

Dear Okanagan Waldorf School Community,

Our Head of School, Andrea Thiessen, has led our community to reach higher, dream bigger, and work harder than we thought possible. The Board has had many emotions - as I anticipate you will have after hearing the news - that Andrea has decided to step away from her current position at the end of the 2019/2020 school year. I believe I can speak for all of us in saying, "Thank you, Andrea, for your last five years of service to the Okanagan Waldorf School and getting us to where we are today. Our community will be forever grateful."

Andrea, time and time again, agreed to wear a variety of new hats throughout the rapid growth of our campus. As Head of School, her current role includes the duties of both an Executive Director as well as a Principal.

Our success to date can be greatly attributed to her ability to learn many things, taking on a workload and set of responsibilities that even at the best of times was daunting. Over the years Andrea could be found doing everything from teaching hand-work, hauling her step ladder out to hang the school banner at McDonald Park, shopping at Costco for the best deal on soap, and consoling upset students to leading the charge for the Board's strategic development. When asked by the Board to take on the role of Principal, she stepped in wholeheartedly and successfully managed significant transitions in our reporting, policy development, and BC ministry certification. Thanks to Andrea we can also proudly say we now have a strong administration team, a dedicated Board of Trustees, and strength in our committee work. Her guidance has helped the Board develop a strong governance and leadership structure and has also assured we are well underway to implement a sound strategic plan that includes a succession plan. Because of all of her endeavours noted above, we can be assured that we have the resilience to manage this change gracefully and prepare for this evolution of our leadership.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to organize a Personnel Committee to hire the next management team and the Board has already started this process. The Personnel Committee is to recruit qualified candidates, vet the candidates, and ultimately present finalists to the Board for approval. In accordance with our succession and restructuring plan, we will be looking to fill both the Executive Director as well as the Principle positions as stand-alone roles in our future governance.

The management team search process is a real opportunity for our school to create a vision for this next phase in the life of Okanagan Waldorf School. Just as our teachers guide our students so carefully through the stages of child development, now the bedrock of the school itself will move through a necessary stage of its development. While change can be daunting, I believe transformation will reveal new opportunities—and that the strength of our community will carry the gift of Waldorf Education well into the future.

Warmly,



Vanessa Collieran
Chair – The Bridge Educational Society
Please email any questions to learn@bridgeeducational.org