

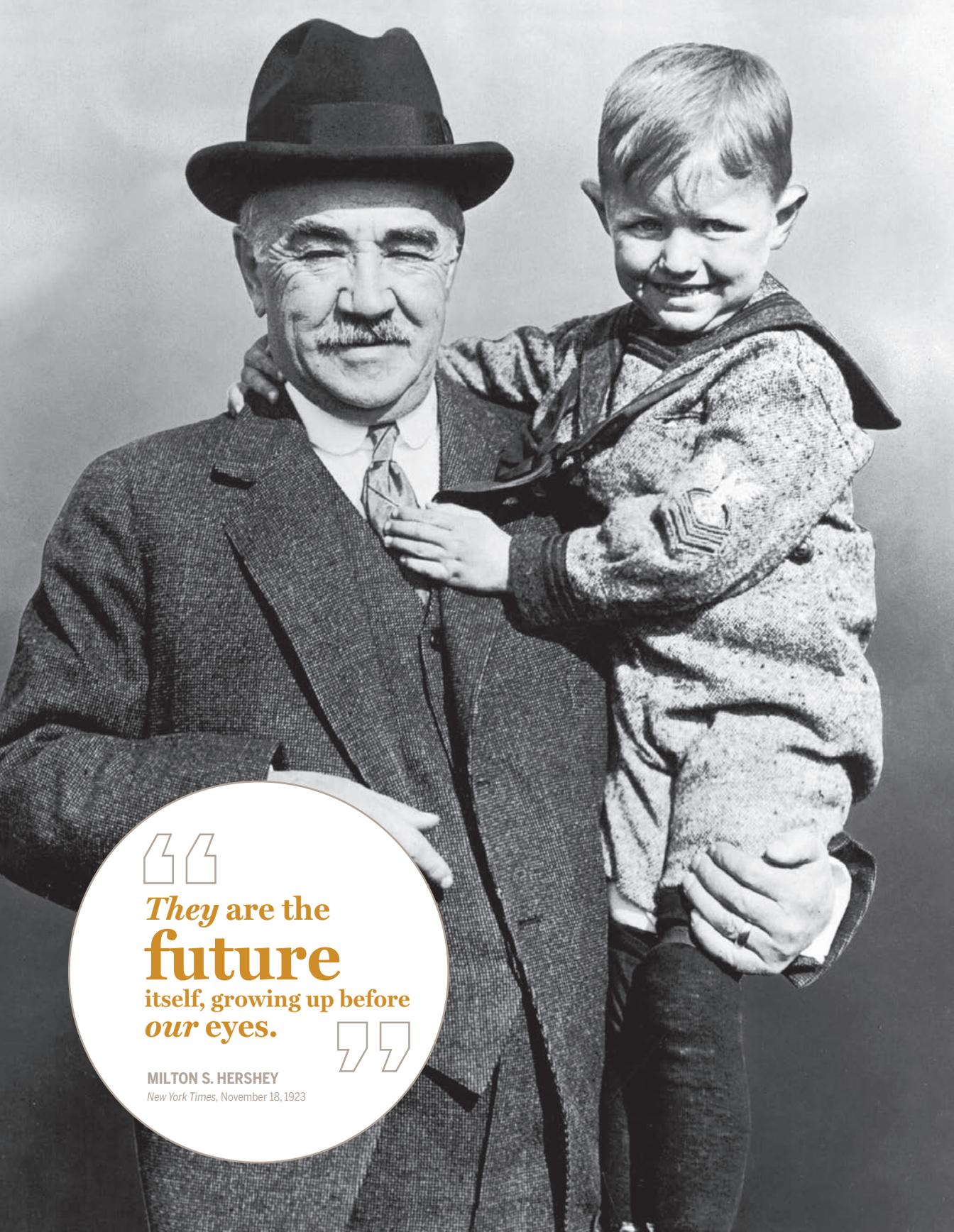
MILTON  
HERSHEY  
SCHOOL®

FOUNDED 1909



# OUR FUTURE IN **FOCUS**

2020-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN



“

*They are the  
future  
itself, growing up before  
our eyes.*

”

MILTON S. HERSHEY

*New York Times*, November 18, 1923

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**About MHS**

# A Message from the President

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At Milton Hershey School, we play a special role in the lives of our students—far different than that of any other pre-K through 12th-grade school in the world.

When Milton and Catherine Hershey founded our school in 1909, they did so with the intention of giving children with less more—more education, more access to care, and more opportunities to enrich their lives and put them on the path to a successful future.

For 110 years and counting, we have done that. Our success has been driven by our ability to develop and execute solid schoolwide plans that combine the needs of current students with the Hersheys' guiding vision. The next MHS strategic plan, Our Future in Focus, also known as the MILT Plan, is a roadmap for how we will move forward over the next five years. Using in-depth research, industry best practices, and feedback from staff and students throughout campus, this plan was formed not only to guide, but also to inspire every MHS staff member to be their greatest self, so we can in turn help our students do the same. It also reflects our students' valued perspectives and builds on a culture of student-centered engagement.

From 2020 throughout 2025, our MHS community will be focused on four key areas:

- Modeling Character and Well-Being
- Innovating Career-Focused Education
- Leveraging Impact
- Teamwork to Strengthen Community Alignment and Engagement

While year one of our strategic plan will also involve overcoming the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, I am confident in our direction and ability to bring this plan to life. We have resilient, determined, and engaged students and a committed, talented, and passionate staff. Together, we will enhance the way we serve and support our students and alumni to reflect the evolving world and workforce.

On behalf of our MHS family, I invite you to learn more about the Our Future in Focus five-year strategic plan in the pages that follow.

Sincerely,



**PETER G. GURT '85**

President



# Strategic Plan Framework

Our Future in Focus: The MILT Plan

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**Modeling Character and Well-Being**



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**Innovating Career-Focused Education**



L

**Leveraging Impact**



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**Teamwork to Strengthen Community Alignment and Engagement**



Advance The Compass Project to equip students with Sacred Values-inspired character, skills, and work ethic to lead fulfilling and productive lives.



Deliver relevant, experiential education and individualized learning pathways to prepare students, pre-K-12, for career success in a changing world.

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Broaden graduate opportunities for apprenticeships, military service, postsecondary education, and career services for professional success.



Develop strategic programs to serve more low-income children.



Enhance talent recruitment and inspire excellence through professional and personal growth and leadership opportunities to support the school's mission and values.

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Deepen the sense of belonging, contributions, and collaboration among staff, students, parents/sponsors, and alumni to strengthen the school community.





# Modeling Character and Well-Being

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At Milton Hershey School, we are committed to preparing our students to enter the world after graduation equipped to thrive as self-sufficient adults who are thoughtful, compassionate, and ready to make a positive impact on their communities. But growing up in poverty can impact children's ability to manage their emotions, develop healthy relationships, and make responsible decisions—all essential to successfully navigating life. By promoting self-discovery, responsibility, and character-based learning inside and outside the classroom, we are helping students develop the skills, traits, and mindset they will need for life after graduation.





## Modeling Character and Well-Being

### GOAL

# Advance The Compass Project to equip students with Sacred Values-inspired character, skills, and work ethic to lead fulfilling and productive lives.

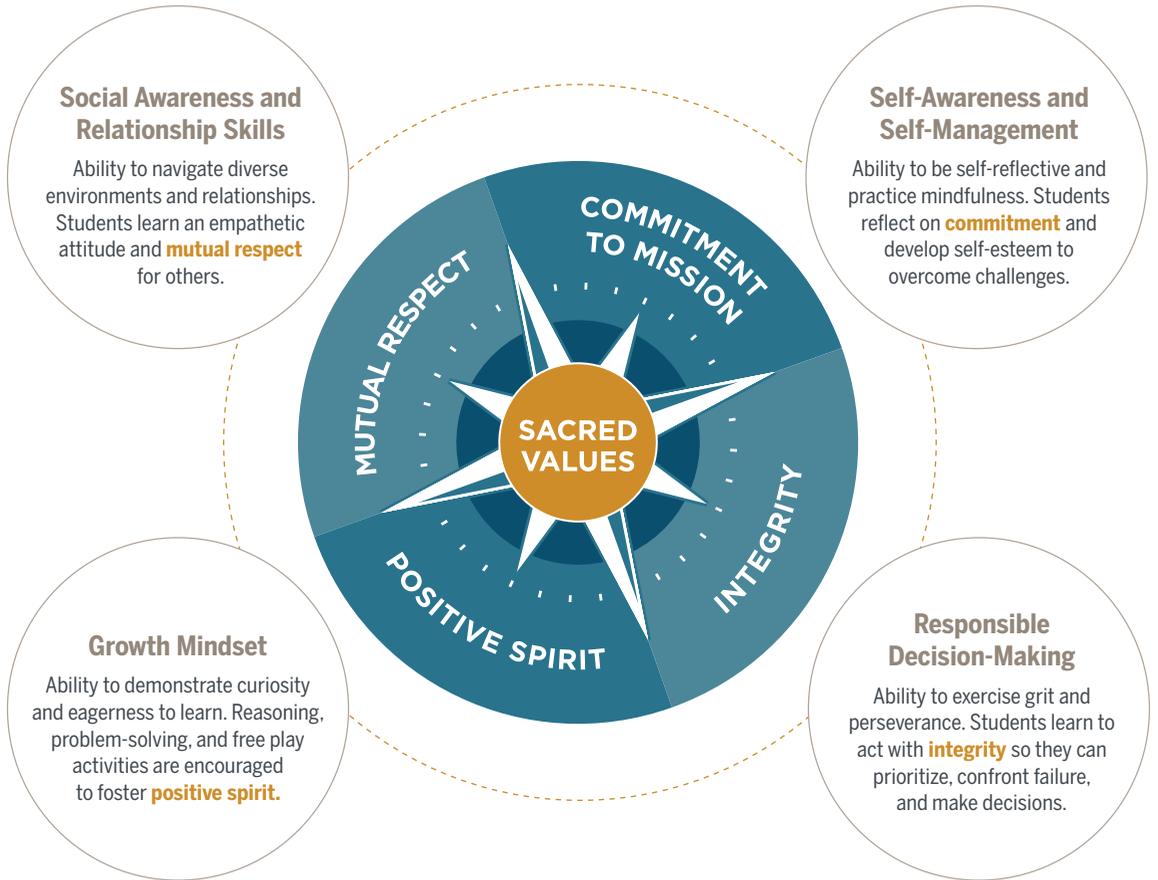
During our last strategic plan, we launched our character and leadership development initiative to help students of all ages discover their values and learn the necessary skills to become leaders and global citizens. We called it The Compass Project, and it continues to guide students by building on our four Sacred Values. The Compass Project reinforces our commitment to developing the whole child.

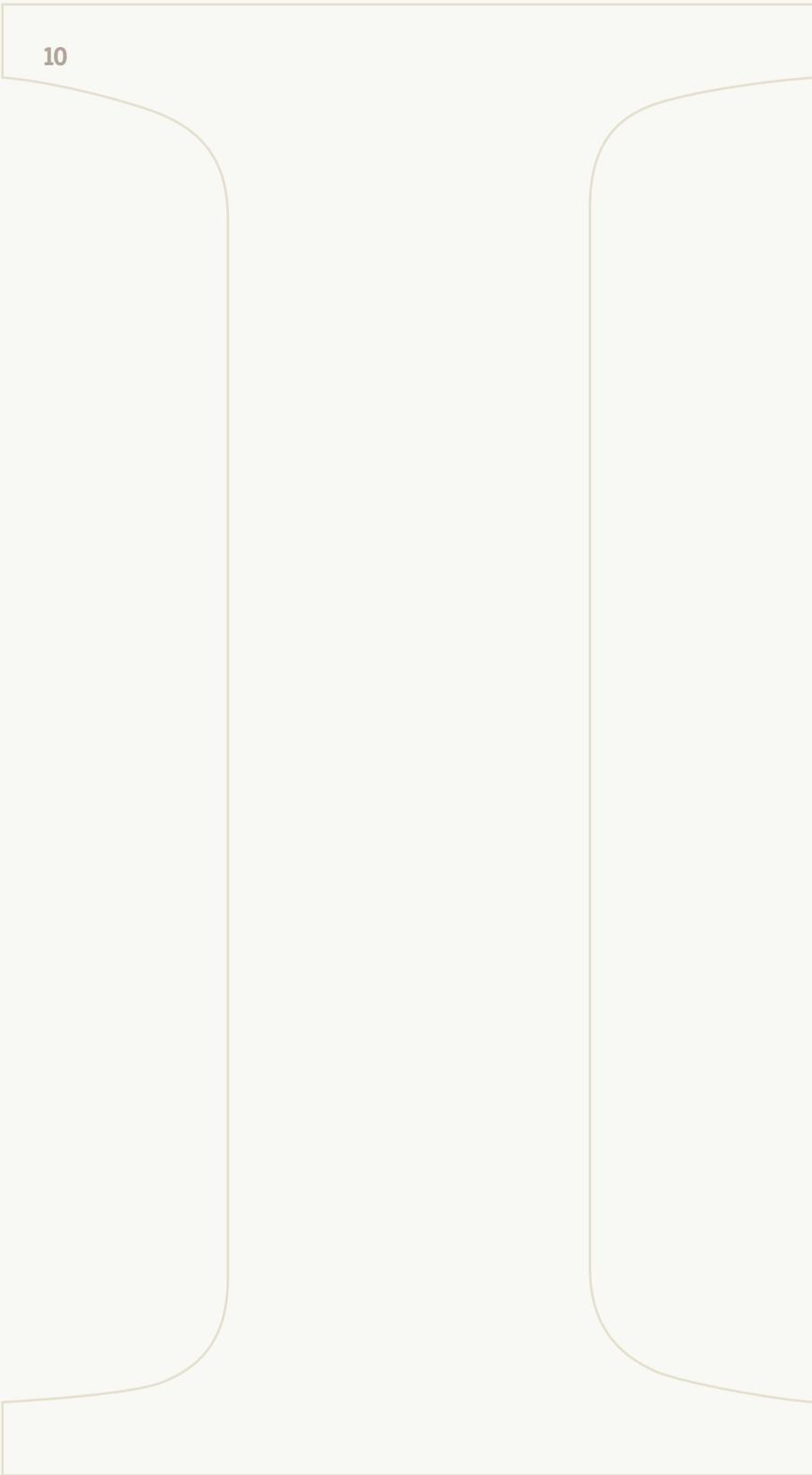
The Our Future in Focus strategic plan will continue to move MHS from a rules-based to a values-based culture built on mutual respect, integrity, positive spirit, and commitment. To do this, we will extend The Compass Project to all aspects of student life, expand The Compass Project and Sacred Values education among the MHS community, leverage partnerships with staff, parents/sponsors, alumni, and others, and expand student voice and leadership opportunities. By enhancing our support and monitoring systems, the program will be able to continually improve. When students graduate, they will have the ability to live out the Sacred Values along with the skills and work ethic to lead fulfilling and productive lives.

### IN ACTION

- ✓ Deepen impact of The Compass Project (TCP) across all areas of student life
- ✓ Expand awareness of TCP and ways to support student growth among parents/sponsors
- ✓ Refine tracking of student outcomes tied to character and social and emotional learning skills
- ✓ Grow TCP support system among staff and external partners by expanding mentoring and community service programs
- ✓ Develop additional opportunities for student voice and leadership

## The Compass Project/Sacred Values Connection





# Innovating Career-Focused Education

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Milton Hershey School has a long history of career-focused education. Since 1909, we have intentionally incorporated career training into our curriculum and in the process developed an award-winning Career and Technical Education program. As our world and the workforce continue to evolve, it is more important than ever that our school curriculum and career-readiness approach also evolve. This includes recognizing and supporting the many paths students and graduates can take in pursuit of a career—from apprenticeships and postsecondary learning to the military and more.





## Innovating Career-Focused Education

### GOAL

# Deliver relevant, experiential education and individualized learning pathways to prepare students, pre-K-12, for career success in a changing world.

Career-focused education allows students to discover their strengths, interests, and purpose so they can graduate career, postsecondary, and life ready. MHS students are introduced to career pathways in elementary school, but over the next five years, pre-K through eighth-grade career exposure and exploration will drastically transform to educate students on the full range of career pathways, including those that do not require a four-year college degree. MHS will also reorient all pre-K through 12th-grade education around career exploration, exposure, experiential learning, and preparation. This vision involves leveraging the Hershey entities, local industries, MHS staff, and alumni to increase real-world, career-based opportunities and become a “school without walls.” The vision also includes teaching all students logic and problem-solving through computer programming. Our Future in Focus will aggressively build upon programs initiated in 2015-20, including pre-apprenticeships/apprenticeships, the Education and Human Services pathway, and Individual Career Exposure electives so students can explore multiple career fields regardless of their Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathway.

### IN ACTION

- ✓ Increase career speakers and professionals' involvement in pre-K-8 learning
- ✓ Use data to identify students' strengths and interests, personalize learning, and broaden career exposure
- ✓ Outline courses of study, competencies, and credentialing for career clusters
- ✓ Educate students, beginning in elementary school, on the full range of career pathways
- ✓ Build out authentic work experiences and pre-apprenticeships/apprenticeships
- ✓ Provide all students foundational computer programming instruction and advanced learning opportunities
- ✓ Increase rigor and relevance of academic content and integration with CTE areas
- ✓ Intensify teaching of lifelong learning skills, work ethic, and self-regulation







## Innovating Career-Focused Education

### GOAL

# Broaden graduate opportunities for apprenticeships, military service, postsecondary education, and career services for professional success.

The Graduate Programs for Success (GPS) Division was launched in 2016 to better prepare, transition, and support MHS high school students and recent graduates. Through the Our Future in Focus strategic plan, we will expand the certificate and apprenticeship opportunities for recent graduates. We will also build upon our work providing real-time supports to graduates in the military, workforce, community colleges, technical schools, and four-year colleges and develop additional pathways for postsecondary success aligned with GPS and our pre-K-12 program. Timely and in-depth professional development will result in more robust individualized career planning assistance for alumni and students, along with a deepened understanding by staff, students, and parents/sponsors of the wide range of career and credentialing opportunities for students.

### IN ACTION

- ✓ Expand postsecondary career-related partnerships with career and technical schools and businesses
- ✓ Provide in-depth professional development to key staff members on an annual basis
- ✓ Expand students' and parents'/sponsors' understanding of the wide variety of credentialing opportunities in all career areas
- ✓ Create more robust individualized career planning
- ✓ Develop an apprenticeship boot camp experience for recent graduates



# Leveraging Impact

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Milton and Catherine Hershey strongly believed that the power to build an exceptional life begins with an education. They created Milton Hershey School to bring the life-changing power of education to children in need. For more than 110 years, our school has empowered children from underprivileged backgrounds to reach their potential and achieve their dreams with the resources, education, and support they need in and out of the classroom to find rewarding careers, break the cycle of poverty, and develop into adults who are positive forces in their own communities and the world. By creating impactful solutions to difficult issues, MHS has changed thousands of lives and is now in the position to change thousands more by expanding the impact of the Hersheys' vision.





## Leveraging Impact

### GOAL

# Develop strategic programs to serve more low-income children.

Thanks to the Hersheys' generosity and vision, MHS has continually enhanced and expanded its programs and offerings so that more and more children can benefit from our best-in-class education, resources, and care. During the next five years, we will identify, design, and begin implementing a strategic program that will enable us to serve a greater number of children than ever before.

Potential areas being explored include expanding Career and Technical Education programming, launching early childhood education initiatives, or providing summer programming beyond current students. The program we pursue will maintain our high level of excellence, demonstrate our proven expertise in the education field, and be aligned with the Hersheys' Deed of Trust. We look forward to finalizing the focus of this goal and bringing it to life to transform more lives in the future.

### IN ACTION

- ✓ Use research, feedback, and data to determine program

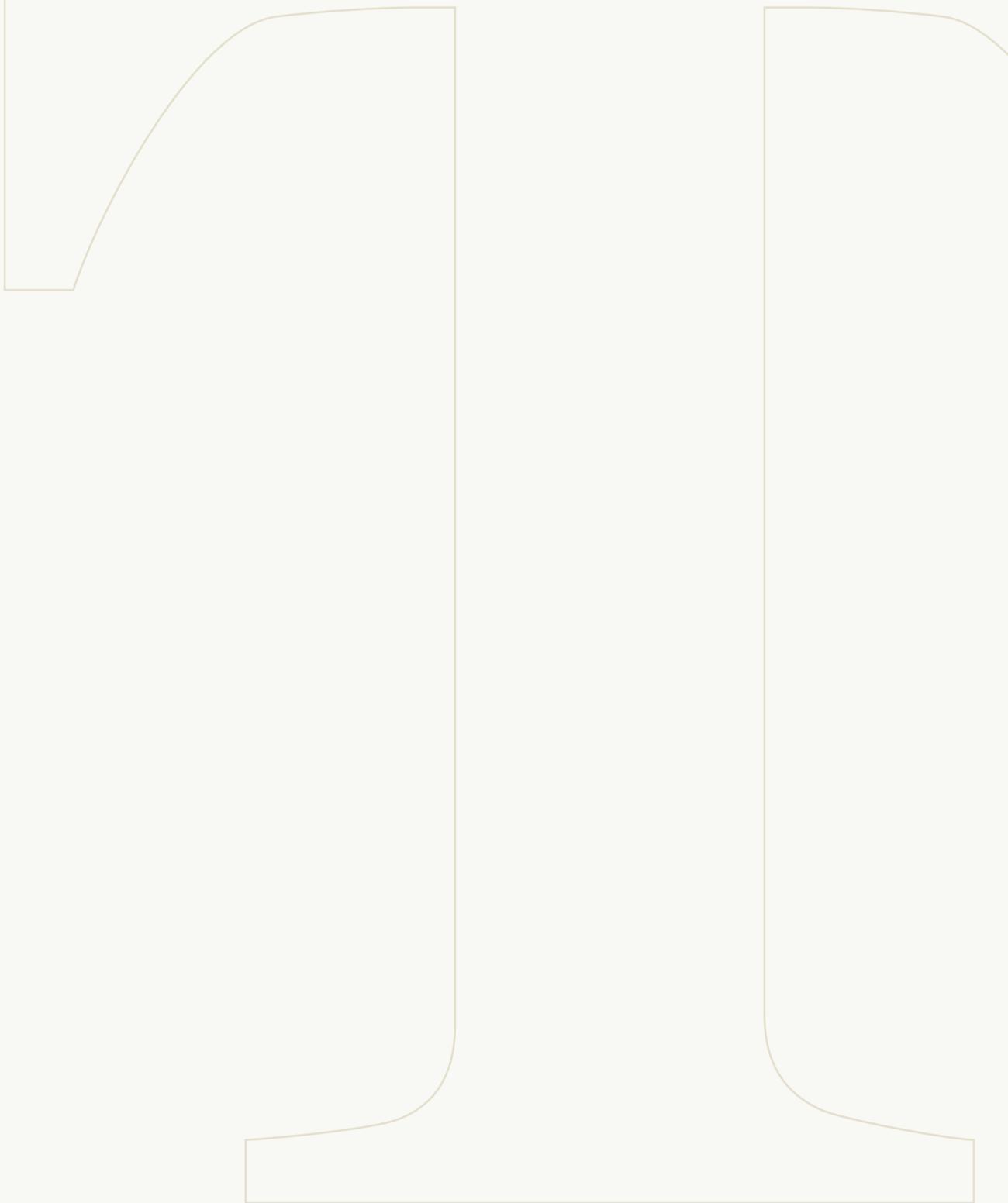
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- ✓ Develop plan for implementation

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- ✓ Impact more low-income children than ever before





# Teamwork to Strengthen Community Alignment and Engagement

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We get a true understanding of the strength and ability of an organization by the people in it. At Milton Hershey School, this includes staff, students, parents/sponsors, and alumni. Our track record of excellence and dedicated service to children is derived from our workforce. As experts in their fields, MHS employees not only possess the knowledge and skills to make a difference but also the heart. They are passionate about their careers and both understand and value that their work is life-changing for others. By attracting and retaining the best, most talented people and deepening the sense of purpose, belonging, and collaboration among everyone in the MHS family, we will strengthen our school community and keep the close-knit bonds that make MHS welcoming and unique.





## Teamwork to Strengthen Community Alignment and Engagement

### GOAL

# Enhance talent recruitment and inspire excellence through professional and personal growth and leadership opportunities to support the school's mission and values.

During our most recent accreditation by the Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools, MHS collected feedback from leaders and staff to determine our school's core strengths and vision for the future. The acquisition, development, and retention of talent was identified as one of our school's top 10 core strengths.

Through Our Future in Focus, or the MILT Plan, we will heighten our focus on talent recruitment and professional excellence to grow our current workforce and develop a talent pipeline for the future. This will be done by implementing new human resources strategies driven by data and technology to recruit top-notch talent. We will inspire employees to play a more active role in their own professional development while also delivering a technology platform for individual and schoolwide learning. When our employees are their best, they can help our students be their best, too. Growing the leadership abilities of staff at all levels will be important to succession planning and means future success for our school, students, and graduates.

### IN ACTION

- ✓ Use marketing, recognition strategies, analytics, and technology for recruitment and retention
- ✓ Continually update recruiting strategies to align with the evolving marketplace
- ✓ Grow employees' leadership abilities through professional development
- ✓ Evolve performance management to focus on coaching and motivating employees
- ✓ Launch an organizational technology platform for learning and professional growth





SCHOOL BUS

MILTON  
HERSHEY  
SCHOOL  
TRANSPORTATION



## Teamwork to Strengthen Community Alignment and Engagement

### GOAL

# Deepen the sense of belonging, contributions, and collaboration among staff, students, parents/sponsors, and alumni to strengthen the school community.

Also among our school's top strengths is our community, sense of belonging, and family-like bonds. Our welcoming and family-like environment is what makes our school unique. It is what drives people to want to work here, inspires parents and sponsors to enroll their children, nurtures students to explore and pursue their dreams, and keeps alumni connected. As our school grows in the number of children we serve and the diversity of programs we offer, it will be critically important that we never lose the tight-knit community connection we have enjoyed and valued for more than 110 years. It's simply what makes MHS, MHS.

This strategic plan will build on this strength by uniting all members of our school community, fostering connections and collaboration among them, and safeguarding loved traditions to achieve more for our students. Our goal is an MHS community where every student feels supported, every staff member understands their role in our mission, parents/sponsors feel connected, and graduates stay engaged.

### IN ACTION

- ✓ Build new opportunities for student voice and leadership, mentoring, and collaboration among Elementary, Middle, and Senior Divisions
- ✓ Celebrate individual and group successes and MHS traditions
- ✓ Increase teams' collaboration across MHS
- ✓ Empower teams to make decisions
- ✓ Strengthen partnerships with parents/sponsors
- ✓ Increase alumni engagements and opportunities for student-alumni connections

# What Success Looks Like

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With the collaboration and support of the MHS community, we look forward to making a difference for students that will positively impact their entire lives and those of generations to follow. For our next five-year strategic plan, this is what success will look like—this is what our future looks like in focus.

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## Modeling Character and Well-Being

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## Innovating Career-Focused Education

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## Leveraging Impact

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## Teamwork to Strengthen Community Alignment and Engagement

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### A values-based MHS culture where...

Students understand and live out Sacred Values

Student and adult programs are strengths-based, align with Sacred Values, and promote social and emotional learning skills

Student voice and leadership are embedded into living and learning environments and strategic planning

Modeling the Sacred Values extends to all MHS community adults, including staff, parents/sponsors, alumni, and mentors

Student and staff Sacred Values recognition program is developed and promotes performance, growth, and mutual support

### Career-focused education where...

Students prepare for the 21st-century workplace and careers that haven't been invented yet

Career pathways are enhanced and pre-K-8 career exposure transformed so all students are aware of the full range of career options

Personalized career guidance equips students to create career goals and postsecondary career plans

All students graduate with computer programming knowledge and opportunities for accelerated programming

All students graduate having completed an authentic work experience tied to their career goal

All students graduate having completed some postgraduate work

### Career-focused education at the postsecondary level where there is...

Strengthened alignment between pre-K-12 academics and postsecondary credentialing opportunities

Greater understanding by staff, students, and parents/sponsors of the wide range of career and credentialing opportunities

Greater diversity in the postsecondary plans pursued by students and recent graduates

Increased completion of postsecondary credentials

### A new strategic program where...

The MHS mission is advanced and expanded

More children from low-income families are positively impacted

Children from poverty benefit from our school's expertise and resources

### An MHS human resources approach where...

Recruitment, management, and compensation strategies attract and retain top talent

There is a culture of continuous improvement and focus on student and graduate success

Staff play an active role in their own professional development

Staff share their expertise with other schools and organizations nationwide

Performance management inspires regular feedback and coaching to grow employees

Effective metrics inform strategic decision-making and workforce planning

Talent is developed within MHS to meet current and future needs

### An MHS community where...

Every student feels surrounded by adults who care deeply about them and their success

Staff understand how their efforts advance the MHS mission and contribute to student/graduate success

Traditions maintain the feeling of a small and welcoming community

Communication and collaboration with parents/sponsors result in students' academic, social, and emotional growth

Alumni engagement is strengthened and student-alumni connections increased

Cross-functional innovation and collaboration solve work-related challenges

All staff experience an increased sense of belonging, retention, and commitment to mission

# About MHS

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Milton Hershey School began as a dream and vision shared by the famous chocolate maker Milton S. Hershey and his wife, Catherine. Unable to have children of their own, they used their wealth to create a home and school for orphaned boys in 1909 called the Hershey Industrial School (renamed Milton Hershey School in 1951).

Today, MHS thrives as a cost-free, private, coeducational home and school for more than 2,100 students from families of lower income. It offers a positive, structured home life year-round and an excellent pre-K through 12th-grade education. The school focuses on building character and college and career readiness so students have the skills to be successful in all aspects of life.

Under the leadership of President Peter G. Gurt '85, Milton Hershey School has developed strategic plans, including Our Future in Focus and the 2020 Vision, to continue the work and proud legacy of our founders. MHS is impacting more children than ever before and has a clear focus to continually enhance and expand upon the programs, resources, and services it offers so students can lead happy, healthy, and productive lives.

To learn more about the progress of the current strategic plan, visit [mhskids.org/AnnualReport](http://mhskids.org/AnnualReport).





# MILTON HERSHEY SCHOOL®



Milton Hershey School is one of the world's best private schools, offering a top-notch education and positive home life to children in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade from families of lower income at no charge.

Learn more at [mhskids.org](https://mhskids.org).

*Milton Hershey School does not discriminate in admissions or other programs and services on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, sex, religious creed, or disability. Visit [mhskids.org](https://mhskids.org) for more information.*