

May 28, 2019

Dear Nueva Community,

To everything there is a season, and the 2019–2020 school year will bring a close to my season at Nueva. After 19 years, Bob and I will be leaving a community that has always felt like home.

When I first set foot on the Nueva campus in January 2001 and heard the children’s laughter, saw the teachers’ level of intense engagement, admired the artwork on the walls, and felt the living energy of the school’s mission and vision, I fell instantly and deeply in love. I realized that this was the school I had been looking for—a safe haven for children who think deeply, make connections quickly, and wear their hearts on their sleeves. This was a school where the greatest gift to gifted learners was and is the gift of being normal.

Those initial impressions and that powerful feeling have never changed. The school is and has always been a place of extraordinary potential and remarkable realization. Our students, faculty, staff, parent community, and the Board are co-creators, working seamlessly and ceaselessly to bring that potential into being. I cannot imagine a head of school ever finding a more collaborative, energetic, dedicated, inspirational community of learners and doers. This is a community where staking out new ground only expands the perimeter of possibility, revealing further opportunity and novel directions.

Just as I was amazed by our students’ drive, creativity, and open curiosity, our many visitors from around the world are impressed by our students’ poise, entrepreneurial spirit, inner confidence, and obvious comfort with and respect for adults. Our faculty imbues all these attitudes in each student, striving to elicit the very best by themselves embodying our motto — Learn by doing, learn by caring. Our teachers are intelligent and kind, which enables our students to enjoy a learning environment that is joyous, limitless, and safe.

Our administrative leaders and staff are equally dedicated and talented. They serve tirelessly, often behind the scenes, making the school function as it should: in service of our students. I can only begin to thank my colleagues — faculty, staff, and administrators — for all they do and who they are. Working with such immensely capable people has been the privilege of a lifetime.

A school’s mission, vision, and potential are fulfilled when there is a partnership between the Board and head. The six chairs/co-chairs with whom I have worked — Grant Heidrich, Noel Perry, Susan Barnes, Dennis Wong, Bonnie Fought, and Bruce Cozadd — have devoted themselves to Nueva. Words like “unstinting” and “above and beyond” are woefully inadequate. Their dedication and that of the rest of the Board has led to the implementation of bold strategic plans, creating new programs, a new division, and new opportunities. Their vision and our community’s remarkable generosity have made dreams realities as Nueva has grown from 317 students in 2001 to next year’s 940.

I could not have imagined in 2001 the willingness of the adults in the community to offer their time, talents, knowledge, and resources on our students’ behalf. Through the NPA, on task forces and committees, and in the classroom and academies, their dedication makes a Nueva education extraordinary.

In coming to my decision, I have worked closely with Bruce Cozadd, chair of the Board of Trustees, to ensure that he and the Board are well positioned to undertake a thorough and well-orchestrated process to identify my successor. This moment feels as full of possibility as the day I arrived. This next stage of growth and stewardship under a new head will be an exciting one for Nueva, and I will look proudly, fondly, and optimistically at what this community will accomplish over the years to come.

Thank you for the honor, opportunity, daily joy, and laughter. I welcome this final year with you to live fully and learn deeply.

With gratitude,

