

**Milton Hershey School, Hershey Trust Company Receive Court Approval  
to Advance Cost-Free Early Childhood Education Initiative**

*Court Approval Allows Milton Hershey School, Hershey Trust Company to Serve Even More Children from Economically Disadvantaged and At-Risk Backgrounds with \$350 Million Investment*

Friday, Oct. 23, Hershey, PA – Milton Hershey School and the Hershey Trust Company received approval from the Orphans’ Court Division of the Dauphin County Court of Common Pleas to advance the holistic Early Childhood Education Initiative (ECE Initiative). The ECE Initiative will initially consist of up to six cost-free Early Childhood Resource Centers (ECRCs) in Pennsylvania for economically disadvantaged and at-risk children from birth to age 5. The Centers will operate through subsidiaries of Milton Hershey School.

“The Milton Hershey School and Hershey Trust Company are gratified by the Court’s decision, which clears the path for us to expand and enhance the impact and reach of Milton and Catherine Hershey, and allows us to serve more children than ever before,” said Robert Heist ’82, Chairman of the Milton Hershey School Board of Managers, also an alumnus. “While this is just the first step in the process, we are thrilled to start putting words into action and begin bringing the ECE Initiative to life.”

With Court approval, Milton Hershey School and the Hershey Trust Company can now begin the process of implementing the ECE Initiative to improve school readiness for children from disadvantaged and at-risk backgrounds while introducing more families to the benefits and programming of Milton Hershey School.

The \$350 million investment to initially construct and operate up to six ECRCs over approximately six years will be provided by a limited portion of the annual Trust net income from the Milton Hershey School Trust and a limited portion of the Trust’s accumulated income from prior years. The first ECRC will be built on the Milton Hershey School campus. A second ECRC will be built in Harrisburg. The locations of other ECRCs will be determined by the School’s Board of Managers.

“We are thankful to everyone who has supported this project to date, including Milton Hershey School staff, alumni, families, our Board and many others. We now have the opportunity to build on our success and serve even more children,” said Peter G. Gurt ’85, Milton Hershey School President and alumnus. “We look forward to sharing updates on the ECE Initiative and continuing to work with our staff and early childhood education leaders from around the country to design this world-class program.”

More information about the ECE Initiative and its progress can be found at [www.hersheyearlylearning.org](http://www.hersheyearlylearning.org).

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