

Dear Watershed Community,

“What have you been called to serve?” “Why have you been called to serve?” These were questions today at our first Board of Trustees meeting of the year. We were in a session about building effective board cultures, and our facilitator, Maame Afun, was challenging us to think deeply about how we serve our school, how we serve others. It was a wonderful, inspiring workshop – one that we will draw upon as we do the work of the Board throughout the year.

The fundamental role of a Board of Trustees is to hold the school in trust for future generations. They work to ensure that the school has the vision and resources to continue to serve students and staff into the future. Sometimes we say that we are not looking at the school through the lens of the class of 2025, but rather through the lens of the classes of 2035, 2045, 2055. On our board we have parents of alumni, we have parents of current students, we have alumni, we have a retired head of school (from the Calhoun School in NYC), and one of our founders serves as trustee emeritus. This range of connections and experience gives real strength to the board and to our deliberations.

Our Trustees are all volunteers who give their time and energy freely and generously. Each has their own personal reason to serve on the board, but the common thread is a commitment to ensuring that a Watershed education is available to students in the future. That’s because they all believe in the importance of an education where students are learning not just about the world, but in the world and for the world. Where we do not seek to replicate society, but to nudge society into better shape. Where students are learning to make a difference. Learning to change the world.

I leave every Board of Trustees meeting with a deep feeling of gratitude, and a sense of awe for the wisdom and commitment of the trustees.

Zooming out, the work of our Trustees makes me think of all the other volunteers in our world, working behind the scenes to improve the lives of us all, to contribute to the common good. I think of the volunteers who serve on library boards, on town councils and committees, on nonprofit boards, on public education boards, and on parent associations (like our own Watershed Parent Association!). Their acts of service, small and large, make all of our lives richer, stronger, more connected.

One more note. Every year, as part of the seminar we run for our seniors, we talk about board service – at Watershed and beyond. We aim to plant the seed that this type of service, while often behind the scenes, is essential in our world. And we share our hope they will all, at some point, feel “called to serve” -- and follow that call wherever it leads.

Thanks for reading.

Warmly,  
Tim