

The following communication is being forwarded to you on behalf of Mr. James L. Volling, Board of Education Chair

Re: New President Search Process

Dear Members and Friends of the Minnehaha Academy Community:

I am writing to update you regarding the process for selecting a new President for our school. The Executive Committee, at its meeting on December 3, 2008, and the Board of Education, at its meeting on December 15, 2008, made decisions in three areas that will set us on a course to selecting our next President.

1. **Interim President.** We were advised by the four consulting firms interviewed and considered to assist us with the search that, if we engage a consultant in December 2008 and begin the search process in earnest in January 2009, we should be able to attract a sufficient number of quality candidates, settle on finalists, and hire a new President before June 2009. Moreover, in assessing the state of the school and the timing of Dr. John Engstrom's departure, we do not believe we need an interim leader if we can avoid having one. Minnehaha Academy is not an institution in turmoil or suffering from serious dysfunction or strife; John has given the school 15 great years and is departing at a time when we have finished two major construction projects and capital campaigns, as well as the I.S.A.C.S. accreditation evaluation and a retreat leading to the Centennial Long-Range Plan. We are confident and clear in our mission, on the way to articulating our vision, and ready for the next phase of leadership for the school. If we were to have an interim President during the 2009-2010 school year, a new President would not be in place until the 2010-2011 school year, leaving too little time for the new President to learn the school, gain the trust of its constituents, connect with donors, and be prepared to lead a major endowment fundraising effort surrounding the school's Centennial in 2013. In short, we will seek an interim President only in the event that a search beginning now does not produce acceptable results and we must continue the process in the fall of 2009.

2. **Search Consultant.** We have retained People Management International, Inc. (Rob Stevenson, Tony Kroening, and Mark Stevenson) as the consultant to assist with the search for a new President. This Minnetonka, Minnesota-based office of an international search firm has a most impressive list of clients in the Christian educational and non-profit arena, including World Vision, World Relief, Wycliffe Foundation, Fuller Seminary, Campus Crusade for Christ, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Young Life, and many others. They recently completed the President search process at Bethel University, and they are currently engaged to find a new head for the Association of Christian Schools International. Rob Stevenson is the father of two Minnehaha Academy graduates (one of whom, his son, Mark Stevenson, will be part of the People Management team) and is deeply committed to the school. Tony Kroening is a pastor by training (a Bethel Seminary graduate) who worked at Christ Presbyterian Church before entering the search field, and his wife also has strong ties to Minnehaha Academy with three cousins and an uncle who are graduates. People Management is local, utilizes the SIMA (System to Identify Motivated Abilities) strengths assessment process, is excited about the assignment, and is very impressive. Indeed, People Management collaborated with Max Lucado on his excellent 2005 book Cure for the

Common Life: Living in Your Sweet Spot. We are excited about the opportunity to work with People Management.

3. **Search Committee.** The composition of the Search Committee must be considered from a number of different perspectives. We have determined that the Search Committee will include present and former Board of Education members, parents, alumni, and donors; however, it will not include current faculty, administrators, or staff -- particularly where, as here, there will be internal candidates seeking the position. These important stakeholders need to have the opportunity for input into the process -- and they will be involved at several junctures by the consultant; but they should not participate in frank discussions within the Search Committee about their peers who are internal candidates, and it is most difficult to have employees hiring their employer. In terms of size, we have determined that the Search Committee should consist of 13 members. While fewer might be more efficient in some respects, we believe we need a broad base of opinions, backgrounds, and representation. Accordingly, the Search Committee will consist of the following members and will begin work immediately:

- James L. Volling, Chair (current Board of Education Chair and former parent);
- Rev James Fretheim (current Northwest Conference Superintendent and current Board of Education member);
- Dr. Louise Wilson (current Board of Education Vice Chair, alumna, and former parent);
- Alan Bergstrom (current Board of Education Treasurer and former parent);
- Rev Kay Sorvik (current Board of Education Secretary and alumna);
- John Douglass (former Board of Education Chair, current Board of Education member, and former parent);
- Jan Hansen (former Board of Education Vice Chair, former parent, and current member of Northwest Conference Board);
- Nina Coleman (former Board of Education member and current parent);
- Dr. Margaret Beahrs (current Board of Education member and former parent);
- Amy Carey (alumna, current parent, and former Director of Development);
- Patrick Simmons (current and former parent and current Board of Education member);
- Leah McLean (alumna and current Board of Education member); and
- Dan Olson (alumnus and educator/Development Director at Hope Academy).

If you have questions or would like to discuss any issue related to the search, please feel free to contact me. I will provide additional updates about the process as we move forward, but, of course, I will not be able to reveal certain information because of the confidentiality expected by potential candidates. Please keep the search process and the school in your prayers during this time of transition. Blessings to you and yours as we await the celebration of Christ's birth!

Very truly yours,
James L. Volling
Board of Education Chair

jvolling@faegre.com
(612) 766-7758