

PENNY BARKER NAMED NEW HEAD OF SCHOOL

The Board of Trustees of St. Stephen's Episcopal School is delighted to announce that Penny Barker will be our next Head of School.

Penny, committed to hearing from and fostering working relationships with the entire St. Stephen's community, will host a series of listening sessions beginning February 1, 2021. She will assume her formal duties as Head of School on March 1, 2021.

Penny brings to St. Stephen's a myriad of qualities that make her an exceptional fit for St. Stephen's: outstanding academic credentials, prior success as Head of School at an Episcopal school, a solid track record of increasing enrollment and annual fund giving, a history of collaborating with all stakeholders to strengthen community, a dedication to supporting and empowering faculty, and an unwavering commitment to educating students of diverse backgrounds.

Lisa Hunt, Church Rector and School Board President, said that "Penny's background and values align seamlessly with those of the school, and her international experience will be a huge asset for us."

"Penny is the right person at the right time," said School Board Vice-President Paige Pecore. "We look forward to a long, productive partnership with her as we build and grow as a school and community."

When we began our Head of School search in September, we said we were looking for a leader who is "visionary, inspiring, and passionate about the School's future, yet unafraid to roll up their sleeves and solve small problems or iron out operational details." Penny is exactly that kind of leader, and we are very fortunate to have her join our team.

We on the Head of School Search Committee extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who attended last week's Town Halls and answered the survey questions. Your keen interest and informative responses were invaluable to our process. You care deeply for our School and its future, and we truly appreciate your partnership.

We also offer our sincere gratitude to Zach White of Wickenden Associates for his help in identifying and recruiting candidates, arranging interviews, and answering countless questions throughout the search process. We also thank our diligent Search Committee: Co-Chairs Tamala Singleton and Daniel M. Maxwell, Aaron Davis, Aly Dossa, Rev. Lisa Hunt, Chris Hysinger, Paige Pecore, Tyler Swanson, and Mary Claire Walther.

Please join us in welcoming Penny to the St. Stephen's community. We look forward to working with her in the years to come.

In case you missed it last week, we are attaching Penny's bio along with a headshot.

In Peace,

/s/ Lisa Hunt, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church Rector and School Board President

/s/ Paige Pecore, St. Stephen's Episcopal School Board Vice-President



Penny Barker

Penny Barker comes to St. Stephen's by way of Mead Hall Episcopal School (a K-12 parish school with 320 students in Aiken, South Carolina), where she served as Interim Head of School for the 2018-19 school year. After the arrival of the school's permanent Head for the 2019-20 school year, Penny was asked to stay on as the Associate Head, leading the school's elementary division through the spring semester. In her two years at Mead Hall, Penny increased enrollment and annual giving while reducing attrition among faculty and families. She also improved the school's strategic marketing and communications, the school's curriculum alignment, and commitments to diversity and student access. Penny moved to Houston in the summer of 2020 following her husband's appointment to a new post.

From 1994-2002, Penny worked as the global marketing manager for a division of ICI, leading diverse teams across Europe, Asia, and North America for a \$5 billion chemical manufacturing company. She was called to education in 2005, taking advantage of a U.K. program that helped leaders in private industry transition to senior administrative roles in education.

While in the U.K., Penny led the social sciences division at Conyers School for four years before being appointed Assistant Principal at The King's Academy (a Christian charter school with 1,200 students 6-12), where she worked on faculty development and improving student outcomes. In 2012, she moved to St. Hild's Church of England School (a charter school with 800 students in an under-served neighborhood of Hartlepool in Northern England), where she served two years as Vice Principal before being appointed to lead the school. Penny led a comprehensive turnaround of St. Hild's, focusing on instructional excellence, community development, curriculum innovation, student wellness, and diversity and inclusion initiatives.

A first-generation college student, Penny holds a B.A. in Theology and Philosophy from the University of Oxford. She also earned a post-graduate diploma in international marketing from the Chartered Institute of Marketing and a post-graduate certificate in education from the University of Durham. She has been recognized by OFSTED (the U.K. Government Office for Standards in Education) and the Archbishop's Council Education Division (Church of England) for leading rapid, sustained improvement in schools.