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Dear PMFS Families,

Welcome to the 2019-2020 school year! As the summer days pass quickly, I become more fully settled into the new spaces here at PMFS and in our new home in Mount Airy. The stress of the move behind us, Ellen, William and I are now facing the reality of unpacking hundreds of remaining boxes, while helping Jonathan prepare to move back on campus at George Mason University. The transition to Pennsylvania and to PMFS certainly brings forth a lot of “double dip” emotions of excitement and nervousness. Truly, these are feelings that most of the students will bring back to school with them when they return. I’m anxious to greet them in person on our First Day of School!

Since my official arrival on July 1, I have been on a “listening tour”, meeting with faculty, School Committee members and some parents in one-on-one conversations. My goal has been and continues to be to listen to personal PMFS stories and gain an understanding of hopes and dreams for the upcoming school year. Notably, I am seeking information, as well as community expectations for the new Head of Plymouth Meeting Friends School. I predict that my listening tour will continue throughout the upcoming school year; and I invite you to schedule time to sit and share your story with me at a mutually agreed upon time. Email me at [brendac@pmfs1780.org](mailto:brendac@pmfs1780.org).

The PMFS community is a wonderful, loving and supportive one that has thrived for 238 years. We transition into the 2019-2020 year with both challenges and opportunities. Like many small schools, our enrollment has declined. This impacts many facets of the school as a business; however, the commitment to providing an excellent, enriching and nurturing school experience for our students is unflinching. As we work to address these challenges, the desire to provide a stimulating, innovative program rises to the top. Through the generous support of the School Committee, members of the extended community and Plymouth Monthly Meeting, these priorities are being addressed in a timely manner. Please join me in welcoming the following new members of our faculty community:

**Kelly Vidovich, PE Teacher:** Kelly comes to PMFS with past PE teaching experience at Montessori Children’s House of Valley Forge (Wayne, PA) and Westminster School (Annandale, VA). She also taught in the Penn-Delco School District in Aston, PA. She

has experience teaching children from toddlers to high school and has coached soccer, basketball and softball. Most recently, Kelly worked as the Program Director at Marple Sports Arena in Broomall, PA. Kelly holds a B.S. in Health and Physical Education from East Stroudsburg University.

**Jill Work, Library/Ed-Tech Teacher:** Jill joins the PMFS community with over 16 years of experience as a school and public librarian. Most recently, she worked at Stuart Country Day as the Lower School Children's Librarian and Technology Integrator. Jill brings a rich background in communications, art, music and theatre into her work; she is a poet, a composer and a graphic designer. Notably, she is self-identified "techie" who enjoys collaborating with young children on "making", robotics, coding, video and podcast production. Jill holds a B.A. from Arizona State University and a Master of Library & Information Science degree from the University of Alabama.

**Margaret (Meg) Shea, Science Teacher:** Meg comes to the PMFS community with science teaching experience that spans from early childhood to high school. Most recently, she worked at the Woods Hole Child Center (MA) as a primary substitute and a Community Garden volunteer. Meg is a strong advocate of project-based and experiential learning. She served as an outdoor high school project director for AmeriCorps and Northwest Youth Corps (Eugene, OR), taught biology in the Alfred-Almond Central and Hammondsport Center School Districts (NY), and worked as a science educator in Washoe County School District (Reno, NV). Meg also worked as a researcher and writer for Captain Planet Foundation. (Ask her about endangered pollinators!) Meg holds a B.A. in Biology from St. Mary's College of Maryland; she has pursued graduate studies in education at University of Phoenix and Alfred University, as well as graduate studies in biology at University of Nevada Reno.

We are currently exploring options for ongoing counseling support and interviewing for a fourth grade assistant teacher. My hope is to have those positions filled and the complete PMFS teaching team on board prior to the start of the school year. Updates will be forthcoming.

In June, I attended the *National Small Schools Conference* hosted by Crefeld School. It was wonderful to connect with teachers and administrators devoted to supporting and sustaining small school communities. At the *NAIS Institute for New Heads*, I had the opportunity to listen, learn and network with "classmates" who are also embarking on the adventure of a first headship. Some of the most meaningful conversations were those I had with three women who are now heads of Friends schools. We quickly reached "shared joy" with the realization that we lead communities grounded in Quaker faith and practice, with rich histories and claimed social responsibility. I am honored to step into that state of *shared joy* with everyone here in our Plymouth Meeting Friends School community.

2019-2020 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Mexican Exchange. Throughout the year, we will honor this longstanding commitment to global responsibility and cultural competency. I invite you to join us as we come together for fellowship and in friendship to celebrate this significant year in our school's history! It will be a time for

students, families, alumni and friends to come home to Plymouth for the *shared joy* of this unique program and our amazing school.

I'll see you on our First Day of School, Wednesday, September 4. Please feel free to contact me in the meantime if you have questions or if you would like to schedule a listening tour visit.

Enjoy the sunshine!

In peace,  
Brenda