

TOOL BOX

STRATEGIC THINKING SESSION FORMAT

The purpose of this session is to give faculty, staff and administration the opportunity to review and reflect on what NAIS research indicates as *The Five Keys to Sustainability in the 21st Century* for all schools this decade. We have designed an exercise based on the practice of generative thinking presented by Richard Chait in his book **Governance as Leadership** (2006) as a way to help you process these issues as we plan strategically.

Directions:

1. Choose from the potential five dimensions of sustainability provided the three that most resonate with your group as top priorities for our school to address over the next three to five years.
2. Choose one of these priority dimensions of sustainability to process.
3. Focusing on the priority dimension of sustainability chosen and, working on your own, write your response to the following question (as a question) on the index card provided. What is the single most important question a wise independent school should ask about this issue?

Discussion prompts:

- What is at issue?
 - What is at stake?
4. Read the question on your card to your group. After all questions have been read, choose (or compose) the single best question our school could ask. Record that question on the index card provided.
 5. Gather as a large group briefly to hear the proposed questions.
 6. Reconvene in small groups, discuss and record on the index card your best and most persuasive solution to the generative question posed.

Discussion prompts:

- Who sees the situation differently?
 - What are we missing?
 - How does the situation look from the vantage point of the constituents most affected by the decision at hand?
 - What problems might the proposed solution create?
 - What is the best possible outcome?
 - What is the worst case scenario?
 - What is the next question we should discuss?
7. Please turn in your index cards to the facilitator.

