

ST. MARK'S SCHOOL OF TEXAS

— 1906 —

August 31, 2018

Dear Members of the St. Mark's Community,

I hope the school year is off to a very positive start for you and your family. It has been immensely gratifying to have the boys back on campus, and I want to thank the entire St. Mark's community for the hard work that makes this time of year so rewarding.

As we head into the Labor Day Weekend, I want to share some important information with you. As you are aware, there has been considerable focus and attention nationally on the issues surrounding sexual misconduct by adults in positions of authority, including educators, religious leaders, and others. This has certainly been a serious problem faced by schools, colleges, and universities across the country, and I want to address a development relevant to our community with candor and timeliness.

Specifically, Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire issued a report last Friday detailing serious allegations against 11 of its former employees. Among those included in this report is Dr. Henry Ploegstra, a former Exeter faculty member who (according to the report) was allowed to resign from the school in 1980 for "personal reasons" even though it was a student allegation that prompted his departure. Upon his departure from Exeter, the school also agreed to provide positive recommendations to future employers with no mention of any allegations. Dr. Ploegstra went on to teach at the Trinity School in New York City before joining St. Mark's where he served on the faculty from 1984 – 2012.

In 2013, a year after Dr. Ploegstra's retirement, Exeter called to inform St. Mark's that an allegation against Dr. Ploegstra had arisen from a former Exeter student dating back to the 1960s. At that time, Exeter did not provide St. Mark's with any specific information related to this accusation, nor did anyone from Exeter indicate plans for specific actions or further investigation. When the Exeter report was released last week, it included additional information about this accusation and noted that a confidential financial settlement had been reached with the former student.

I hope this letter provides some helpful context and perspective. As always, our foremost priority is the safety and well-being of all of our students. The relationships and trust formed in our community underpin the foundation of all that we do to fulfill the School's mission. Should you ever have concerns, we urge you to contact the School directly.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,


DAVID W. DINI
Eugene McDermott Headmaster