An Extraordinary Learning Environment:

Our Strategies for Cultivating Extraordinary 21st Century Teaching & Learning

“Committed to Every Child, Every Day”

Derry Township School District
Derry Township School District is an award-winning public school system located in Hershey, PA. Our community enjoys a legacy that began with founder Milton S. Hershey. The district serves approximately 3,500 students in kindergarten through twelfth grade residing in Derry Township, Dauphin County.

Our 114-acre campus hosts five schools

- Hershey Early Childhood Center
- Hershey Primary Elementary School
- Hershey Intermediate Elementary School
- Hershey Middle School
- Hershey High School

All of our schools have exemplary facilities, curriculum, faculty, administrators, co-curricular and extra-curricular programs. Annually more than 90% of our graduating seniors pursue post-secondary education.

Hershey High School is often recognized as one of the top public schools in America by national publications. At all assessed grade levels, statewide assessment scores are consistently well-above state and national averages.

Our collective goal is to be a model for how public education should function. We are cultivating an extraordinary 21st Century teaching and learning environment.
Like all public school districts in the Commonwealth, Derry Township School District is required to file strategic planning documents with the Pennsylvania Department of Education every six years.

The plan documents that set a course for DTSD through 2019 are the culmination of more than a year's worth of thorough and, at times, intense work by more than 100 individual stakeholders across a variety of committees.

Anyone who has participated in strategic planning can attest it is not an easy process. For such planning to be effective, an organization must be open to candid self-evaluation. It must reflect on where it is, determine where it wants to be and create a design for reaching its goals. Introspection, constructive criticism and a dash of calculated risk are crucial elements in the planning process.

It is easy to understand why many organizations find themselves so exhausted by the process that they lack the energy to push on and actually implement the strategies they have drawn up. The Derry Township Board of School Directors, administration and staff recognize that filing documents with the state is not the end of the process, but rather just the beginning.
Strategic plans have long been compared to roadmaps. I prefer to think of a good plan as being more akin to a GPS unit: interactive rather than static, recognizing detours, roadblocks and traffic jams that will inevitably appear which require course corrections. Unlike a map, a GPS unit will occasionally tell you to double back in order to get ahead.

The document you hold in your hand is one example of “doubling back” in order to move forward. While the official strategic plan documents are completed and approved, they are also bureaucratic. The grand ideas, lofty goals and exciting opportunities can be lost in the formulaic reporting we’re required to produce for the Commonwealth. So to help our stakeholders – and at times ourselves – better understand the underlying ideals of the plan, we are revisiting it and re-presenting it here. As you read these pages, remember the intent of this summation is to present the essence of much larger and longer documents. The complete plan is open for your review and can be downloaded from the district’s web site at www.hershey.k12.pa.us/StrategicPlan.

Even this summary can be further distilled: As parents, staff and community, we will cultivate an extraordinary learning environment that expands the minds and nurtures success for every member of the school community. With your support and everyone’s focus, effort and determination, we’ll achieve our goals.

Joseph E. McFarland, Jr.
Our Mission
Engaging all students every day to help them achieve their greatest potential as global citizens.

Our Motto
"Every Child Every Day"

Our Vision
As parents, staff and community, we will cultivate an extraordinary learning environment that expands the minds and nurtures success for every member of the school community.

Our Beliefs
To launch students successfully into the 21st Century, the Derry Township School District believes that...

- Effective collaboration among home, community, and school is essential.
- Systemic change is necessary for continuous improvement.
- Rigor, relevance, and engagement in learning are para-
• Individual strengths are recognized and valued in order to foster students’ pursuit of dreams.

• Learning within the entire school community is optimal when:
  ◊ All who enter feel physically and emotionally safe and secure.
  ◊ Healthy minds, bodies and spirits for all are valued and encouraged.
  ◊ All children are given meaningful encouragement, guidance, support, instruction and an opportunity to connect with at least one significant adult.
  ◊ High expectations are held for all.
  ◊ Opportunities for all to participate are equal.
  ◊ Clear, consistent rules are communicated and reinforced.
  ◊ All stakeholders are responsible and accountable.

• Curriculum, instruction, and assessment decisions are based on research, evidence and best practices.

• Global citizens require competencies in problem-solving, communication skills, technology, and teamwork.

• Professional development and collaboration is the foun-
Performance Target #1: Professional Development

The District will develop and direct the work of staff toward reaching the overarching goals in the 6-year Comprehensive Plan through:

- Establish a district system that fully ensures professional development is focused, comprehensive and implemented with fidelity
- Establish a district system that fully ensures consistent implementation of standards-aligned curricula across all schools for all students
- Establish a district system that fully ensures the consistent implementation of effective instructional practices across all classrooms in each school
Performance Target #2: Special Education

The District will ensure the inclusion of all special needs students to the maximum extent possible across all buildings through:

- Continue to grow and expand competency and understanding of all staff regarding the unique needs of students on the autism spectrum
- Build capacity in professional and paraprofessional staff related to positive behavioral support
- Expand paraprofessional capacity in ABA principles, anxiety in students, supporting in the general education setting, building student independence and executive function
Performance Target #3: Technology

The District will provide a safe, caring, rigorous learning environment that offers multiple opportunities for success and supports student achievement and development. The District will develop plans and requirements to achieve the vision for 21st Century Teaching and Learning by:

- Equipping students to be responsible 21st Century electronic citizens who understand ethical, cultural, and societal issues in a digital world

- Integrating technology into teaching and learning to promote student engagement and enhance 21st Century skills for all students. Continue a strong focus on instructional pedagogy with effective integration of technology tools into the classroom

- Exploring means to improve communication with constituents and to streamline and reduce costs of operations through the use of technology
Performance Target #4: Safe & Supportive Schools

The District will provide a safe and secure environment for students, staff, and visitors. The District will develop and maintain physical infrastructure, staff organization, and professional skill levels to enable an instructional environment required for 21st Century learning through:

- Completion of a Facility Master Study/Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
- Enhancing partnerships with local agencies and entities to support safe and supportive schools response and efforts
- Focusing on enhancements to infrastructure and operational practices related to school safety and school climate