

# KO Will Shape Its Future With Strategic Vision

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As we close the chapter on Kingswood Oxford's 110th year this year, I can't help reflecting on the tens of thousands of graduates this school has sent off into the world, well prepared for the academic challenges of college and well equipped to meet the demands of the 20th Century. Our school has a long history of helping students develop a love for learning, to read and write with increasing sophistication, and to take ownership of their learning. Equally relevant, we have taught students about the importance of personal integrity, hard work, and caring beyond self. These have always been the hallmarks of our mission and will continue to be so in the years ahead.

However, as we turn our attention to the future and formulate a new strategic vision for our school, we must also ask, "How do we best prepare our students for success in the colleges and jobs of the future?" The changes taking place in the world today are of historic significance and will surely shape the ways in which we live, work, and interact with one another.

## ***Revolution 4.0***

While the First Industrial Revolution of the early nineteenth century brought a transition to machines powered by steam and water, the Second introduced electricity and mass production. These two fundamental transformations altered the social and economic structures of the prior thousand years. They gave birth to new ideas, like industrial capitalism, Marxism, and socialism, and made it possible for humans to wage war on a scale unimaginable to past generations.

Many economists now argue that we have already undergone a Third Industrial Revolution, which ushered in the Information Age and automated manufacturing, and that we are now in the midst of a Fourth Industrial Revolution that will deliver entirely new ways of embedding smart technology within production processes, societal structures, and even the human body. Like the Industrial Revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, these revolutions in information and artificial intelligence will bring dramatic changes to how we live and work in the near future.

Equipping our students to meet the challenges of these rapid transformations will require new skills and dispositions to build onto those we have always taught. According to the World Economic Forum's "Future of Jobs Report," within five years, up to one-third of the skills we think are essential for success in the jobs of today will have become obsolete.

### ***Ready for the Revolution***

As we develop a new strategic vision for Kingswood Oxford, we are being intentional about providing our students with the skills and dispositions they'll need in this new world. These include:

- Interdisciplinary Learning** – Because new discoveries will blend knowledge from many fields, young people will need to perceive and utilize connections across academic disciplines.
- Emotional Intelligence (EQ)** – The ability to empathize and connect with others is a disposition that artificial intelligence won't be able to copy.
- Focus** – Bombarded by the multiple distractions of data, students will have to distinguish between peripheral and significant information and to home in on key concepts.

•**Critical Thinking** – Young people will need to cultivate and exercise a healthy skepticism about the quality, accuracy and hidden consequences of new information and processes.

•**Content Mastery** – While the facts and concepts in every field are continually being updated, revised and even discarded, students will still need a body of core knowledge to provide context and perspective on new information.

•**Collaboration** – The complexity and speed of information demand a team approach to research and problem-solving, placing a premium on unselfishness, compromise, and tact.

•**Interpersonal Communication** – Amidst an atmosphere crackling with the static of data, they'll need to express their ideas and information clearly, concisely and cogently.

•**Flexibility** – Like a quarterback under pressure, they'll need to be able to adjust and recalculate their patterns of thinking to meet unexpected challenges.

•**Ethical Leadership** – New technologies, business models and scientific breakthroughs are raising profound ethical questions, and young people will need strong moral compasses to answer them.

•**Risk-taking** – The Fourth Revolution is not for the faint of heart; young people will need to develop the courage, confidence, and competence to explore and propose new ideas and solutions.

### *A Roadmap for the Revolution*

While devising a plan to prepare our students for the challenges of the future can seem daunting, the process of creating our strategic vision also brings

exhilaration and excitement. Our teachers, staff members, parents, students, alumni, and trustees look forward to setting clear goals for our school and exploring creative ways to meet them as they continue to sustain and nurture the values that Oxford, Kingswood, and Kingswood Oxford have always cherished.