

June 11, 2018

Dear MPH Community,

Our head of school, Jim Dunaway, has notified the MPH Board of Trustees that he will retire at the end of the next academic year, in June 2019. The Board of Trustees accepts Jim's decision with great admiration for him and gratitude for his contributions. While we would have loved to keep him longer, we understand his and Libby's desire to live under the same roof as she moves to a new job in New Hampshire. Fortunately, we will continue to benefit from Jim's wise leadership for another year.

When I first met Jim in a coffee shop near campus on a wintery day in early 2015, it was immediately clear he was the right person to take the reins at a challenging point in our school's history. And, indeed, the entire MPH community has been blessed by his experience and deep educational insight, his integrity, thoughtfulness, wisdom, and how he applied these gifts so diligently to the betterment of MPH. It has been an absolute honor to work alongside Jim.

Under Jim's leadership, MPH now enjoys vastly expanded and improved campus facilities, including the new Athletics and Visual Arts Center, and work begins this summer on the new STEAM Park, an outdoor learning center and "children's museum." After years of declining student numbers, enrollment has been stable for three years, and there has been particular growth in interest in our Early Learning program and Lower School, a critical area for overall growth in enrollment and the most promising barometer for our future. Jim came to MPH at a time of acute financial challenge and will leave the school on stable footing. The school has begun to articulate much more clearly "the MPH effect," something well-known to those closely associated with the school, but often unclear to those outside. An already strong academic program is even stronger at all levels. In addition, the school successfully underwent the periodic two-year process of reaccreditation by the New York State Association of Independent Schools (NYSAIS) and remains the only NYSAIS-accredited school in Central New York. Overall, with Jim at the helm, there is greater confidence in the school among parents and alumni. And Jim has developed and mentored a talented, focused, and committed leadership team to guide us in the coming years.

The new head of school will inherit an institution that has made remarkable progress. More than that, he or she will find an unusually optimistic and energized school community, a kind and encouraging culture that inspires students to tackle big challenges and celebrate each student's success. Not every school is so inclined. An exceptional faculty tap into student interests and develop them into powerful strengths. Our curriculum provides students with the tools they need for success after MPH, whatever their course of study and career.

We are confident there will be much interest in this position, as MPH and Jim enjoy an excellent regional and national reputation. The Board will oversee the search for Jim's successor, and there will be multiple opportunities for community involvement in the process; input from faculty, staff, parents, students, and alumni will be essential. Once we finalize the details of the process, we will share them with you.

In the meantime, we look forward to working closely with Jim over a busy summer and a productive 2018-19 school year. We anticipate many opportunities in the coming months to express our gratitude for all Jim has given to Manlius Pebble Hill School.

Sincerely,

John Mezzalingua '85, President
MPH Board of Trustees