

November 29, 2017

Search Committee  
St. Michael's School  
602 N. Wilmot Rd.  
Tucson, AZ 85711

Dear Members of the Search Committee,

Never could I have imagined twenty-three years ago walking onto the grounds of St. Michael's Church and School that I would one day apply for the Head of School position. It has been my good fortune to have served both the church, as a Vestry member and Senior Warden and the school, as a member of the Board of Trustees for over ten years including terms as the chair, secretary and the chair of various sub committees.

While serving in those capacities brought great rewards and satisfaction, my most cherished position has been that of parent at St. Michael's. Our daughter Brooke was fortunate to have excelled at St. Michael's from kindergarten through eighth grade. The word "excelled" is used deliberately as it has been evident during her years at University High School and most recently as a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley that her foundational years at St. Michael's not only set her on a successful academic journey, but shaped her as a caring, compassionate person with ambitions to serve others. I know firsthand the power of our school community and what it does to transform the lives of children.

My entire professional career has been focused on the education and formation of young people and those who serve them. As my resume will support, I have taught various grade levels and have served in several leadership capacities including principal, director of curriculum and superintendent. My current position as Pima County Deputy School Superintendent allows me to work with district, charter, private and home school educators. This background has afforded me the opportunity to be active in the education community in a variety of roles, visit schools throughout Arizona, work with teachers, train leaders, and advocate for policies at the state level that promote best practices for educating students and improving schools.

At this point in my life, were I to be called to serve as the Head of School at St. Michael's, it would be the highlight and capstone of my career. In many ways it is as if my entire professional and personal journey has led me to make this application. My love and devotion to the church and school runs deep. I greatly appreciate your consideration of my application.

Sincerely,

*Debbie D'Amore*

# Debra S. D'Amore

<b>Education</b>	<u>1994-1996</u> <u>University of Arizona</u> Doctoral coursework – Teaching and Teacher Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minor – Educational Leadership</li></ul>
	<u>1993</u> <u>Northern Arizona University</u> Master of Education – Educational Leadership
	<u>1991</u> <u>University of Arizona</u> Master of Arts – Teaching and Teacher Education
	<u>1980-81</u> <u>University of Arizona</u> Post baccalaureate 30 units for teacher certification
	<u>1979</u> <u>University of Arizona</u> Bachelor of Arts <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Major - Psychology</li><li>• Minor – Sociology</li></ul>
<b>Certifications</b>	<u>State of Arizona:</u> 1997 – Superintendent 1992 - Principal
	<b>Professional Experience</b>
	<u>July 2001 – Present</u> <u>Pima County School Superintendent’s Office</u>  Chief Deputy School Superintendent (July 2001 – present)  Superintendent for the Pima Accommodation School District – (Mar 02 – Mar 05)  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Design and oversee all educational professional development programs: STEMAZing, Healthy and Safe Schools, LEADNOW!, Frameworks and Foundations</li><li>• Serve as member of leadership team to oversee budgets, elections of school board members, bonds/overrides</li><li>• Participate in various local and statewide education advocacy meetings/events</li><li>• Serve as Regional Lead for Southern Arizona Regional Education Center (Pima, Santa Cruz and Cochise Counties) Work closely with four other Regional Center leads in AZ</li><li>• Provide grants management for educational programs in the county and state</li><li>• Develop partnerships with local school districts, charter schools, community agencies, Arizona Dept. of Ed and the Governor’s Office to provide services in professional development, curriculum and related educational services</li></ul>

1997– 2001 Vail School District Vail, AZ

Assistant Superintendent  
Director of Curriculum and Professional Development  
Principal of Vail High School

- Designed, staffed and served as Principal of Vail High School  
180 students located at U of A Science and Technology Park
- Assisted in development of new schools - Cienega High School  
including hiring of the principal; Acacia Elementary and others
- Designed and implemented professional development program  
for the school district
  - New teacher induction program
  - All district in-services
- Managed all curriculum activities in the district
- Designed, implemented and taught in the Vail/U of A Academy;  
Developed Master of Arts degree program on site for teachers
- Coordinated curriculum development;  
Alignment of curriculum to Arizona State Standards
- Served as District Testing Coordinator  
Completed District Assessment Plan (DAP)  
Stanford Achievement Test (SAT9)  
State criterion reference test (AIMS)
- Managed grants
- Coordinated teacher re-certification efforts

1992-1997 Vail School District Vail, AZ

Middle School Principal – Old Vail Middle School

- Served as instructional leader of a rapidly growing middle  
school, grades 6-8
- Approx. 40 certified staff, 10 classified staff
- Student population – 525

1989-1992 Vail School District Vail, AZ

Teacher – Old Vail Middle School

- Taught 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades language arts
- Team leader

1988-1989 Palominas School District

Teacher – Palominas K-8

- Taught 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades language arts

1981-1986 Flowing Wells Schools

Tucson, AZ

Teacher

- Taught 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and general music appreciation K-5
- Grade level leader
- Active in various district level committees including development of Career Ladder program

## **Community Involvement**

### **St. Michael's Parish Day School**

- Board of Trustees; 00 – 06; 2012 - 2017  
President; 04 – 05
- Church Vestry; 06 - 2008
- Senior Warden of church – Jan 08 - 2011

### **Imago Dei Middle School; Episcopal school for low income middle students**

- Foundation Board; 04 - 09  
Vice-chair 07- 09

### **Southern Arizona Middle Level Association**

- President of the Board of Directors; 97
- Member of the Board; 92 - 96

### **North Central Association of Colleges and Schools**

- Visiting Team Member/Chairperson; 92- 98

### **University High School Site Council**

- Member Sept. 2010 - 2014

### **University High School Foundation**

- Member Sept. 2010 – 2013

### **University of Arizona – College of Education**

- Professional Preparation Board for Teachers; member of Executive Committee
- Co-Chair of Professional Development Committee
- Supervisor of student teachers
- Member of interview committee for Teach-for-Tucson candidates
- Member of interview committee for Clinical Adjunct Professors
- Worked in partnership with field experiences on *teach2mentor* program
- UA Links Board Member; program to build positive and supportive school cultures
- Recipient of UA Alumni Citizen of the Year Award

### **University of Arizona Honors College Board**

- Member Oct. 2010 – 2017

**Pima Community College Teacher Preparation Advisory Council**

- Member Sept. 2009 – present

**Governor Napolitano's Teacher Quality and Support Committee**

- Member; Appointed fall 05 for two year term
- Chair of Professional Development subcommittee

**Foster Ed Leadership Committee (National Center for Youth Law)**

- Member; March 13 - present

**State Wide Teacher Induction Committee; AZ Dept. of Ed.**

- Member; 04 - 05

**Southern Arizona Professional Developers**

- Founder and Chair; 00 - 08

**Professional Development Leadership Academy; AZ Dept. of Ed.**

- Member; 02 - 05

**Southern Arizona Curriculum Directors**

- Founder and Chair; 04- 08

**Pima/Santa Cruz Counties School-to-Work Partnership**

- Governing Board President; 98 - 99
- Member; 96 - 00

**Reading Seed Advisory Council**

- Member 08 – 10

**Arizona K12 Center; Statewide Professional Development Center**

- Board Member 10 - 12

**Personal**

- Tucson resident for 41 years
- Married to David Bradley – AZ State Senator (2013 - current); former member of AZ House of Representatives (2003 - 2011)
- Three adult stepsons – seven grandchildren
- Daughter – graduate of UC Berkeley
- Enjoy community service; all sports; reading; family

**Debbie D'Amore**

## **Educational and Leadership Philosophy**

One of my fondest memories as a parent of a St. Michael's student are my quiet moments perched on the wooden bench outside a classroom in the primary courtyard. I made a point to arrive early to pick up my daughter to sit alone in this magical space. The bright Arizona afternoon sun would cast a warmth throughout the grounds. Closing my eyes and absorbing the feel of everything around me and giving thanks was a daily routine. Throughout my years as a school administrator, I have been asked the same question – “How do we decide where to send my son/daughter to school?” Without hesitation my response would be the same – “Go spend time on the campus, observe, ask questions and take it all in.” Good schools have a *sense* about them. There is an atmosphere, a feeling of openness, acceptance, energy and excitement. To a simple observer it may look *easy*. However, there is nothing easy about creating a successful community of learners. We are blessed at St. Michael's to have one of the most beautiful campuses in southern Arizona. Well thought out learning spaces have been created in the heart of the city while keeping the campus safe and accessible to all. Three distinct courtyards allow students the opportunity to feel a part of smaller communities. As important as it is to have safe, well kept, adequately resourced learning spaces, the key to any successful school is the adults that occupy the four walls. The most important role of the Head of School is one of hiring and serving the adults that walk through the doors each day. It is crucial that each person hired to interact with students demonstrate they are CARING and COMPETENT.

Students know when adults care about them. They are present, they listen carefully, they encourage, they support, they take interest in the whole child, they exude warmth and acceptance. Those qualities call for special people who are healthy, balanced and mature. We cannot give what we do not have. The Head of School is therefore called upon to be a role model displaying the same qualities to create a working environment where caring for one another is of utmost importance. The Head of School is first a servant, present to remove obstacles to allow others to teach, facilitate and inspire students. Everything that happens within a school community is based on relationship. Faculty and staff need to know the Head of School is present to support them, encourage them to grow, and challenge them to be their best selves inside and outside of the school. Maintaining a steady, calm “together is better” attitude, the Head of School must lead with humility by both words and deeds.

Being a competent educator is a tall order. Teaching is both a science and an art. Students today enter the classroom with information at their fingertips, accessed at warp speed, technology natives in a world that is complex and media driven. Educational leaders are required not only to be content experts, they need to be masters at facilitating learning, maintaining high levels of engagement, offering learning experiences that are both collaborative in nature, and at the same time empowering students to become independent thinkers. Managing nineteen active learners at one time requires learned and practiced skills. Productive classrooms are ones in which procedures and routines are

taught, practiced, reinforced daily, and where expectations for behavior and academics are high for all students.

Episcopal schools model diversity and inclusivity. All students' voices, beliefs and ideas are heard and embraced. The best teacher understands the importance of education as a community effort, starting with the parent. Working collaboratively with the student's first teacher – the parent - is critical. It must be a team effort with open and honest communication. Technology today offers the ability to make this happen in near- real time. We all make mistakes. Conflicts will arise. One question must always remain in the forefront – “What is best for the student?”

St. Michael's School has a long history as a mission of the church. Strong working relationships with the Rector, the Vestry and parishioners are crucial. We are all one. The Board of Trustees is responsible for establishing broad policy that aligns the operation of the school with its mission, providing fiduciary oversight of the school's operations, and developing long range strategic goals. The Head of School's relationship with the board, especially with the board chair, needs to be strong, open and honest. Investing time together and keeping lines of communication open are enormously important.

St. Michael's motto – “The difference is balance” sums it up well. Effective educational leaders teach the whole child. Learning environments are created that foster not only intellectual and physical growth but emotional and spiritual growth as well. Our Episcopal identity calls for the nurturing of our moral, religious and spiritual development while celebrating diversity. Serving others, caring for each other, our neighbors and community, and worshipping together on a regular basis rounds out our daily life on campus. Keeping in mind our deep sense of a shared mission and honored traditions, we can remain open minded, practice tolerance, resolve conflicts peacefully, appreciate differences, and love one another to the fullest, as God has taught us to do. In the end, when our students walk out of our beautiful sacred church and down the sidewalk in that serene sun filled courtyard, we give thanks, breathe a joyful sigh of relief, knowing we helped produce young people who will go out and make a significant and positive mark on the world.