

Dear Waverly Community,

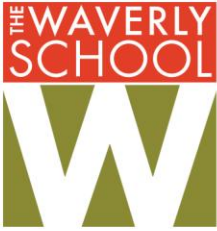
In January of this year, I came to the difficult decision that the 2020-2021 school year would be my last at Waverly. My parents, both in their mid-90's, had needed much care and support from me throughout 2019. I knew that would continue to be true for the foreseeable future, and I wanted to do all I could for them. I realized I could not do that while still giving the Waverly community everything that you deserve. When the pandemic hit, I put my decision aside for a while. At the end of July, my father passed away, leaving my mother in my care and bringing me back to the conclusion I had reached in January. After much thought, I have decided to retire from Waverly at the end of June 2021.

As I think back over my twenty-five years at the school, I am filled with gratitude. I have had the tremendous honor of working alongside students, families, and colleagues to build a school that continuously seeks to live up to its progressive mission. Together, we have faced many challenges. The path has not always been clear, but with the compassion and support of the community, we have emerged from our challenges a stronger school.

I am grateful to the students of Waverly, past and present, for all the joy they have given me and all that they have taught me. What a gift it has been to witness children learning to read, singing and dancing with confidence, overcoming learning struggles, bursting into a run at the gate of the farm, sharing their heartfelt writing, and raising their voices for social justice and in protection of the earth. My years with Waverly's students have inspired me to live in the present, to find time to play, to think deeply about my own experiences and beliefs, to be brave, and to embrace change.

I am grateful to the families of Waverly, from the earliest days to the present, for the time, effort, resources, energy, and love that they have given to the school. Our families have nurtured the school's growth, created community, and tirelessly volunteered on tasks too numerous to list. Our families have challenged me to profoundly fulfill the school's mission and provided the encouragement and support necessary to move ever closer to that goal.

I am grateful to my colleagues, past and present, who along with the students are the true heart of the school. Waverly staff members, teachers, and administrators have persevered through rough times, enthusiastically worn many hats, and embraced growth, both personal and professional. They have kept students at the center of their work, and many helped me raise my own children. I have learned from their honesty and been nourished by their generosity and grace.



I am grateful to the board of trustees for their deep commitment to the school's mission and for endlessly sharing their time, professional expertise, and resources. Under their guidance and with their generous support, Waverly has grown from a small school struggling to meet its financial commitments to a well-established institution that owns its primary campuses and has sufficient resources to weather storms. Along with the school, I have benefited deeply from the board's constancy and wisdom.

During a student interview in my first year at the school, an applicant for the not yet opened high school said that she "wanted to come to a school that would be different because she was there." That student was in our first graduating class, and the school was different – kinder, funnier, wiser – because she was with us for three years. I have told this story often because I think it captures an essential truth of our school. Every member of the community shapes Waverly. I am excited for all that the new school head will bring – new life experiences, ideas, energy, fresh eyes – and all the ways Waverly will grow ever stronger.

I will work with determination to further Waverly's mission and will remain deeply involved in all aspects of school life until June 30. I will retire with a full heart and rich memories of my Waverly life.

With love and gratitude,

Heidi Johnson