



WARDLAW+HARTRIDGE

Leadership Transition

Dear Wardlaw+Hartridge Community,

As we find our way into this new year, I am writing to tell you I have informed the Board of Trustees that the 2022-23 school year, my 18th as Head of School at Wardlaw+Hartridge, will be my last year at the school. My wife, Aurea, and I have discussed this decision frequently over the last several months, and it indeed marks a momentous change for us. This beautiful school has meant the world to us and has been the world in which our children grew into young adults.

I am a student of words, and I know their limitations, as they can never stand fully for the most powerful feelings they try to convey. I will not be able to put into words all that this school community has meant to me and my family. When we arrived in 2005, knowing no one here and not truly comprehending the scope of the work that would be entailed in my new position, we saw immediately the powerful sense of community at W+H that formed the bedrock strength of the school. As the school has grown and changed, preserving and enhancing that sense of community has been a top priority, and I have been privileged to work with so many who have shared that commitment. We have also maintained our focus on academic excellence, on global interconnection and diversity, and on raising students of high character. I am proud of all we have accomplished here as a school community, and after much deliberation have concluded that the time is right to seek new horizons.

Wardlaw+Hartridge remains a joyful place, even at a time of duress in our country and around the world. As I walk around campus, I take great pleasure in seeing kids learn and grow in spaces I have had the opportunity to help create, guided and inspired by people with whom I have worked for years and have helped to bring into our community. I see this vital energy every day, among students on the Lower School playground, on the fields and tennis courts, in the gymnasiums and pool, in the garden, in every classroom and library, on the stage of the Berry Performing Arts Center and in the art studios, in the AP room for lunch, and in a huge array of extracurricular activities. I see the hard work that every teacher, staff member, and administrator devotes daily to forming this metaphorical village charged with raising pioneering thinkers with the courage and character to shape the future of our world. I am proud to be a leader of such a village and more simply to be of Wardlaw+Hartridge, as a colleague, a parent, and a member of our school family. It is a true privilege to live and serve among such a wonderful group of people.

Each day, I interact with a fascinating student body, filled with creative and engaged students, and a team of dedicated colleagues, whom I admire not just as creative, talented professionals but as truly good people. I am grateful also for parents who entrust their children to us in a true partnership, and a Board of Trustees that devotes tremendous time and energy to ensure the brightest possible future for the school. I have been fortunate to work with four Board Presidents, Randy Rogers '81, Ted Osborne '71, Rob Rizzo '89, and Dr. Ayesha Sitlani, who made school leadership an enormous part of their lives with no recompense except the satisfaction of steering the school toward growth and vitality and who provided me with invaluable support and encouragement.

Much like our graduates each year, I can look back on a powerful journey of growth, and know that the lessons I have learned, and the spirit of those with whom I have learned here, will carry me forth on the next part of my journey. I will continue to learn and grow with you all, and continue to lead the school to the best of my ability through these times of challenge and opportunity until the last day of June 2023.

During that time, the school will seek and find an outstanding Head of School to bring in new perspectives and ideas, and to build upon the tremendous strengths we have all helped to establish for the school. In this last span of my tenure, I will do everything in my power to advance the school's mission and to make the W+H experience the best it can be now and long into the future. We have thrived together through great times and difficult ones, including historic economic crises and a worldwide pandemic. We are a resilient school, with a palpable commitment to its mission and core values, and my work over the next eighteen months will be to keep stoking its spirit with positive energy and patience.

Seventeen years ago, Aurea and I accepted the offer to join this community, to help shape its unique identity, build its strengths, and address its challenges. We are forever grateful for the opportunity, for the love and joy we have found here, and for the ways the school helped our children grow and become their true selves. We will now seek new opportunities to learn and grow in another community, forever informed by our experiences here. Our years here are enough to claim the coveted title of Lifer, an honor we will cherish. My partnership with all of you will remain strong through this last part of our journey together as we continue to develop the distinctive strengths of our beloved school.

With fondest regards,

Andy Webster
Head of School

Dear Wardlaw+Hartridge Community,

I hope this letter finds you and your family in good health as we begin this new year. I am writing to you with a heavy heart to let you know that Mr. Andy Webster, Head of The Wardlaw+Hartridge School, has notified the Board of Trustees of his decision to end his tenure at W+H in June 2023. Andy has had a profound and enduring impact on our community, with a long list of accomplishments. We are all fortunate to have experienced the graciousness and wisdom that Andy, and his wife Aurea, have imparted on the W+H community, and we are excited for them as they embark on their next journey, full of new opportunities.

As President of the Board of Trustees, I have had the pleasure of working closely with Andy these past two years. I have been deeply impressed by Andy's integrity of character and commitment to enhancing the student experience. On behalf of the Board and myself, I would like to express my most heartfelt gratitude to both Andy and Aurea for their dedication and service to W+H. We will miss them, as they have made an indelible impression on the fabric of our community, and as parents of five young alumni (P '13, '15, '19, '21, '21) they will forever be a part of the legacy of W+H.

During his 17 years at W+H, Andy has been laser-focused on delivering on the school's mission to prepare well-rounded students to lead and succeed in a world of global interconnection. Under Andy's leadership, the school has expanded competitive curricula offerings, service initiatives, and campus facilities in multiple areas including STEM, the performing arts, athletics, and global humanities. Andy has also introduced important steps to expand our initiatives in diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB). The successful accreditation of W+H from the New Jersey Association of Independent Schools (NJ AIS) in 2021 is a testament to Andy's dedication and commitment to strive for excellence at W+H.

Andy's calm and thoughtful style of leadership during challenging times cannot be overstated – be it a recession, an ongoing pandemic or a devastating natural disaster. Despite an unrelenting pandemic these past two years, W+H has thrived by increasing enrollment and receiving widespread recognition of the school's excellence. Through all of this, Andy has effectively managed the day-to-day operations of the school while solidifying our financial position.

We will continue to rely on Andy's leadership, experience, intellect and insight for the remainder of his term, and very much appreciate his commitment to support us during this transition as we look for a new Head of School. We are forming a search committee, co-chaired by me (P '25), and my colleague Dan Schildge (P '15, '17, '20), also a member of the Board of Trustees. We will be hiring an executive search firm to support us in identifying and selecting an outstanding successor and will be engaging the broader W+H community including parents, faculty and staff, alumni, and students to assist with our search. We are fortunate to be able to conduct this search with the support of a dedicated Board of Trustees, in collaboration with the W+H community. We will be providing regular updates and keeping the community apprised of progress with the search process through the school's website.

As we look forward, it is important to recognize that W+H is positioned for continued success and finding a new leader presents us with a wonderful opportunity to celebrate and reaffirm the mission and values of our school. I am looking forward to collaborating with the W+H community to build on our strong foundation as we find the next leader for our school.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ayesha Sitlani, P '25
President, W+H School, Board of Trustees

WARDLAW+HARTRIDGE
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