

April 22, 2010



Dear TBS community members,

What a remarkable few weeks we have had at The Berkeley School. From the low point of hearing the news of Janet Stork's death, to the high point of a fun and successful auction, to the bitter-sweetness of coming together to celebrate Janet's life, we have all been through an incredible time as a community. Throughout the past few weeks, I have been repeatedly and poignantly reminded of our shared values: curious minds, generous hearts, and a community of teachers and learners vitally engaged in a changing world.

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As you all know, Mitch Bostian was appointed interim Head of School on March 1st. Mitch had originally been hired by Janet with succession planning in mind, although no one anticipated these specific circumstances. The informal feedback that the Board of Trustees has received since he stepped up has been uniformly positive, even glowing. Faculty, parents, and administration members have all expressed their appreciation of Mitch, both for his willingness to step into a demanding role under challenging circumstances, and for the skill and talent with which he has led the school. Speaking for the entire Board of Trustees, we feel lucky to have him in place.

The hiring of a Head of School is the most important responsibility that the Board of Trustees has, and in hiring a long-term Head, the school's bylaws require the Board to depend on more than informal feedback to inform their decision. The bylaws stipulate that the Board form a committee, to include members of the faculty, charged with formally developing a list of desired attributes for a Head of School and soliciting community input on these attributes. The committee must meet with a candidate and make a recommendation to the Board on the hiring of that candidate.

At Tuesday's meeting, the Board voted to create that committee, with myself as chair. I am pleased to report that the following people have all agreed to participate: Norman Johnson, faculty, parent, and Board member; Maureen Beck, faculty and Board member; Signy Judd, parent; Hyungsook Kim, parent and TBSPA chair; Janet McGarvey, Board member and Director, Bay Area Teacher Development Collaborative; and Randy Yee, member of the administration and parent. After the committee has its first meeting next week, you will hear more about how you can have input into the process.

While we intend to engage in a genuine and rigorous vetting process to ensure that Mitch is the right person for the job, it will not be a lengthy process. Our intent is to report back to the Board with a recommendation at the next Board meeting, scheduled for May 18th.

I recognize that some people may believe that this is an unnecessary exercise: "Mitch is great, sign him up!" Others may wonder whether we should engage in a more involved process and consider other candidates. As a Board, we have thought deeply about both of these positions and the deep desire that informs them both: a wish for our school to be the best that it can be, with a leader who exemplifies our values and has the skills to ensure our success. I am confident that we will be able to do just that with a process that is both thoughtful and efficient, and I thank you in advance for your support.

Regards,

Ann Fischer Hecht
Chair, TBS Board of Trustees