



WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA
SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

300 East Swissvale Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15218-1469
www.wpsd.org

August 14, 2015

Dear Melissa:

And to think, it all started on a whim!

In July of 1993, I decided to apply for the position of Superintendent at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf. I had visited WPSD and the City of Pittsburgh once when I worked at the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf and had a pretty positive first impression of both the school and the city. When I saw the job announcement I thought to myself, why not?? If I made it to the interview stage, I figured the whole thing would be a good learning experience for me.

Much to my surprise - and to just about everyone who knew me then - I was offered the job!!!!

Cathy, the boys and I flew to Pittsburgh and spent the weekend; we decided to accept the offer and to move from St. Augustine, Florida to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Honestly, how many folks do that? Who moves from St. Augustine, Florida to Pittsburgh?! Turned out, it was one of the best decisions we've ever made!!!

At WPSD - and eventually at The Scranton School - Cathy and I have been so blessed to meet, work with and share our passion for educating deaf and hard of hearing children with the most wonderful people!

Pittsburgh and all of Western Pennsylvania has offered us the ideal community in which to raise a young family. Don and Mike grew up to be real Pittsburghers! They graduated from local high schools, attended Pitt, met and married Western Pennsylvanian girls and are now raising our four fabulous grandkids (soon to be five!) in Western Pennsylvania. We are truly blessed!!

Way back when, our plan was to work at WPSD for about five years, gain some experience and then move on to something "bigger and better". We quickly came to realize there really is nothing better than WPSD!



THE SCRANTON SCHOOL
for Deaf & Hard of Hearing Children



So, with the support and encouragement of the incredible WPSD Board of Trustees and the amazing abilities of our staff, we made WPSD bigger, and hopefully, even better. No longer is WPSD simply a school located in Edgewood Borough. The Programs of WPSD now span the entire state with the founding of a whole new school in Scranton, a preschool in Hershey and our outreach center in Camp Hill. Our school has now grown into a large and diverse mission-driven business, serving infants, children and their parents throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

As you know, my original plan was to retire in January 2014. That would have culminated in an even 20 years of my service to WPSD. But, the Board of Trustees asked me to consider staying a little longer to finish certain projects. As good as you and the Board have been to me, I couldn't say no.

Within the past three years, through retirements, WPSD has seen almost a complete change in the composition of our upper level administrative team. We have a new Chief Fiscal Officer, Director of Human Resources, Director of WPSD, Director of The Scranton School, Director of Early Childhood Programs, Director of Institutional Advancement and Chief Operations Officer. These changes have occurred in an organized and efficient manner while WPSD continues to throttle forward at full speed. While I hated to see valued colleagues and friends retire, I am very proud of the folks we've chosen to replace them. They are all doing great work!!

After seeing all these great people retire, now it's my turn!!!

Please consider this notice of my intent to retire as CEO at WPSD, effective June 30, 2016.

I cannot express in words my appreciation of the support, guidance and trust I have received from the WPSD Board of Trustees over these past 22 years. It has been a genuine honor and true privilege to work with you on behalf of deaf and hard of hearing students across Pennsylvania.

I am excited about what the future holds for me and for WPSD as well. I leave fully confident that - under the Board of Trustee's and your leadership - WPSD is in good hands.

And Mel...always remember, and never forget...WPSD is #1!!

Warmest personal regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DR', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Donald E. Rhoten,
Executive Director