



October 18, 2016

## A MESSAGE FROM CARLY ANDREWS

To the Wonderful Baker Community,

I am delighted to be writing what will be the first of many letters as your next head of school. I'd like to thank each of you for your kind reception this September. My family and I deeply appreciated your generous welcome and introduction to the school community. After meetings with the students, faculty and staff, parents and family members, the Board of Trustees, the Search Committee, and Dan, it was clear to me that I had found a school that champions the values and beliefs that I hold dear as a progressive educator.

The principles that guide the distinctive education at Baker and the ways that they are evidenced within the community are inspiring. During my visit I was moved by the self-portraits of students and parents that line classroom walls and hallways; the two students, heads together, discussing properties of equations; the teacher, camera in hand, documenting student exploration of monarchs; the student leading a morning meeting of his peers - part ritual, part inspiration. Moments like these speak of a school that pays attention to a child's curiosity, understands students as diverse, complex individuals who have different needs, and cares about environments that support the distinct phases of a child's development.

I am thrilled to lead Baker into its second century as a school. The philosophy and practices that were integral to Baker's founding in 1918 are still observable today, and we know empirically from the last decade of neurobiological research on children and learning that progressive education practices create the most ideal learning outcomes for children. This type of dynamic education occurs when dedicated teachers engage students in hands-on learning experiences, paying close attention to a child's understanding and setting the stage for their future development. We also know that progressive practices which nurture the whole child - including attention to socio-emotional growth, as well as to diversity, equity, and inclusion - serve all children as they develop and grow, allowing them to actualize their full potential.

If we zoom out from the micro-lens of our children to the macro-lens of our community and country, we want for this type of transformative education to strengthen our very democracy and the principles and practices of equality that should undergird it. As I mentioned in the parent meetings, I am aligned with the Progressive Education Network principles, including, "education must amplify students' voice, agency, conscience, and intellect to create a more equitable, just, and sustainable world." Schools are at their best when they honor a child's curiosities and when they embrace practices that have the power to transform

individuals and communities.

On a personal note, our family dinner table conversations have shifted and are centered around the following musings: Where are the best places to sled in Evanston? Will the dog survive in three feet of snow? When are we going to buy winter boots for such excursions (for dog and child)? Can I walk to the library by myself when I am in the sixth grade? Will I be able to find my way from my class to the pool? Can we take the metro to school? In sum, we are all excited.

Though my work will officially begin July 1, I look forward to the upcoming transition and the opportunities to visit Baker, get to know you better, and work with Dan and the faculty and staff, so that we can hit the ground running (or sledding) next year. My family and I are looking forward to the start of a meaningful journey.

With great joy,  
Carly

*STAY CONNECTED*

