

Dear Friends,

It is with great pleasure that I am announcing the selection of Jeremy Besch as the new permanent Head of School for Park beginning July 1, 2018. As many of you know, Jeremy had already accepted the position as the Interim Head of School for the 2018-2019 school year replacing Chris Lauricella who leaves Park at the end of the school year after a very successful ten (10) year leadership role. It was the decision of the Board of Trustees of the School to begin a process whereas Jeremy should be considered a viable internal candidate for the permanent Head of School based on his many years of experience at Park, and his leadership roles over those years culminating in his current position as Assistant Head of School.

The Trustees decided that the best approach in considering Jeremy for this very important role would be to construct a “vetting” process where we could have as many as possible participate in this consideration of Jeremy as the next Head of School. A decision was made to use the services of Cecily Rodriguez, the owner of an Organizational Consulting Firm Shift Happens and a current Park parent, to develop an inclusive process where six (6) stakeholder groups would be selected and populated with: past board members, current board members, alumni, parents, faculty, and administrators, in addition to two groups of current students. This process took over two months of actual interviews and meetings and resulted in over 150 specific questions posed to Jeremy by 31 different interviewers. This level of detail and inclusion was required to give the entire Park community confidence that the process was thorough and provided a valid decision-making process in selecting the school’s next leader.

Prior to the start of the overall process, both the Board and Shift Happens spent time developing a comprehensive job description for this position along with what was felt to be the most important competencies required to be a successful Head of School. Based off this description and the competencies developed, our program revolved around questions and discussion related to each of the ten (10) competencies listed in the job description resulting in a detailed and substantiated scoring methodology. Jeremy did very well across all listed competencies and really out-performed in character and especially organizational fit. In addition to this approach, several other measurement tools were used to complete the vetting of Jeremy as a viable candidate.

After this exhaustive process and several active meetings and discussions since, the Board of Trustees voted unanimously to approve the selection of Jeremy Besch as Park’s Head of School at its March 19, 2018, meeting. What the Board sees for the future of The Park School is a strong internal candidate who will provide the smoothest of transitions in leadership while continuing the path of growth and improvement the School is currently following. Jeremy is best positioned to be the face of Park and the leader of our wonderful progressive educational programs, the exciting new Knopp-Hailpern Science Center, and the exposure of all of Western New York to the beautiful 34-acre campus Park calls home.

The Board of Trustees had a choice to make with the pending departure of Chris Lauricella after his ten years of leadership. That choice was to begin an open search for the next Head of School

or to consider an internal candidate. Park was very fortunate to have a strong internal candidate in Jeremy Besch who has fifteen (15) years of growth and leadership at Park. The Board feels very confident that the correct choice was made, and The Park School will prosper under Jeremy's leadership.

Yours truly,
Martin J. Berardi
President, Board of Trustees