

HARBORLIGHT



M O N T E S S O R I S C H O O L

Frequently Asked Questions – January 2011

Q: What is the timeline for the search?

A: Harborlight will actually be engaging in two searches: One for an interim leader who will serve for the 2011-2012 school year and one for the permanent Head of School who will begin his or her tenure July 2012. Susan Egan will continue in her role as Head of School through the remainder of this school year—through June 2011.

The search for an interim leader has begun. Our consultants are meeting with various Harborlight stakeholders to ensure that they know the school well and understand the experience and qualities we are seeking in an interim leader. A search for an interim leader is typically not as broad based or lengthy as a search for a permanent Head of School. There is a small but strong corps of very experienced educational leaders who utilize their experience by serving as interim leaders in independent schools. Our goal and unwavering commitment is to find the best leader to serve Harborlight Montessori for the 2011-2012 school year. While we expect that the naming of an interim leader will take place early this spring, we are most committed to finding the right person and less concerned whether this happens in February or in May as this individual will not officially begin until July 1, 2011. We will certainly offer the community opportunities to meet the interim leader prior to that date. Our consultants have assured us that this will be an attractive opportunity and are confident that Harborlight will secure a strong interim leader. (A question below will answer “Why an interim?”)

The search for the permanent Head of School will begin this spring when our consultants will engage the full community in active conversations as to what our hopes and dreams are for Harborlight Montessori and what we are seeking in our next Head of School. The consultants will then begin to speak with educational leaders about the opportunity to attract and vet a strong candidate pool. They will introduce candidates to the members of the search committee who will begin its process of interviewing and exploring attractive candidates. It is the industry practice that these stages of the process are confidential. Once the search committee has identified candidates that they believe could be great leaders, the process will open up and all members of the community will have opportunities to meet with the candidates as they visit Harborlight Montessori. Again, we are most committed to finding the *right* next Head of School then to a specific timeline—other than knowing that the goal is to have this individual ready to begin July 2012. The search committee will keep the community informed as it identifies finalist candidates and schedules those individuals to visit our school.

Q: How will the search committee be formed?

A: We will utilize a small committee to undertake the important work of partnering with our search consultants to vet potential interim head of school candidates. This is a board appointed committee and needs to be comprised of individuals who have the time to take on this time consuming and important task on behalf of the entire Harborlight Montessori School community. The Board is following the recommendation of our search consultants to keep this committee small. Consequently, the committee will consist of the Board officers (President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary) and the two co-chairs of the permanent head of school Search Committee.

As we move forward toward launching the search for a permanent Head of School, the Search Committee will be expanded to include some Board members, faculty and a non-Board member parent. Search Committee members will need to commit a great deal of time and energy to this process as they hold the important responsibility of working on behalf of the entire Harborlight Montessori School community. We recognize and greatly appreciate that there are many individuals eager to help in this process—certainly far more than can be accommodated by the recommendation of our search consultants to keep the committee number in “single digits” in order to ensure the ability to meet frequently as a full committee and to ensure that the committee is able to do its work effectively on behalf of the community. Do be assured that there will be opportunities for all stakeholders to contribute in meaningful ways to this process and to offer input as we engage in the conversations noted above to define who we are looking for and as we host finalist candidates.

Q: What does the Search Committee do?

A: The search committee will partner with our search consultants to vet candidates who are interested and qualified to serve as Harborlight’s next Head of School. They will serve as Harborlight ambassadors in meeting and interviewing candidates. They will work on behalf of the community to ensure that the search and process are successful for Harborlight Montessori School. Ultimately, they will gather the input of the community and conduct extensive reference checking and make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees as to which candidate should be offered the opportunity to serve as our next Head of School. The search committee does not hire the Head of School as that is the responsibility of the Board.

Q: What are we looking for in the next Head of School?

A: We are looking for a great next leader for Harborlight Montessori School who will embrace the school’s mission and culture. Over the coming months, we will be engaging in conversations that will help define the qualities and experiences sought in the Head of School. Our search consultants will prepare an Opportunity Statement for perspective candidates to review which will outline what we are seeking. That document will be a public document and will be shared openly with our community.

Q: Why use an Interim Head of School?

A: As the Board began to plan for Harborlight’s leadership transition, we learned that the use of an Interim Head of School is an established practice in the independent school world. Transitioning from a long-tenured, respected Head of School to new leadership is a significant change for a school. Every independent school consultant with whom we met strongly recommended utilizing an interim head to assist in the school’s leadership transition in order to best prepare our community to consider what is most needed in leadership to direct Harborlight forward successfully. Harborlight will benefit from not only the wisdom of a highly experienced interim leader but from the additional time that will enable us to ensure a thoughtful, thorough search for a new Head of School.

Q: Is Susan Egan involved in the Search?

A: The Search Committee, by charge of the Board, is responsible for managing the search on behalf of the entire school community. The search committee and the search consultants will be utilizing the perspectives, knowledge and wisdom of all members of the school’s management team, faculty, staff, parents and other stakeholders as appropriate. Candidates will certainly appreciate the opportunity to learn about the school and its history from Susan and others as they visit our school.

Q: How will communication be handled?

A: We are committed to keeping the community apprised as appropriate throughout the process. Certainly check this HOS Transition webpage for updates, and we will continue to use the various Harborlight communication vehicles to share information. There will certainly be public “quiet” periods during the course of our searches as the search consultants and committee are conducting the confidential work of vetting potential candidates, but do seek out a member of the search committee if you have a question. Additionally, you can email our search consultants, Jane Foote and Bill Lyons, at it@independent-thinking.com with questions.

Q: Will these searches impact my child’s experience?

A: Harborlight is fortunate to have a strong senior management team, faculty and staff who will continue to do the great work they do to ensure that Harborlight is a great place for all of our children to come each day. This talented group and the Board will all be working to partner with the interim Head of School and the new Head of School as we transition to new leadership. We are all committed to doing the work necessary to ensure the strengths of Harborlight Montessori School are only enhanced as we move forward.

Q: Who will hire the new Head of School?

A: The Board of Trustees is responsible for hiring the Head of School.

Q: Have a question that is not answered here?

A: Please use this link: BOT@harborlightmontessori.org and ask your question.