

June 3, 2012

Dear BHS Community:

During the interview process, a *Sagamore* reporter asked, “What will be your first undertaking if you become Headmaster?” I instinctively said, “To listen.” This plain answer was hardly satisfying to a tenacious high school investigative reporter, but it was sincere.

I enter your school community with a sense of honor and humility. I also enter with great respect for Brookline High School’s striking heritage and history and its clear and compelling culture, all things that were evident to me during the search process. To each of these I am, at this moment, still an outsider, who can look at the school with a relatively new and clear lens. For that reason, I’ve created a rather formal entry plan that will allow me to capture this important transitional moment. The plan will let me learn as much as I can about the school community in a short period of time. I will then report back to the entire school community what I heard, which will hopefully generate some collective new thinking and learning. The new learning will enable me, school leadership, and faculty to develop plans for moving forward.

I have structured a number of ways for students, parents, faculty and staff to share their insights.

- For **all** members of the community, I have created a brief online survey that should take you 7-10 minutes maximum to complete. This survey can be found at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/bhstransition> (opens best in Safari)

I also have set up times for the school community to meet with me if you would prefer to share your thoughts in person.

- For the **faculty and staff**, you can sign up for a 20-30 minute meeting to discuss the questions I have outlined below either individually or with a group of colleagues. I have set aside a few mornings in the main office in June, July, August and in September. Please contact Kelli McDermott to sign up. The summer dates are:
 - 6/8, 8:00-11:00am
 - 6/13, 7:30-11:30am
 - 6/14, 7:30-11:30am
 - 7/9, 8:00-12 noon
 - 7/10, 8:00-12 noon
 - 7/17, 8:00-12 noon
 - 7/18, 8:00-12 noon
 - 8/20, 8:00-12 noon
 - 8/29, 8:00-12 noon
 - 8/30, 8:00-12 noon
- For **parents**, I have worked with the PTO to set up a series of coffees this summer and into the fall. I would encourage parents to attend one of the coffees listed below to share your thoughts and to hear from others. Please RSVP at the links below.
 - 7/10 at 7p.m. at 28 Copley St hosted by Ben Whipple & Carol Gladstone
<http://meetdebholmanjuly10.eventbrite.com/>
 - 7/19 at 9a.m. at 55 Welland Rd hosted by Teresa Cheng and Ira Chan
<http://meetdebholmanjuly19.eventbrite.com/>
 - 8/22 at 7p.m. at 242 Grove Street, Chestnut Hill (S. Brookline) hosted by Georgia Moridi & Scott Rassoulia <http://meetdebholmanaugust22.eventbrite.com/>
 - 9/19 at 7pm at the MLK room for Boston/METCO parents, who are welcome to attend all other parent coffees.
 - Additional September date TBA

- For **students**, I am going to meet with a number of student leadership groups, but will also schedule meetings in September to hear from all of you about your reactions to the questions listed below. These meetings will be announced in September.

The ultimate goal is for me to understand better how I can effectively lead this school, while simultaneously collecting important information about Brookline High School from which we can all learn.

Thank you for your commitment to this process, and I am excited to begin this work.

Sincerely,

Deborah Holman

Questions:

1. What do you see as the three most positive aspects of Brookline High School?
2. What do you see as the three key issues (in order of importance) that I need to address as headmaster?
3. What has been the nature of your contact with the headmaster? How should it remain the same? How would you like to see it changed, if at all?
4. In what ways does BHS fulfill its goal of serving all kids? In what ways does it fall short?
5. Freedom and responsibility is a palpable community value here. What are its positive results? In what ways does it fall short?
6. Faculty only: What does teacher autonomy look like here? What does teacher collaboration look like here?
7. Give me one piece of advice that you think will help me as I begin my tenure as headmaster of Brookline High School.
8. Is there anything else you would like me to know?

Timeline:

- May/June: Draft plan and get feedback
Reread NEASC self study and headmaster search survey from fall 2012
Read NEASC visiting committee report
Attend senior assembly
- June: Meet with interested faculty and staff either individually or in groups
Set up online questionnaire and send out link through PTO newsletter, internal email system, and to students (available until September)
- July: Meet with interested faculty and staff either individually or in groups
Meet with each administrator individually (Unit B, deans, assistant headmaster, director special ed)
Meet with school department senior staff
Meet with town officials
Attend parent coffee(s)
Meet with head custodian and custodial staff
- August: Send out reminder of online survey
Meet with interested faculty and staff either individually or in groups
Meet with each administrator individually (Unit B, deans, assistant headmaster, director special ed)
Meet with school department senior staff
Meet with town officials
Attend parent coffee(s)
Meet with secretarial staff as a group
- September: Share my core values with faculty and staff at opening day meeting
Meet with interested faculty and staff either individually or in groups
Attend parent coffee(s)
Meet with student leadership group(s)- (Legislature, Metco, STS, others).
Hold open meetings to meet with students
Send out final reminder of online survey
Be hosted by all departments for half a day to visit classrooms with curriculum coordinators
Attend department meeting(s)
- October: Be hosted by remaining departments for half a day to visit classrooms with curriculum coordinators
Attend department meeting(s)
- November-December: Compile information from the entry process, develop presentation and brief report of findings
- January: Share report of findings with administrative council, faculty and staff, students, school department senior staff, and with the PTO and ask for reactions/thoughts

January-

February: Begin to discuss a plan of action to address priorities

Resources: Barry Jentz, *The Entry Plan Approach*. (Leadership and Learning Inc., 2012).