

# History of

## Mill Creek High School

Prior to becoming the location selected for Mill Creek High School, Duncan Creek—the creek that separates Mill Creek acreage from Highway 124 and Interstate 85— was the site of a working corn/grist mill. A group of Gwinnett County citizens chose the name Mill Creek to honor the mill that was once a predominate feature of the creek.

Mill Creek High School opened its doors to students in August 2004 under the leadership of its first principal, Dr. Jim Markham. A total of 2,538 students in grades 9–12 were enrolled for the initial year of operations. Mill Creek is located in the municipality of Hoschton, Georgia, population 6,014. The city of Hoschton was named after the Hoschton brothers, merchants who constructed the first retail store in the area. The school itself is located in the Gwinnett County portion of Hoschton.

Mill Creek was constructed to relieve overcrowding at both Dacula and North Gwinnett high schools, but soon grew and became the largest school in the district. At the beginning of the 2008–09 school year, Mill Creek housed a total of 4,207 students during the first semester. Mill

Creek's attendance area serves the unincorporated area of Hamilton Mill and Braselton, Georgia. The school was recognized as the largest school in Georgia in 2006 and remains so today.

Many of Mill Creek's symbols and traditions were developed in the six months prior to the official first day of school. Student committees were formed to create and establish the words and visuals that would permeate Mill Creek's halls for many years to come. The

### FAST FACTS

Address: 4400 Braselton Highway (Hwy. 124)  
Hoschton, GA 30548-1621

The following have served as principals of Mill Creek High School:

Aug. 2004–Dec., 2012	Dr. Jim Markham
Dec. 2012–Present	Jason Lane

School Colors: Navy Blue, Cardinal, and Vegas Gold  
School Mascot: Hawk

Mill Creek Crest was the result of many hours of work. The approved Crest was presented to the school on the evening of the school's formal dedication on September

19, 2004. The crest contains the Latin words "Honestas/Fidelitas/Virtus" which means Honor, Loyalty, and Personal Integrity. Student Phillip Reeseman, a very talented student musician, was asked to compose the Mill Creek Alma Mater. His composition was performed for the first time by the Mill Creek Chorus on the night of the dedication.

Students were actively involved in the selection, design, and approval of the tangible symbols that would represent Mill Creek's future. The school mascot, the Hawk, was selected to honor the nesting Red-tailed Hawks that were located on the construction site and for several years after the school's doors opened. The school colors were selected as a way of recognizing the two Gwinnett County high schools that provided Mill Creek's original student population—Dacula and North Gwinnett. The colors selected were

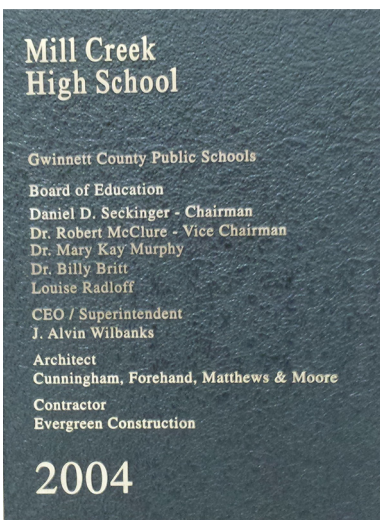


navy blue, cardinal, and vegas gold. The blue selection honored Dacula High School, as navy is one of their primary colors. Cardinal was selected as a tribute to the red portion of North Gwinnett's red and black. Vegas gold was the final color selected, representing Mill Creek's contribution to the school's colors.

Two principals have led Mill Creek since its opening in 2004. Dr. Jim Markham opened the school and remained the principal until his retirement on December 1, 2012. Mr. Jason Lane began his tenure as Mill Creek's principal the day after Dr. Markham's retirement.

Today, Mill Creek is continuing with the traditions scripted out in the school's crest of Honor, Loyalty, and Personal Integrity. In 2015, Principal Jason Lane charged a committee made up of parents, students, community members, and staff to re-examine the mission and vision statements of Mill Creek High School. The committee decided to update the mission and vision statements around the acronym SOAR, which stands for "Strive to Overachieve through Accountability and Respect." The school now uses the motto of SOAR to inspire its students and staff to go above and beyond in everything they do.

Mill Creek also is known around the county as having one of the largest and most active student leadership programs, which it calls TALON (Teaching Advanced Leadership and Opening Networks). In 2012, there were 35 students making up this organization focused on providing leadership lessons and opportunities to MCHS students. In the spring of 2013, Mr. Lane challenged the student body to become more involved in leadership organizations, and they rose to the challenge. As one example of how Mill Creek students SOAR, at its high point in 2016, TALON had more than 750 members and a waiting list of more than 100 students who wanted to participate. Today, TALON has over 200 members who meet with a mission to learn and serve our community through servant leadership. Mill Creek also created a freshmen mentoring program in 2013 called iLEAD, which currently has approximately 200 students who serve as mentors to the school's ninth and tenth grade students. In 2016, Mill Creek formed an organization



called the President's Club, which combines the 20 or so leadership and service organizations to meet with the principal on a regular basis to discuss opportunities to work together, so MCHS can have a greater impact on the school and its community.

Mill Creek's continued desire for excellence lies in its desire to become the best school in the nation for the student learning experience. In addition to a number of state championships in a multitude of sports, Mill Creek also has garnered admiration and respect for its academic accomplishments. Mill Creek regularly has been recognized among "America's Most Challenging High Schools," "The Best High Schools in Georgia," and has been named as an Advanced Placement (AP) Honor School.

As part of its efforts to provide students unique learning opportunities, in 2016 Mill Creek formed and implemented a new STEM-based program called EPIC as an alternative for its students. The program, which combines Math, Engineering, Science, and Language Arts into a cross-curricular approach using many teaching strategies including project-based learning (PBL), has been very successful in its first years. The EPIC program has extended its reach beyond MCHS, expanding into the cluster elementary and middle schools with its approach to using PBL as its core teaching strategy, as well as finding and using the natural links between subject matters.

MCHS serves as the center of a vibrant, growing community. With the commitment to its vision from our caring teachers and staff as well as our amazing parents and students, Mill Creek will SOAR into a future of continued excellence.