



THE WHEELER SCHOOL

October 8, 2024

Dear Wheeler Community,

It is with great enthusiasm that we announce the decision to appoint Mark Anderson as the next head of The Wheeler School, effective July 1, 2025. After an extensive, international search and careful consideration of several highly qualified finalists, we are convinced that Mark is the right leader to guide Wheeler into its next chapter of growth, academic innovation, and community engagement.

What sets Mark apart is his exceptional leadership, which has earned him the trust and respect of faculty, staff, parents, and students alike at the Sanford School in Hockessin, Delaware, where he currently serves as head of school. As we learned through conversations with those who know and work with him, Mark has an unwavering commitment to the well-being of students and a deep understanding of the importance of building supportive and inclusive environments where everyone feels valued and heard. It was clear from our interviews that Mark understands the work behind the scenes is just as crucial to a thriving school as the work done in classrooms and studios, and on performance stages and athletic fields, and he makes a point to recognize and appreciate the contributions of all members of the community.

Mark's authenticity shone through the earnest conversations he had with our students, families, alumni, faculty, and staff during his recent campus visits, and we heard about these same qualities from members of his current school community. As he shared with us, he is a lifelong learner who is constantly evolving as a leader, and always seeking ways to improve. As head of school at Sanford, Mark was not only a visible and active presence on campus but also deeply committed to knowing each student personally, both as scholars and as individuals. His dedication to creating a school environment that is enriching, welcoming, and inclusive will continue to foster a sense of belonging for everyone in our own community.

Mark is also recognized as a leader who can balance expansive vision with tactical action. In getting to know him through the search process, it was clear that Mark does not just lead with ideas; he knows when to build consensus and when to act decisively to implement necessary changes. Long before conversations around diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging became central in independent schools, Mark was already leading with a focus on how decisions impacted the entire student body. He consistently engages alumni, parents, and students to ensure that every aspect of the school experience is fulfilling for all.

Mark's appointment is the culmination of a six-month-long search, which attracted interest from accomplished educators and ultimately incorporated feedback from faculty, staff, students, parents, alumni, and administrators. His candidacy was supported by glowing recommendations from colleagues, trustees, and those who have reported to him. Among other accolades, they describe him as a transformational leader who helped Sanford achieve remarkable enrollment growth, successful fundraising, and a campus revitalization during his tenure. The enthusiastic response from Wheeler families, and our faculty and staff, underscored the board's decision. On our own community survey, an overwhelming 97% of respondents affirmed they felt Mark possesses the experience and expertise needed to lead Wheeler.

Lastly, we want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our current head of school, Allison Gaines Pell, whose steady leadership and sense of unity have guided the Wheeler community over the last eight years. We are deeply thankful for her dedication and service to our school. Her leadership has been both invaluable and impactful, and we will continue to rely on her guidance as we move through this important transition. We are grateful for her ongoing commitment to Wheeler and the support she will provide during this next chapter.

While the joy and energy of this school year is just getting underway, we also feel incredibly fortunate that Mark will join our community next summer, along with his wife, Nicol, and their children, daughters Stella (a junior at Gettysburg College) and Finley (who will attend Syracuse University next fall following a gap year), and son Oliver (a high school sophomore who is excited to join the Wheeler Class of 2027). We look forward to the exciting future we will build together under his leadership. Please join me in welcoming Mark and his family to Wheeler!

Sincerely,
Alisia St. Florian '86
Chair, Board of Trustees