

January 24, 2024

Dear Poly Community,

It is with great enthusiasm that we announce the appointment of Dr. Noni Thomas López as Poly Prep's new Head of School, effective July 1, 2025. Dr. Thomas López will become Poly's twelfth Head of School and the first woman and person of color to lead our community. Dr. Thomas López brings thirty years of experience and leadership in independent education to Poly. She is currently in her sixth year as Head of School at the Gordon School in East Providence, Rhode Island where she fostered a community of courageous learners and compassionate leaders.

Before joining Gordon, she worked for twenty years as a teacher and administrator in independent schools throughout New York City, including time in the role of Assistant Head of School for Teaching and Learning at the Ethical Culture Fieldston School where she was responsible for overseeing curriculum instruction, faculty development, and strategic academic initiatives from Pre-K to twelfth grade. Dr. Thomas López holds an MA in Education Leadership from Columbia University, with a concentration in Private School Leadership, and an Ed.D in Educational and Organizational Leadership from the University of Pennsylvania.

A longtime New Yorker and a natural leader, Dr. Thomas López understands what it takes to elevate a school and uplift a community. She serves on multiple national, regional, and local boards, including the National Association of Independent Schools, and is the founder of the Interschool Leadership Institute for Educators of Color—a weeklong program that supports the next generation of leaders of independent schools.

“I am thrilled to begin the next chapter of my professional journey at Poly Prep—not only because I am returning to a city that has played a central role in my personal story and my family history, but because I am joining a community that shares in my belief that schools should be sites of joy, intellectual engagement, belonging, and purpose.

While my last place of residence in New York was the Boogie Down Bronx, BK holds a special place in my heart. From signing my first New York apartment lease to walking home across the Manhattan Bridge after the Twin Towers fell, my time in Brooklyn was a time of becoming, for me and the borough. Poly embodies that spirit of becoming as well, a community that, in your own words, *wants to open out to the world and be open to the world*. What an audacious, beautiful, and necessary aspiration for a school today.

Advancing Poly's commitment to diversity and academic excellence is an endeavor that I do not take lightly, and it's one that calls for the engagement of every member of the community. I am looking forward to 2025 and joining students, families, faculty, staff, trustees, and alumni in the good work of pulling forward the best of Poly's past to envision and create an extraordinary future together.”

The Board voted unanimously for Dr. Thomas López's appointment, recognizing her scholarship, passion for mentorship, and experience in the New York independent school community as true

differentiators. She also embodies our values of disciplined scholarship and self-reliance and will ensure the community continues to focus on individual students' progress while fostering a shared learning environment that values inclusion and achievement. While Dr. Thomas López continues at Gordon, we look forward to welcoming her on campus throughout 2024-2025 as she prepares for her transition to Poly.

We are extremely fortunate to benefit from the continued leadership of John Rankin. John will continue to serve as Head of School through the end of the 2024-25 school year, working with Dr. Thomas López to embark on a seamless transition. John's leadership has been instrumental in establishing the foundations for a successful search and his focus on academic and organizational priorities, historical relationship to the school, and fundamental academic experience has revitalized our community for Dr. Thomas López's arrival, and we are eternally grateful to him.

We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Thomas López to Poly and look forward to the positive impact she will have on our school and throughout our community.

Sincerely,
Andrew Foote P'27, '29
Poly Prep, Board of Trustees Chair