

November 17, 2017

Dear Members of the St. Michael's School Search Committee:

For the past sixteen years, I have served as founding Principal, and now as President, at Nativity Prep Academy, the only private, faith-based tuition-free school in San Diego. Nativity Prep serves hardworking students from low-income families, all of whom represent the first generation in their families to earn a college education. Our mission is to prepare students for sustained success in high school and college. We are proud that better than ninety-eight percent of our graduates have earned their high school diploma to date, and better than ninety percent have earned admission to college.

After sixteen very successful years in one wonderful school, it seems time to broaden my experience. I have decided to pursue opportunities in the world of independent, faith-based schools, preferably with a school that offers new growth and challenges, and one that also shares some of the characteristics that make Nativity Prep so special—attention to the individual student, a rigorous and balanced curriculum, a dedicated and loving faculty, and a highly committed board of trustees. As I begin this next exciting stage of my professional career, my own Board has given me its blessing and support to do so. Trustees have asked me to work with them over the course of the current academic year to find a successor who will build on the good work I have begun and move the school to its next stage of success.

As President of Nativity Prep for the past five years, I have focused principally on building a professional board of trustees, one that understands and welcomes its role in supporting the head of school, setting a clear and compelling strategic direction, and working to ensure that the organization has the resources it needs to thrive, financially and otherwise. I am especially proud of these efforts I have initiated with our board to ensure long-term sustainability and success for the school; doing so has ultimately allowed me to transition with confidence after sixteen years in a founding role. In order to engineer these changes, I relied on my ability to build strategic relationships with key trustees and benefactors, and, with their help, to secure the necessary resources and to build consensus among the full board. I have also worked to strengthen the partnerships with our local high schools, especially the more selective private-independent, charter, and Catholic secondary schools in San Diego, so that future generations of Nativity Prep students have every opportunity to earn an excellent secondary education as they continue their journey to college.

The opportunity to serve as the next head of St. Michael's is highly appealing to me. My professional experience thus far has been with K-8 schools, with a majority of those years devoted to middle school in particular. I chose education as a vocation, and working with K-8 students especially, because my own love for learning, personal growth, creativity, and sense of adventure came alive during these formative years. I am also finely attuned to K-8 because all three of my children are currently in this grade range. My wife and I made the conscious choice and financial sacrifice to invest in private-independent school now for our children because we believe wholeheartedly that an excellent education in these critical K-8 years will profoundly influence their character, sense of self, world perspective, and love

for learning for the remainder of their lives. It is very clear to me that the St. Michael's community embraces this same belief, and it is very clear that personal care for the individual student is alive and well and thriving at St. Michael's.

I am drawn to the headship position at St. Michael's by the significant resources already available within the school (facilities, funding, faculty, and programs) to meet the comprehensive needs for each and every student. I am also eager to hear about the challenges that await the next head. I feel that my experiences, here at Nativity especially, have prepared me well to meet any challenge. As one who has worked for years serving a demographic that is in many ways very different from the socioeconomic spectrum served by St. Michael's, I bring a unique perspective to the conversation about building cultural competency among students and faculty. And I have successfully initiated and led schoolwide strategic planning and led comprehensive accreditation through WASC, which I believe to be very useful in any independent school.

Equally appealing and important to me is the faith-based, Episcopal identity and spirit of the school. My wife and three children have all been baptized in the Episcopal Church, and it is within the Episcopal community here in San Diego (at Saint Paul's Episcopal Cathedral) that we as a family have found a home. My wife and I are excited by the prospect of joining a thriving and dedicated Episcopal school and community for our and our children's continued spiritual and intellectual growth, and for the contributions we can make as a family.

I anticipate that the demands of the headship at St. Michael's will require a school leader who possesses, among other essential capacities, a keen understanding of the differences and commonalities between school and parish governance, a genuine willingness to work side by side with the church leadership for the good of the students and the parish, and effective communication with both communities. Translating my experience with board governance at Nativity Prep to the St. Michael's board that works in conjunction with the church for oversight and decision-making will take patience, open mindedness, and a spirit of collaboration, all qualities that I value dearly and that I practice consistently in my role as leader of Nativity Prep.

I look forward to speaking with the members of the Search Committee at your convenience. Until then, I appreciate the time and effort you have committed to the process of finding the next great leader for St. Michael's.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brendan J. Sullivan". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Brendan J. Sullivan

Brendan J. Sullivan

Experience and Leadership Accomplishments

2002-Present Nativity Prep Academy, San Diego, CA Independent/Catholic,
Grades 6-8

President (2013-Present)

- Successor to school founder, promoted in 2013 from Principal to President
- Oversee a \$1.7M annual budget, 17 faculty and staff, 175 active alumni in high school and college, 60-70 students and families, and more than 60 volunteers
- Developed Board of Trustees by recruiting eleven (11) new trustees, establishing term limits, amending bylaws, establishing new-trustee orientation and annual Board retreat
- Initiated and supported strategic planning for Board of Trustees by hiring consultant and participating as *ex-officio* member of the Board, ultimately to position the school for long-term sustainability and success
- Cultivated \$1M gift, largest single-pledge gift in Nativity Prep history; solicited and secured matching gift of \$500K and have since solicited gift pledges totaling \$3-4M
- Worked directly with local foundation to build Board Reserve Fund to \$400K to date over the past three and a half years
- Hired new Director of Philanthropy in September 2016, resulting in 74% increase in new-donor revenue for FY 2017 (\$326K in new revenue v \$187K previous FY)

Founding Principal, Teacher (2002-2013)

- Recruited, trained, and supervised 34 teaching faculty and more than 100 volunteers
- Built enrollment over three years, from an initial class of 20 to an enrollment of 60-70
- Led school-site transition to new campus, including staff of 15 and more than 60 families
- Developed a comprehensive curriculum, including counseling and guidance services for students
- Initiated and coordinated the school's first accreditation (WASC), earning a six-year term
- Taught middle school English, history, math, Spanish, Latin, and art in the founding years
- Initiated new website and wrote all content, including new school video
- Founded school's first Parent Committee, which helps with admissions recruitment, raises \$10K annually, and serves as a mini grant-making body for teacher and student proposals
- Initiated, coordinated, and participated as a rider in the Nativity Prep Cal Coast Bike Ride, an eight-day, 630-mile cycling event with nine riders and two support staff, from San Francisco to San Diego, raising more than \$70K for the purchase of two new school vans

1999-2002 La Jolla Country Day School, La Jolla, CA Private-Independent, PreK-12

Interim Director of Middle School (2000-2001)

- Oversaw 25 faculty and more than 300 students
- With upper-school colleague, initiated the Visiting Scholars Program, which in its first year brought playwright and director Moises Kaufman to campus
- Served on the WASC accreditation team

Teacher (1999-2002)

- Taught 7th & 8th grade English; Spanish I and II

Coach and Advisor (1999-2002)

- Coached upper school j.v. soccer, middle school soccer, volleyball, and taught physical education
- Advisor for outdoor education trips to Catalina Island and Sequoia National Park

1994-1999 Saint Ignatius Loyola Academy, Baltimore, MD Jesuit/Catholic, Grades 6-8

- As Assistant Headmaster (1998-1999), assisted Head of School in all facets of daily school operation for 60-70 students and nine full-time faculty, including semester and weekly planning
- As Director of Athletics (1998-1999), planned and scheduled annual and weekly physical education curriculum and interscholastic sports schedule
- As Director of Summer Admissions (1995-1999), coordinated and scheduled four-week academic program; assisted in selecting student candidates for scholarship positions
- As Summer Semester Director (1994-1999), recruited and interviewed eight full- and part-time college-aged counselors; planned and scheduled weekly and daily curriculum and activities for forty returning students and eight counselors
- Taught English, Spanish, and ancient and world histories (1994-1999)

1992-1994 Sacred Heart Elementary School, Washington, D.C., Catholic, Grades K-8

Assistant Principal (1992-1994)

- Established and managed daily protocol for student and financial records and office personnel
- Acted as daily liaison between Principal and Hispanic community
- Instructed adult-aged international students in Level 6 ESL

Professional Accomplishments, 1988-1992

- Served two years with the International Jesuit Volunteer Corps at Georgetown University in fundraising/development and program management for volunteer teachers in Belize and Peru (1990-1992)
- Spent two years working with the Jesuits in Venezuela through the Boston College International Volunteer Program (1988-1990)
- Directed extra-curricular activities and weekend retreats for 200 students at San Javier del Valle School, Merida, Venezuela (1989-1990)
- Assisted in securing \$100K development grant for housing and electricity construction for the El Guariapo farming cooperative in Apure, Venezuela (1988-1989)

Education

University of San Diego, courses toward the Doctorate in Educational Leadership from 2012-2013

Middlebury College, Bread Loaf School of English, 2005
M.A., English

Loyola College of Maryland, 1999
M.Ed., Secondary English, Curriculum and Instruction

Boston College, 1988
B.A., English and Philosophy

Boston College High School, 1984

Family and Personal

Married since April 2000 to Alison Lan Ting Kuo; three children, Andrew (12), Renee (11), and Nate (6). The middle child of seven, all of us first-generation college educated.

Languages

Fluent in spoken and written Spanish; beginner Latin

Interests

Competing in triathlons and marathons; road cycling; cooking Sunday family dinner; linocut printmaking; digital photography; Sunday NY Times Crossword devotee; avid reader of essays and periodicals

Brendan J. Sullivan
Statement of Educational Philosophy and Practice

Empathy, Commitment, Humility

I spent my formative years as a beginning teacher at Saint Ignatius Loyola Academy, a private Jesuit school for boys from Baltimore's inner city. Our headmaster used to say, "If you can teach well *here*, you'll be able to teach anything to anyone, *anywhere*." He believed that building relationships of mutual trust and respect with the young men from Baltimore's toughest neighborhoods would be the most important work we could do. In turn, he believed, as I came to believe as well, that the capacity to do so would help prepare us for any challenge as educators, in any role, and teach us principles to last a lifetime. Among the more important values I learned in those early years as an aspiring teacher on Calvert Street, ones that continue to guide my beliefs and practice as an educator today, are empathy, commitment, and humility.

I learned that taking a genuine interest in others—wanting to know their hopes and dreams, their strengths and challenges—goes a long way in building trust and respect. This desire to know and understand others 'from the heart' applies to everyone within the school community, but it has no greater importance in practice than with the students we serve. They are the reason for all that we do as educators. Personal care, empathy, and understanding for each and every student, in and out of the classroom—for the good of their intellectual, social, physical, spiritual, and emotional development—remains every school's foundation, focus, and primary responsibility. I believe that all students are capable of serving for the genuine good of others throughout their lifetime by having learned from the heart about themselves and others within a loving school community.

I learned that progress, for the individual student and for the school as an institution, requires time, sacrifice, and commitment. Retaining and investing in excellent teachers and administrators who commit joyfully to the holistic growth of their students, who serve as models of lifelong learning through their own professional development, and who are themselves invested in the long-term vision and success of the school are essential in building a community of excellence.

I learned that self-awareness and honesty about one's own shortcomings goes a long way as well in building trust and respect with others. Rarely, if ever, do I have all the answers to the myriad challenges I face in any given day or month or year. I welcome the help and support of others—students, teachers, colleagues, parents, and trustees. I work collaboratively and rely on the collective wisdom of the school community to help shape and inform my most important decisions. There are times, however, when I must embrace my responsibility to act decisively and without broad consensus, for the good of all students and families and for the integrity of the school's mission.

May 2017