



January 24, 2011

Dear Students, Alumni, Parents, Faculty, Staff, Administrators, and Friends of Indian Creek,

The Board of Trustees of Indian Creek School is pleased to announce the appointment of Richard J. Branson as Head of School effective July 6, 2011.

Rick is an education leader with a strong background in teaching and administration at all grade levels, significant alignment with the culture and philosophy of Indian Creek, and a warm and engaging personality. The students, parents, faculty, staff, and administrators gave glowing feedback from Rick's interaction with them when he was here visiting on January 5 and 6.

Rick has an extensive education, having received both his bachelor's (1982) and master's (1986) degrees from the University of Oregon in Journalism. He then taught both high school and undergraduate journalism. In 1995, he moved to the Concord Academy in Petosky, Michigan and taught grades ranging from fifth grade to senior high school AP English Literature and Composition. He later became the High School Coordinator and then the Elementary School Principal before being appointed Co-Director of Concord Academy in 2001, serving with the school founder. In 2005, Rick and his wife Sarah began a journey to experience education outside the U.S. when he left Concord to teach English at the International School of Curitiba, Brazil. Two years later, in September, 2007 he was appointed to his current position, Headmaster of Hokkaido International School in Sapporo, Japan. Along with his teaching and leadership responsibilities, he has coached girls and boys soccer and directed a high school drama program. In addition, for the past several years he has been completing course work for his Ed.D. in organizational leadership. In June, 2011 he expects to complete his dissertation that examines the organizational learning capacity of schools.

As if all that isn't impressive enough, Rick and Sarah have three children, a son, David, and daughter, Megan, who are grown, married, and busy with careers in education, and a son, Daniel, who is a junior at the University of Oregon. Sarah has taught AP and IB Biology and anticipates returning to her career as a nurse midwife when they are settled in the Annapolis area. Beyond school and family, Rick is an avid runner who has completed seven marathons.

Rick's references gave him particularly high marks in some areas that are of great importance to Indian Creek. The trustees from the Hokkaido International School praised his organizational and communication skills stemming from his belief in transparency and a strong ethical framework. The Hokkaido School faculty, in anonymous feedback, described Rick as providing clear vision, inspiring teachers, and working collaboratively to achieve the vision. He has experience in campus development, having led the development of a new school building at Concord, and experience in significant strategic planning having led Hokkaido to launch a second campus which will further the school's mission and reach. Further, he developed expertise in fundraising by initiating an endowment fund and expanding the annual fund for scholarships at Hokkaido. His references consistently commented on Rick's integrity, honesty, and sense of humor.

We would also like to extend our personal thanks and the school's gratitude to the members of the Head Nominating Committee: Victoria Smith - Chair, Mark Pelavin, Jane Snider, Rick Wheeler, Amy Macdonald, Robert Wells, Martha Selonick, and Chris Mannix. They have served this school tirelessly, interviewing many candidates, following up on references, meeting as a committee and giving of their time, talent, and expertise to discern the candidate who fit our unique needs.

The Indian Creek community is a rich and vibrant community of committed students, alumni, parents, faculty, staff, administrators, and friends who join together to promote, enhance, and support the mission of the school. For thirty-seven years the school thrived under the leadership of visionary leader and founder Anne Chambers. In this transition year, the school has been incredibly well served by Lila Lohr, whose vibrant presence is felt in every corner of this school. We are deeply indebted to Lila for her steady hand during the challenges of leadership change and economic recession. At this juncture, the Board is enthusiastic about the future of the school, and we are so pleased to be able to appoint Rick Branson as Head of School, who will capture the best of who we are and lead us to an exciting future.

Sincerely,
Rick Grindrod
Chair, Board of Trustees

Victoria Smith
Chair, Head Nominating Committee



After Rick's two day visit to Indian Creek, the Head Nominating Committee collected comments from students, parents, faculty, staff, and administrators. The feedback was strong and enthusiastic.

From students: "We were really enthusiastic about him and liked him a lot." "We told him we wanted more recess and field trips." The HNC also heard that Rick was the only candidate to get the Middle School students away from their prepared questions and into a real dialogue.

From the parents: "Strong interpersonal skills. Good vision for the development of the school through these transition years." "He understands the challenges we face such as two campuses, development and competition." "He has given us the best feeling of the candidates my husband and I have seen."

From the faculty, staff, and administrators: "I just feel like he matches our school. I feel he will be a very positive leader with a great store of experience to bring to solving our challenges." "He seems comfortable in his own skin and able to relate to all kinds of people." "He seemed wise, intelligent with a passion and exuberance for education." "Capable of meeting the challenge he set forth in his statement to honor our vision and history while meeting the challenges and developing the opportunities of the future."

January 17, 2011

Dear Indian Creek Community,

It is a great honor to have been named the next head of school at Indian Creek, and it is with great enthusiasm that I now prepare to work with you to guide Indian Creek toward tomorrow. My career has been founded upon a love for learning, and I am grateful that my journey has brought me to Indian Creek.



My wife, Sarah, and I are returning from six years spent working abroad in Brazil and Japan, and we truly feel that in joining the community of Indian Creek, we are coming home. Indian Creek School is a unique jewel in independent schools. It has the strength of an established school of 40 years as well as the spark of a new and growing upper school program. Throughout its growth, Indian Creek has maintained its focus on the individual student as part of a larger school community. Through its innovative programming and commitment to diversity in all learners, Indian Creek has developed a strong sense of public purpose in a community where each member is known, respected, and engaged. This commitment and sense of purpose place Indian Creek at the forefront of independent schools across the world.



During my visit to Indian Creek, I met students on both campuses who asked engaging questions and showed excitement and interest in the direction the Creek will grow; I talked with teachers who were passionate about the school and students' learning, and parents who were dedicated to the continuous improvement of a treasured school. I watched as third grade students presented their Rome unit and demonstrated the strength of learning that comes from student-led inquiry and supported curiosity. I heard the excited buzz about the faculty-student middle school basketball game and was impressed to see the comfortable, familial relationship that exists between teachers and students and parents. All of these encounters reinforced my belief that Indian Creek has successfully created and nurtured a community where the passion for continued learning, growth, and improvement is present in all the community members. It is an honor to become part of a school that both honors its past and looks forward with a progressive vision. The jewel that is The Creek has a lustrous future.

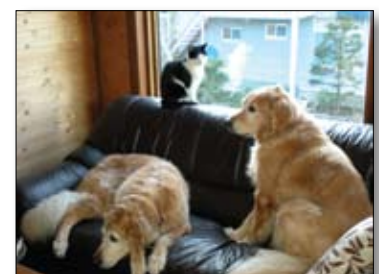


I applaud Anne Chambers and her commitment to the vision of what a great school should be. I extend my great appreciation to Lila Lohr and her expertise at guiding Indian Creek during its leadership transition. I thank Rick Grindrod, Victoria Smith, the Search Committee and the Board of Trustees for their tireless work to seek the best fit for Indian Creek.



Sarah and I are thrilled to become a part of the Creek community. Our children and their spouses are excited to make the Chesapeake their home away from home, and we thank the entire community for making us feel so welcome already.

Best regards,
Rick



From top: Rick and Sarah; Rick, Daniel and Sarah (Go Ducks); David and Jana wedding November 2010; Megan and Josh wedding April 2010; Sam & Frodo and their cat, Elsie.

MISSION STATEMENT OF INDIAN CREEK SCHOOL

It is the mission of Indian Creek School to provide an academically challenging education in a warm, supportive environment to a group of students with a wide range of talents and skills. It is the mission of the school that students should develop self worth and an appreciation of others of diverse cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. It is the mission of Indian Creek School to help each student become an independent learner with the self-confidence to take intellectual risks along the educational path.