



# PAUL CUFFEE SCHOOL

A Maritime Charter School for Providence Youth

May 6, 2014

Dear Paul Cuffee School Community Members,

I am delighted to report to the Paul Cuffee School Community that earlier this evening the Board of Trustees unanimously voted to approve the appointment of Christopher Haskins as the next Head of School. Chris will assume his duties as Head of School in July. We are confident that he will enthusiastically embrace and support the Paul Cuffee School community, mission, and culture.

As many of you who had the opportunity to meet Chris during the search process already know, he has been dedicated to educating young people his entire career, including more than a decade as a principal in Rhode Island public schools. Chris currently serves as Principal of Dunn's Corners School in Westerly, and he previously was a principal in the Cranston Public School District. Prior to being a principal, Chris taught English, including English Language Learners, and other subjects in Attleboro, Central Falls, and at the Seven Hills Charter School in Worcester, MA. Chris impressed the committee as a hands-on leader who works closely with all members of the school community to help them meet and exceed academic goals. In addition to his experience as a school leader, Chris is a national facilitator with School Reform Initiative, Inc. where he has led institutes on facilitative leadership, coaching professional learning communities, and learning from student work. For the past eight years Chris has continuously coached teacher, school, and district leaders across Rhode Island. He is a founding board member of the Center for Leadership and Educational Equity, a Rhode Island non-profit organization dedicated to providing professional learning to leaders who work to improve equitable outcomes in their schools. With his three siblings, Chris was raised by his parents, both educators, in North Attleboro, MA. Chris currently resides in Coventry with his wife Renee and their two young children.

In his educational philosophy statement, Chris wrote the following:

“School communities interested in empowering their members must keep in mind that we cannot empower anyone to do anything; we can only give power. Good school leaders give power by inviting voice and contribution. They ask great questions and learn to live with the answers. Leadership is strong in schools where students and teachers use their voices well and, when they use their voices, they find that their influence grows. The conflicts that arise in even positive school climates should be seen as opportunities to grow and learn. Where heads of schools and principals see themselves as lead learners all members come to value life-long learning, not just as opportunities to improve in knowledge and skill, but also as opportunities to help provide what people need most in order to succeed. This, to me, is what it means to lead for equity: encouraging people to speak their

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truth, listening openly to that which is surprising, admitting to what we do not know, seeking multiple perspectives, recognizing the responsibility that comes with privilege, suspending judgment and surfacing assumptions, using questioning to probe further into dilemmas, and recognizing the responsibility to give each member of the community what he/she needs in order to succeed.”

Throughout the search process, including the listening sessions in which many faculty, staff, students, parents, board members and friends participated, we heard a clear and common desire for exactly this style of leadership. We are confident the search committee found in Chris Haskins the educator with the experience, skills, and shared values to lead our School to even greater heights. Members of the Board will be actively engaged in supporting him as he transitions into this role over the coming months, and we call on all members of the community to share what you love about the School with Chris and to provide him with your knowledge, dedication and collective commitment to help ensure his success and the School’s continued success for many years to come.

The search process was intensive and inclusive, and we are deeply grateful to the many members of the school community who participated in listening sessions in December and January and who met with finalists over the past month. The feedback provided by parents, faculty and staff who met with the finalists was read in its entirety by the search committee and was instrumental in its final recommendation.

The Board also expressed appreciation to the members of the search committee who devoted significant time to this effort: co-chairs Kim Noble and Earl Smith, and members Leslie Brackett, Kai Cameron, Andrea Carrera, Johanny Castillo ‘16, Allyn Copp, Tom Epstein, Crystal Gantz, Robert Kelley, Ed Neubauer, Rob Pike and Nancy Safian. I served as an *ex officio* member of the committee in my capacity as Board President, and Maria Palmgren provided outstanding staff support to the committee throughout the process. Finally, the Board expressed gratitude and appreciation to Wendy Randle for her service as Interim Head of School this year.

Please join me in welcoming Chris and his family to the Paul Cuffee School community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Russell C. Carey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Russell C. Carey  
President, Board of Trustees