

A Word from the Headmaster

After an intensive four-day visit to the school by five administrators from four independent schools in New England, the following major commendations were placed in the New England Association of Schools and Colleges Visiting Committee Report:

- The Committee commends The MSW for their mission orientation. The MSW lives it mission. Of special note is the school's commitment to integration of teachers as members of a team, integration of the program, and inclusion of all students.
- The Committee commends The MSW for their positive school climate. The culture of the school is collegial, respectful, and growth-oriented. The Committee was delighted to meet so many thoughtful and engaged parents, Board members, administrators, teachers and students.
- The Committee commends The MSW for their instructional practices including their ability to encourage and elicit higher order thinking.
- The Committee commends the visionary leadership of The MSW.

When asked by visiting parents, educators, colleagues and other guests why The Mountain School at Winhall is such a highly-rated academic institution that also provides such an exceptional, supportive environment for children, families, and employees, my answers are almost identical with the findings of the NEASC committee:

- Because we know our mission well and we live it every day. It is the basis for all we do for our children.
- Because community is intentional. We must communicate, create, and expect the type of environment needed to make our children feel safe while being challenged to grow.
- Because we have high expectations for every trustee, employee, and child. We must believe that each person can achieve excellence, and then we follow that belief with an expectation.
- Because where we are today is a sum total of all of our decisions of yesterday. We must strategically think and plan today for the school we want tomorrow...we will never leave our children's education to happenstance.

I am proud to serve as headmaster at such a fine –exceptional—institution of learning for children. It has been my privilege to have led MSW through the past eight years, and I am invigorated to see all of the amazing accomplishments that have been made in that time.

I would like to thank each of you that has supported our school, our Purpose, Promise, and Principles, our employees, our programs and, above all, our children. I look forward to continuing to lead The Mountain School at Winhall into the future as we continue to become the preeminent Pre-K-8 school in Vermont.

Daren M. Houck,
Headmaster