

October 20, 2017

Dear Members of the EDS Community:

I want to update you, on behalf of the Search Committee, on the progress of the search for Head of School. In the last update, we announced our Search Committee members; Justin Beck, Katy Collins, Dr. Jason Folland, Liz Harrison, Collier Merrill, Katherine Mitchem, Tom Owens, Jake Renfroe, and Tonja Ward with Jay Bradshaw and Father Michael Hoffman serving as ex-officio members. Last Spring, we also announced our search firm and consultant, Stephen DiCicco, the President of Educational Directions Inc. (EDI). Since then, DiCicco has visited our school and interviewed various stakeholders, gathering a better understanding of what we are looking for in our next leader. Through these visits, along with the survey sent out to the community, DiCicco put together a posting for the position, reaching out to nearly 300 qualified applicants who fit our criteria for Head of School.

At the end of September, DiCicco sent the Search Committee the resume, cover letter, statement of educational/leadership philosophy and three reference letters of the top twelve qualified candidates for our search. On October 5, the Search Committee met and narrowed down the pool to eight candidates. Seven of our candidates visited Pensacola October 16 and 17 for interviews with the Search Committee along with one candidate interview via Skype. Each was given a tour of the school guided by Lisee Sherrill, Director of Administration, and a tour of Christ Church with Father Michael Hoffman. As the application process was advertised as confidential, the Search Committee held the candidates' names and we agreed to only announce the final three candidates.

We are now at the finalist stage – we are delighted by the quality of the candidates. Each of the semi-finalists were impressive and most would have been a good fit for our school. Following the last interview on October 17, the Search Committee met and selected three finalists based on the needs and concerns of the EDS community previously identified in the early stages of the search. It is with great pleasure that I can announce, on behalf of the Search Committee, our three finalists for Head of School; Clay Elliot, Nathan Speck-Ewer, and Robert Stephens. Each of the application files are attached, I encourage you to take a look.

The finalists will each be on campus with his spouse for two days each in late October and early November. The visitation schedule is as follows:

- Nathan Speck-Ewer: November 5 through November 7
- Clay Elliot: November 12 through November 14
- Robert Stephens: November 27 through November 28 (*updated*)

Our teachers, staff, parents, administrators, church members and anyone who wishes within the EDS school community will be given the opportunity to meet each candidate and his spouse. Please note there will be scheduled times for each candidate in which we will hold various meetings, the meeting times will be the same for each candidate during their site visit days as noted above.



Please mark your calendars and make every effort to attend the meeting(s) that pertain to you. Additionally, we will provide you an online form that will enable you to give the Search Committee feedback. We will use this feedback in our final decision making process. The Search Committee is excited for you to meet the finalists and we look forward to your input.

DAY ONE

7:30 – 7:55 AM South Campus – Candidate to meet with teachers, open to any, and all faculty members

8:00 – 8:55 AM South Campus – Candidate to meet with parents, open to all

9:00 AM – 9:55 AM South Campus – Individual meeting with administrators (Admissions Director, Development Director, Business Office, Staff etc.)

10:00 AM – 11:55 PM Class Visits

12:00 – 1:30 PM Lunch meetings with student leaders one day and faculty the next (BUT will need to schedule a time afterward for candidate to eat lunch as they are usually not able to do so during these meetings)

2:00 – 2:55 PM Church Parlor – Vestry, Congregation Meeting, open to all

3:00 – 4:00 PM South Campus – Faculty Forum (immediately after school, open to any and all faculty members)

4:30 – 6:00 PM TBA – Reception with EDS Board Members

DAY TWO

7:30 – 7:55 AM Hilton Green Campus – Candidate to meet with teachers, open to any, and all faculty members

8:00 – 8:55 AM Hilton Green Campus – Candidate to meet with parents, open to all

9:00 – 9:30 AM Hilton Green Campus – Individual meeting with administrators

9:35 – 10:30 AM Meeting with Interim Head of School

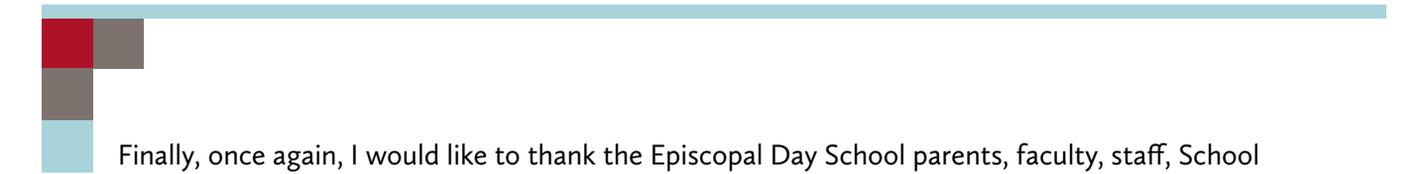
10:35 AM – 11:55 AM Class Visits

12:00 – 1:30 PM Lunch meetings with student leaders one day and faculty the next (BUT will need to schedule a time afterward for candidate to eat lunch as they are usually not able to do so during these meetings)

2:00 – 3:00 PM Exit Interview with Search Committee

The tours for the spouses will be customized individually depending upon family needs. Spouse tours will include class visits and meetings with teachers from appropriate level(s). The Search Committee is thrilled about the process and we look forward to a successful conclusion of the search before Thanksgiving, with a start date of summer 2018. I would like to extend a big thank you to the Search Committee for their dedication to this search and their commitment to finding the best fit for our community and for our children. I would also like to thank each of you for your interest and patience throughout this process. Each of our semi-finalists who visited Pensacola this past week were very impressed with not only our school, but our community and all that it has to offer.





Finally, once again, I would like to thank the Episcopal Day School parents, faculty, staff, School Board, Christ Church Vestry and Ed Costello for laying the groundwork and guaranteeing an easy transition between the past, interim and future Head of School. This has given us the time to conduct a thorough search and survey the largest field of candidates to recruit the best leader possible. Also, I want to thank Father Michael Hoffman for his continued leadership – at Christ Church, Episcopal Day School and our community.

Last but not least, from a personal perspective, I wanted to share something about these visits. One thing that all of the candidates had in common were their sentiments they shared with the Search Committee of how wonderful, special and extraordinary our EDS community is. This was indeed a reminder that we are all of this and so much more. I know that I take for granted my roots at EDS – this became clear to me at the beginning of the school year when I walked into chapel and saw that my son's chapel buddy is the son of my chapel buddy from 45 years ago. EDS is a wonderful institution that, with the right leadership, will continue to preserve, grow and lead our children as well as their children to come.

As always, please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns regarding the search or our candidates. I can be reached by phone at the office 438-0955 or by email collier@merrilland.com.

On behalf of the Search Committee,
Collier Merrill
Chairman

