

October 26, 2018

Dear Gulf Stream Community,

Before beginning our visit to Gulf Stream School, my wife Sarah, and I took a walk down the avenue in Delray Beach and stopped at a canal-side restaurant for lunch. As we were waiting, looking out over the Intracoastal Waterway, we saw something unique to Florida. A manatee broke the surface, head first with a big breath out and in, and then a tail flip, diving back down into the clear water. The manatee's mottled brown head, back, and tail broke the surface for only a second, but we both saw it.

Sarah and I looked at each other with surprise and then curiosity, each reaching for our phones to Google manatees and the meanings associated with their appearances; hoping for something as straightforward as "good luck." We found something with a deeper context: that the manatee encourages trust and openness and thus attracts luck and prosperity.

With this in mind, we went into our visit on campus at GSS and, as perhaps the manatee foretold, we found a community imbued with trust, strong - values-based - relationships, and an educational program focused on the prosperity of each and every student.

I spent a day walking your hallways and conversing with many different groups of constituents. In each encounter, as I absorbed your culture and learned the depth of GSS's program, I felt inspired by all that is taking place on your campus. GSS's efforts at and capacity to do what is best for students emanated from every observation and interaction.

Nowhere was this more evident than on my tour with the Admissions Director. Among other discoveries, I learned that colleagues know each other well, enjoy collaborating, and members of all departments speak with equal passion about their program goals and expectations for students.

One of the many values of PK-8 schooling is that it prolongs childhood, encouraging meaningful and reflective learning aimed at educating students' minds, and their hearts. How GSS delivers on that value can be felt all around the campus; it radiated from every classroom I visited and enveloped every interaction I observed.

At the end of the day, while waiting for an Uber back to the hotel, I enjoyed a thoughtful conversation with a teacher holding two plates of warm snickerdoodles that she had just baked with some students. In my long experience in independent school education, I have only ever heard positive words about GSS. I now understand why.

A school with a "life" like GSS's is made possible by visionary and inspiring leadership. GSS's Board of Trustees has evidently stewarded the school with great care, aiming it to achieve the goals of its mission. Thank you to Mr. Joe Zaluski for his leadership and direction, throughout an outstanding tenure as Head of School. Faculty and staff have clearly shared in the school's lead-

ership, earnestly endeavoring to carry out GSS's mission, while wisely focusing on building strong relationships between and among adults and children alike.

TheodoreSizer, former Dean of Harvard's School of Education, observed, "You can't teach a student you don't know," and that a great school is more than the sum of its program. It is a community where all members share a set of values aimed at developing educated and moral graduates.

I am honored and humbled to be chosen as the next Head of Gulf Stream School. I will seek to continue to inspire the Board of Trustees, faculty, students, parents, alumni, and all stakeholders in maintaining the traditions of GSS and advancing its program to new levels of excellence, so that GSS continues to be recognized both regionally and nationally as a leader in formative education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Smith', with a stylized, flowing script.

Gray Smith, Ed.D.

Head-elect, Gulf Stream School