
Head of School Search Frequently Asked Questions

Why is Drew Smith leaving Friends School Mullica Hill?

The Board of Trustees gave Drew Smith his highest ever year-end evaluation in 2009, and the Board of Trustees was saddened and surprised by his decision to leave. The Board of Trustees, however, is excited about the opportunity to build on what Drew has done and to hire a new Head, someone who will bring a different mix of strengths to the school. Drew expressed to the Board of Trustees that he is more pleased with the quality of the administrative and leadership team at the school than at any time in his decade-long tenure as Head. He believes that the school will continue to thrive in his absence, and he has stated that he would not have made the decision to leave if he believed otherwise.

Who will be hiring the next Head of School?

The Friends School Mullica Hill Board of Trustees will be hiring the next Head of School. Information about the Board of Trustees and its members can be found on the school's website: www.friendsmh.org.

What is the process that the Board of Trustees will follow to select the next Head?

The Board of Trustees appointed a Search committee, which was charged with creating an inclusive search process and delivering a recommendation for the next Head of School to the full Board. The Search committee is clerked by William Carrigan and has followed the search guidelines suggested by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) and by consultant Barbara Gilvar through her book, *The Art of Hiring Leaders*, a guide for nonprofit organizations seeking to employ a new director.

The initial stages of this process are now complete. In addition to creating and posting the job advertisement, this included the creation of a Nominating committee, which was charged with putting together five Advisory committees as follows:

Lower School Parent Advisory Committee

Upper School Parent Advisory Committee

Faculty/Staff Advisory Committee

Student Advisory Committee

Alumni Parent Advisory Committee

These five committees were duly appointed and are now in the process of participating in focus groups clerked by members of the Board of Trustees. These focus groups will participate in coordinated exercises designed to help illuminate those characteristics most desired in the next Head of School. The minutes from these focus groups will be shared with the Search committee as it moves through the rest of the process. In addition to the focus groups,

Advisory committee members will also participate in the interviewing of the Head of School finalists, with each Advisory committee allotted forty-five minutes in this regard.

The Advisory committees are one key part of the Search committee's plan to reach out systematically to the various stakeholders in the Search. In addition, the Search committee has developed a survey and distributed that survey to parents and faculty/staff members of the school community. This survey allows numerical feedback on key issues while also providing a space for general comments and suggestions. Finally, the clerk of the Search committee has attended both a Faculty/Staff meeting and a Parents Association meeting to discuss the search process.

Further details about the Search Committee, the search process and the Advisory committees can be found on the "Head of School Search" webpage, accessible from the school's homepage, www.friendsmh.org.

What characteristics in a Head of School do the Board of Trustees value?

The Board of Trustees seeks a Head of School that:

- Has experience or familiarity with Quaker education
- Can communicate very effectively with a diverse range of constituencies
- Understands independent school finance
- Has both enthusiasm and experience in development and fundraising
- Holds experience in enrollment management and outreach
- Possesses leadership and administrative experience
- Can engage parents in a positive dialogue
- Is sensitive to the value and the Light in each person
- Is an extraordinary listener
- Has great intellectual energy and stamina
- Loves working with kids
- Is experienced in making difficult decisions

What is the timeline for the Search?

The deadline for applications is 15 November 2009. The Board of Trustees hopes to move quickly after that date so that a new Head can be announced before reenrollment applications are due. The Board of Trustees, however, will not move quickly unless it is certain of hiring a strong leader. If there is no unity on this important decision, the Board of Trustees is prepared to hire an Interim Head of School for one year.

What will the salary of the next Head of School be?

The salary will be competitive with that received by other Heads of independent schools in the Delaware Valley.

Last Updated 12 November 2009 - Compiled by William Carrigan

Assistant Clerk of the Board of Trustees - Clerk, Head of School Search Committee