

Dear Avon Old Farms School Community,

With the deepest gratitude for his exceptional service to Avon Old Farms School, I write to share the news that Ken LaRocque has notified the Board of Directors of his decision to retire as Headmaster at the end of the 2018-2019 academic year in June 2019. Fortunately, we will continue to benefit from Ken's leadership and service for another 18 months. We will then move forward with continued confidence given the strong state of the school.

Ken came to Avon Old Farms in 1981 and became Headmaster in 1998. Since his arrival, he has made a difference in the lives of thousands of young men, their families, and the broader Avon Community. When he retires, he will have served for 21 years as our Headmaster. His tenure has been transformational for our school. His impact has been both obvious to many and less visible to most. Ken has worked tirelessly to improve the quality of our school, including the academic programs, arts and sciences curriculum, faculty and staff, facilities, athletic teams, and our endowment.

Ken has challenged our school to be the best college preparatory school for boys by cultivating young men of integrity, who honor wisdom, justice, inclusion, service, and the pursuit of truth. He has emulated this mission every day, along with our core values of brotherhood, integrity, scholarship, and sportsmanship. As part of a decennial accreditation review of our school by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges completed in November 2017, the Visiting Committee noted the school's focus on our mission and summarized their review by remarking that they were, "thoroughly impressed with Avon Old Farms School." They went further to state that, "Avon is a very special place." It is a real honor to be recognized for our accomplishments by outside experts.

As we experience Avon as a community, it's important to recognize Heidi LaRocque, Ken's wife, who has been by his side and an important factor in his success; their daughter, Lexie, Ethel Walker '01; and their sons, Nick '01 and Ben '10, who were campus leaders during their time at Avon. As we move through the next 18 months, we will find the right times to celebrate Ken's legacy and family. The celebrations will be well deserved!

In the meantime, the Board of Directors has important work ahead to secure the right leadership for the school. The Board established in early 2016 an ad hoc Succession Planning Committee to work behind the scenes on succession planning and preparing for Ken's eventual retirement. In 2017, we engaged Carney Sandoe & Associates, one of the premier professional search firms, to consult with us around succession planning. We've now retained them to help with the search process and are finalizing the composition of the Search Committee that will be charged with presenting to the Board the final candidates to serve as Avon Old Farms' next Headmaster. The Search Committee will consist of a select number of current directors and faculty, and I am pleased that Chris Drew, '85, P'17, '18 and current Secretary of the Board, will join me to co-chair the Search Committee. We will post the complete membership of the Committee on the school's website over the next week and as the search process proceeds we will share appropriate updates and related information with you on the website. At this time, we are anticipating that we will be introducing the next Headmaster in October 2018.

We start our search for Ken's successor from a position of strength. Our focus will be to find the right person to ensure we stay true to our values and advance those aspects of Avon Old Farms that make us both unique and among the best schools for boys in the country.

Ken, thank you for all that you have done for Avon Old Farms and for all that you will do over the next 18 months to ensure a successful transition to your successor.

Aspirando et Perseverando,



Marty Cole H'16, P'04
Chairman of the Board