

September 13, 2022

Dear Members of the Seven Hills School Community,

I am writing to share the news that Christopher P. Garten, Head of School, has advised the Board of Trustees that he plans to retire in June, 2024. The Board has accepted his decision with regret, given the extraordinary contributions Chris has made to Seven Hills, but also with the knowledge that his retirement will be incredibly well-deserved. Chris shares his personal reflections in an accompanying [letter](#).

Since Chris joined Seven Hills in July, 2009, he has worked tirelessly on behalf of the school. From the start of a typical day opening doors in the car line, to cheering on a team or applauding a performance well into the evening, Chris's love for this institution is profound. As a result of his energetic and visionary leadership, his accomplishments are numerous. Some highlights:

- Chris has spearheaded programmatic enhancements and professional development investments that have delivered the most vibrant and varied curriculum in the school's history. Recognizing the vital importance of the work done by the faculty, Chris has championed making significant progress in faculty compensation.
- He has overseen a dramatic increase in the diversity of the student body, with students of color representing 39% of the current year enrollment, up from 22% when he joined.
- Chris has been on the forefront of investing in both academic support and mental health services, as both of these have seen increasing demand. Of course, the last nearly three years have witnessed Chris and his leadership team ably navigate the uncharted waters of a pandemic, deftly working to safeguard the health of students and faculty while continuing to deliver a world-class educational experience.
- On his watch the school has invested roughly \$45 million in new top-notch facilities. We have no ongoing debt, we have reserves for a "rainy day," and we opened our doors this year with 1071 students, the highest enrollment in the school's history. As such, Seven Hills has never been on more solid financial footing.

While we are announcing this now, Chris shared with the Board his thinking well in advance, and we began preliminary planning for a transition some time ago. We have engaged one of the leading head of school search consulting firms, RG175, to help us with this process. The Board has formed a search committee which will be led by two outstanding Trustees: Lair Kennedy, Board Chair-Elect and Angie Apple, Board Treasurer. More information on the search process will be sent out separately and we will provide updates at www.7hills.org/search. Please note that the RG175 team will be gathering input from key stakeholders – faculty and staff, students, parents, alumni, and advisors to the school – as to their aspirations for the future of Seven Hills. These perspectives will help inform their outreach efforts for candidates, nationally and from outside the U.S. as well. We hope many of you will be able to share your thoughts and more details on this will be provided by Angie and Lair later this week.

Our expectation is to have the search process completed and for the Board to make an announcement of Chris's successor by the end of the current academic year. Having the individual selected more than a year in advance will help ensure a smooth transition.

In closing, on behalf of the entire Board, I want to thank Chris for his tireless work, leading this outstanding institution to “engage hearts and minds, guiding students to cultivate their unique capacities and preparing each for a meaningful role in a rapidly changing world.”

We are fortunate to have nearly two more years of Chris at the helm, and we’ll have an opportunity to celebrate Chris’s accomplishments in 2024 as his tenure comes to a close. I know you join me in expressing heartfelt gratitude to Chris, and warmest wishes to him, Christine, and their daughter Jess for what will be a most well-deserved retirement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stephen J. Baggott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "B".

Stephen J. Baggott
Chair, Board of Trustees