

Dear Members of the Metropolitan Montessori School Community,

As you now know, Brenda Mizel, our Head of School since 2011, and an educator for more than 35 years, has announced her decision to retire at the end of the 2018–19 school year. We all wish Brenda the very best as she moves on to the next chapter of her life with Lou and her entire family. The time frame of Brenda's departure on June 30, 2019 affords MMS another academic year under Brenda's strong leadership as we enter the search process for a new Head of School.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I want to thank Brenda for her incredible leadership and dedication to MMS and our children. When Brenda first arrived, we were in the process of closing on the purchase of the building next door. The subsequent combination of that building with our existing space was the school's first major facility project since moving to its current site in 1996. Brenda possessed the vision, energy, and competence to usher MMS into a new era with this wonderful new home.

From the start, Brenda jumped in with both feet and her characteristic drive and implemented a number of best practices at the school. She has worked tirelessly to address issues impacting the faculty, administration, students, and parents to enhance our educational program and support the MMS mission of developing lifelong learners.

Specifically, Brenda guided the Board through the development and execution of a five-year strategic plan that focused on improvements in the curriculum like adding the Columbia Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, expanding STEM, and increasing mindfulness practices in the classroom. Other strategic priorities focused on faculty development and compensation, admissions and retention, diversity, and financial planning to enable the construction of the new space. Additionally, Brenda guided MMS through its first capital campaign aimed at improving our facilities and strengthening our reserves, thereby enabling improvements to various parts of the program.

Most of all, Brenda has provided an energy and a love for MMS that has been contagious and helped advance the school and our community in many ways. We are grateful for all that Brenda has done for MMS and can say with conviction, that the school is in an even better place than it was seven years ago due to Brenda's drive and leadership and that she has positioned MMS well for its next phase of evolution and improvement.

As for the next phase, I will be chairing the newly formed Head of School Search Committee, whose members represent a diverse set of experiences, backgrounds, and points of view. The group includes trustees Gerardo Rodriguez (P 4, '17), Alison Horton (P PK, 2), Sharon Schuur (P '17, '15), Alvin Crawford (P K, 2, 4), Sarah Farivar-Hayes (P 2, 4), and Monique Neal (P 3, 5), and Elementary Co-Director Nancy Burton and Director of Admissions Marielle Lopez.

The Board of Trustees is partnering with the independent school search firm, Resource Group 175 (RG175) to guide us through this search and recruit top-notch candidates. We are working directly with consultants Linda MacMurray Gibbs and Jerry Katz, both former heads of New York City schools having led The Hewitt School and Rodeph Sholom School, respectively. We are confident that MMS's strong reputation as well as its warm, caring community and financial stability will allow us to attract a pool of outstanding candidates. Our search process will be thorough, inclusive, and as transparent as possible while maintaining appropriate confidentiality. Additionally, we will ensure that the entire MMS community has the opportunity to share thoughts and ideas along the way.

Here is an overview of the search process: Linda and Jerry will be visiting the school on Thursday, April 5 and Friday, April 6 to spend time interviewing faculty, administration, parents, and students. You will receive a Paperless Post invitation this week with more specific information on these sessions. The consultants' goal is to understand our school, our community, and the key attributes our new Head of School should possess. All faculty members and parents will be invited to participate in a brief online

survey to share their perspectives as well. This feedback will be used to write a job description to recruit candidates.

Over the summer, Linda and Jerry will be creating a short list of candidates, who will meet with the Search Committee. As final candidates emerge early next fall, the entire MMS community will have a chance to meet them in open sessions, likely happening in October or November. The Search Committee will be relying on your feedback to help make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees. The final decision and responsibility to appoint a next Head of School rests solely with the Board of Trustees. We expect to make an announcement about the outcome of this process by early 2019.

We will continue to update the community regularly as we move forward. We invite your feedback and questions throughout the search. You can reach the Search Committee at [search@mmsny.org](mailto:search@mmsny.org). We will do our best to respond in a reasonable time frame. Additionally, after spring break, we will be updating our website with a new page dedicated to the search where you will find related communications and FAQs.

As a current parent in my 20th year with the school and as someone who is deeply committed to this institution and its success, I am honored to serve MMS as a steward of this process.

Sincerely,  
*Jim Maffezzoli*  
Chair, Board of Trustees  
P 5, '07, '10, '13