

# Envisioning the Future



## South Carolina Governor's School of Science and Math Strategic Plan

January 12, 2018

## ENVISION THE FUTURE

The South Carolina Governor's School for  
Science and Mathematics will be  
recognized as a national leader in K-12  
science and mathematics education, known  
for developing students who are  
exceptionally well-prepared to engage in  
global issues as creative and ethical leaders.

## Setting the Stage

In 2017, the South Carolina Governor's School for Science and Mathematics (GSSM) undertook a new strategic planning process. This process drew heavily from the deep engagement of GSSM faculty, students, families and supporters. These stakeholders gave hours of their time and ideas to envision a GSSM that is able to reach and serve more students, provide more opportunities, and prepare more future leaders in the fields of science, mathematics and engineering for South Carolina.

### Honoring Our Legacy

For thirty years, GSSM has provided unparalleled, advanced educational experiences to the state's most academically motivated students. Starting with 64 students living on campus in 1988, GSSM now enrolls hundreds of new students into its residential and virtual programs each year, and thousands more into its summer and school-year programs. This growth is the result of lasting relationships across the state built upon the knowledge that our programs provide uniquely challenging opportunities to learn and grow, while being accessible to all who are motivated to excel in science and mathematics.

### Affirming Our Mission

Remaining true to our founding purpose, we understand that highly motivated and prepared students are found in a diverse selection of communities across the state and benefit from programs delivered in a variety of ways. Becoming a trusted partner in these communities is the key to continued growth and excellence in all of our programs. We express our understanding of these possibilities through this mission:

*GSSM seeks out and advances our state's most talented and motivated students, offering a transforming education in science, mathematics, and engineering that cultivates joy in learning and builds the confidence to engage as ethical leaders with the world's most significant issues.*

### Building Our Future

As we enter our fourth decade of service to the state, we will enhance our contributions by focusing on key areas of academic excellence, talent cultivation, program access, and outreach:

- Our residential programs will allow students more time to learn and mature, so that our graduates will be better prepared for college and career.
- Our virtual programs will reach highly motivated students in all communities in South Carolina.
- Our catalog will offer a broader array of challenging and relevant course offerings, giving our students meaningful experiences that are unique to GSSM.
- As we engage with elementary and middle-schools, we will inspire interest in math and science, develop knowledge, and help teachers in those schools achieve their educational objectives.
- Knowing that many of South Carolina's future opportunities rely on international relations, we will work to prepare our students to pursue complex global issues in college and career.
- As a school with the highest aspirations for excellence and achievement, and supported by public and private partners, we will continue to be responsible stewards of our resources as we support the programs that are key to developing the state's next generation of leadership in science, mathematics, and engineering.

We undertake this work from a shared desire to continue GSSM's tradition of excellence, and to better serve a broadening population of students who are ready and willing to challenge themselves for a better future.

## The Plan

GSSM will build its future upon deeper and richer engagement with South Carolina's most talented and motivated students wherever they are and with whatever they need. By strengthening programs, expanding partnership networks and becoming more engaged with peer communities, GSSM will be recognized as a national leader in science, mathematics, and engineering education.

Always keeping our commitment to student-centered excellence at the forefront of our efforts, GSSM commits itself to a course of work that supports and enhances:



# 1

## Student-Centered Academic Excellence

GSSM offers exceptional academic programs to exceptionally motivated students. Building upon this, GSSM will broaden its course of studies across each of its programs. An expanded catalog of courses in the residential and Accelerate programs will provide unique opportunities for students to explore areas of potential interest, stretch limits, and deepen their knowledge and confidence. Developing new virtual, online, and on-site courses will allow us to engage an even broader audience of students.

### KEY INITIATIVES

- **10<sup>th</sup> grade residential admission** – Students may choose to enter as sophomores to begin their advanced coursework early or to strengthen their foundations in math, science, and humanities.
- **Seminar year** – Students who have substantially completed graduation requirements by the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade may pursue a personalized course of study in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade that fits their interests and needs for future study.
- **Updated graduation requirements** – Students who demonstrate solid foundations in math, sciences, and humanities have increased opportunities to move more quickly into advanced courses.
- **Research and inquiry** – A new research and inquiry graduation requirement will be met through newly developed courses, Scientific Investigations, and student-designed experiences. The Summer Program for Research Interns (SPRI) program will evolve into a selective program for students who wish to explore laboratory research during the summer.

## 2

### Student-Centered Global Engagement

The most important challenges, and the most valuable opportunities, for new leaders are global in scale and require the ability to work competently and ethically across international and cultural borders. GSSM will provide its students with rich opportunities to develop their awareness of global issues and the competencies needed for further study and work.

#### KEY INITIATIVES

- **Study abroad** – Opportunities for extended international study will be accessible to all students.
- **International partnerships** – GSSM will expand its international partnerships with like-minded institutions to increase opportunities for international exchange, collaborative study, and inter-cultural understanding.
- **Course development** – Courses addressing international and multi-cultural issues will be added to the catalog of electives available to students across all programs.
- **Global emphasis** – Courses across the curriculum will include international, economic, and cultural perspectives that prepare students for future study of, and engagement with, global issues. Study abroad opportunities will be available to every residential and Accelerate student.

## 3

### Student-Centered Integrated Development

GSSM programs are designed to develop content knowledge and concept mastery which, when combined with experiences that build self-confidence, creativity, and compassion, are excellent preparation for success and leadership. GSSM teachers and student development professionals will integrate their efforts to develop grit and perseverance, leading to persistence in STEM fields and promoting healthy, ethical high-achieving leaders.

#### KEY INITIATIVES

- **Professional development** – Teachers and staff will acquire the experiences and practices that promote self-awareness, confidence, and joy in learning.
- **Course integration** – The development of self-efficacy, resilience, ethics, and related developmental objectives will be integrated into program and course designs
- **Active assessment** – GSSM will build institutional research capacity to track student progress towards academic success and the development of self-efficacy.

# 4

## Broadened Accessibility and Diversity

Students capable of, and interested in, advanced study of science, mathematics, and engineering live in all communities across the state. GSSM will develop lasting relationships with partners in school districts, communities, and businesses to identify talented students and to develop their interests and knowledge in science, mathematics, and engineering. Our goal is to offer GSSM programs to students ready to challenge themselves in residence, in their home school, or virtually and online wherever they may be, whatever their personal circumstance.

### KEY INITIATIVES

- **Expanded outreach** – GSSM will expand both the reach and depth of its outreach programs to all districts to identify and develop talent in elementary grades and kindergarten students.
- **New virtual opportunities** – GSSM will expand its Accelerate and virtual foundational programs to be available in all schools, developing curricula for courses beyond Algebra II that can be delivered virtually and in blended format in under-served schools.
- **Diversity focus** – GSSM will strive for enrollments that reflect the demographics of the communities to which it offers programs.

# 5

## Strengthened Partnerships and Recognition

GSSM remains a well-kept secret among communities it seeks to serve. Through active participation and leadership in relevant organizations and communities, GSSM will be widely recognized for its ability to understand and address the needs of outstanding students and to achieve high-end outcomes in academic and developmental domains.

### KEY INITIATIVES

- **External accreditation and assessment** – GSSM will seek accreditation from organizations like the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' (SACS) AdvancED program. Through processes like this, GSSM will credibly satisfy itself and external constituents that it is successful in achieving its outcome objectives.
- **Professional participation** – Through active participation and leadership within consortia such as the National Consortium of Specialized Secondary Schools, GSSM will demonstrate its commitment to excellence in science, math, and engineering education.
- **Integrated outcomes** – GSSM will ensure that curricular outcomes are consistent for all topics, regardless of the program or modality of delivery.



- **Innovation and program improvement** – Professional growth and development will be part of each faculty and staff member’s performance assessment.
- **Marketing and communication** – GSSM will seek to integrate the work of its internal and Foundation marketing to reach interested parties with authentic and compelling information about GSSM students, programs, and opportunities to create pride in the institution and inspire a desire to become part of our community.

## 6

### Enhanced Advancement and Stewardship

To maintain excellence across its programs, GSSM requires stable and flexible access to public and private support. While complying with applicable regulations and best practices, GSSM will structure its operations for outstanding program support, accountability, and efficiency. It will strengthen its working relationship with the GSSM Foundation, ensuring a productive partnership for fundraising, support, and growth.

#### KEY INITIATIVES

- **Enhanced internal protocols** – Procedures for planning, budgeting, and purchasing will be integrated with SAP accounting tools provided by the state (SCEIS). Workflows will be created to eliminate duplicated efforts and to streamline repeated tasks associated with procurement.
- **Institutional research (IR)** – best practices in IR will be implemented for all student-centered goals and outcomes, all school operations, and all partnerships.
- **Enhanced partnerships** – Partnerships with parents, alumni, corporate partners, and GSSM foundation will be fully integrated with strategic goals, fundraising efforts, and student-centered grants.



## Implementation Framework

The following goals and strategies form the framework for the school's growth and improvement work for the next five years.

# 1

## Student-Centered Academic Excellence

Students will choose courses of study that support their interests and collegiate objectives. A broadened selection of courses and mentored research in all programs, combined with changes to residential graduation requirements and minimum per-term enrollments, broadens potential enrollment pathways and allows the student to create courses of study more closely aligned with their interests and career aspirations.

**GOAL:** Prepare more students for success in advanced coursework and provide opportunities to explore their passions and interests.

### OBJECTIVES:

1. Within 5 years of implementation, an average of 40% of GSSM's residential students will enter in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade.
2. 20% of residential students will successfully declare and complete a seminar year experience.
3. 100% of residential students will complete two or more electives of their choosing without the need to enroll in overloads.
4. 30% of GSSM's courses will be available for delivery virtually or online.
5. Courses and course modules will be developed for local and remote delivery for elementary, middle, and high schools.

### STRATEGY I

**Enroll residential students in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade to provide additional time for students to complete SC graduation requirements, and increase opportunities to engage in advanced GSSM coursework and research.** Students may also enter in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade as they do now. GSSM will create a curriculum for students arriving in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, gradually preparing them for more challenging courses of study in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade years. Courses or curricular analogs commonly taken in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, like Geometry, Algebra II, and English II, will be added to the curriculum. This curriculum, or portions of it, could be available online.

### Required Resources:

- Six personnel FTE's (10<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, additional student development staff), approximately \$513,000
- Operational expenses of approximately \$45,000

### Earliest Timing:

- Spring 2018: Planning for recruitment, curriculum
- Fall-Spring 2019-20: Recruit first 10<sup>th</sup> grade class
- Spring-Summer 2019: Hire faculty, staff
- Fall 2020: First entering 10<sup>th</sup> graders

## Rationale:

- About one third of GSSM students (2016-17) reported not being able to enroll in the school's most beneficial electives and research experiences due to the need to satisfy SC high school graduation requirements in addition to GSSM's requirements. An additional year of enrollment naturally extends the time to meet these requirements.
- Variations in programs across school districts create disparity in student preparation for GSSM's advanced curriculum. A 10<sup>th</sup> grade year, carefully calibrated to transition students into the school's academic pace, provides additional time to address these issues, making advanced study available to more students in later years.
- Prior to the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, when colleges begin examining academic performance, students can recover from initially lower grades that are common as students acclimate to GSSM and life away from home. This has the potential to improve college outcomes and builds confidence to engage in more challenging experiences later.
- Allowing students to continue enrolling in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade gives families choice to exercise based upon their understanding of their child's emotional development, academic preparation, and other factors that make 10<sup>th</sup>-grade enrollment unattractive. This proposal is consistent with providing good alternatives for a broader range of needs and preferences.

## Additional Expected Benefits:

- The ability to develop research and project-based courses of multi-term duration increases opportunities for multi-disciplinary learning.
- Availability of room to enroll in non-required courses, and changes in GSSM graduation requirements, should stimulate the development of a broader array of high-quality, specialized electives.
- Evidence from similar schools that allow enrollment in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade suggests students develop deeper and more appreciative relationships with the school, its faculty and staff, and their peers.
- Stretching out the time available to complete requirements makes it possible, in most cases, to reduce the minimum student course load from six to five courses, enabling participation in courses that require significant time in labs or other research.
- A year designed to acclimate students to GSSM's rigorous 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade programs is expected to reduce attrition due to burn-out and academic deficiencies.

## STRATEGY II

### **Enable the option of a 'Seminar Year' in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade for students who have substantially completed graduation requirements by the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade.**

- Enrollments in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade years may be designed to fully complete graduation requirements by the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade year. Some students do this already, and an additional year made possible by enrollment in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, could increase the number significantly.
- With the assistance of their academic advisor, rising seniors interested in the Seminar Year will create a formal proposal outlining a course of study based upon their interests, abilities, and career aspirations. With the exceptions that the course of study must align with GSSM's STEM-focused mission, a minimum number of credits must be attempted (perhaps 4), and that pre-requisites must be upheld, no other

requirements would be imposed. The proposal will detail desired outcomes, and be reviewed by a seminar committee for approval.

- Prior to graduation, students will complete a project, approved by their seminar committee, reflecting upon their Seminar Year experience and describing the outcomes that they achieved.

**Required Resources:**

- \$82,000 per year for program expenses

**Earliest Timing:**

- Fall 2018: Curriculum committee studies requirements
- Spring 2019: Seminar Year curriculum approved, first group of students apply for Seminar Year
- Fall 2019: First Seminar Year group begins

**Rationale:**

The Seminar Year is an attractive feature that motivates students and differentiates GSSM's programs in an increasingly competitive market for top students.

- Allowing students to dive deeply into subjects that interest them, or to pursue a survey of courses they wish to explore, invests them in their own educational plan.
- The Seminar Year becomes an attractive feature that students look forward to, and potentially reduces attrition.

### STRATEGY III

**Increase the flexibility in GSSM graduation requirements so that students are to create programs of study that are responsive to their interests and aspirations.**

- Students will be required to enroll in a minimum of 5, reduced from 6, courses per semester and one during the Interim term. Students in good academic standing may apply for overload enrollments of 7 courses in a semester.
- Graduation requirements will be changed to accommodate courses of study that may be accomplished by students entering in the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> grades, creating additional opportunities to enroll in elective and research opportunities.
- Exemption from foundational courses in science may be granted upon student request when satisfactory initial competency is shown. Standards for acceptable competence is determined by each discipline.

**Required Resources:**

- Approximately \$11,000/year for program expenses

**Earliest Timing:**

- This proposal could be implemented as soon as exemption protocols are developed and board approval for the changed graduation requirement is granted.

**Rationale:**

- Students will perform better and gain more satisfaction when they are able to enroll in courses that fit their interests and needs.
- Increased time to spend on coursework and projects results in deeper exploration, better understanding, better teacher-student engagement, and higher quality work.
- Allowing students opportunities to exempt coursework they have already completed provides additional opportunities for elective enrollments in their fields of interest.

**Additional Expected Benefits:**

- Programs customized to student needs and interests will increase interest among prospective families and reduce attrition.
- Teacher-student relationships will deepen as they engage on projects and interest-based electives.

**STRATEGY IV**

**Strengthen opportunities for research and inquiry.** The GSSM curriculum provides rich opportunities for each student to develop their ability to understand, describe, and contribute to the world around them through activities and coursework that integrate research and inquiry-based experiences. Therefore we will:

- Expand the opportunities available for fulfillment of the research and inquiry requirement into new and existing courses.
- Support the incorporation of interdisciplinary components into research and inquiry projects where it is feasible and improves understanding.
- Elevate the Summer Program for Research Interns (SPRI) to be a selective opportunity for interested students who wish to pursue high-quality research opportunities in labs across the state, nation, and around the world.
- Develop a summer school term for incoming and enrolled students to gain foundational knowledge, create opportunities for elective enrollments, and to potentially recover from academic issues that might otherwise require a student to leave the school.

**Required Resources:**

- Dependent upon the cost of proposed research and inquiry experiences. A significant portion of these costs could be funded from current SPRI allocations.

**Earliest Timing:**

- Summer 2019

**Rationale:**

- Research skills gained through hands-on experimentation, measurement, and interpretation are key to success in STEM fields, and in problem solving and future learning.
- Interdisciplinary learning allows students to establish the connections between ideas and processes which deepen understanding.

- SPRI remains an important experience for residential students. In the era of full-enrollment and in response to planning happening elsewhere within the school, it is fitting and timely to review and take steps that ensure SPRI's vitality, relevance, and position as a core part of GSSM's future.
- Summer school provides additional opportunities for students to pursue courses of study that match their needs and interests.
- The ability for students in academic distress to take corrective action in the summer may reduce attrition.

## STRATEGY V

**Enroll GSSM students in 10<sup>th</sup> grade classes delivered virtually or online to provide quality courses to highly motivated students unwilling or unable to enroll in the residential or Accelerate programs.** Develop existing and new GSSM courses for virtual and online delivery.

### Required Resources:

- Approximately \$5,500 per course developed. Delivery costs dependent upon personnel and subscriptions costs.

### Earliest Timing:

- Fall 2019



The most important challenges, and the most valuable opportunities, for new leaders are global in scale and require the ability to work competently across international and cultural borders. GSSM will provide its students with rich opportunities to develop their awareness of global issues and the competencies needed for further study and work.

**GOAL:** Develop awareness and competency to pursue leadership roles in addressing the world's more complex global issues.

### OBJECTIVES:

1. Every residential student, regardless of family income, has access to an international study experience.
2. Program proposals and assessments address strategies to increase cultural literacy and awareness of global issues.

## STRATEGY I

**Ensure all GSSM students have the opportunity to develop skills and confidence by engaging with international, economic, and cultural issues that contribute to success in the global marketplace.**

- Study abroad is an opportunity available to all students. It can be satisfied by summer research, Interim travel, or specialized term-abroad programs.
- Expand partnerships with other international schools, universities, and research institutions.

- Integrate examination of global issues and ethics into courses across the curriculum.

**Required Resources:**

- Approximately \$505,000 for travel, supplies, and personnel costs. One FTE to coordinate.

**Earliest Timing:**

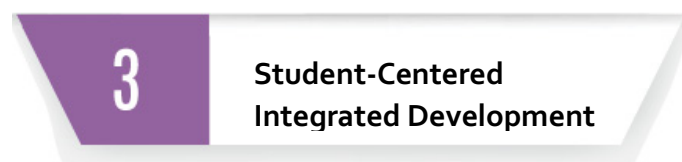
- Fall 2019

**Rationale:**

- The world GSSM students inherit is increasingly driven by globally-connected issues that require skills which can only be developed through first-hand experiences with other cultures.
- Employment and research in STEM fields face ever-increasing competition from well-developed international corporations, often with state sponsorship.
- Early development of global competencies and interests increases the likelihood that students will pursue related fields in college.
- As South Carolina seeks to be competitive in global markets, it will benefit from leaders able to navigate global issues with skill and sensitivity.

**Additional Expected Benefits:**

- Interest in global issues and the opportunity for travel abroad experiences may increase interest in GSSM programs.
- Participation in studies abroad and the development of international issue awareness may create more competitive admission portfolios for students applying to highly-selective colleges.



GSSM programs are designed to develop content knowledge and concept mastery which, when combined with experiences that build self-confidence, creativity, and compassion, are excellent preparation for success and leadership. GSSM teachers and student development professionals will integrate their efforts to develop grit and perseverance, leading to persistence in STEM fields and promoting healthy, ethical high-achieving leaders.

**GOAL:** Build the development of success characteristics into GSSM programs and courses.

## **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Strategies for developing student self-efficacy are integrated into professional development targets.
2. Program proposals and assessments address strategies to achieve appropriate social, ethical, and developmental outcomes.

## **STRATEGY I**

**Promote well-being within the community through a combination of mental, physical, emotional, ethical, and social health factors in all GSSM programs.**

- Program assessments will include attention to opportunities for active movement and social interaction.
- Programs will encourage iterative cycles of attempts, failure, strategy improvement, and retry.
- Through professional development opportunities, GSSM faculty and staff will improve their ability to recognize and respond to mental and emotional health issues that they may encounter.
- GSSM will develop a curriculum of out-of-class programming that develops and assesses student growth towards personal well-being.

### **Required Resources:**

- \$75,000 for professional development and programmatic expenses

### **Earliest Timing:**

- This work could begin in Fall 2018 and scale fully by Fall 2020.

## **STRATEGY II**

**In all course designs, include content and practices that promote self-awareness of learning progress with the goal of improving approaches to learning, work completion, content mastery, and skills development.**

- Programs will highlight the connection between what students know and what they are learning by providing opportunities to connect concepts across disciplines and to encounter problems that require multi-disciplinary approaches to correctly solve.
- Assignments and projects will frequently ask students to reflect on the nature of their learning experience.
- Programs will include features that quickly challenge students to use and think about what they have just learned.



## 4

### Broadened Accessibility and Diversity

Students capable of, and interested in, advanced study of science, mathematics, and engineering live in all communities across the state. GSSM will develop lasting relationships with partners in school districts, communities, and businesses to identify talented students and to develop their interests and knowledge in science, mathematics, and engineering. Our goal is to offer GSSM programs to students ready to challenge themselves in residence, in their home school, or virtually and online wherever they may be, whatever their personal circumstance.

**GOAL:** Offer GSSM programs to students ready to challenge themselves wherever they may be.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Foundational and advanced courses in developing interest and mastery in science, mathematics, and engineering will be available for credit in every grade, in every school district.

#### STRATEGY I

**Deliver high-quality programs in-person and virtually to students from kindergarten through high school by leveraging GSSM's curricular expertise, partnerships, and technologies.**

- Complete the Center for Inquiry building to facilitate development and delivery of high quality STEM programs to schools visiting Hartsville and around the state.
- Student diversity and inclusion will be key considerations in the development, promotion, and enrollment across all GSSM programs. The demographics of students in GSSM programs will be similar to those of their communities.
- Develop modular courses and course units that generate interest and confidence in STEM among elementary and middle-school students. They will be deliverable in schools, virtually, online, and at GSSM's Center for Inquiry.
- Develop foundational courses and deliver them online to underperforming schools, modeling teaching standards that empower local teachers to teach at high levels.
- Create a selection of self-paced and guided courses available online to students seeking advanced study options, especially in schools where they are not offered.
- Invest in the development and management of new partnerships with school districts across the state.

**Required Resources:**

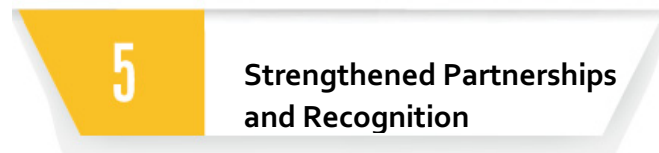
- \$22M capital expenses for the building, approximately \$700,000 to develop deliver expanded programs

**Earliest Timing:**

- Fall 2019

**Rationale:**

- Service to the state of South Carolina as the leader in STEM education is core to GSSM’s mission as set forth in its enabling legislation.
- Increasing interest in the study of STEM broadens the field of potential participants in future GSSM programs.
- Improving the foundations in math and science across the state increases the number of students prepared for GSSM’s most advanced programs.
- GSSM is well-positioned to improve STEM-related education across the state.



**5** **Strengthened Partnerships  
and Recognition**

GSSM remains a well-kept secret among communities it seeks to serve. Through active participation and leadership in relevant organizations and communities, GSSM will be widely recognized for its ability to understand and address the needs of outstanding students and to achieve high-end outcomes in academic and developmental domains.

**GOAL:** Be recognized as a national leader in science and mathematics education.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. GSSM’s regional and national reputations place it in the top ten percent of peer institutions.
2. GSSM compares favorably with its aspirational peers.
3. GSSM achieves reputable external validation of the excellence of its programs.

**STRATEGY I**

**Strengthen the school’s ability to imagine, develop, and deliver world-class educational programs.**

- Provide compensated opportunities for development of innovative courses, course-units, or approaches that support GSSM’s curricular objectives.
- Integrate curricular oversight of various residential, virtual and outreach programs to ensure consistent outcomes.
- Implement structural professional development for each faculty and staff member as part of their annual performance assessment.
- Develop ongoing institutional research capabilities to support decision making and to assess the impact of new and current practices.
- Integrate the Academic Success Center into academic and student development curricula.

- GSSM will explore dual-enrollment partnerships for courses taught at the collegiate level where it benefits students.
- The school will review best practices for calculating teacher load with additional emphasis placed on equity and developing high-quality out-of-class experiences between teachers and students.

**Required Resources:**

- \$2,500 per teacher for about \$100,000 for professional development.
- Dual-enrollment fees estimated to be \$150,000 per year for residential (288 students, 3 courses per year) and Accelerate programs (300 students, 4 courses per year) when Accelerate is at planned enrollment of 300 students.

**Earliest Timing:**

- Fall 2020

**Rationale:**

The quality of GSSM programs is the most important factor in achieving and maintaining a reputation for excellence.

- Programs and curricula developed within separate divisions are likely to employ different approaches, curricular goals, and assessment criteria, creating the opportunity for uneven levels of quality. Coordination of outcome goals by discipline experts ensures quality of the program, regardless of the delivery method.
- GSSM teachers often have ideas for innovative approaches to their subject, but need the ability to invest time into developing them.
- Current institutional research resources are informal and insufficient to gather, interpret, and present the information required to support planning, decision making, and assessment.
- GSSM courses taught at above-AP levels often receive less weighting on the SC uniformed grading scale (UGS) than lower-level courses taught in other schools. Dual-enrollment credit guarantees proper weighting and allows GSSM graduates to receive college credit for their efforts.

**STRATEGY II**

**Develop endorsements and partnerships with national and international organizations that can validate, collaborate, and improve GSSM programs.**

- Research the infrastructure and investment necessary to achieve accreditation by the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges/AdvancED. Submit to the GSSM Board for consideration.
- Develop a consortia of regional specialized STEM schools for collaboration and advocacy that is able to focus on regional and local issues.
- Research alternative agency affiliations that provide better visibility and operational support than is currently available.

**Required Resources:**

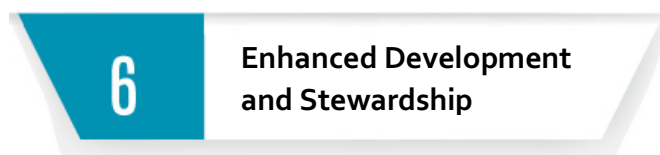
- \$150,000 including institutional research staff person and supplies. One FTE.

### Earliest Timing:

- Institutional research staff search should begin as soon as possible. Begin planning for accreditation Fall 2018.

### Rationale:

- The landscape for education is changing rapidly and there is increased interest in evidence of program efficacy.
- Improving STEM programs in school districts create a perception of program equality that requires clarification to encourage interest in GSSM programs.
- External validation and reputable assessment of the school's programs differentiate the high quality of programs and increase confidence across all programs.
- GSSM's unique mission creates support and administration requirements that are less-well understood and difficult to accommodate by external agencies.



To maintain excellence across its programs, GSSM requires stable and flexible access to public and private support. While complying with applicable regulations and best practices, GSSM will structure its operations for outstanding program support, accountability, and efficiency. It will strengthen its working relationship with the GSSM Foundation, ensuring a productive partnership for fundraising, support, and growth.

**GOAL:** Ensure reliable and flexible support for GSSM programs and growth.

### OBJECTIVES:

1. GSSM can efficiently obtain and retain products and services that support program stability and excellence.
2. Positive collaborative relationships between GSSM and its Foundation result in consistently understood priorities and transparent information exchange.
3. GSSM funding is reliably sufficient to support ongoing operations and future initiatives.

### STRATEGY I

**Improve operational requirements for efficiency and navigability, allowing GSSM to respond nimbly to changing needs and opportunities.**

- GSSM will structures and affiliations, aimed at improving effectiveness and control over operations and procurement practices.

- GSSM will review its internal workflows to improve efficiency and responsiveness, and achieve the best distribution of information to support decision making.

**Required Resources:**

- Unknown

**Earliest Timing:**

- Begin assessing options Spring 2018

**Rationale:**

- As a state agency, GSSM’s technical integration with a fiscal agent may reduce access to the full flexibility of the state purchasing code when negotiating for products and services. Additional other-agency (non-GSSM) purchasing policies, layered on top of the state purchasing code, are properly designed to serve their internal agency requirements rather than the needs of a school like GSSM. Interpretations of purchasing policies are made external to GSSM, and often by agency personnel who neither understand, nor are responsible for, GSSM’s role and requirements for student success.
- The school’s administrative efforts evolve constantly but remain rooted in processes created in the pre-growth era. With more than double the number of students, faculty, and staff of just a few years ago, inefficiencies can have an amplified effect, impeding delivery of the best support for the community.

**STRATEGY II**

**Strengthen and adapt GSSM’s partnerships with all its stakeholders, from parents to schools, state-agencies, state business, and corporate supporters to enable and support the school’s vision for student-centered excellence.**

- GSSM and its Foundation will work to improve collaboration and broaden fundraising priorities to increase support from private donors and foundations.
- GSSM will strengthen its partnerships with parents, alumni, and donors through direct participation in development planning and activities.

**Required Resources:**

- No additional resources required.

**Earliest Timing:**

- Immediately





SOUTH CAROLINA GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL  
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