



# CHARLES WRIGHT ACADEMY

## THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Tuesday, October 8, 2024

Dear Charles Wright Academy Community,

Over the past four months, the Board of Trustees has engaged in a deep and reflective process of listening to the Charles Wright Academy community. Through six well-attended listening sessions, a community survey with over a hundred participants, and individual conversations with many of you, we've heard your voices.

These sessions were challenging for everyone involved, yet essential in the community's healing process and enabled us to move forward in restoring our beloved community. We are grateful to everyone who took the time to provide us with heartfelt feedback.

We acknowledge that this difficult period unfolded under our governance and that our processes were, in hindsight, not sufficient to independently evaluate the key issues and circumstances affecting our school. Furthermore, we understand the concerns regarding Board accessibility of those seeking to share their concerns. We sincerely apologize to the school community for not recognizing and addressing these issues sooner.

The Board is aware of the profound responsibility we bear in rebuilding trust. We must learn from this experience and strengthen our governance practices in meaningful ways so the Board has the necessary knowledge, feedback, and processes in place to fully evaluate and monitor the Head of School, thereby ensuring that such issues will be addressed proactively in the future. Here are the

concrete steps we will take:

**1. Visibility**

Since June, the Board of Trustees has its own page on the CWA website that includes our names, a contact form, frequently asked questions, and more. We will keep this page up-to-date so that all community members can know who is on the board, how the board works, and how to communicate with the board.

**2. Transparency**

In June, the Board of Trustees began to provide email updates to the school community and will continue to do so as needed. When the search for a long-term Head of School begins later this Fall, we will provide information by email and post updates on the CWA website.

**3. Accessibility**

The Board of Trustees can be reached anytime at [feedback@cwatrustees.com](mailto:feedback@cwatrustees.com). Every email received is shared with the entire board and we are committed to responding to each one. Furthermore, the Board of Trustees will periodically hold open meetings (similar to the Head of School coffees) that welcome attendance and feedback from anyone in the CWA community.

**4. Ongoing Feedback**

The Board of Trustees is committed to ongoing community surveying and feedback, starting with a climate survey later this school year. This feedback will be reviewed by both the Board and a third-party consultant. A summary of the feedback will be shared with the CWA community, along with a response from the Interim Head of School and the Board Chair, Adam Blakney.

**5. Governance**

We will add new trustees to the Board, to bring us in line with best practices among peer institutions. (The process for trustee selection can be found in the FAQ on the [Trustee webpage](#).) Every current and future Trustee will participate in board training courses provided by the National Association of Independent Schools. Finally, we will enhance the Head of School evaluation

process to ensure a more comprehensive and balanced review.

In collaboration with Chris Gorycki, Interim Head of School, we are working to identify ways we can help rebuild our culture, celebrate our community, and move forward together. We are committed to this work and will share updates.

Sam and Natalie Brown founded Charles Wright Academy for the purpose of providing an education “equal to that of the best schools in the country.” As Trustees, we are dedicated to keeping that vision alive and ensuring that future generations can experience the same. Our hope is that whether you are a student, parent, faculty/staff, alumni, former trustee, or part of our extended community you will always feel a deep sense of pride and belonging at CWA. As we say, “Once a Tarrier, always a Tarrier.”

In Partnership and with Sincere Commitment,

The CWA Board of Trustees

Aimee Allen (P '19)

Drew Bamford '91

Adam Blakney '00 (P '33, '32)

Dr. Guillermo Chacon (P '34, '11)

Emily Happy (P '32)

Hillary Hearn (P '36, '38)

Dr. David Hirschberg '80 (P '17)

Christian Mattson (P '37, '35)

Toby Murray '71 (P '02, GP '38)

Ben Sclair '88 (P '24, '19, '17)

Nicole Stice (P '29, '27, '24)

Sarah Weyerhaeuser (P '11, '09, '07)

Trevor Will '93 (P '27, '24)

Dori Young (P '16, '14)

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