

# Milton Hershey School

## Early Childhood Education Initiative

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### ECE Initiative Fact Sheet

#### About MHS and its Mission

- Milton Hershey School (MHS) is a cost-free, private, co-educational school and home founded in 1909 by Milton S. Hershey and his wife, Catherine, to serve children from economically disadvantaged and at-risk backgrounds.
- For more than 110 years, MHS has transformed the lives of thousands of children by offering rigorous academics, best-in-class care, a wide range of extracurricular activities, advanced technology and state-of-the-art facilities.
- MHS has continually evolved to fulfill Milton and Catherine Hershey's original vision and has grown in both size and quality to serve a richly diverse population of at-risk boys and girls from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade by employing its holistic approach to education.
- With the largest enrollment in its history at the opening of the 2019-20 academic year and a strategic plan to serve even more, the extraordinary success of MHS includes sustained outstanding academic results and a retention rate that reached a 50-year high.

#### About the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Initiative

- The ECE Initiative is an early childhood educational plan to develop initially up to six (6) cost-free Early Childhood Resource Centers (ECRCs) operated through separate entities affiliated with MHS for children from birth to age 5 from economically disadvantaged and at-risk backgrounds. It is designed to enhance the development of a child's educational, cognitive, social, emotional, and physical well-being.
- Following a comprehensive, multi-year study of effective strategies and the input of internal and external experts, the ECE Initiative was developed to serve more children from economically disadvantaged and at-risk backgrounds.
- The ECE Initiative includes:
  1. A primary core early learning program consisting of a rigorous and relevant curriculum aligning with a mission to nurture and educate enrolled children
  2. Enhancements to the primary core early learning program for enrolled children, such as nutritious meals, transportation as necessary, and provision of supplies such as clothes, diapers, and basic on-site medical supplies
  3. Integrated support services for families of children enrolled in the ECRCs including interaction with families in support of the core early learning program
  4. Ancillary sharing of knowledge with other early childhood education providers to strengthen the services for children enrolled in the ECRCs

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### Location

- All of the proposed Early Childhood Resource Centers (ECRCs) will be located in Pennsylvania. The first will be located on the Milton Hershey School (MHS) campus. The second will be located in Harrisburg. The locations of other ECRCs will be determined by the MHS Board of Managers, if the Court grants the Petition.

### Funding the ECE Initiative

- The funding for the ECE Initiative will come from a limited portion of the annual and accumulated income from the Milton Hershey School Trust, ensuring the continued funding of and investment in the long-term success of MHS.
- Through prudent management, the Milton Hershey School Trust has grown substantially and has historically produced more income than is needed to fully fund the School.
- The funding requested by the Petition includes funding for both the construction of the ECRCs and for the operation of the ECRCs once constructed. That funding is estimated to total \$350 million over approximately six years.

### The Need for and Benefits of Early Childhood Education

- There is a substantial need for early childhood education in Pennsylvania. In fact, 80-85% of children under age 5 in Pennsylvania living at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level don't have access to quality early childhood education.
- Research shows participation in quality early childhood education programs can directly improve children's learning and development.
- Research has found that much of the school readiness gap between low- and high-income students is created — and can be prevented — before formal schooling begins through early childhood education.
- The ECE Initiative is designed to encourage families or custodians of eligible children to apply for enrollment in Milton Hershey School when their children reach an appropriate age.
- The ECE Initiative is designed to prepare enrolled children to be more school ready if they matriculate to Milton Hershey School or when they enroll elsewhere.