



## A Message from the Board of Trustees

Dear BHMS Community,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, we are proud and tremendously excited to announce the appointment of Stephanie Pax Flanigan as Brooklyn Heights Montessori School's next Head of School. Stephanie will succeed Martha Haakmat in July 2019, following the conclusion of Martha's exceptional six years as Head of School.

Stephanie is a national Montessori leader and a highly experienced head of school. She recently completed an 18-year tenure as the head of Montessori School of Denver (MSD). Her leadership was instrumental in extending MSD's program through eighth grade, growing its campus, raising the school's profile in Denver and beyond, and maintaining dual accreditations with the American Montessori Society and the Association of Colorado Independent Schools. Stephanie is an ardent believer in faculty development and has trained and mentored many school leaders, including the new head at MSD. Stephanie articulates Montessori principles with ease and has a proven track record of promoting Montessori pedagogy and Montessori eighth grade graduates.

Our halls resonated with excitement during Stephanie's campus visit earlier this month! Stephanie showed herself to be a consummate professional who connected seamlessly with all constituencies. Stephanie is fiercely dedicated to the ongoing development of the heart of our program: our expert, ingenious, tireless teachers. It is clear to the board that Stephanie will be a powerful guide, mentor and champion for all of our faculty and staff. In the words of one of our faculty members, "it was like she was already here."

Grounded in the Montessori principles of respect, interconnection and peace, Stephanie intends to continue the school's leadership work in diversity. Stephanie embraces the school's core values of equity and inclusion and has expressed great enthusiasm about joining us on this intentional journey.

The board voted unanimously for Stephanie's appointment. We are convinced that Stephanie is perfectly prepared to guide BHMS from our current position of strength through our next exciting chapter.

Stephanie is now gleefully planning for her relocation to Brooklyn with her husband, John Flanigan. Stephanie and John have three adult children: their daughter Allegra lives in Manhattan, their son James is nearby in Connecticut, and their other son Conor is in Denver. Stephanie and John will be accompanied to Brooklyn by their dogs Bentley and Nell.

Our extensive, open, and collaborative head of school search process made extremely clear that Martha has beautifully positioned BHMS for great things ahead and has trumpeted our story far and wide. Because of the school's stellar reputation, constantly supported by Martha's ambassadorship on the national platform, the search attracted an extraordinary pool of applicants from across the United States and around the world. Our search consultants, Carney, Sandoe & Associates, presented the search committee with an exceptional portfolio of candidates, all of whom were highly qualified and enthusiastic about BHMS. The opportunity to choose from this deep and attractive pool is largely due to Martha, and we are grateful for her leadership and generosity throughout this process.

Words are inadequate to express the depth of our gratitude to every person who gave their time, energy, and thoughtfulness to the head search process. Our search committee collectively spent hundreds of hours refining search criteria, reviewing candidate materials, conducting interviews, calling references, participating during candidates' campus visits, reviewing community feedback and discussing what would be best for the future of our beloved school. Our teachers, staff, parents, alumni parents, and students put aside their day-to-day work, gave us their invaluable time, and thought hard about what should come next for our community. The intelligence, caring, and deep consideration reflected in the community feedback was extraordinary. Thank you.

As two inveterate doers, Martha and Stephanie have already begun to plan the leadership transition. The Board will be highly engaged this year and next to support them, and the search committee will continue working as a transition committee. Stephanie will visit us repeatedly during the remainder of this school year to meet with Martha and her team and to continue getting to know our community. She is preparing to hit the ground running when she arrives in July!

We will spend the balance of this year celebrating Martha's many accomplishments. During Martha's tenure, we have expanded our gorgeous physical facility, strengthened the curriculum, supported our teachers in their constant development, and added expert administrators. All the while, our warm and embracing culture has been nourished by Martha's actions and spirit. It is no wonder that high school admissions officers are banging down the doors to visit our middle school and meet our eighth graders!

We are delighted to welcome Stephanie. We look forward to her stewardship of Brooklyn Heights Montessori School's mission to educate children who are, in the words of Dr. Maria Montessori, "both a hope and a promise for mankind."

Margaret Donohoe Tull  
*Board of Trustees, President*  
*Parent of Elliot (8) and Addie (3)*

Teresita Levy  
*Head of School Search Committee, Chair*  
*Board of Trustees, Secretary*  
*Parent of Ari (8) and Ilan (6)*