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MHG Strategic Plan 2020-2023

Extracts concerning the IB Education translated from the [original document in Estonian](#) that is available on the website of Miina Härma Gümnaasium.

Introduction

The current strategic plan is composed to articulate the directions of the development of Miina Härma Gümnaasium (MHG) for 2020-2023. As the educational world is in rapid change and the Estonian Educational Strategy is still under development, the school's Senior Management Team has decided to compose the strategic plan for three years instead of the previous five-year span. The strategic plan is the basis for placing all strategic decisions, setting goals for the school year and building the action plan. The development plan is based on the following legal acts and documents:

- Basic and Upper Secondary Schools Act
- The development plan of Tartu city for the years 2018–2015
- The report from the internal assessment of MHG (2017-2019)
- The organisational documents of IBO

The document is composed of three main sections and two appendices:

1. Starting position where the institution's current situation is described using the indicators of the critical areas and their results and assessment to the execution of the previous development plan is given. This section includes references to documents taken as primary sources for developing the current strategic plan.
2. The main directions of areas of development and the plan for action where the planned activities are described to meet the set goals.
3. The organisation of review and update of the document.

In addition, the strategic plan of MHG includes the report of the internal assessment and the feedback report of the school's counsellor Kristi Raava from the Ethics Centre of Tartu University.

1. Starting position

1.1. Miina Härma Gümnaasium in 2019

Miina Härma Gümnaasium is an educational institution that is contemporary, safe, and open to the world; where the learning environment, the curriculum, and professional teachers provide each student with the opportunity to reach their developmental potential.

MHG prepares the next generation who will change the world into a better place. MHG is a student-centred school which helps develop a broad range of knowledge and skills through contemporary approaches to learning and opens up opportunities to make further choices both in the field of education and employment. MHG provides students with the confidence and agency to contribute to the development of Estonia and the world.


- Erudition and responsibility
- Diversity and staying together
- National and international mindedness.

The values listed above are the foundation of the material created during the collaboration days of different interest groups. The work is still in progress. With the counsellor of the development of values, other concepts have been discussed that may be more relatable to the school family: development, openness, creativity, consideration, responsibility, collaboration, and traditions.

It is believed at school that the students learn best when the learning engagements have been set in a real-life context and are connected to the student's prior experience. The teachers can influence learning by offering engaging assignments that incorporate global context. The global context enables the students to join the learnt concepts and knowledge and develop the learner profile attributes.

The learner profile comprises ten traits that characterise the students and the teachers to guide and motivate the learning process.

The learner profile attributes are inquirer, knowledgeable, thinker, open-minded, principled, communicator, caring, risk-taker, balanced, and reflective.



At MHG, all teaching and learning of Estonian and international students from grades 1–12 are based on the National Curriculum of Estonia and the International Baccalaureate framework. The students from all over Tartu city are studying at the primary school, and students all over Estonia are studying in the secondary school of MHG. In addition, international students whose families are staying in Estonia and Tartu temporarily are studying at our school.

The admission to the Estonian 1st grade is organised based on the tasks conducted during the admissions day; students entering the secondary school based on the National Curriculum and the IB Diploma Programme are admitted based on the results of the respective entrance tests. Open study places in the transition classes are filled based on the results of the entrance tests organised for the applicants.

During the school year 2010/2011, the school was authorised to teach the IB Diploma Programme (DP), in 2013/2014 the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) and in 2018/2019 the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP).

Learning languages is valued at school, so students are offered the possibility to take international language certificate exams in English, German, French and Russian. English is the first foreign language studied that begins in the 1st grade as a group lesson. By the end of the basic school, the language level reached is B1–B2. In grade 4, the second foreign language is introduced. A student can choose between Russian, German or French. The groups are open when the groups extend the minimal

required size. The language level reached by the end of the basic school in the 2nd foreign language is A1–A2. In secondary school, students can continue or take up a 3rd foreign language (on A2 level) by choosing between Spanish, French, German, Finnish, Russian or Swedish.

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In the basic school, two Estonian parallel classes are studying as well as one combined international class with English as the language of instruction. In secondary school, there are three Estonian classes in grade 10. In grades 11 and 12, there are three Estonian classes and one DP class on each grade level. The students attend the lessons in two shifts.

The school focuses on obtaining knowledge and skills through inquiry-based teaching and learning.

The academic results of the students are good. The average score of the national state exams has been at the top of the national ranking, and high places are achieved in Olympiads and contests. Thanks to the students with diverse cultures and high motivation towards learning, the teachers can improve their skills and develop themselves in many ways in their subjects. Singing is highly valued at school. The school has children's, boys', young ladies' and mixed choirs, with a graduate students' choir established. Seven folk dance groups have also been established in the last three years.

The school has a strong graduate student body that values the possibility of returning to school to give lessons or hold lectures. In the spring of 2012, an Alumnae Association was established, and a school foundation was to be established. Sixteen out of all teachers at MHG are graduate students of the school. Openness to public figures of the culture and society is one of the key characteristics of MHG. A cooperation agreement is established between the University of Tartu that makes MHG the base of teacher training.

The school has managed to remain working as a full cycle school and receive the IB accreditation for all three programmes (about 15% of the IB World Schools have this status). In grades 1–12, about 800 students study in Estonian classes and about 90 students in international classes.

- The most valued by students: the school spirit, good reputation and traditions; good relationships with class- and schoolmates as well as teachers; teachers' dedication and recognition; the adults' willingness to notice and help; security; clean school house; sporting and exercise facilities.
- The most valued by teachers: school's reputation; good relationship with students and colleagues; security; they consider themselves dedicated and knowledgeable about educational innovations; they feel confident and competent in their work environment and can support students' initiatives.
- The most valued by parents: school's good reputation; quality of studies; students' individual support; school environment that is physically and mentally secure; the work of homeroom teachers. The children love to go to school. They feel joy in learning.
- Feedback from the international accreditation visits brought out the following aspects:

PYP evaluation: the collaboration and planning of primary teachers; descriptive assessment and feedback given to parents; parents understand the assessment principles; the use of learner profile; students can present their knowledge and skills; varied and interesting learning engagements; student activity on parent-student-teacher conferences.

MYP accreditation: students positively attuned; support from parents and Tartu City Government; Stuudium platform that provides for immediate feedback; open and respectful school culture; activities that invite the community; responsible action within and outside the school; highly qualified teachers; Estonian and mother tongue lessons for international students.

- The renewed school vision, values and visual language.
- The school has received IB accreditation for all three programmes. With that, the student body has become more diverse, the teachers have received internationally recognised training, and teaching and assessment approaches have been renewed. Learner profile attributes are used, the principles of academic honesty are practised, and global contexts are used in lessons.
- There are positions for three IB coordinators - PYP, MYP and DP and the Personal and Research Projects Coordinator.
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- Renewed organisational structures and the Pedagogical Leadership team. Subject groups are implementing collaborative planning and working with the curriculum development.
- The staff of Educational Counsellors has increased. The school psychologist supports the students and teachers. Two social pedagogues/career coordinators and an educational technologist. Different activities support the adaptation of the students joining the secondary school. Joining the anti-bullying programme KiVa has increased the students' responsibility and willingness to take action (KiVa days, lifestyle day, SWOT activities etc.).
- Increase in engaging students in organising the content and organisation of their learning (optional courses, school exams, mentoring new students etc.)
- The Wi-Fi connection at school is good, and different digital environments and equipment are used for teaching and learning. The number of students taking the Robotics course has increased.
- The school's physical environment has been refreshed with renovated restrooms and wardrobes, established study corners and an exhibition cupboard. Students built a gymnastics corner in the schoolyard and placed two table-tennis tables.
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- Information exchange is taking place in Studium; a Facebook page has also been added. The new school website is to be published.
- Higher value on recognising collaborative activities and noticing what goes on

around us (MHG Highlights of the Year, appreciation event for the whole staff etc.).

- A high number of international language certificate exams taken at school (English, German, Russian and French)
- Great results from student competitions in Sciences and Mathematics.
- Changed teaching and learning approaches in Design and the appearance of creativity in school space.
- Systematic work with talented students.
- Changing the assessment system in grades 1–8 to MYP criterion-based assessment.
- Folk dance groups were added to the choirs.
- Collaboration with the University of Tartu. MHG is recognised as a school for teacher training practice.
- Wide range of career choices among the graduates of MHG, the increase of voluntary work.

1.2. Documentation used as the basis for developing the Strategic Plan of MHG

- 1.2.1.** The report of MHG internal assessment that was conducted in 2018/2019. (available in the school's network)
- 1.2.2.** IBO framework and documentation. <https://www.ibo.org/>
- 1.2.3.** The educational and science strategy of Estonia
<https://www.hm.ee/et/kaasamine-osalemine/haridus-ja-teadusstrateegia-aastateks-2021-2035>
- 1.2.4.** The Strategic Plan of Tartu City (2018–2025)
<https://www.tartu.ee/sites/default/files/uploads/Kontaktid%20ja%20linnajuhtimine/Arengukavad/AK2018-2025.pdf>

2. The main developmental directions and activities for the years 2020–2023

2.1. Philosophy

MHG philosophy represents the collection of principles that are the basis of all teaching and learning at school. The basis of teaching is:

- Vision
- Mission
- Values
- Learner Profile
- Collaboration of interest groups
- Responsible action
- Academic honesty
- Acquiring foreign languages
- Honouring the culture and traditions of Estonia



Activities:

Every activity includes the name of the position responsible for implementing it.

2.1.1. The organisation of action plans is based on the school's vision

- A. Phrasing the goals for the school year and organising action plans. Head of School, Head of Development and Human resources
- B. Emphasizing the vision and values in the school curriculum, website and physical environment. Head of School
- C. Creating content for the new school website. Head of School

2.1.2 School values are used as the basis of decision-making.

- A. Development of school values. Verbalising the values with the school family. Head of Development and Human Resources
- B. Implementing lessons and activities introducing the school's philosophy, values and traditions to the different school levels. Head of Development and Human Resources, Head of Studies
- C. Implementing the Learner Profile in all school levels. Connecting teacher reflections and feedback to the Learner Profile attributes. Head of Development and Human Resources
- D. Visualizing the school's identity to the physical environment. Designing a house guide. Head of School
- E. Developing the products with the school's symbolics and the e-shop. Head of Extra-Curricular Activities, Head of Finances

2.1.3 The school community is collaborating

- A. Planning for collaboration in the school's yearly calendar. Head of School
- B. Creating an appropriate environment for conducting the school's internal assessment, gathering information, and saving the analysis results. Head of Development and Human Resources

2.1.4 The school promotes responsible action

- A. Systematic community service planning, acknowledging it as a part of the school's curriculum. Designing an appropriate digital environment for it. Head of Extra-Curricular Activities, IB Coordinators
- B. Raising awareness of the sustainable development goals (school culture, curriculum, extra-curricular activities, room design, development of school clothes etc.). Head of School
- C. Finding and conducting a meaningful event for the community that helps promote the image of MHG among the basic school students of Tartu city (environmental TedX, Drama Club for basic school etc.). Head of School

2.1.5 The school family follows the principles of academic integrity.

- A. The continuous acknowledgement and implementation of the principles of academic integrity. Head of Studies, IB Coordinators

2.1.6 Learning Estonian and other mother tongues and foreign languages are valued at school.

- A. Teaching the Estonian language in a volume that enables the students with Estonian as their mother tongue to express them correctly both orally and in writing. Head of School
- B. Supporting the mother tongue studies of international students (sharing information, giving guidance etc.) IB Coordinators
- C. Renewing the principles of teaching foreign languages. Head of Studies

2.1.7 Traditional events are empowering the school's philosophy.

- A. Connecting the traditional school events to the school values. Head of Extra-Curricular Activities

2.1.8 Best practice is shared with the broader community.

- A. Constant communication of the management decision to the community in Estonian and English (Stuudium, MHG newsletter, press conferences). Head of School
- B. Sharing the best practices of teaching and learning as well as achievements of students and teachers to the community. Head of School
- C. Sharing the practices of contemporary learning approaches with the local and national community.
- D. Establishing a school foundation and a training centre. Head of School

2.2 Management and resources

The school's leadership and management structure support the curriculum's implementation. The students are taught by qualified self-directing teachers and supported by educational counsellors. The projects and activities of interest groups (Student Council, parents, alumni) are based on the needs of the school's curriculum. Required rooms, resources and daily schedules are provided to conduct learning at school. Teaching and learning take place in a safe environment.

Activities:

Every activity includes the name of the position responsible for implementing it.

2.2.1 The leadership and management structure supports the implementation of the curriculum

- A. Organization of the personnel policy (principles of recruitment, supporting the professional development of employees and recognition etc.). Head of School

2.2.2 Teachers' qualifications are being tracked

- A. Renewing the job descriptions. Head of Development and Human Resources
- B. Renewing the system of annual staff appraisals, conducting the meetings. Head of School, Head of Development and Human Resources

2.2.3 The teachers and leaders engage in personal professional development

- A. Renewing the lesson observation and feedback form, connecting it to school values. Head of Development and Human Resources
- B. Establishing a digital environment for teachers to record their self-reflection and work analysis. Head of Development and Human Resources

- C. Improving the induction programme of new staff members. Head of Development and Human Resources
- D. Sharing best teaching practices among colleagues. Head of Development and Human Resources
- E. Organizing and holding team-building workshops. Head of Development and Human Resources
- F. Renewing the mentoring system of the teacher-trainees. Head of Development and Human Resources
- G. Renewing the system of the satisfaction surveys. Head of Development and Human Resources

2.2.4 Educational counselling system supports learning

- A. Continuing with the anti-bullying programme (KiVa). Social Pedagogue
- B. Building a well-structured counselling system. Educational Counsellors

2.2.5 Participating in educational projects

- A. Creating agreements for participating in the projects. Head of Finances
- B. Establishing stronger connections between the project work and the curriculum. Pedagogical Leadership Team

2.2.6 Increasing the role of students and Student Council in the organisation of school life

- A. Selecting the Student council based on new principles and launching its work. Head of Extra-Curricular Activities

2.2.7 Enhancing the activity of parents and Parent Advisory Board

- A. Introducing the teaching practices and philosophy to the parents, other educational institutions, and the school community. Head of School
- B. Reviewing the structure of the Parent Advisory Board. Head of School

2.2.8 Enhancing the work of the Alumnae Association

- A. Finding a leader for the association, launching the activities. Head of School, Head of Extra-Curricular Activities.

2.2.9 Finding rooms and equipment for conducting lessons

- A. Furnishing the Science lab on the 2nd floor and redesigning the whole floor to become a Science centre. Head of Finances, Head of the Sciences subject group
- B. Renewing, renovating and extending the school's physical space. Renovating rooms, replacing the artificial turf on the sports field, and finding additional space outside the school building. Head of School, Head of Finances
- C. Extending the possibilities for movement and exercise in the school (room design, renewing the equipment in the gym, ergonomic desks for teachers etc.) Head of Finances

2.2.10 Ordering learning materials and supplies

- A. Ordering the learning materials and supplies. Heads of subject groups, Librarian, Head of Finances
- B. Introducing and ordering digital environments. Heads of subject groups, Educational Technologist, Head of IT

2.2.11 Updating the school's daily schedule and calendar

- A. Analysis of the daily schedule and updating it based on current needs. Head of Development and Human Resources

2.3 Teaching and learning

The school's curriculum is based on the school's philosophy and is coherent in all grade levels. The teachers are collaborating to plan for it. During the set period, more attention is given to the development of social skills and digital competencies, creativity and development of research skills. The learning outcomes and results are high (based on the results of national level tests, final exams of basic and secondary school, IB exams, the additional value of schools and the PISA test). The student's special needs incl. deep interests and extra-curricular activities accounted as part of their learning (studying under a personalised curriculum, participating in Olympiads and contests, considering extra-curricular activities etc.). Different activities and career counselling support secondary school students. The learning outcomes and results of the students enable them to continue their education in their preferred fields of study. The satisfaction rates of parents and students are analysed regularly and used in developing the school's procedures.

Activities:

Every activity includes the name of the position responsible for implementing it. All homeroom and subject teachers are responsible for constantly developing students' reflection skills and giving feedback on them.

2.3.1 The school philosophy is followed in designing the curriculum

- A. Ongoing improvement of the curriculum for national and international students. Head of Studies, IB Coordinators
- B. Designing optional courses for basic school. Head of Studies
- C. Renewing and updating the optional courses for secondary school. Establishing more significant connections between learning and extra-curricular activities.
- D. Creating visual introductions for the curriculum. Head of Studies, IB

Coordinators.

2.3.2 Coherent planning of learning in collaboration between the teachers

- A. Creating possibilities for subject groups to collaborate; monitor and give feedback on the process. Head of School.

2.3.3 The assessment principles align with the school's philosophy and are constantly introduced to the interest groups

- A. Ongoing work with explaining the basic school grading principles to the interest groups. Head of Studies, IB Coordinators
- B. Analysis of the assessment principles of the secondary school. Head of Studies.

2.3.4 Exhibition, Personal Projects and Research Projects are conducted at the end of school levels

- A. Developing the digital environment for the Research Projects of the secondary school. Research Project's Coordinator, Educational Technologist
- B. Guiding students to conduct research work. Head of Students, Heads of subject groups
- C. Supporting the establishment of student companies. Head of Finances, Teacher of Entrepreneurship
- D. Introducing the created pieces of work to the community through presentation days. Research Project's Coordinator, Head of Extra-Curricular Activities, IB Coordinators
- E. Establishing greater connection to real-life problems. Head of Studies, Research Project's Coordinator

2.3.5 The development of the digital competencies

- A. Creating the scope and sequence of digital skills for secondary school. Educational Technologist
- B. Implementing the scope and sequence of digital skills at all school levels. Educational Technologist

- C. Introducing the scope and sequence of digital skills to the teachers, organising workshops. Educational Technologist
- D. Launching the hobby club for digital students. Educational Technologist
- E. Monitoring the implementation of the scope and sequence of digital skills. Educational Technologist

2.3.6 Social skills are developed

- A. Organising activities for different school levels to support the work of homeroom teachers in developing their students' social skills. Educational Counsellors

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