

From the
HEAD OF SCHOOL
Than Healy



Goals for the Year

With the school year off to a tremendous start, I thought this would be a good time to share our priorities for the coming year and beyond as we strive to create a transformative and relevant educational experience for our students.

When we speak about relevance at Menlo, we are talking about the kind of preparation our students will need to enter into a future that will require agility and a broad skillset to adapt to an ever-changing world. Thinking about my own first decade as Head of School at this remarkable institution, the pursuit of relevance drives me personally as I've worked with the Board of Trustees to further refine Menlo's priorities now and for the years to come.

The kind of nimble, adaptive approach to how we teach our students to solve problems and find their own paths and passions should be reflected in the leadership of the school as well—to also be agile and responsive to the world around us. We are indeed fortunate at Menlo that we enjoy the kinds of students, coaches, teachers, and spaces that other schools must expend their institutional focus working to acquire and attract. The community and support that have been carefully cultivated here over decades are strengths that we sometimes take for granted but are the kinds of things other schools must prioritize. These rare gifts set Menlo apart and allow us to focus our time and energies on expanding our educational relevance to ensure we are able to offer the programs that will best serve our students in their futures.

Over the past two years, we saw firsthand how our talented faculty and staff delivered for our amazing students during a global health emergency despite having to reinvent curriculum and instructional methods and find new ways to create community, engagement, and joy. What we witnessed during this challenging time emphasized that our approach

to educating our students is the right one—that we are not just preparing them for their next step in their educational career, but for a world that can change in an instant.

With all of this in mind, I'm pleased to share the following initiatives and priorities that I believe will help us ensure that we remain dedicated to providing students with the relevant skills that will prepare them for their futures, no matter where life may take them.



Creating Transformative Student Experiences

Offering a challenging, engaging, and supportive learning experience for students remains our core focus. We are currently working to:

- Develop a five-year strategic plan for mental health and well-being to fully support students navigating a post-pandemic world.
- Envision and implement even more relevant, engaging upper level courses that will stretch and distinguish our students.
- Establish a five-year strategic plan for Menlo Athletics to ensure we are offering experiences that serve our students well now and in the years to come by executing on the [Athletics Mission and Values](#).
- Expand our educational relevance by examining how Menlo might better prepare its students for citizenship in a world defined by climate disruption with an emphasis on optimism and agency.





Emphasizing Empathy and Belonging

It is essential to our work as a school that Menlo is a community where students feel a true sense of belonging and that their contributions are valued. To this end, we aim to:

- Proactively communicate the School’s EDIB values and priorities so that they are broadly held within our community.
- Ensure access and belonging for all students as we strive to be a community where all feel welcomed, seen, valued, heard, affirmed, and cared for.
- Implement widespread and effective family support programs so that every family can fully participate in the life of the School.
- Make empathy loud across campus, particularly in the Middle School, as we work to relearn what it means to be in community with each other.



Fostering Employee Excellence

Often referred to as our “secret sauce,” the dynamic, supportive, and caring employees at this school are what make Menlo Menlo. To this end, we strive to:

- Continue to hire creative, resilient, and talented educators from a wide array of backgrounds.
- Support and ensure the successful onboarding of new faculty and staff.
- Strengthen our culture of connection and collaboration among all employees.
- Continue to explore strategies for employee retention in light of the high cost of living in the Bay Area.



Sustaining Our Future

We have an institutional responsibility to be fiscally strong now, as well as for generations to come. To accomplish this, we need to:

- Cultivate leadership-level endowment gifts on top of achieving our fundraising goals for the Annual Fund and Auction.
- Protect our future enrollment by ensuring we meet our traffic and admissions targets per our agreement with the Town of Atherton.
- Support and empower our Admissions Team to better understand ongoing demographic shifts in our student population and geographic area that could impact our enrollment.



Broadening Our Impact

As a leader in the educational landscape, we strive to prepare students to make a positive impact on ever-wider communities. Institutionally, we seek to do the same thing. To accomplish this even further, we plan to:

- Explore initiatives to extend the School’s impact and provide the benefits of a Menlo education to students beyond those our current program serves.

Menlo is an amazing and fortunate place. And great schools, like all organizations, never arrive, but are always in a state of becoming. By investing in exceptional educators, creating a supportive curriculum, focusing on student well-being, and fostering a community that gives parents, faculty, and staff the same sense of optimism and agency we encourage in our students, I am confident Menlo will deliver on these newly focused priorities. These initiatives—combined with the talent of our faculty and staff, the quality of our students, and the support of the broader community—will harness the strengths we’ve acquired through the hardship of the pandemic and position Menlo for institutional excellence in the service of our children for decades to come.

Thom Healy

