



December 16, 20250.

Dear Keswick School Community,

Along with Marc and the Board of Trustees, I would like to be the first to welcome and celebrate Jody Berkey as our incoming Head of School. Almost twenty-five years ago, I was humbled to join a small private boarding school that consistently helped boys and their families achieve transformational growth. I was so impressed after my first few months at the school that I committed my professional life to this community and the work we do. I have never looked back. I have always believed that the soul of institutions is organized around one or a few key individuals. By the time I arrived in 2001, Marc and his wife, Terry, had become the core of the school's identity and spirit, anchoring a caring community of unmatched quality and effectiveness.

The challenges of simultaneously operating an educational institution, a psychological treatment facility, and a residential service are immense. As one can see from the startling number of programs that are loosely similar and have closed their doors since 2020, it is a challenging task. However, thankfully for us, Marc simultaneously holds in mind more details, concerns, projects, tasks, and people than anyone I have ever known. His care, honesty, drive, and integrity are unquestionable, and he gets things done. So we are left with the question, "How can someone do that job at the level required to carry us forward?"

Fortunately, Marc saw in Jody someone who could get all of these things done. She is someone who has the same care, honesty, drive, and integrity. Over the last several years, I have watched as Jody mastered the operations side of the school, spearheaded our navigation through the pandemic, and began installing systems for operations that Bob and Libby had always done on the fly or assumed Marc would take care of. Our HR department, accounting and financial departments, food service, and parent support programs have all been revamped. She supported the efforts of a committee of staff who streamlined and updated Individualized Education Plans to better meet current special education administrative requirements. One of the most important aspects of ensuring sustainability is staff retention. Jody's early focus included reorganization of teacher compensation to position us favorably among Albemarle County schools and programs. In addition to these and many other initiatives and projects, Jody has developed familiarity and skill in navigating the legal, financial, and regulatory aspects of the school's operations.

Marc is the shepherd of our community. Countless times, I have witnessed him carrying a staff member or a student's family through the hardest challenges of their lives. My worries about the sustainability of the heart of our community have been alleviated as I have witnessed Jody demonstrate that same ability to identify needs and shepherd individuals to safety. Keswick demands a great deal of each community member. From the boys to their parents and each staff member, our work requires a commitment from everyone. Significant amounts of trust, faith, time, focus, drive, loyalty, and responsibility are extracted from each community member every single day. The school truly operates as an inverted pyramid, with the Head of School shouldering the entire weight.

I am truly thankful and confident that I no longer need to worry about what will happen when Marc relinquishes his role at the end of this school year. Please join me in welcoming Jody to her new role as we move forward into the next sixty-three years of service at Keswick School.

Respectfully submitted,

Marty C. Thomson, PhD  
Keswick School Clinical Director