



Parents Association Meeting Agenda
January 3, 2022
5:30pm

"For every one step that you take in the pursuit of higher knowledge, take three steps in the perfection of your own character."

-Rudolf Steiner

Opening:

The January PA meeting was called to order at 5:42 pm on Tuesday, January 3, 2023 by Heather Maury in the First Grade classroom at The Richmond Waldorf School.

Present:

Acorn Rep: Shawn Smith

Dogwood Rep: Rebekah Canard Lehto

Magnolia Rep: Mallory Sandbridge

Oak Rep: Megan Jones

Willow Rep: Mary K. Engelten

1st Rep: Rocio Espericueta

2nd Rep: Carlton Bragg

3rd Rep: Rosa Castellano

4th Rep: Pete Markham

5th Rep: Shannon Garrett

7th Rep: Michele Burt, Maggie Reinke

Faculty Rep: Tim Daniel, Interim Director of Administration

PA Leadership: Erica Childress, Heather Maury, Elizabeth Cleveland

BOT: Marianne Kelliher, Secretary

Parents: Erica Angert, Matthew Gray, Sonali Gulati, Lynn Hurley, Juliette Singh, Antonio Pachecko, Jacob Williams, Nate Simon, Margaret Ayre, Noell Rathbun, Heather Simon, Ashley Long

Housekeeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Susannah Meyer is stepping down. Will secure new Faculty Rep by next month.
Faculty Update & Accreditation: Tim Daniel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tim Daniel stepping in for January as Faculty Rep for the PA• Additional upcoming events:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Saturday, Jan 21st is the Pajama and Pancakes Party for the five classes that achieved full participation for the annual fund: <i>Magnolia, Oak, Willow, 3rd and 7th grade.</i>○ Sunday, March 12, 2023 at 4:30 (last day of Spring Break) Christophe Wagner and Joanne Kong will host a benefit concert at Eternity Church. He was so impressed with his time at RWS and with all the students, that he wanted to come back and offer a benefit. All proceeds will go to the Music Department.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Holiday Fund: Message was sent out in December. One of the reasons we were trying to address it was due to RWS accreditation and our aspirations there.● Accreditation: In sharing the rationale for why accreditation is important, Tim shared the following quote from the International Council Advancing Independent School Accreditation: <i>"Independent school accreditation is a peer-reviewed process that fosters excellence in education and encourages school improvement through discovery, dialogue, compliance, and commitment. Accreditation enables a member school to develop clearly defined goals and objectives based on its unique mission and philosophy."</i> <i>Accreditation is both a process and a status. It is the process of reviewing schools and their programs to assess educational quality – how well they serve students and society. This review is related every five to ten years if the institution or program is to sustain its accreditation. The result of the successfully completed process is the designation of 'accredited' status."</i>○ Every accrediting body speaks to self and peer review and continual improvement. This is what we will continue to strive for.○ With the Holiday Fund, this called attention to what independent schools need to be clear on: Who is fundraising, how it is conducted and how funds are dispersed. But it highlighted a reminder of the standards we want to uphold at RWS.
Board of Trustees Update: Heather Maury	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● William H. Wright, Jr. (Chip), former Member of the Board of Trustees has passed away after a long battle with colon cancer. Heather read his bio and celebrated how he was such a big advocate for the school and that he will be greatly missed. Please hold him and his family in your thoughts. To see his obituary, please click here.
PA Treasury Update: Erica Childress on behalf of Danny Friedman	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● \$8,473.70 in the PA checking account● We have a few checks that still need to be deposited (including \$258.12 from bbgf, which is 15% of the proceeds from in person and virtual sales.



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Holiday Fund / Fundraising Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Please see Danny Friedman's attached note (or click here) which shares some relevant updates regarding the PA executive team's ongoing dialogue with the administration regarding the Holiday Fund.
Upcoming Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Coffee Social</u> THIS FRIDAY, JAN 6. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 3rd grade leading ○ Next year – we'll be having the PA meeting and Coffee Social the "second" week of Jan vs. the first week! ● <u>Games Night</u> DATE CHANGE: FEB 10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 6th grade leading ○ Originally started as "screen free week" and we're bringing it back. Please bring games to share and play. ○ Family friendly ○ Pizza and drinks for sale
Upcoming Community GIVE BACK Events: Heather Maury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Art Supply Drive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Heather will be sharing a list of materials needed (e.g. markers, modeling clay, etc.) ○ <i>Please let your classes know this is coming and that we'll be collecting throughout February</i> ○ ONLY NEW supplies please. ● Crafts & Conversations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We are bringing this back. This was an activity "Before-Covid" where you gather after drop off, bring your coffee and work on something crafty as a group.
Director of Administration Announcement	<p>Discussion</p> <p><i>RWS Parents raised concerns about the recent decision to hire Andrew Ross as Director of Administration. A large part of the discussion centered around Andrew's DEIJ experience and a desire for the Board of Trustees to address the following:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>How concerns from some RWS Parents and the Advisory Committee, coming out of Andrew Ross' Meet & Greet Sessions, were factored into the hiring decision.</i> 2. <i>How the recent decision has left the following impression on several parents: that while our school values the importance of DEIJ, choosing a candidate without experience in this area feels counterintuitive to our short and long-term plans for RWS.</i> 3. <i>How some parents no longer feel welcome and safe at the school which is why they originally chose RWS.</i> <p><i>Parents acknowledged the hard work of the Board and Search Committee, but also discussed that they missed several of the communications from the board about the candidates. Some parents present were actively involved and following the process closely, others had not and were just</i></p>



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	<p><i>now learning about the candidate and the issues being raised by concerned parents.</i></p> <p><i>Parent Class Representatives also discussed how to best inform their classes of what was discussed and the issues raised. They agreed to collaborate on a document that would outline the concerns they heard, as well as, share background on the process and communications so that the information being shared was as accurate and clear as possible.</i></p>
<p>State of the School Town Hall Agenda Discussion - Marianne Kelliher, BOT Secretary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning to connect with the administration on the top four things • Top themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Accreditation ◦ The decision about the new director of administration. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can the board address serious questions on how the process and decision was made, especially how they incorporated feedback from a mixed faculty college and from parents who shared serious concerns. ■ Marianne shared that the BOT has sole responsibilities to hire and fire the Dir. of Administration. She also shared that she's not at liberty to share info about individual BOT participation in the decision making.
<p>Upcoming Events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coffee Social ♦ 1/6 ♦ 8:15 am ♦ Lobby • Parent Education Series ♦ 1/12 ♦ 5:30 pm • No School: Martin Luther King Jr. ♦ 1/16 • Virtual Author Talk: Sadeqa Johnson, The Yellow Wife ♦ 1/17 ♦ 5:30 - 7:00 pm https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84322341358?pwd=dncrYmZTdHRHK0JZY2lpWDdCK1VGdz09 • Pajama & Pancake Party for Magnolia, Oak, Willow, 3rd and 7th grade, for 100% participation in Annual Fund 1/21 in Gym • Book Club: Black Cake ♦ 1/21 ♦ 3:00 pm ♦ Hardywood West Creek • State of the School Town Hall Meeting 1/25 ♦ 6:00-7:30 pm • EC Re-Enrollment Deadline ♦ 1/27 • Grades 1-8 Application Deadline ♦ 1/31 • Financial Aid Deadline ♦ 1/31 • Coffee Social ♦ 2/1 ♦ 8:15 am ♦ Lobby • Benefit Concert: 3/12 ♦ Eternity Church
<p>Next PA Meeting</p>	<p>February 7, 2023 at 5:30 pm.</p>
<p>Meeting Closed</p>	<p>Elizabeth closed the meeting at 7:10 pm.</p>



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Class Updates

(not discussed during the meeting)

Dogwood: Dogwood class is practicing smaller motor skills by cutting and creating snowflakes to decorate the classroom with. We already have a few hanging up.

Oak: Oak class is currently in a Spanish block and learning about cardinals through Circle Time. They will start their next biking block in February.

2nd: The biggest news is that we have a new student joining the 2nd grade, Abigail (Abby) Goddard started Monday. Her parents are Lori and Braden. That brings us up to 18 children in the class.

The 2nd grade is starting a Language Arts Block focused on animal fables. The story content of this block will come from Jataka tales- ancient Buddhist stories from India, Tales of Abunuwas from east Africa, Aesop's fables, Kipling's *Just So Stories*, and more. The class will also hear about the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. next week.

3rd: Mrs. Pollard read some of *The Chronicles of Narnia* books by CS Lewis towards the end of 2022. This sparked great interest with a few of the students who have bought the series or received them as Christmas presents. They are starting an indigenous creation stories block. They will cover North America stories and expand to many other cultures. They are working on their six and seven times tables. They are prepping for their farm trip in April to New York to work on a biodynamic farm, which is a pivotal experience in their development.

7th: The 7th grade just finished up their physics block. They made Rube Goldberg projects which were quite impressive! They made a police swing, created a simple motor. Next they are getting ready for a human physiology block with guest speakers. Parents who are medical professionals will be giving the lectures on different systems of the body.

After that, they will move into the age of exploration. They will be working on their class play *The Wizard of Oz*. They are very excited about this play! They are planning a class trip to Virginia Beach for a couple nights in the late Spring.



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Holiday Fund / Fundraising Update Note from Danny Friedman

My apologies for missing this meeting. I wanted to share some relevant updates regarding the PA executive team's ongoing dialogue with the administration regarding the Holiday Fund.

1) The Board's decision to support a holiday bonus for the faculty and staff was a welcome one. It is our belief that the Board will continue to make the holiday fund a line-item in the annual budget and fundraise for it. Erica and Heather on behalf of the PA as well as Tim Daniel, interim director of administration, will work with the board to ensure that this is in future budgets. This will be one of the ways that we can support our teachers and thank them for the work that they do for our students.

2) The collaboration between the PA, the Board, the school administration and development teams to address the holiday fund has brought to light an opportunity to bring the PA guidelines (previously called bylaws), the Parent Handbook and the Richmond Waldorf School governing bylaws into greater alignment. This could help us identify any other areas where a formal school policy and Waldorf family traditions are out of alignment with each other and with the guidelines that will lead to accreditation, and we can work to create a long-term solution.

3) In the PA guidelines, there is a dispensation for the use of "special funds" which are funds the PA raises beyond our funding from parent dues. From our guidelines:

These funds are used to give back to the school through supporting: needed equipment, grounds and building improvements, and educational program support. Specific projects are chosen in collaboration with the needs of the school and priorities of the parent body.

The primary setting to work in collaboration with the administration for that second point is a committee of the board of trustees called the Advancement Committee. Through that committee we support ongoing fundraising efforts that affect the whole school and go beyond the scale of fundraising activities based in any individual classroom or the PA. As the PA may choose to deploy a "special fund" for a specific project, we would work in collaboration with the Administration and Development team through that committee. This point of clarification is relevant to larger scale projects especially. I (Danny Friedman, PA Treasurer) am the PA representative on that committee.

4) All of the opportunities we have identified to examine and revise existing practices are, and have been, in the interest of qualifying for accreditation.

I'd be pleased to discuss this further with you prior to our next meeting. Please feel free to email me your questions or concerns: danny.friedman@gmail.com or call me 480-363-3736.

Happy New Year!

Danny Friedman

During our January 3rd, 2023 PA meeting, parents asked that there be time to discuss the Board of Trustees' (BOT) decision to hire Andrew Ross as the new Director of Administration (DOA).

In the meeting RWS Parents raised the following concerns:

- 1. How parent and Advisory Committee concerns coming out of Andrew Ross' Meet & Greet Sessions were factored into the hiring decision..***
- 2. The BOT shared that Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ) was not an important factor in the decision based on parent input from a 2022 survey to understand what qualifications would matter most to the community for the DOA candidate. However, given that our school values the importance of DEIJ, to choose a candidate without experience in this area feels counterintuitive to our short and long-term plans for RWS.***
- 3. How some parents no longer feel welcome and safe at the school which is why they originally chose RWS.***

Background:

- March 23, 2022: The Search for a Permanent Director of Administration announced***
- March 30, 2022: Listening Sessions for Director of Administration Search announced***
- April 5, 2022: Brook Carole, Acies Strategies attends PA Meeting***
- April 5, 2022: Parent survey announced at PA Meeting***
- April 6, 2022: Brook Carole, Acies Strategies hosts morning DoA listening session***
- November 3, 2022: Brooke Carroll, Ph.D, the Search Consultant from Acies Strategies sent an email to the RWS community to inform that the Search Committee had identified two candidates. She shared their resumes and invited the community to meet & greet the candidates on specific dates. These messages were repeated in The Messenger.***
 - Andrew Ross will visit on Tuesday- Wednesday, November 15th-16th.***
 - Jess Prussia will visit Thursday-Friday, November 17th-18th.***
- December 19, 2022: Brian Gillert, Chair of the Board of Trustees (BOT) announced Andrew Ross as our new Director of Administration, starting July 1, 2023 (announcement attached).***
- December 20, 2023: BOT meets with members of Advisory Committee, Faculty College, RWS Administration***
- December 23, 2022: BOT correspondence to Faculty College, Valerie and LaToya***
- December 28, 2022: BOT meeting to review feedback received in response to announcement***
- December 30, 2022: BOT sent correspondence to Faculty College, Vallerie, and LaToya***
- December 30, 2022: BOT sent correspondence to Advisory Committee***
- January 2, 2023: First day back to school***
- January 3, 2023: Parents Association Meeting***

Current Situation:

- Several families attended the meet and greets and/or participated in the committees, and came away concerned that Andrew Ross' background and DEIJ experience did not make him a good fit with RWS currently, or for the future culture of the school.***

Those families shared their feedback but felt dismissed, leaving them feeling unwelcome and unsafe in our community.

- ***Other families recognize the hard work and many hours put in by the BOT, but missed the communications due to the busyness of the fall and end of year season. Upon hearing the decision and reading about the candidate, they have expressed concerns about the candidate's commitment and understanding of DEIJ values that deeply affect the safety and growth of this community.***

Call for Action:

- ***A group of concerned parents have asked for an additional separate forum to discuss the above listed concerns in relation to Andrew's hiring, the overall search process and the opportunity to re-evaluate this hiring decision. This conversation is requested to occur prior to the Town Hall, in order for parents to be able to make an informed decision ahead of the re-enrollment deadline, freeing up the Town Hall to discuss other important matters.***
- ***A group of concerned parents have asked the PA to share a petition to "...request that the Board of Trustees rescind the offer made to Andrew Ross and search instead for a candidate who embodies and aligns with the core values, mission, DEIJ purpose, and short- and long-range plans of Richmond Waldorf School" in addition to four questions put to the Board about the hiring and decision making process. Petition link here: [RWS Open Letter to the Board of Trustees - January 2023](#)***

Please Note:

- ***There are RWS families who trust the work the BOT has done, and do not feel they can judge Andrew Ross based solely on the information at hand, as others may have similar past experiences that could cause inaccurate opinions to be formed as well. These opinions were not discussed or shared during the January 3, 2023 meeting.***

The Search for a Permanent Director of Administration announcement in The Messenger dated March 23, 2022

The Board of Trustees has contracted with Acies Strategies to lead a search for the long-term Director of Administration. The search will be lead by Brooke Carroll, Consultant, and will begin with listening sessions. These sessions will ask for several inputs, including the characteristics and qualities believed to be essential for the position. The Board, school employees, parents, and alumni will be invited to sessions either April 5th or 6th. Questions should be addressed to Nancy Cross, Interim Director of Administration. Stay tuned for more details about these upcoming listening sessions.

Listening Sessions for Director of Administration Search announcement in The Messenger dated March 30, 2022:

Dear Richmond Waldorf Parents,

As you know, we have begun the search process for the next leader of our school. To gather parent input that will be used to support and guide the decision-making process, our search consultant, Dr. Brooke Carroll, will be coming to spend time here with us on Tuesday, April 5th and Wednesday, April 6th. She will conduct listening sessions with groups and individuals in-person on these days and will follow this visit by sending a SurveyMonkey survey to all school constituents so that you have two opportunities to share your thoughts.

We would love for all Richmond Waldorf parents to participate in the listening sessions and to fill out the survey. We have scheduled the following listening sessions:

Tuesday, April 5th: during the PA meeting at 6pm in the gym

Wednesday, April 6th from 8:15-9:15 am in the gym

If you are unable to attend one of the listening sessions, please make sure to fill out the survey so we that hear from you. Thank you for participating in this most important process of identifying our next school leader.

Sincerely,

The Richmond Waldorf Search Committee

Excerpt from PA Meeting Mlnutes dated April 5, 2022.

Brooke Carroll, Acies Strategies

Search Consultant for RWS Director of ~~Education~~ Administration

The search process begins with gathering data by meeting with multiple groups/individuals with the search committee, evaluating characteristics of the ideal candidate to prioritize those characteristics and use them to guide us to make the decisions in interview questions. The interview process - we hope to bring up to 3 candidates to campus for a visit in November. This will be an opportunity for parents to meet the candidate, and multiple interviews, including the Faculty College interview, and to make a decision in December [2022].

Acies/The Search Committee will put together an advisory group to include a group of parents, faculty, and staff who will meet with the finalists and interview them. Not sure how that group will be

formed as that is TBD, but wants the community to be a part of the process: your input now is one of the ways to be a part of the process.

Question: Who ultimately decides who will be hired?

Answer: It is the BOT's responsibility to hire the Director of Administration.

Question: Why is it taking until December to make a decision?

Answer: Because we are going through a very specific process that will get us the greatest pool of candidates. We will post the opening in mid-May. Over the next month we will be gathering info and the committee will be coming up with characteristics of the ideal candidate. We want to give enough time for candidates to apply, so that will be over the summer, then we will have three rounds of interviews throughout the Summer and Fall. This is a typical timeframe for independent schools (mid May to mid October), and we will start the interviewing process once we get a strong pool of candidates.

Question: How many other schools are looking for a similar role?

Answer: Baltimore just hired, Philadelphia and Washington are both in leadership searches and a lot of Waldorf schools are looking at their organizational structure, strategic thinking and planning.

Question: Can the search committee go through all this work and the BOT say no we choose some other person?

Answer: In theory yes, they have that authority as a 501(c)(3), but it would be foolish. The Board's job is to ensure the success of their main Administrator. They [BOT] will only be successful if they have the support of the community, that is why the BOT gives this proxy to the smaller group of the Search Committee members who go through that process. The BOT doesn't have the time to go through this process. When you go through this process it really helps you to find the best match for your school. It is a process to ensure we get the right match for this school at this moment.

Question: Who makes up the 3 interviews?

Answer: There are 3 interview stages. The 1st round of folks, which is usually 8-10 people (typically receive 18-25 resumes) includes the 1st interview questioning what they have done and examples in certain types of situations. Semi finalists maybe 4-5 people move on to the 2nd round, which is a longer interview with scenarios and more information about school. This is a way for candidates to project what they would do in scenarios. The 3rd round is a day and half of interviews of ideally 3 people. This round will include several interviews, where the candidates will come to school, conduct a meet and greet with parents, faculty, students, and have a formal interview with the college and advisory committee. They will meet with the BOT, which will be an interview as well.

So there are 3 levels of interviews, and the last one consists of several interviews to include an interview with Nancy Cross and the business manager.

Question: Will we get people applying to all of the Waldorf schools searching for this position?

Answer: Possibly, yes. We are looking for someone who is looking for you.

Brooke/Acies wants to know:

- 1. What are the strengths of the school that you want to make sure the next leader maintains?*
- 2. What are the priorities that the next leader really needs to be focused on/ issues to be addressed; what are the problems to be fixed, what are the priorities?*
- 3. What are the characteristics of this leader that you would like to see? Paint a picture in words of this ideal person.*

Discussion:

"Calm, cool, collected, and also emotionally intelligent."

"Not knowing what the problems were before, it's hard to know what the priorities are."

"Having had a few different Directors in the last year and half would like to be informed of what the problems were. I know it is a tricky, a delicate subject, but I feel like there was no transparency with the last director and what happened there, and I feel like before I am able to accurately tell you what I think the qualities are I need to know at least some of the problems were with the last directors. And I think that's a fair question. And I appreciate you are clearly trying to be as transparent as possible with the process. Feel like for the benefit of the whole school it does help us all to know why those directors didn't work out before we decide what will make the next director work out. It was a lot of upheaval. I anticipate being with the school for quite awhile, and in order to calm/assuage my fears/anxiety, that information would go very far."

Without revealing detailed information, it was discussed at a high level that previous Director hires were specialists in specific areas and not generalists who had the "entire package" of the optimal skills required for success in that role.

Announcement from the RWS Board of Trustees dated December 19, 2022.

Dear RWS Families,

I would like to thank the Search Committee for the endless hours they dedicated to the hiring process, along with everyone in the community who met our two finalists when they visited the school in November. It is with great pleasure that we announce Andrew Ross as our new Director of Administration, starting July 1, 2023.

In order to make this decision we had a lot of information to consider. Grounded in the characteristics of the ideal candidate that RWS community feedback shaped, we weighed the strengths and weaknesses of both candidates, qualifications, certifications, and input from Advisory and Faculty committees together with professional references. Andrew's experience and knowledge of Waldorf school administration made him the clear choice.

Andrew is coming to us from a Waldorf centered Charter school in Idaho where he has been the School Administrator since 2018. His leadership led to many achievements - from accreditation to attaining financial stability under difficult circumstances. Notably, Andrew fostered a welcoming and diverse community, in part by starting a DEIJ committee. This committee has the freedom and power to recommend improvements to curriculum, administrative practices, and community activities. Having spent 16 years as a teacher, Andrew feels as comfortable in the classroom as he does working with his team of 40+ staff or partnering with his School Board to advance their mission.

Here are a few words from Andrew himself:

What a joy and honor it is to join the Richmond Waldorf School as the Director of Administration. It was wonderful to meet many of you during my visit to the school last month. I look forward to the deep connections that will be built as we work together to bring the beauty and wonder of Waldorf education to our children. My family and I will make the voyage from Boise to Richmond in June to build our roots within the community.

As a core principle of Waldorf education, Human Relationships ignite and sustain the power of this incredible way to learn. Together, as students, teachers, staff, administration, parents, and community members, we are empowered to cultivate meaningful and collaborative relationships while keeping our focus and energy on developing the children that are in our care.

I have had the honor and privilege of serving in education for the last 20 years. My philosophy and approach to this work begins with human connections. The social responsibility we have to each other is paramount to the tending of our community. I am deeply grateful for the school board's trust it has put in me to be a lead and guide at RWS. I look forward to meeting you all very soon.

I hope everyone has a wonderful winter break and that you all enjoy this special time of year with your friends and families!

I'd also like to thank Tim Daniel for stepping into the role of Interim Director of Administration during this transitional year.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or comments.

*Sincerely,
Brian Gillert
Board Chair, RWS Board of Trustees
bgillert@richmondwaldorf.com*

***Letter requested to be shared during January 3, 2023 PA Meeting
Letter to Magnolia Class on December 20, 2022:***

Dear fellow Magnolia parents,

We are writing to you in response to yesterday's announcement that the Board of Trustees has extended an offer of employment to Andrew Ross to be the new director of administration at RWS. We have been concerned about Andrew as a candidate to lead our school since he was announced as a finalist in early November. In his professional life, in his educational journey and in his interviews at RWS in recent weeks, Andrew has not shown a commitment to BIPOC or LGBT students and families.

Andrew's credentials include two degrees from Liberty University, which expels students and fires faculty for being gay. Students who attend Liberty, like Andrew, sign their commitment to the school's beliefs, including that marriage is reserved for a man and his wife. Liberty and its policies are deeply offensive and harmful to LGBT people, but our concerns are not exclusive to where he twice attended school. In his interview with the RWS advisory committee on hiring, on which Rob served, Andrew did not express an understanding of what it means to be committed to DEI work or the LGBT community. In response to specific questions about these things, he shared no professional experiences or vision related to this work. It was the consensus of the advisory committee that Andrew's lack of candor on these subjects should eliminate him from consideration.

While we are distressed that our school's board made a decision to hire Andrew despite our feedback and the negative feedback of many other parents, teachers and the advisory board, the board can reconsider its decision and make an affirming statement in support of BIPOC and LGBT members of our RWS community.

Over the last two days, we have been in dialogue with our school board chair and fellow Magnolia parent, Brian Gillert, as well as teachers, parents and employees. Now, we hope that you will join us in communicating to the board your concerns about the offer of employment extended to Andrew.

If you value the presence of LGBT families in our classroom and school, we hope you will speak-up now for our families and our children, and for the other LGBT families at RWS.

We are happy to talk about this with you. Our contact information is listed below.

We hope you will contact Brian at bgillert@richmondwaldorf.com.

*Sincerely,
An EC Parent and
Matthew and Rob Keeling*

Letter sent to Faculty College, Valerie and LaToya dated December 23, 2022:

Dear Faculty College, Valerie and LaToya,

We'd like to apologize for interrupting during the holidays and thank you for all your contributions throughout the course of the DoA search process. It's been a long journey and we appreciate your role in it.

We understand that, for some of you, this hiring decision has raised concerns. You are protective of your students and their families. Many of you are parents at this school and some of us share this connection. We've learned a lot and are grateful that you felt comfortable coming forward to make your voices heard. It's an encouraging sign that our organization has more open lines of communication. We deeply value this.

However, it is paramount that the Board upholds fair hiring practices and our entire community follows the RWS Code of Conduct. Should you have feedback related to our current & future Director of Administration, please share your thoughts directly with Brian Gillert, Board Chair.

Some RWS parents have sent out email communications with divisive, inaccurate speech about Andrew Ross. These emails continue to circulate among classes. False assumptions have led to conclusions unsupported by evidence or facts. Not only has this behavior put the school at risk, but it is very disruptive during a cherished time of year for many.

We want you to know that we've been in touch with Andrew and shared a synopsis of your feedback with him. He has indicated that his door is open to those who are willing to connect one on one and build a relationship with him. He also affirmed that the university he chose to attend is in no way a direct reflection of him as a person and he will not discriminate against anyone that is a part of or considering joining the RWS school community.

The Board is taking all concerns seriously and will meet as a full Board on December 28 to evaluate community feedback and balance it with our fiduciary duties. In the interim, all RWS Faculty and Staff should feel free to direct inquiries on this matter to bot@richmondwaldorf.com.

We are committed to bringing experienced leadership that will act with integrity, achieve our mission and program, and treat all community members with compassion, fairness, and respect. We will remain in open dialogue with you. After the holidays, we will continue to offer more opportunities for you to directly engage with our administrative leadership transition.

As always, thank you for all that you do and please don't hesitate to reach out.

Wishing you all a holiday season full of joy and wonder!

RWS Board of Trustees

Letter from the BOT to Faculty College, Valerie and LaToya dated December 30, 2022:

Dear Faculty College, Valerie and LaToya,

We hope this email finds you well. Thank you to those who responded to our last communication and proactively touched base with your families to address concerns surrounding the DoA hiring announcement. Although the scope of apprehensive families at our school was small, it is critical that volume not outweigh the gravity of concerns raised, which is why we made the effort to connect with and listen to everyone that approached us with questions and feedback. Throughout the entire search process, including last week's announcement and subsequent reaction to it, we have found no evidence that Andrew has or would discriminate against anyone. The Board met on the 28th and we stand by our decision to choose him as our next Director of Administration.

We wanted to provide you with an advance copy of the message we will send to the members of the Advisory Committee - please see below. We also respectfully ask that you direct any continued community feedback on this matter to bot@richmondwaldorf.com so we can continue to respond in a timely manner.

*With gratitude,
RWS Board of Trustees*

Letter from the Board of Trustees to the Search Advisory Committee dated December 30, 2022:

Dear Members of the Advisory Committee,

Thank you for taking part in the RWS DoA search process, which began in March 2022. We truly appreciate your contributions and feedback. In making this decision, the Board had to consider many perspectives shared by faculty, staff, parents and other RWS community members. We chose Andrew Ross to be our next Director of Administration and stand behind that decision.

We acknowledge that this hiring decision has raised concerns for some of you, as you shared with us by email and at the meeting on December 20th. Many of you are parents at this school and some of us share this connection. We've learned a lot and are grateful that you felt comfortable coming forward to make your voices heard. It's an encouraging sign that our community has more open lines of communication. We deeply value this dialogue. Our top priority is upholding the school's mission and vision while advancing our commitment to DEIJ work as stated in our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion statement:

Richmond Waldorf School welcomes students, families, faculty, staff, and guests of all races, ethnicities, cultural and religious heritages, socio-economic backgrounds, geographic origins, gender identities, sexual orientations, and family structures. We educate our students to respect the dignity of all people and we reject discrimination in all its forms. We seek to create, embrace, support, and nurture a diverse and inclusive community where everyone feels respected, connected, honored, and valued.

We want you to know that, since December 20th, we've been in touch with Andrew and shared a synopsis of your feedback with him. He stated emphatically that the university he chose to attend is in no way a direct reflection of him as a person. He will not discriminate against anyone and is committed to ensuring that RWS will remain a community that is welcome to all. His professionalism is rooted in 20 years of education where he has worked with, taught, and walked alongside all people, including people that identify as LGBTQ+. Andrew conveyed that he believes relationship building is the most effective way to establish mutual trust and respect. This will ultimately happen when he begins his full time role next July. However, he has offered to connect one-on-one with members of the community in advance of his arrival to begin this process. We believe this offer is indicative of his character and commitment to our school.

We are committed to bringing an experienced leader to RWS who will uphold the school's mission, vision, and values and ensure that each child and community member is celebrated, protected, and valued. Thank you again for your time and dedication.

*Sincerely,
RWS Board of Trustees*