue to sustain the school and our mission.

## Shared Values and Beliefs

- High Expectations with Strong Supports
- A Green School is Necessary
- Celebrate Diversity
- Become an Anti-racist Institution
- Relationships Drive Engagement
- Support the Whole Student

## Strategic Planning Committee

Alex Chu, Board President  
Matt Holzer, Head of School  
Jeff Becker, Assistant Head of School  
Brian Gonsalves, Student Support  
Andrea Kunst, Development Coordinator and Strategic Plan Facilitator  
Amanda Perez Hansen, Instructional Leader  
Molly Schen, BGA Board  
Chamberlain Segrest, Director of Sustainability and Innovation  
Jodi Then, School Counselor, HS  
Erica Wilson, Science Teacher, HS



Career Technology and Education in Environmental Science teacher Chris Donnelly plants the first seedlings in BGA's Freight Farm located just outside the cafeteria, adjacent to our raised beds and picnic tables.

# Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

**Goal 1: In service to our students, their families, and the community, BGA will become an anti-racist institution.**

**Objective 1.1** – To prioritize educational and instructional equity by interrupting practices that negatively impact students, and by cultivating the gifts and talents of every student

**Objective 1.2** – To model an anti-racist stance for our students and community by opposing racism wherever it exists and to take action against racist language, practices, and behavior in all its forms

**Objective 1.3** - To increase student independence, ownership of learning, and consistent inclusion of student voice in the daily life of the school

## Strategies

1. Regularly review BGA policies, data, practices and norms of behavior to identify patterns of inequity and disrupt them

- Equity team meets at a minimum of once monthly
- Collect and review missions for each team, committee, and group at BGA, ensure that all are aligned with the school's mission and vision of anti-racism and equity and post in a shared folder for access
- Begin affinity group training for staff in January and share outcomes and minutes with school
- Review, with data and systems team, how data is being collected and used and whether our existing systems and platforms are adequate (revise systems if they are found to be insufficient)
- Continue to review student data regularly, concentrating on areas that are consistently challenging (e.g suspension, attendance, grades, behavior), and examine whether bias and equity are a factor in outcomes
- Assist staff in examining forms of bias, including implicit bias, and provide opportunities for relevant and effect staff PD
- Grade level teams include in their goals an examination of data and behavior, and codify systems for interventions including counseling, family involvement, and in-school options
- With instructional leadership team, review grading practices to ensure they are consistent and equitable across classes, grade levels, and the school

2. Build a community, curriculum, and school culture that prioritize equity, diversity, and support for students and families who have been traditionally underserved

- Ensure that all classes achieve cultural curricular equity with a curriculum that reflects students' lives and encourages success in all areas of life
- Enhance and organize our visual school culture - exhibiting posters and artwork that reflect our community and values

3. Ensure that our hiring and support practices continue to result in staff demographics that accurately represent BGA's students

- Continue to fill open positions with at least 50% candidates of color every year
- Convene affinity groups and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion PD for all staff
- Respond to feedback from Staff of Color so that they feel supported at BGA

## Goal 2: BGA will become an innovative and culturally responsive green school.

**Objective 2:1** - To make learning equitable and student-driven, incorporate student leadership, project-based learning, and culturally responsive teaching methods as the foundation of daily classroom experiences

**Objective 2:2** - To balance in-classroom learning with access to “real world” learning outside of the classroom in collaboration with community, career, and green industry partners, other schools, colleges, and families

**Objective 2:3** - To promote leadership and advocacy opportunities for students and staff to share sustainability knowledge and experiences

### Strategies

1. Increase opportunities for students to build problem solving capacity using 21st century skills, and to grapple with complex, real world issues, which are relevant to creating a just and sustainable world

- Increase students' opportunities to draw connections between content areas using resources that prompt questions and discussion about sustainable living and practices
- Revise and reintroduce green exhibitions at every grade level
- Increase opportunities for out-of-classroom experiences and project-based learning
- Expand partnerships and opportunities within BGA
- Expand BGA's Career Technical Education programming and opportunities
- Plan and execute a strategic expansion of 21st century green programming

2. Provide time and resources for teachers and staff to further develop their own knowledge base, teaching practice, and passion for using sustainability learning techniques

- Increase opportunities for all faculty to pursue choice-based, individualized professional development in all areas of Sustainability, including working with experts in equity-based teaching and learning
- Build time for curriculum development and sustainability-focused, cross-content collaboration into the annual teaching and learning plan
- Use Green Exhibitions and other project-based models as a way to encourage non-science teachers to incorporate sustainability learning techniques into their classrooms
- Build passion for sustainability among all staff
  - By giving staff an opportunity to design individual PD experiences
  - By creating more opportunities for project-based learning, requiring cross-content teacher collaboration

3. Amplify BGA's presence in the regional and national forum of green education by promoting BGA's teaching and learning practices

- Encourage faculty visits to schools to observe and share best practices in project-based curriculum design and implementation
- Regularly host schools interested in learning about BGA's green and sustainable practices
- In year 2 of strategic plan, begin an annual Institute that brings together leaders in the sustainability sector with educators to examine and share common interests and challenges and disseminate the presentations/papers

## Goal 3. BGA will continue to strengthen student learning and outcomes

**Objective 3.1** - To narrow opportunity and access gaps for all students

**Objective 3.2** - To improve student success in all classes by increasing depth-of-knowledge and prioritizing culturally responsive and sustainability learning practices

**Objective 3.3** - To increase the number and percentage of students who are academically successful

### Strategies

1. Renew focus on academic and skill development through the use of project-based learning and exhibition-style assessments

- Promote a culture of learning that embraces collaboration, project-based learning, and critical and creative thinking as crucial components of achievement
- Increase opportunities for project-based learning
- Examine (pilot in one or two classes) competency-based learning and assessment as an opportunity to meet students where they are in their learning pathway and support their academic growth by nurturing curiosity, self-awareness, self-confidence, and ownership of learning
- In alignment with Goal 1, reverse the implicit bias that assumes students of color cannot achieve at the same levels as white students by ensuring that students always have access to grade-level work as well as the option to engage in higher level work

2. Assess and improve whole-student supports, and increase academic interventions

- Introduce in-school and after-school reading, writing, and math tutoring supports to supplement existing interventions to fill in learning gaps
- Introduce skill-building enrichment electives (in-school and after school), including a Makerspace, to broaden students' access to arts, music, and ideas
- Increase access to social and emotional supports across the school through additional SST staff and/or partner organizations

3. Develop and Implement an Academic Action Plan for our third charter term

- Identify strategies to strengthen standards-based instruction, identify and implement whole school instructional values, prioritize support for struggling groups (especially Latinx and Students with Disabilities, the two groups that our data indicate struggle the most at BGA), implement school-wide 6-12 MyCAP-based programming, and deepen the use of formative assessments to drive instructional adaptations







## Goal 5: BGA will have a strong, successful, and sustainable Middle School program

**Objective 5:1** - To increase student ownership of learning by consistently including middle school student voice in decision-making

**Objective 5:2** - To structure a BGA learning arc beginning in 6th grade that creates a consistent academic, social, and cultural pathway to 12th grade and provides earlier exposure to college and career planning

### Strategies

1. Provide opportunities for students to amplify student voice in the middle school and create a process for ongoing inclusion in decision making
  - Build a student council with Middle school students, creating the foundation for continuing the council through 12th grade. MS students involved in building the council will make it representative of their collective voice, and be charged with the growth of the council.
  - Convene regular focus groups of students to review curriculum, school culture, and support for students (including specific sub groups such as Latinx students and Students with Disabilities).
2. Broaden opportunities for MS students to diversify their interests through increased exposure to people, places, and ideas, preparing them academically and socially for high school.
  - Over the next five years, add 1-2 clubs/year that engage students in critical thinking and skill building  
Current clubs: Debate, art, and urban ecology  
To consider adding in year 1: entrepreneurship, civics and leadership  
Future club ideas encouraged and vetted through student council
  - Build a schedule that supports clubs and extracurricular opportunities  
Consider extending lunch schedule by enough time to make clubs possible
3. Examine and improve communications and messaging around all academic and behavioral expectations using common language and consistency.
  - Create a dedicated position to oversee MS systems. Make this a clear responsibility, with a job description, expectations, ownership, and accountability. This includes creating and overseeing systems of communication as well as providing consistent supports and materials, including templates and calendar systems, for advisory
  - Create an ad-hoc committee of teachers and staff to examine streamlining data systems and use, to connect with the school-wide data review initiative in Goal 1

## Goal 4: BGA will have a strong, supportive, clear, and exemplary school culture with a trauma-informed focus

**Objective 4:1** - To increase positive, healthy, equitable, and rigorous student engagement

**Objective 4:2** - To ensure that BGA provides all students and staff with a safe and supportive school and work environment

**Objective 4:3** – To increase communication and collaboration with families, celebrate student success and elicit support and engagement with the school

### Strategies

1. Embed a comprehensive school counseling program into the daily life of the school for all students
2. Identify and improve conditions that enhance the social and emotional engagement of our English language learners
3. Increase attendance and reduce tardiness by providing teaching and learning that engages students and offers opportunities for ownership of learning and increasing supports for off-track and at-risk students
4. Increase trauma training opportunities for staff
5. Use an enhanced advisory model to maintain strong communication with families





## Goal 6: BGA will increase philanthropic support through a diverse portfolio of funding categories

**Objective 6:1** - To identify, annually, unfunded areas of need within the school by program, priority, and status (i.e: existing, pilot, needed)

**Objective 6:2** - To create a plan that will fund identified needs, and includes annual income goals from grants, individual donations, in-kind donations, and events

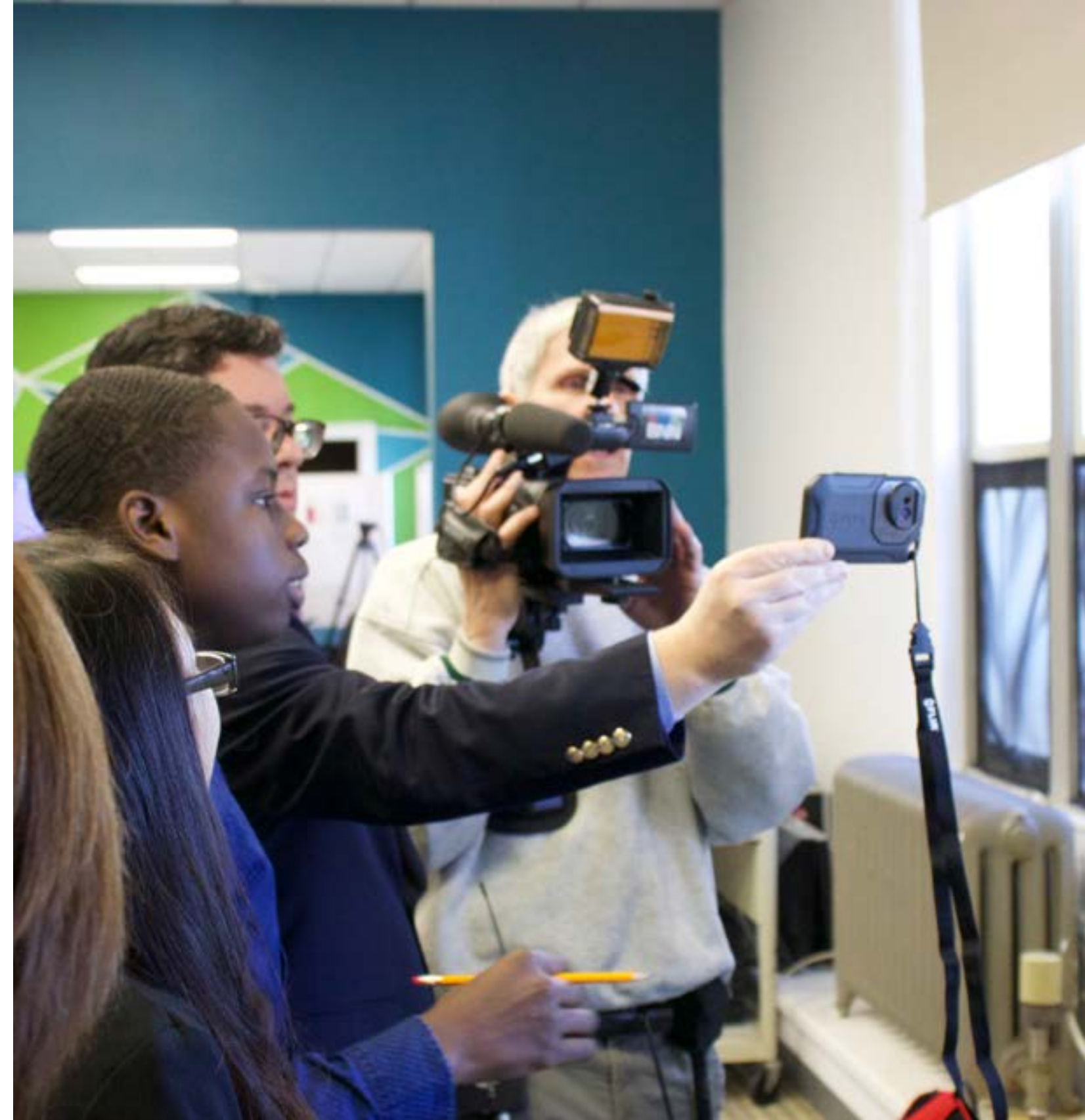
**Objective 6:3** - To create and maintain a marketing plan that regularly promotes the work of BGA to all of its constituencies

**Objective 6.4** - With the director of sustainability and innovation, create a dissemination arm of the school to amplify BGA's presence in the regional and national forum of green education

- Encourage faculty visits to schools to observe and share best practices in project-based curriculum design and implementation
- Regularly host schools interested in learning about BGA's green and sustainable practices
- In year 2 of strategic plan, begin an annual Institute that brings together leaders in the sustainability sector with educators to examine and share common interests and challenges and disseminate the presentations

### Strategies

1. With head of school and administrative team, identify areas of need (annually) within the school
2. With head of school and development committee, develop a plan that will fund identified needs, drawing from individual donations, grants, and when appropriate, corporate sponsorships
3. Create an annual plan, updated quarterly, providing head of school with progress towards goals, and suggested adjustments to address any losses (i.e. unfunded grants)
4. Establish the development office as central to communication with all staff about grants, sponsors, and fundraisers, ensuring there is no overlap in applications or appeals
5. Increase the number of credible contacts for e-letter and other marketing communications by no less than 50% in year 1, 25% in year 2, 20% in year 3, 15% in year 4 and 10% annually in year 5
6. Increase the number of active donors by 25% in years 1 and 2, 20% in years 3, 4 & 5
7. Build a stewardship program that maintains communication with and encourages increased gifts from donors
8. Establish a calendar making the head of school available for conversations with donors, visitors to the school, potential corporate funders, and partners at least every two months.
9. Using events and meetings from #8 along with letters, events, appeals, and updated collateral, create a marketing plan with a goal of increasing knowledge and understanding of BGA and its mission locally, regionally, and nationally



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