



January 10, 2018

2150 Butler Pike | Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462
pmfs@pmfs1780.org | 610.828.2288

Dear School Committee and PMFS community,

It is with a mix of bittersweetness and great pride that I write to let you know I will be completing my term as Head of School 18 months from now, at the end of the 2018-19 school year.

Plymouth Meeting Friends School has made remarkable strides in the past six years, positioning it well to continue its strong progress in a new phase of leadership and development. I am excited about my continued individual growth and development as well. I feel called to apply my skills and experience in a larger school or non-profit setting, in the area of administration, admission, or communications. I believe that at this time, both the PMFS community and I are ready for a new cycle to begin. I'll be sharing more about my plans over the course of the next year.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here first as a parent when my children began as students in 2005, then as Assistant Head/Director of Admission for two years, and finally during the six school years since I became Head of School in 2012. When I first came to Plymouth as a substitute teacher in the late '90s, I could sense a powerful spirit of the school, which clearly extended to include all within its community. All these years later, I am blessed to see that same strength of spirit in our community and, very important to me, in the wonderful people my children have become. This has been a remarkable journey for which I will always be deeply grateful. As one of our alums told me recently, "**Plymouth never leaves you,**" and I know that will be abundantly true for my family and for me as well.

I am very proud of all we have achieved at PMFS during my tenure. Working together, we have brought major strategic, programmatic and facilities dreams to fruition. Some of the highlights for me are the completion of the largest capital campaign in the school's history; the construction of a new library and classroom building; funding and completion of extensive classroom renovations; the formation and successful launch of a new strategic plan; expansion of our Early Childhood Program; adoption of a school-wide math curriculum; implementation of all-school curriculum mapping; design, creation and launch of a new website; restructuring the administrative team; and increased student support through multiple measures.

I'm very grateful for the many opportunities I have had to both contribute to, and benefit from, the warm and connected community and for your support and care, for me and for PMFS. of families, faculty, staff, alumni, meeting members, and friends here at Plymouth. I look forward to working closely with the School Committee over the next 18 months as we continue to work on our strategic plan goals, including planning upper campus renovations, engagement of our new Enrollment and Outreach Task Force, continuing to work with faculty on curriculum and student support models, and making full use of the communications capabilities of our new website. I look forward with unbounded optimism to what lies ahead for this wonderful school that we all love.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Sweeney-Denham".

Sarah Sweeney-Denham
Head of School



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Dear Members of the PMFS Community,

I am writing to you, on behalf of the School Committee, to communicate our deep gratitude to Sarah Sweeney-Denham for her many years of leadership at Plymouth Meeting Friends School, and to share our acceptance of her decision to step down as Head of School at the end of the 2018-19 school year. As Sarah expresses so clearly in the accompanying letter, we are well positioned to make this transition, and the timeline will allow us to continue work on important projects while also conducting a thorough search for a new Head.

Sarah has served as Head of School since 2013, after stepping in as Interim Head of School in 2012-13. During her tenure, PMFS has built on its mission of providing a big world in a small Quaker school. The campus has undergone a renaissance, with the development and construction of the Emerson Building, the renovation of the 4th and 5th grade classrooms, the creation of our science room on the upper campus, and the complete transformation of the upstairs of Journey's End to become the home of the Pre-K 4 classroom. Our curriculum is being enhanced, unified, and articulated across all grades, and our Pre-K offerings have been expanded. Sarah has worked tirelessly with the Finance Committee and Development Committee to stabilize and strengthen the school's financial position. And she has overseen the conceptualization and implementation of the "Discover 2020" Strategic Plan, which maps out our strategic blueprint for our education program, our outreach, and our institutional sustainability.

Choosing the next head of school will engage all parts of the PMFS community, and everyone will be invited to participate. To begin the process, the School Committee has appointed Ralph Henninger as clerk of the Naming Committee, which will recommend members for the Search Committee. Ralph has been actively involved with Plymouth for more than 30 years, as a Meeting member, a parent, Clerk of the School Committee, and presently as Director of Development. The Naming Committee will consist of members of the PMFS community who are intimately familiar with the school and who represent all constituencies of our community. Its job will be to receive nominations of people to serve on the Search Committee, and then recommend the membership of the Search Committee from that group. The School Committee will have final approval of the Search Committee membership, as well as retain the services of a Search Consultant to guide the process.

Over the next 18 months, the School Committee looks forward to working closely with Sarah to prepare our community for the transition to new leadership, and the next chapter in the school's history. In the coming weeks and months, we will have more details regarding the search, the transition to new leadership, and our plans for engaging the full community in the process.

In closing, I wish to thank Sarah again for her many years of dedicated service to PMFS and Friends education. We look forward to multiple opportunities to celebrate Sarah's many accomplishments.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tom Hoopes'.

Tom Hoopes, Parent '13, '14
Clerk of School Committee