

**MOSES  
BROWN  
SCHOOL**

*SUMMER 2024*

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# An Update on Strategic Planning



## OUR MISSION

Moses Brown,  
a Friends School,  
exists to inspire  
the **inner promise**  
of each student and  
instill the utmost  
care for learning,  
people, and place.

# Visioning the Future for Moses Brown School



As we stand at the threshold of a new era, we reflect on the important journey that has brought us to this moment. The success of our previous strategic plan, *MB Believes* (2013-2021), left an indelible mark on our beloved school. We have seen the rise of new buildings like the Woodman Family Community and Performance Center, the Gorgi Family Squash and Education Center, and a state-of-the-art lower school. Our athletic facilities, including the impressive Campanella Field and Taleghani Family Community Fitness Center, have been upgraded to provide our students with top-notch spaces to excel within our expansive Providence campus. We have also significantly increased our financial aid support, developed meaningful experiential educational programs for

students, and bolstered professional development for our dedicated faculty.

Now, as we look forward to celebrating 250 years of education at Moses Brown in 2034, we are excited to finalize our new strategic vision for our school. This plan will not just be a roadmap; it will be a bold declaration of our commitment to lead in education as we prepare our students for a complex and ever-changing world. We will be determined to keep our focus on the horizon, symbolizing our journey toward continuous growth, exploration, and excellence representing the endless possibilities that await us. By chasing the horizon, we commit to never settling, always striving for best-practice approaches to education, and inspiring our students to reach their fullest potential.

# Visioning Our Future

As we look to 2034 when MB celebrates 250 years of education, what is the story we want to be telling?

## Our Quaker Values and Mission

At the heart of Moses Brown School is our identity as a Quaker institution. Our mission is a powerful beacon for us at this time in history: *Moses Brown, a Friends School, exists to inspire the inner promise of each student and instill the utmost care for learning, people, and place.* Our Quaker values, represented by the SPICES—Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality, and Stewardship—are integral to our vision and guide us in every step of our journey. These values are not just ideals, they are the foundation upon which we build our community, inspire our students, and shape our future.

## Your Role in Shaping Our Future

This visioning work is a collective endeavor. We need the passion, creativity, and support of every member of our community—students, alumni, parents, grandparents, faculty, staff, and friends. Together, we can create a future that honors our rich history and propels us towards even greater achievements.

## Leading in Education

Our responsibility is to prepare students for a complex and changing world. Our vision will focus on innovative educational practices, enhancing our curriculum, fostering a supportive and inclusive environment, and equipping our students with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in the 21st century.

## Join Us in This Journey

As we embark on a transformative journey, we are filled with optimism and determination. Together, we can create a future where Moses Brown continues to be a beacon of excellence in education, guided by our Quaker values and mission.

As we plan for the next ten years and the 250th anniversary of Moses Brown, and as we look beyond to the next hundred years of MB scholars, let us chase the horizon, embrace the future, and celebrate the incredible potential within our community.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

# *Let Your Life Speak:* Community Conversations Spring 2024



In the spring of 2024, Head of School Katie Titus led the community in a series of conversations. Over the course of five months, we hosted 14 conversations with over 400 participants spanning all constituencies— from faculty and staff to students, parents, and alumni. During these sessions, we set out to accomplish two goals— to identify the important questions we should be asking ourselves at this moment in Moses Brown's 240 year-history, and to build community empathy and resilience during a time of deep polarization in the world. Out of these conversations, we developed

over 14 pages of critical questions or queries. At the end of each session, we held a Meeting for Sharing, the Quaker practice of settling into silence together with the expectations that people will share from their experience. Common messages included gratitude for the opportunity to reflect on the importance of a Moses Brown education; appreciation for a willingness to engage in difficult conversations and even conflict with a sense of common purpose; and enthusiasm for the future. A small group has worked over the summer to review the queries and develop the following themes.

**In the fall, we will gather to reflect on these queries and tackle one big question: What is our vision for Moses Brown 2034, when the school will celebrate 250 years of Quaker education?**

## Themes from Community Conversations

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### Quaker Mission and Values

The community is strongly aligned with the school's mission and Quaker values. As we are living through increasing polarization and decreasing trust in organizations, there is a clear desire to deepen our reliance on the strengths of Quaker practice as a unique and compelling aspect of our program. We also note that Quaker values are often broad enough to support multiple interpretations, which can, at times, divide rather than unite our community around programming, such as the diversity, equity, and inclusion work of the school.

**Query:** How can Moses Brown strengthen our commitment to, alignment around, and use of the Quaker values and practices?



## Themes from Community Conversations

### Educational Excellence

The community expressed pride in our rigorous, values-based educational program that prepares students for what's next after graduation. Students specifically noted a desire for more opportunities to create deep meaning through applying their academic engagement to more real-world applications. Upper school students also noted a desire to ensure that classrooms remain places of open debate and dialogue, where differing opinions are nurtured and welcomed. Finally, there was a common reference to a complex, changing world that will require students to develop new and varied skills to ensure their ability to succeed in an uncertain and dynamic environment. We welcome this challenge and already have been helping to lead regional and national conversations about how to responsibly embrace emerging technologies (such as AI) as powerful tools for students and teachers.

**Query:** How might we create the conditions for learning that will deliver on a rigorous and relevant education, one that prepares students for future challenges?

**Query:** What skills and competencies will be most essential for our students in the next 10-20 years? How does a changing technological landscape contribute to these skills and competencies?



## Themes from Community Conversations

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### Community and Relationships

The most consistent strength that emerged from the community conversations was the strong relationships that are forged between students and their teachers. We know that students thrive in environments of high trust with the adults who care for them. At Moses Brown, we affirm that knowing our students is the basic foundation to being able to challenge them and help them to develop their full potential or inner promise. In the context of a rapidly changing landscape, where teachers are feeling additional stress in the work, technology is challenging our ability to engage meaningfully with others, and the world has experienced decreasing trust in institutions and others, we want to ensure our continued commitment to this core strength of the student experience.

**Query:** With emerging and evolving technologies, how can Moses Brown ensure that we continue to prioritize the importance of human relationships, especially the connections between teachers and students in a time when cultivating deep, trusting relationships is more challenging?

**Query:** How can we strengthen our partnership with parents and alumni in support of our program for students?





## Themes from Community Conversations

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### Student Wellness

Students from 4th grade, middle school, and upper school all participated in the Let Your Life Speak community conversations. They shared challenges ranging from anxiety related to change, stress about their futures and the challenges facing the world, and pressures to live up to an unrealistic set of expectations, whether imposed by family, friends, society, or self. Students acknowledge the challenge of technology and its role in increasing the mental health issues facing kids today. There's an access to information that can contribute to a sense of overwhelm, paralysis, and uncertainty. And yet, they also acknowledge the importance of technology for their social connection and academic learning.

**Query:** How might we cultivate a balanced and healthy school environment that prioritizes student mental health by connecting purpose and clear expectations with deep care and support for all students?



## Themes from Community Conversations

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### Teacher Support and Development

In recent years, education has seen a decrease in teacher pipeline and an increase in teachers leaving the profession. In independent schools, increasing expectations of parents, expanding needs of students both academically and socially, the political and social polarization of society, and the challenging impact of technology on teaching and learning are just a few examples of how the job has expanded. Moses Brown is known for having excellent teachers who develop meaningful connections with kids, which allow teachers to challenge and inspire students to fulfill their potential.

**Query:** How might we create an environment that attracts and retains the very best teachers, those who truly love working with kids, while addressing the challenges of a decreasing teacher pipeline and increasing rates of teachers leaving the profession?



## Themes from Community Conversations

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### Financial Vibrancy and Campus Stewardship

As programmatic expectations have increased, inflation has risen, and independent schools have deepened their commitment to financial aid and expanding access to our incredible educational experiences, there has been a steady increase in costs to run our schools, with decreasing revenues, despite growing tuitions that are outpacing a sense of affordability. In addition, while the *MB Believes* campaign resulted in new academic, athletic and art facilities, we need ongoing stewardship of our campus to ensure that we have facilities that will best support a modern academic and co-curricular program.

**Query:** How can Moses Brown transform our financial model to ensure our commitment to access and affordability while stewarding our resources strategically in support of our mission and long-term sustainability?

**Query:** How can Moses Brown better steward our unique and expansive urban campus to ensure we are fully meeting the needs of our students and our evolving educational program?



# Discernment Dialogues

In the fall of 2024, we will gather again as a community to reflect on the themes and queries that emerged from the community conversations and tackle one big question: **What is our vision for Moses Brown in 2034?** We will seek continued feedback and input through a reflective process traditionally used at Moses Brown for strategic planning, known as a discernment dialogue. As we iterate and evolve the thinking that came out of the constituency-based spring conversations, each discernment dialogue will be a cross-constituent session. A series of three discernment dialogues will be held in October; there will be one evening, one weekend, and one virtual opportunity to participate. Faculty, staff, students, parents, and alumni will gather together and hear from Head of School Katie Titus and other educational leaders who will set the stage for the dialogues. Then, participants will move into small groups, facilitated by an MB upper school student leader, to discuss their vision for MB's future. Following their discernment, groups will reconvene for a Meeting for Sharing.

We hope you will join us!

## Save a Date

We encourage alumni, parents/guardians, upper school students, faculty and staff, grandparents, and Friends to participate in one of these cross-constituent sessions.

### October 10 (Thursday)

In person in Woodman Center  
5:45 - 7:45 p.m.\*

### October 26 (Saturday)

In person in Woodman Center  
Hosted by Board of Trustees  
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.\*

### October 28 (Monday)

Virtual via Zoom  
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

*\*Refreshments will be provided during the dialogues. Child care will be available for lower school students, and arrangements can be made for those who want to have dinner with their families on-campus before the event.*

# What's on the Horizon?

## Strategic Choices and Bold Actions

Once the Discernment Dialogues series concludes, school leadership teams will reconvene to consider specific priorities for the next strategic plan, define short-term objectives, and provide a framework for mid- and long-term actions and choices. The Board of Trustees will review, refine, and approve the strategy. Head of School Katie Titus will announce the strategic plan framework to the community at the annual Stewarding our School event in January. Continuing in the spring of 2025, we will work with subject matter experts to develop specific implementation plans, moving the focus from what we plan to do to how we plan to do it.



## ◆ Stewarding Our School

January 28, 2025 (Tuesday)

6:30 - 8:30 pm

In-person in the Woodman Center

Join us when Head of School Katie Titus announces the framework for the next strategic plan.



# Thank you!

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Thank you for helping us determine the stories we want to be telling in 2034 as we celebrate 250 years of education at MB!

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