Investing in Human Capital
A framework for strategic planning, 2006-2011
Options for consideration

Background
By any standard, Packer has been extraordinarily successful in achieving the ambitious strategic goals we laid out for ourselves a decade ago. After recently completing an historic expansion of our physical plant, we must now focus directly on Packer’s human capital through an integrated effort that addresses the needs and aspirations of our students, faculty and community.

New challenges confront Packer today. A growing economy has improved the fortunes of many independent schools, raising competition for the best students and teachers. Demographic changes in the Brooklyn and Lower Manhattan neighborhoods we draw from are challenging our efforts to maintain a diverse community. And our own improved fortunes have led to rising expectations among Packer families, who demand consistent levels of excellence in every aspect of our program.

Standing still is not an option. Packer must continue to grow and evolve, to adapt to our changing environment. We must invest in our future even as we celebrate our past and enjoy unprecedented success in the present.

Part I. Defining our goals
The Board of Trustees believes the purpose of a Packer education is to enable our students to discover and achieve their full potential, individually and as members of a larger community. To fulfill this purpose, our strategic plan should be guided by five principles:

Critical skills
Preparing students to think critically, write clearly, pursue inquiry and master the essential skills for a successful and fulfilling life.

Humane values
Encouraging students to treat others with respect, value diversity, serve their community and be engaged citizens of the world.

High achievement
Challenging students to perform at high levels, pursue individual interests, be recognized for their accomplishments and gain admission to the most selective colleges.

Excellent teaching
Cultivating a faculty of creative, passionate and inspired teachers by fostering their skills and rewarding their professional growth.
A secure future
Developing and maintaining ample facilities and sound finances to assure Packer’s continuing ability to accomplish its mission for future generations.

Part II. Investing in our teachers

Great teaching should be the cornerstone of a Packer education. The strategic plan should place the highest priority on specific measures to attract and retain superior teachers and enhance the quality of teaching throughout the school. These could include:

- Ensuring consistently high standards of professional practice by addressing faculty supervision and evaluation based on current educational research and best practices.

- Defining a new salary structure that is fair and equitable, supports excellence and rationalizes workloads with remuneration.

- Increasing overall faculty compensation to ensure that we compensate our teachers appropriately and remain competitive with the top NYC independent schools.

Part III. Investing in our students

Packer’s educational program has always provided students with a balanced, broad-based approach to educating the whole child. The strategic plan should provide specific measures to ensure that we continue to fully and appropriately address the intellectual, creative, physical, social and emotional needs of our students. These could include:

- Finding new and innovative ways to enhance our academic program such as establishing a writer or artist in residence, providing a broader array of electives in the Upper School, building on our arts and physical education programs, creating an Urban Studies program, further integrating the use of technology into the curriculum, or appointing an Academic Dean to ensure continuity of education across and between the divisions.

- Revamping our advising program to improve academic guidance and social/emotional support, foster continuity from year to year, connect to college counseling, and enable the school to know and guide our students as individuals.

- Creating a mini-semester during the January intersession that would provide our students with nontraditional learning opportunities such as intensive mini-courses, artistic experiences, trips, internships or other programs. The lost instructional time would have to be found elsewhere during the year, possibly by eliminating one week from Spring Break and/or extending the school year by one week.
Part IV. Investing in our community

Packer’s sense of community and shared values are among its greatest assets. The strategic plan should provide specific measures to enhance and reinforce the total fabric of this community. These could include:

- While reaffirming our longstanding commitment to racial and cultural diversity, adding a new emphasis on economic diversity to offset the rising cost of private education and increasing economic uniformity of our neighborhoods by increasing our commitment to financial aid.

- Providing a sustained and outward-focused community involvement program that is integrated with the curriculum, draws our students into the external community and contributes to improving the quality of life in Brooklyn and New York City.

- Determining the educationally optimal usage of our facilities through a long-range evaluation of the capacity of our physical plant and the preferred size of each division.

- Ensuring an optimal learning environment by increasing our annual facilities investment for better maintenance and continued refurbishment of the physical plant to meet our educational goals.

Part V. Where the investment could come from

Endowment
Increasing the endowment will afford opportunities either to enhance revenues through the current 5% annual drawdown, or to provide for programs through designated gifts or scholarship directed aid.

Annual Giving
Significantly increasing annual giving directly and immediately contributes to the school’s operational budget.

Efficient utilization
Capacity/utilization analysis may reveal ways in which we can provide a net revenue increase. We need to comprehensively study where we are in terms of the capacity of our physical plant to determine optimal utilization to achieve our educational goals.

New sources of non-tuition revenue
Capitalizing on the human and physical resources of our school in ways that are consistent with our educational goals and community values (for example, summer educational programs, continuing education, etc.) could also yield additional revenues.
**Tuition increases**

- One-time or temporary tuition supplement.
- Supplemental tuition increases (above the normal annual increases) that would gradually raise tuition levels.

Any decision to increase tuition, or change the size of the school, must carefully weigh the impact on the economic diversity of our community, our longstanding commitment to keep tuitions relatively affordable for a middle-class audience, and the possible need to increase financial aid.