



## **Oak Meadow Head of School Search Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) January 26, 2011**

Q: How was the Search committee formed?

A: Parents, faculty and staff comprise the Search Committee in order to solicit the most direct and relevant feedback from constituents. Community members should utilize Search Committee members as their representation and as their source of communication for status updates and the process. The size of the Search Committee is based upon the optimal number of people who can meet extensively at times, including during the workday, nights and weekends if needed.

Q: Who is on the Search Committee?

A: The team is comprised of the following parents, faculty and staff:

Blaine Alvarez-Backus  
Jennifer Bitner  
Barbara Brady  
Buck Chintamani  
John Collins  
Robin Foley

Lyn Goldman (Chair)  
Elizabeth Hickey  
Barbara Orlowitz  
Anita Tarantino  
Darlene Vanstone

Q: What does the Search Committee do?

A: Work includes consideration of a search consultant, development of a position description, multiple interviews, candidate visits, and communication with constituents. The Search Committee does not make the final hiring decision, but they are responsible for the heavy lifting and will bring relevant information and recommendations to the Board along the way.

Q: How will my voice be heard if I am not on the Search Committee?

A: Complementary forums have begun and more are planned in order to solicit feedback, ideas, and assistance. We will be looking for advisory input from many. Forum ideas include surveys, focus groups, and interviews. We recognize that parents have deep talent and expertise that can help us in this process.

Q: What are we looking for in the next Head of School?

A: For both the Interim Head and the Permanent Head of School, the broad focus will be on continuing our trajectory of growth, development and learning. With regard to specific qualities and qualifications, we will conduct community discussions centered around our school's needs.

Q: Will the search focus on candidates with a Montessori background?

A: A Montessori background would be a wonderful strength, but this is not a necessity, as demonstrated by Dave's ability to lead Oak Meadow without the benefit of explicit Montessori training. Viable candidates must be "philosophically attuned to Maria Montessori's principles," appreciate the way children are taught in a modern Montessori environment and embrace the culture as it exists in this particular Montessori school. As we are learning from the Strategic Visioning process, a Montessori education aligns very well with 21st Century skills. Oak Meadow is in a very strong position thanks to the deep Montessori experience of our faculty and staff.

Q: What will the Interim Head of School do? Why use one?

A: This person will be responsible for continuing our trajectory during their time with this school. The use of an Interim Head is an established process in the educational world. Many retired Heads and senior administrators with deep experience have fully engaged careers as Interim Heads. By using an Interim Head, we have the opportunity to be appropriately thoughtful and deliberative in planning and implementing a comprehensive search process. This will also make it possible for us to make our hiring decision for our permanent Head of School early in the school year, when the top candidates are available. Like any senior administrator, the Interim Head of School will work with students, parents, faculty, administrative staff and the Board to ensure progress is made on all initiatives, including the Strategic Vision.

Q: What is the timing of the Interim Head of School?

A: Dave Stettler, our current Head of School is committed to serve until June 30, 2011. The goal would be to hire the Interim Head of School in the first quarter of 2011 so that transition and cross-training issues can be accommodated with plenty of time. The Interim Head of School will serve from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012. In keeping with the typical school hiring cycle, the permanent Head of School would be hired in the first quarter of 2012 in order to begin on July 1, 2012. The Board of Trustees believes that this gives us plenty of time to find the most appropriate candidate for our permanent Head of School.

Q: Is Dave Stettler involved in the Search?

A: The search is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees and the Search Committee. However, Dave will be consulted at times in order to benefit from his experience in serving as the Head of Oak Meadow and his broad experience with independent school searches.

Q: How will communication be handled?

A: There have been numerous personal forums and meetings so far with parents, faculty and staff. Written notifications have also been sent. Additional meetings and forums will be scheduled throughout the process to communicate progress and solicit input. Additionally, Faculty, Parent, and Board committee members will give periodic updates to their constituencies. Check this Head Search webpage for updates which will be posted as information becomes available.

Q: Will there be Admission and Retention Issues due to the transition?

A: Oak Meadow is a strong school with experienced Montessori educators and leaders serving as faculty and as administrators. The students are deeply engaged and are growing as quiet, confident learners. Students and families are here for the educational experience they will continue to receive. This education will continue to be supported by the deep resources currently in place.

Q: Will there be financial implications or tuition increases due to the search?

A: The school finances are administered in such a way that there is financial room for the Head of School search process with no material change to current operations.

Q: How will the needs of students be fulfilled?

A: From an emotional security and continuity perspective, the students are deeply engaged with their teachers and their classrooms. With respect to other processes such as financial aid and secondary school admissions, those tasks are currently being conducted by both Dave and the senior leadership team. Those senior leaders remain and will continue their commitment to these tasks.

Q: What are the next steps over the next few months?

A: Broadly, next steps include identifying desired qualities of the Interim Head, hiring the Interim Head in early 2011, identifying desired qualities of the Permanent Head, and hiring of the Permanent Head sometime in early 2012. If you have additional questions, email [searchcommittee@oakmeadow.org](mailto:searchcommittee@oakmeadow.org).

Q: How can the Strategic Visioning Process proceed without Dave? How will the new Head of School be involved?

A: The generative visioning that has already begun will continue to identify our opportunities, challenges and growth as a Montessori school in the 21st Century. The remaining Professional Development/Visioning Retreats will continue and conclude, as originally planned, before the end of this school year. Those retreats will still deeply involve faculty, parents, Trustees and administrators, including Dave. Criteria for the new Head of School will include shared values and the ability to embrace the initiatives that grow from our visioning. The candidate interview process will be intense in order to ensure that the new Head of School's philosophy is consistent with our values and initiatives which, ultimately, will be described in our next Five Year Strategic Plan.

Q: Who will hire the new Head of School?

A: The Board of Trustees is responsible for hiring the Head of School.

Q: Who is the Search Consultant and why do we need one?

A: Educators' Collaborative, LLC is a consortium of nine former independent school heads and has been in business since 1971. With their nationwide network, they have deep experience in searches for independent school heads and in other consulting services.

Search consultants have deep experience in recruitment and in-depth vetting of candidates. They will involve constituents of the school community in the process, coordinate interviews/visits, develop a comprehensive position statement for candidates and ensure harmony with our Strategic Visioning process which is already underway. We are excited to work with Educators' Collaborative and they have already shown commitment and enthusiasm for our community.