



January 28, 2019

Dear members of the Key community,

Since February 2018, we have been communicating with you about reports of sexual misconduct by former faculty that victimized students in the seventies, eighties and nineties. The resulting independent investigation was formally launched by Key's leadership and Board of Trustees in April 2018. We now write to share that the investigators have completed their efforts and submitted a report of their findings to the Board of Trustees. As promised at the outset of the investigation, the full report is being shared [here](#). It is also available on the investigation webpage, keyschool.org/investigation, which is accessible from the homepage of Key's website.

The investigation was conducted by Andrew Jay Graham and Jean E. Lewis of the Baltimore-based law firm Kramon & Graham. The investigators had complete discretion over the investigation, including establishing criteria for conducting interviews, having unfettered access to individuals and documents, determining how to corroborate reports of abuse, setting factual standards, and making decisions about whom to name in the report. The School fully cooperated with all requests made by the investigators.

Summary of Investigation:

Over eight months, the investigators interviewed 57 people. When people who might have pertinent information were mentioned in interviews, the investigators attempted to locate and interview them. They attempted to speak with an additional 16 people who either declined to be interviewed or could not be reached. Investigators also reviewed documentary evidence including minutes of Board meetings, files from two prior investigations, yearbooks, documents provided by interviewees, and personnel files when those could be located. The report includes descriptions of abuse and names of perpetrators (with the exception of one unnamed person who was both a victim and an abuser) when the investigators were able to obtain some independent corroboration of a witness's report.

The investigators concluded that ten adults in positions of authority at Key engaged in sexual misconduct or inappropriate relationships with students from the 1970s through the early 1990s: Eric Dennard, Richard Sohmer, Peter Perhonis, Vaughan Keith, Paul Stoneham, John Sienicki, Charles Ramos, William Schreitz, Tad Erickson, and the unnamed person mentioned above. The report also concluded that at least 16 former students were subjected to this abuse.

The investigators made clear that they received additional information from individuals that is not included in the report. According to the investigators, the fact that these incidents are not included "does not mean we concluded that an incident did not occur or that we found a witness to be non-credible." Instead, it means that the investigators could not corroborate any aspect of a single witness's report or that the complaint concerned conduct by a person before or after he or she was associated with Key. This was the standard the investigators set for including the specifics of an incident in the report.

There are no allegations of misconduct against any current member of the Key faculty, staff or administration in the report. The investigators were asked to notify the School immediately if any information gathered through their process indicated a concern regarding the safety of current students. The School received no such notification.

Reading this report is incredibly difficult. Actions, and inaction, described within are hard to process and have left us in shock and dismay. It is clear that adults at Key in the past abused, mistreated and failed to protect children entrusted to them. It is also evident that reports of misconduct from the past, made years later, were neither acknowledged nor addressed as they should have been by previous leadership at the School. What happened is inexcusable.

To Victims and Survivors:

On behalf of Key's current leadership and its Board of Trustees, we are profoundly sorry for the pain and suffering you experienced and endured. We offer heartfelt thanks to those who came forward and spoke with the investigators. We cannot know how hard that must have been for some and we, as a community, owe you our deepest appreciation for your willingness to speak candidly and recount painful experiences. You enabled the investigators to bring clarity to what occurred.

Key School's leadership of today acknowledges that the abuse and lack of appropriate timely intervention was enabled by a toxic culture of permissiveness coupled with silence, where adults with intent took advantage of their power over students. We are saddened that subsequent opportunities to acknowledge, accept responsibility for, and address the abuse and abusers were not acted upon, and that victims were marginalized. We apologize for the School's failures of the past and for the School's previous inaction. We commit to preserving and fostering a safe and healthy environment for all current and future Key School students.

To any victim or survivor who has chosen not to speak about the abuse you suffered, should you wish to do so in the future, you may contact Head of School Matthew Nespole at 443.321.7800 or mnespole@keyschool.org, the Anne Arundel County Police at 410.222.8610, or Praesidium Incorporated, a national firm specializing in the prevention of child sexual abuse and employee misconduct training, at their abuse reporting hotline 866.607.7233.

In response to the report's findings:

- The School has provided the report to the Anne Arundel County Police Department.
- The School is in the process of communicating with the leadership of schools where named perpetrators (deceased and living) had worked or may be currently working.
- The School has removed the plaque recognizing Paul Stoneham from a bench on Key's campus.
- The School commits to a recurring and systematic review of its policies and procedures regarding adult to student interaction and misconduct reporting procedures, in addition to ongoing training for all employees in partnership with Praesidium.

At Key today:

Key School today is a very different place than the environment described in the report. Our commitment to our students and families is our top priority, and we work proactively to ensure the safety and well-being of all students. Information about our safeguards is available on the investigation page of the website. Any concern brought to the School's attention, now or in the future, will be investigated immediately. As Court Mandated Reporters, all School personnel are required by law to share with Child Protective Services any report of any type of inappropriate conduct related to children.

Key School now has in place policies, procedures and practices designed to protect students. Our faculty/staff handbook sets clear expectations for employee conduct. Multiple avenues of support are available to students, including unrestricted and timely access to school counselors,

advisors and administrators. Other protections include professional development training for all employees, a student abuse reporting process, an FBI national background check, and a State of Maryland background check which includes automatic notification of any subsequent police interaction. Key has partnered with Praesidium to provide ongoing abuse prevention training for all faculty and staff. In October 2017, all employees underwent sexual misconduct training, and all new faculty and staff are required to complete that training during orientation, and did so in August 2018. Key School has retained Praesidium to provide additional training for all employees in 2019 and beyond.

Resources for Our Community:

We are committed to supporting our parents and community in talking with children about healthy relationships, appropriate and inappropriate interactions, sexual misconduct, and advocating for one's self and safety. Key's investigation webpage includes links to the following useful resources, compiled by Key's counselors:

- [RAINN](#) (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network), the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization
 - [Talking to Your Kids About Sexual Assault](#)
 - [How Can I Protect My Child From Sexual Assault](#)
 - [If You Suspect a Child is Being Harmed](#)
- [Darkness to Light](#), an organization committed to preventing child sexual abuse

Experience tells us that our students will quickly become aware of the report, and we believe it is our responsibility to help them process the information they may access. On the morning of Tuesday, January 29, meetings will be held with students in grades 6-12, where the Head of School, Division Heads, and School Counselors will make them aware of the past misconduct in developmentally appropriate ways, review relevant School policies and procedures, discuss advocating for one's self and safety, and remind them how to report inappropriate behavior if they experience or observe it. Faculty will also attend those meetings so they can support students. We hope the resources above are helpful to any parents who wish to discuss the report with their children.

The Future:

As we look toward the future, to ensuring a safe, nurturing and empowering environment for our current and future students, we know Key will be strengthened by the lessons learned from the School's past and from the stories brought forth by courageous survivors and victims. Our focus now is on determining how best to partner with survivors and victims to help support their healing and continuing to ensure the Key School of today lives up to its responsibility to both protect and educate its students.

To all Key alumni, parents, students, faculty, staff, and friends, both past and present, we reaffirm our commitment to ensure all members of our community, now and in the future, will have the healthy educational environment they deserve.

We are both here to speak with any member of our community who wishes to reach out. Blind eyes will never be turned again.

Regards,

Matthew Nespole
Head of School

Joe Janney
Board of Trustees President