Introduction:
Cheri current serves as principal of St. Bernadette School, a parochial K-8. In addition to parochial experience, she has also worked at two independent schools—one Catholic and one Episcopal—and has elementary and secondary experience. Cheri has been a successful educational leader. Her approach to leadership stems from reflection, collaboration and transformation. She definitely likes to work with a team to discern what an environment may need or want. She believes that it is critical to listen to all stakeholders to be effective. She does not like to be overly directive but knows that are times when one needs to do that. Her overall focus is to encourage and guide individuals to help them get better. She has had to come into situations and be the “fixer” and is seen as someone who can resolve conflict. She also works to develop the community’s vision of where a school needs to go—it is not Cheri’s vision. She simply believes that this approach allows one to be successful as an educational leader. She recognizes that for some they would very much like her to make a decision immediately after they speak with her—but her focus is more on what she can do to help the individual solve the problem. Cheri is very comfortable in the spiritual leadership role. She is actually in a very conservative diocese with a conservative pastor yet she is able to bridge her overall approach. She has been at the elementary level for some time now and is excited about the opportunity to move into the larger K-12 environment.

Candidate Overview/Comments:

• Would appreciate the opportunity to be back in the independent Catholic school environment as she sees schools such as St. Mary’s as more progressive. There is an environment that allows for more creativity.
• Truly appreciates the focus on social justice and inclusivity at St. Mary’s
• Knows how to be effective in enrollment management as she has had to deal with enrollment challenges. Knows that it is critical to show stakeholders that there is an infrastructure of stability. Also, as a leader one has to be more transparent and intentional about your fiscal management these days.
• Works hard as a leader to develop trust with teachers and parents
• Strong in fiscal management. At St. Bernadette’s tuition didn’t even cover 60% of the costs of the school (parish had to provide a large subsidy). Had to look hard at the financial structure of the school. Implemented a number of independent school strategies including an annual fund campaign, gala, development office. Also restructured the tuition program. Educated parents on what development was. Diocese also mandated elimination of the multiple student discount so she implemented a financial aid program. All of these efforts enhanced the overall fiscal picture and reduced the parish subsidy significantly.

• Augmented the leadership team so that she was not responsible for everything.

• Works well with her leadership team such that they feel supported and directed, if needed.

• Able to enhance parent involvement. Able to have parents feel appropriately engaged, that they were heard but understand that she wasn’t automatically going to do what they wanted. Clear that she would engage and that she was in charge.

• Recently invited to serve on the Strategic Planning Committee of a local independent Catholic 6-12 school. She was particularly helpful to this school in the area of enrollment management practices given her knowledge of the schools and the area. Also involved in strategic planning through the accreditation process.

• Currently works with ad advisory board but understands the critical nature of the President-Board relationship. Understands that it is important as President to know what drives each individual Board member and how to blend all of these people together to ensure an effective board. Important for the President to value Board members and help them understand the educational components.

• Looks to work with a Board that can be strategic and think outside the box.

Comments from References:
Shannon Gomez, Head, Connelly School of the Holy Child

• Shannon worked under Cheri at St. Edward’s (now The Parish School) -- Cheri mentored Shannon during Shannon’s administrative credentialing process.

• St. Edward’s is the most vibrant parish school in So CA; with about 700 kids, is at the forefront of education in the area/strongest school in the diocese of Orange.

• Cheri is a great leader who fosters leadership in others -- helped shape Shannon.

• They have stayed in touch after leaving St. Edward’s; St. Bernadette’s, where Cheri is now, is a feeder school to Shannon’s Connelly.

• Shannon invited Cheri to Connelly’s strategic planning process, as an outside principal.

• Transparent, good at bringing others on board with vision, able to bring internal and external stakeholders together.

• Very active in staff/faculty evaluation, offers constructive criticism.

• Has had to deal with different/difficult personalities of pastors who tend to come and go in parish schools; has experienced advisory boards; feels that her transition to a governing board would be a good one where she would be able to utilize, draw on the talents around the table.

• Development is a bit different at parish schools -- more events-driven; St. Edward’s had a big fundraiser, St. Bernadette’s has an annual fund drive.

• Has worked in different types of schools -- St. Edward’s more affluent; St. Bernadette’s is more middle class.
Articulate, organized, super-aware, reflective, comfortable with “pausing” before acting
Area of strength: curriculum; more progressive educator than where she is now but is able to adapt; very well-versed with educational trends, best practices
Started the IB Middle Years Program at St. Edward’s, which was the first in the area; that program is one of its niche programs--Shannon saw the groundwork that Cheri did in putting the program in place
Also led the process that got St. Edward's the National Blue Ribbon Award in 2005
Practicing Catholic--the church is very important to her
In finance, had a lot of autonomy at St. Edward's, where the school did not receive any funding from the parish; at St. B's, the pastor has more control, he owns the budget and he determines financial aid--so has worked in some different models and understands the importance to resource allocation
Has transitioned in schools before so know the process, of getting support from others, of learning the unknown
She has been looking and is definitely ready to get out of the parochial school system and into independent schools

Kelly Branaman, Assistant Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Archdiocese of Washington
Have known Cheri for about 7-8 years, when she came to the archdiocese from LA
Observing her in leadership, she has the sensibility to take stock of an environment she is inheriting; ex: at St. Bernadette's, there was discontent among the faculty and parents that she had to approach strategically, specifically discord about their previous leader
Exceptional instructional leader in the archdiocese
Came with a wealth of experience in other schools
Significant accomplishments: 1. Right-sized the advisory board: they were not aligned with school policy, by-laws by the previous leadership, so started to direct them in the right way, starting with dialogue; 2. Improved curriculum and academics: moved teachers to have more engagement, serving diverse learners and differentiating in the classroom; 3. Hiring and leading good people: holding faculty to expectations and backing it up with professional development, providing constructive feedback
Also serves on the curriculum committees for the archdiocese; is now looking at evaluation systems for faculty for the archdiocese
Working with boards, Cheri would listen, observe, take stock of the landscape, work side-by-side in prioritizing, setting benchmarks; would want to see where the board is at, where it envisions SMA to be
Fundraising: each parish school has a fundraising plan, but typically elementary schools need to do better in alumni development; Cheri has experience in doing that now; St. Bernadette’s is in a relatively affluent area so has more access to fundraising; she works with her advancement team and parent groups to cultivate relationships
Started a strategic plan at St. Bernadette’s, which was part of restructuring the advisory board, to look at the school from different perspectives and pointing them in specific directions, to be more strategic
Challenge at St. Bernadette's was in the early years of having to pick up the pieces after the disgruntlement; but her steady, methodical approach worked
• She is a woman of prayerfulness, who models her faith, shares it with faculty and families; the pastor at St. Bernadette's is not the most approachable so Cheri she has bridged the gap; families are more prone to approach her first before the pastor; has elevated her to being a spiritual leader at the school
• Very clear communicator, so once she is in the environment, she would be an excellent representative of the school
• Cheri has talked with Kelly about her desire to transition to independent schools, to be able to do some significant things in that arena; she has always had pastors over her--this would be the next step in her leadership evolution
• In going to the next level, the areas of a President's role are not unknown to Cheri, but this would be in a larger arena; she would work to harness resources/knowledge that is around and available to help her
• She is ready for SMA--would be a strong candidate for the position; she is one of the best leaders in the archdiocese; have a great deal of respect for her
Dear St. Mary’s Academy Search Committee,

It is with genuine interest and enthusiasm that I am submitting my application for the President of St. Mary’s Academy. Drawing upon my solid experience as an educator and administrator and my deep knowledge of the child development, curriculum development and all the business and financial sides of educational leadership, I believe that you will find that I will be a vision driven, collaborative, positive and dynamic resource in this role.

During my career, I focused on providing students with unique learning opportunities that challenge, engage and inspire personal and academic growth. Through my commitment to the development of the whole child, I have been an advocate for Catholic education, co-educational and single-sex education and innovative academic approaches from Pre-Kindergarten to 12th grade. I believe the Loretto school values of faith, community, justice and respect can be reflected in my gifts and talents as an educator. I am also a focused, organized, reflective and collaborative leader with significant experience in all areas of administration.

Highlights of my achievements include:

• Relevant, meaningful education (Post-Master Certificate in Administration, Summer Fellowship, Teachers College, Columbia University, Klingenstein Institute, M. A. in Psychology, B.A in Psychobiology and Catechist certification) combined with 28 years in teaching and leadership roles in independent and Catholic Schools.
• History of improving academic standards, guiding faculty in standards based instruction, curriculum mapping processes, data driven instructional practices and overseeing rigorous curriculums that served two schools that have received the National Blue Ribbon School Award.
• Served with vision-centered leadership for the needs assessment and implementation of strategic plans, enrollment management of diverse populations, capital campaigns, annual funds, master site plans and school renovations.
• Successful relationship building in changing environments with communication strategies that build community through innovation, patience, empathy, tolerance and service to others.

I have had the opportunity to serve communities in many parts of our nation, which has been a benefit to my global understanding and vision for education in the United States. I have been so fortunate to be able to give my two children the gift of independent, Catholic co-educational and single-sex education in our nation’s capital. Their education has opened their minds, encouraged the core values of the Salesians and Jesuits and given them the courage to set heroic goals. My daughter graduated from the Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School and now attends Davidson College, as an Environmental Studies major. My son will soon graduate from Georgetown Preparatory High School with wonderful opportunities in his future. I believe that my experience as a teacher and administrator in rigorous single-sex and co-educational, Catholic elementary and high schools, and also as a parent, will give me a unique opportunity to share insightful understanding of the overall expectations for the future graduates of St. Mary’s Academy. I am excited to begin a new career adventure in July of 2017.

Please review my enclosed profile for more details about my qualifications and accomplishments. It would be a pleasure to discuss the culture, challenges and priorities of St. Mary’s Academy. I have been intentional in my career path and now hope to devote my energy, experience and vision to a community with a broader range of grades that also serves young women and enables them to grow to be leaders of our future. I would welcome the chance to discuss my understanding of the charisms of the Sisters of Loretto, and my strengths, talents and accomplishments in further detail. Please accept these preliminary documents knowing that I will send the letters of reference in the coming days. I hope to hear from you to arrange an interview.

Thank you for your kind consideration,

Sincerely,

Cheri Lynn Wood
PERSONAL STATEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

It is through my personal experience as a child of public school educators, a liberal arts college education, and my profession experience as a teacher and educational leader in both independent, all-girls, and parochial schools serving pre-kindergarten and 12th grade, that I set high standards of excellence based upon the fundamental values of integrity, care for others and optimism. This responsibility requires that, as a leader, I maintain standards of exemplary professional conduct while recognizing that my actions will be viewed and appraised by the community, professional associates and students. As a school leader, I am able to serve as a role model for young men and women based upon the Loretto school values of faith, community, respect, and social justice.

I acknowledge that I serve the school and community by providing equal educational opportunities to each and every child. To that end, I utilize a transformative, collaborative, reflective approach with the entire community to effect change and improve the learning environment for the common good. I place emphasis upon a positive, safe, effective school environment, accountability and results, increased student achievement, and high expectations for each and every student within the context of social, economic and cultural differences. In addition, as a servant leader, I often place the needs of all in the community before my own with humble commitment to developing interdependent relationships with others and recognizing that each person in the community has God-given gifts and talents that can be celebrated, affirmed, and developed.

I take my role as fulfilling my obligations to students seriously and reflectively. I make the education, spiritual development and well-being of students the fundamental value of all decision making. I act with love, patience, kindness and consistency. I dedicate myself to the development of a relationship with the each student based upon trust and authenticity. I believe that a student must find their voice, and that the school must help to facilitate that discovery by empowering them to recognize challenges, and to find the confidence within themselves to rise
to any occasion. In addition, an all girls high school learning environment should support that enablement and self-assurance by giving young women the opportunity to excel in an atmosphere in which she is most comfortable. Her environment must also be one that inspires creativity, encourages energetic interaction and builds on a culture of achievement. The students should be provided the security to freely express themselves. An all-girls school allows young women to take risks and to venture outside of their comfort zones; to become believers in themselves and to demonstrate to other young women that individuality, community and academic excellence is not only possible, but probable. I believe that being given the freedom to experiment, explore, and create sister-like bonds that embody a true sense of community is a gift that reveals itself in all-girls education.

In fulfilling obligations to the parents, I perform all professional duties with honesty and integrity and always act in a trustworthy and responsible manner. I support the principle of due process and protect the civil and human rights of all individuals. I communicate in a collaborative, transparent manner by articulating the goals and vision for long range planning and develop a relationship based on the reflection upon the needs of each family’s child within the context of the entire school community and the common good. I wish to show my care for the families and the school through empathy, compassion, optimism and humility.

In fulfilling obligations to the profession of education, I do not use leadership position for personal gain and serve the needs of others within the school community first with respect and optimism. I maintain the standards and seek to improve the effectiveness of the profession through research and continuing professional development. I encourage personal responsibility and accountability. I understand the personal strengths of educators and encourage the individual growth of my colleagues. Because of my experience as a Kingenstein Fellow, I make it a mission to develop leadership within my staff in order to preserve and innovate into the future. Through that practice, I develop long lasting, collaborative and trusting relationships based upon creating a group that works together toward a common vision for a school community and education, as a whole. I firmly believe in creating a school culture where all individuals feel known and loved and value life-long learning.

Students can be “molded into leaders by engendering four unique values: self-awareness, ingenuity, love and heroic ambitions.”

- Chris Lowney
CHERI LYNN WOOD
3303 Bigelow Court, Burtonsville, MD  20866
cheri.wood@mac.com     949-338-0071

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Dedicated to vision and collaboration within a school community and among stakeholders in order to provide an irresistible learning environment that fosters character, academic achievement, intellectual curiosity, individuality and a global vision of our connectedness where each student is known and loved. Highly accomplished administrator, educator and scholar with the breadth of experience to serve in the growth and transformation of a school community.

Areas of expertise:

| Character education, school discipline and student relations | Fiscal management and long-range planning |
| Collaborative and transformative school reform | Enrollment management and marketing |
| Staff recruiting and supervision | Curriculum planning and development |

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATES

Notre Dame of Maryland University, Baltimore, MD
Post-Master’s Certificate in Administration

Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY
Klingenstein Summer Fellowship in Educational Administration

Occidental College, Los Angeles, CA
M.A. in Psychology (1989)

Occidental College, Los Angeles, CA
B.A. in Psychobiology (1985)

State of Maryland Administration I Certification
ST. BERNADETTE SCHOOL, Silver Spring, MD
Catholic - Grades K – 8 - Enrollment: 330
Principal (2007 – Present)
Selected Contributions:
• Served as an AdvancEd Visiting Team member for Catholic School office of the Archdiocese of Washington.
• Served on Strategic Planning Task Force for Connelly School of the Holy Child, MD.
• Managed a successful full term AdvancEd Accreditation, 2013.
• Managed a successful full 6-year Middle States Accreditation, 2009.
• Initiated and managed a Science Lab construction project, 2013.
• Created St. Bernadette Saint House System & Greater Love Community Service Initiative, 2012
• Implemented Teacher College Reading and Writing Curriculum and Responsive Classroom.
• Instituted Experiential learning programs to immerse students in all the Greater Washington D.C. area has to offer.
• Stabilized enrollment increasing diversity to reflect changing demographics and started first Annual Fund.
• Stabilized the school budget and fundraising programs.
• Re-organized School boards, Finance Board, and School Administrative structure and created a development office.
• Implemented wireless infrastructure, administrative software, online grading program, Accelerated Reader, Aleks math program, laptop carts, 1 to 1 computing and Smartboards in all classrooms.
• Utilized nationally normed and standards based student performance data to communicate with stakeholders and drive instructional goals.

THE PARISH SCHOOL, Dana Point, CA
Catholic – Grades K - 8 - Enrollment: 684
Principal (2002-2007) and Assistant Principal (1997 to 2002)
Selected Contributions:
• Facilitated, implemented, evaluated the entire K – 8 curriculum, coordinated successful 6-year term Western Association of Schools (WASC) and Western Catholic Education Association (WCEA) accreditation.
• Hired and supervised staff through a collaborative system of clinical supervision.
• Received National Blue Ribbon School Award, 2005.
• Communicated with community in order to reflect and promote a positive learning environment, including use of Edline, Aeries, Blackbaud, ConnectEd and SurveyMonkey.
• Developed and implemented staff motivational programs, retreats and maintained an awareness of instructional best practices, including, the Josephson Institute Manners Campaign and PYP/MYP International Baccalaureate Head of School training.

INCARNATE WORD ACADEMY, Corpus Christi, TX

ST. MARGARET’S EPISCOPAL SCHOOL, San Juan Capistrano, CA
NAIS – Grades PreK – 12 – Coed - Day
Dean of Students & Science Faculty: Chemistry, Biology (1991 - 1995)
• Served as the Dean of Students/Activities director, which included, cheerleading coach, student government moderator, coordinating all class outdoor education retreats, peer counseling & conflict resolution team and honor board.

MARYMOUNT HIGH SCHOOL, Los Angeles, CA
NAIS – Catholic – Grades 9 – 12 - Girl’s - Day
Science Faculty: Chemistry, Biology, Psychology and Dance (1987 to 1991)
• Science & Ecology club moderator
• Coordinated outdoor learning field trips

ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS
Awards and Grants

• Catholic School Educator Grant, Notre Dame of Maryland Univesity,
• Selected as member of Archdiocese of Washington First Pastor-Principal Institute for the Mid-Atlantic states, 2008
• Awarded Title VI Grant on behalf of St. Edward the Confessor Parish School in Brain-Based Learning and Layered Curriculum
• National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) Assistant Principal's Summer Academy Grant, 1998

Publications

• A Day in the Life of a Catholic Elementary/Middle School Assistant Principal, NCEA Publication 1999
• Nutrition and Behavior, Volume 3, No. 1, 1986
• Eastern Psychological Association Abstracts, 1985
REFERENCES

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