

October 8, 2020

Dear Primary Day School Community:

I hope this letter finds you and your families healthy and well under the current circumstances. I am writing on behalf of the Board of Trustees to inform you that our respected Head of School, Scott Lawrence, has decided to step down from his position at the end of the current school year in June 2021. Scott's decision, which he explains in more detail in the accompanying letter, is one he shared with us some months ago and is not a reflection of anything related to the Primary Day School ("PDS"); rather it is based on personal reasons that will take him out of the Washington DC area.

Scott has been a remarkable leader over the more than four years that he has served as Head of School. During his tenure, Primary Day's leadership position in the area of early childhood education has not only been reinforced but also expanded. In addition, Scott has fostered the development of deeper, more personal, connections in our community among parents, students, faculty, and alumni. As a community, we have benefitted greatly from Scott's stewardship of PDS and we look forward to making the current school year a great capstone to his accomplished tenure.

Scott's success at Primary Day stems largely from the personal attributes he brings to everything he does, namely leadership, dedication, empathy, and authenticity. All of these qualities have been reflected in PDS' response to the impact of the pandemic on the lives of our current families, faculty, and staff. Scott's tireless efforts and steady hand have supported the financial, emotional, and healthcare needs of each of these constituencies while also advancing the social, emotional, and academic interests of our young learners. It is Scott's qualities which have served the community well over these past four plus years and will continue to do so going forward.

Scott has made many contributions to our school and community which have had a significant impact. He worked diligently, in partnership with the faculty, to update the curriculum as well as implement the Responsive Classroom program with integrity. Likewise, he encouraged and supported teachers' professional development to ensure that PDS remains a leader in early childhood education. Further, in the critical areas of student enrollment and next school placement, Scott and his experienced team have excelled; enrollment has grown and been sustained at optimal levels and our graduates have a consistent next school placement average of 92% at their "first choice" school. Scott has also made contributions to the future of Primary Day that will be felt over many years to come. These include his active role on the Board in the development of a strategic plan for the School, leadership of a capital campaign that raised over \$1.2 MM to support key initiatives, and implementation of an accreditation action plan to meet the Association of Independent Maryland & DC Schools (AIMS) recommendations. Finally, Scott's effective management over the past four years has placed the School in a healthy financial position such that it can simultaneously advance the interests of its students, faculty, and staff, and also invest in the School's future to ensure its sustained preeminence in early childhood education. Under Scott's stewardship, then, Primary Day finds itself in as strong a position as it has ever been in its over 75 year history.

It is on this great foundation from which the Board looks hopefully and optimistically in our search to find a new Head of School to take us forward. The Board has no greater responsibility to its current families, faculty, staff, and alumni than to identify a worthy successor to Scott. To that end, the Board has formed a Search Committee, headed by Alla Iaquinto (P'14, P'17) and Jennifer Miller ('88, P'20) to lead the effort to identify our new Head. The committee includes a distinguished group of alumni, parents of alumni, staff, and a former head of two leading schools in the area; additional members will be added in the weeks ahead to round it out.

A Head of School search offers the community an opportunity for both reflection and growth. Reflection allows us to identify and reaffirm the core values and principles which our community shares to ensure that they are imbued in the process of identifying our next leader so that the School remains true to these foundational pillars. Growth comes from the consideration of how Primary Day can not only expand on its strengths but also adapt to emerging opportunities and / or challenges.

As we embark on the Search Process, and its associated period of introspection, the Search Committee recently decided to appoint Independent Thinking, the same search firm that brought us Scott in 2016, to help guide us in finding our next Head of School. The Search Committee and Independent Thinking will be reaching out to the community to obtain your invaluable input and we look forward to being in touch in that regard in the coming weeks and months ahead.

The entire Board, Search Committee, and Independent Thinking are all quite confident that PDS will be able to recruit a dynamic and impactful leader for our beloved school; a leader who will ensure that Primary Day remains the nurturing, challenging, and supportive environment for young learners just as Scott and his predecessors have done over the prior 75 years. We base this confidence on the fact that PDS is a recognized leader in the field of early childhood education in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Moreover, the great academic, operational, and financial position in which we find ourselves sets us "head and shoulders" above our peers in the area. Finally, our vibrant, tight-knit, and devoted community of current parents, former parents, faculty, staff, and alumni supporting the school makes Primary Day a welcoming environment for an experienced, thoughtful, and talented educator to consider joining as Head of School.

As we look ahead, we remain enthusiastic and optimistic about the path forward. We look forward to hopefully coming together this spring, in an appropriate manner, to recognize and honor Scott's achievements and contributions to our School and community. In the meantime, we know you will join us in extending our sincere gratitude and appreciation for the leadership and dedication Scott has provided to Primary Day.

With gratitude for your continued trust and support,

Ashish Lakhanpal
Chair

For and on Behalf of the Board of Trustees