



The Chestnut Hill School

Educating. Engaging. Inspiring.

December 5, 2016

Dear Chestnut Hill School Community:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, it is my great pleasure to announce that Tamara Schurdak, Upper School Head at The Town School in New York City, has been unanimously appointed by the Trustees to succeed Dr. Steven Tobolsky as Head of The Chestnut Hill School, effective July 1, 2017.

Tamara was appointed after a rigorous national search that began last summer, included on-campus visits by four finalist candidates, and culminated in the unanimous recommendation of Tamara by the Search Committee to the Board. We are excited about the talent, the energy and the vision that Tamara brings to Chestnut Hill. Her warmth and intelligence were evident to everyone who met her during the search, and her leadership experience has prepared her exceptionally well for the responsibilities of a head of school.

Tamara has seventeen years of experience as an independent school educator. Prior to joining The Town School in 2012, she served as the middle school principal at Bullis School, as a history teacher, grade-level coordinator and department chair at Kingswood Oxford School, and as a Director of College Counseling at Bryn Mawr School. Before working directly in independent schools, Tamara spent several years working in the Yale University Office of Undergraduate Admissions. A native of New York, Tamara holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from Yale University and a Master's degree in education and policy from Stanford University.

As Upper School Head at Town, Tamara has been responsible for faculty hiring and development, curricular design, student support and secondary school placement for a division of 160 students in grades 5-8. She has managed a range of key initiatives, including enhancement of the Preschool to Grade 8 literacy and math curricula and development of a Life Skills curriculum focusing on diversity and identity, health, technology and sustainability. She has realized a 1:1 iPad program, refashioned the admissions experience for admitted upper school applicants, and coordinated science lab and facility renovations, all while continuing her direct connection to students by teaching 7th grade public speaking and advising the student senate.

In accepting the position, Tamara said, "It is an honor to join The Chestnut Hill School community. I was immediately drawn to CHS for its commitment to diversity, creativity, joyful and considered academic thought, and community. Warmth, curiosity, intellect and a deep belief in the importance of Beginner to Grade 6 education so clearly energizes and unites everyone in the school community. I am grateful for this opportunity and am excited to join you in Chestnut Hill next summer."

If you did not have a chance to meet Tamara when she was on campus last month, we are planning a welcome and introduction for Tamara and her partner, Anne Gunning, after winter break. Anne has also spent her career in independent school education and, after several years away from the heart of Red Sox Nation, she is looking forward to returning to her home state of Massachusetts.

In this period of transition, we can be justifiably proud of the strengths of The Chestnut Hill School. The search allowed us to see CHS through the eyes of the candidates, each of whom commented on the magic of our Beginners to Grade 6 program and the breadth and depth of our commitment to academic excellence, diversity and community. The candidates who visited campus experienced a warm, welcoming community and I thank everyone who participated in the process by meeting them, responding to surveys, conducting interviews and serving on advisory committees.

I am immensely grateful to the Co-Chairs of the Search Committee, Melanie Hoffmeister and Sanjay Shetty, and to our fellow Search Committee members, Julian Braxton, Hassan Chowdhry, Jeannie Chung, Dylan Gallegos, Jeff Hawkins, Virginia Siu and Julie Swartz. Each of them dedicated countless hours and immense care to the search. I also want extend my gratitude to Clay Stites and his team at RG-175 for their steady guidance and expertise.

Thanks to the dedication of everyone involved, The Chestnut Hill School is poised for an extremely bright future. I hope you will join me in the months ahead as we celebrate Steve's lasting contributions to the School and prepare a warm welcome for Tamara and Anne in July.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan McSwain". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Susan McSwain
President, Board of Trustees