

The Future is Ours: Definitive Leadership in Indefinite Times

As it has for generations, the new school year began with the German, Little Meeting, and the welcome of New Girls by their Old Girls. We began our work from a position of strength. Admission applications were at a record high for this year, and the quality of students we enrolled is exceptional. I am pleased to note that we continue to be the school of choice for the most talented teachers, and I am very proud of the experience and diversity represented in our incoming faculty. A third have their doctorate or are enrolled in a doctoral program, and we have a person of color teaching in every department on campus.

As a doctoral student at the University of Pennsylvania myself, I have selected a topic for my research that is of particular importance to me: how adolescent girls define success. The opportunity to be reading, studying, and thinking about how our students conceptualize their futures provides an amazing window into their lives and in turn, informs my leadership as head of school. As I look to the future, I think of how we can take Miss Porter's School to the next level. By this I mean, how can we be not just an exceptional school for girls, but the most innovative school? How can we prepare our girls not just for college, but for their futures, whatever they may be?

Over the past year, I have introduced myself and my leadership style to our school community. To prepare for the future, to provide opportunities for innovation, to achieve the next level of excellence, I believe we must leverage the enormous talent that exists in the ranks of the faculty, staff, and administrators. For this purpose, I have instituted a layered leadership model. My goal is to position our leadership teams in ways that will allow us to fully meet the goals we have for our school in the future. To achieve this goal, I have taken many steps, some of which follow:



Head of School Kate Windsor with former heads of school M. Burch Tracy Ford, Richard (Dick) Davis and Marianna (Muffin) Mead O'Brien during Reunion Weekend.

- **Divided the Administrative Team into two affinity groups.**

I have organized senior administrators into two leadership groups, based on their primary responsibilities. The Internal Leadership Team reports to the Associate Head of School and consists of the Deans of Academics and Students, and the Directors of Technology, Athletics, and College Counseling. The External Leadership Team reports to me and consists of the Directors of Admissions, Communications, and Institutional Advancement, the Chief Financial Officer, and the Associate Head. By these measures, I have structured our focus on the two strands of school life: long-term planning, positioning, and strategy and the execution of the daily operations of our community. This is the foundation of layered leadership through which members of the community effectively become shareholders in the management and success of our school.

- **Convened a peer-elected group of faculty, known as the Faculty Committee.**

Early last year, I reframed the liaison work of this group, asking them to meet with me regularly to discuss key issues and serve as a sounding board. The committee meets with trustees during each board meeting to encourage an ongoing exchange of thoughts and ideas.

- **Reorganized the role of the Academic Office and Department Chairs.**

Through reorganization, I have shifted more responsibility to these prominent leadership teams for decision-making in their respective areas. One step in this process was to have departments craft vision statements for their disciplines and to broaden the involvement of these academic leaders in the supervision and evaluation model. The results have been gratifying and informative as we invite the community into the strategic thinking process.

• **Developed task forces to focus decision-making and distribute authority.**

This model was embraced by the faculty, many of whom have already asked to have specific issues or topics addressed through a task force. In addition to the ongoing use of task forces, there has been another leadership outcome as well: the professional development task force has been reorganized into the Professional Development Committee. This committee has authority to distribute funds and their charge will be to support the professional growth of the faculty.

• **Restructured faculty meeting time and communication methods.**

Faculty meetings have been redesigned to professional development opportunities with presentations prepared and delivered by faculty. This year, our faculty meetings have been inspiring and productive with the Professional Development Committee working closely with the Associate Head to structure our time together around strategic thinking and planning, in addition to other focused projects.

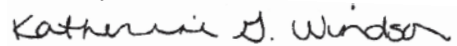
In my experience, the most effective leadership comes from leaders who have the ability to see around corners. True leaders need not know the course, but must possess the skills to anticipate the finish line. As we move forward in our work together, we will build on our distinguished history by being nimble, innovative, and bold. Today, young women have more choices than ever, but the world is more complex than ever. It is important that we understand and prepare for the future that we cannot completely define, and not just respond to these complexities as they arise.

To this end, the board of trustees has embarked on a strategic process through which we will evaluate our school and answer questions such as “What does Miss Porter’s School excel in?” and “What should Miss Porter’s School excel in?” In doing so, we will be able to focus our school on what is unique to who we are and to define our power as a school by looking inward rather than outward to our peer schools. With this achievement, I expect that girls who pursue admission to Miss Porter’s School will not wonder about the benefit of an all girls’ education, but rather, wonder how they could consider any other option for their secondary school experience than our school.

Being prepared in a focused and intentional way for the future is not just best practice, but an assurance we make to our students in our mission statement. We state that we prepare girls for college, for leadership, and for life. As such, we must prepare them for their journey, to and for a future that cannot be entirely defined, as the world they will shape is ever-changing.

Uncertainty about what the future holds, for our society, for our nation, for our technology, and for our global neighborhood, is not uncommon and should not be feared. It has existed since the very founding of Miss Porter’s School and yet, we continue to lead with conviction. Our legacy of success will remain in teaching young women to be independent thinkers, courageous decision makers who seize the opportunity to explore new possibilities, and comfortable with their personal power. At Miss Porter’s School, our success is replicated year after year, decade after decade, and century after century. In Farmington, we know excellence is measured not merely once, but through replication. The future is ours.

Sincerely,



Katherine G. Windsor
Head of School

Editor’s Corner

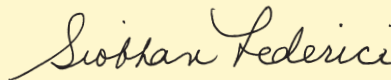
Welcome to *The Bulletin of Miss Porter’s School*. Our magazine has a fresh look this edition, and we hope that you enjoy our new format. You’ll notice that the magazine is a dozen pages longer than previous issues, the design has been updated, and the content strives to share the enthusiastic and exciting vibe of our campus. With each issue, you can expect to find a snapshot of the current events of Miss Porter’s School.

With these improvements, *The Bulletin* will now be mailed biannually in winter and summer. Issues will be supplemented with electronic communications from school via our website, our Facebook page, and electronic newsletters. You will not be without your news from Farmington.

Your contributions to *The Bulletin* are essential. Send your letters to the editor, photos from informal gatherings, article suggestions, creative writing, and recommendations on

Ancients to profile to communications@missporters.org.
(Class Notes should be e-mailed to classnotes@missporters.org)
Reader-generated content will assist in making *The Bulletin* a piece that is truly reflective of our community.

Happy reading!



Siobhan Federici
Director of Communications

P.S. Reader feedback from the publications survey from our last issue was informative and valuable. I would like to congratulate **Carolyn Fallahi P’12**, winner of our survey raffle. Dr. Fallahi received a framed print of Miss Porter’s School.