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## **Settlement Music School Announces New Executive Director**

Philadelphia, PA – Following a six-month national search, Joseph W. Waz, Jr., Chairman of the School's Board of Directors, announced today that Helen Eaton will succeed Robert Capanna as Executive Director of Settlement Music School beginning August 30. Ms. Eaton is only the sixth executive director in Settlement's 102-year history.

Mr. Waz thanked members of the Search Committee, staff and faculty who have assisted during the transition, and commented, "After an extensive national search, we found in Helen Eaton a candidate who fills the bill in so many ways: a musician, a teacher, a successful arts administrator who was ready to step up to lead the largest institution of its kind, and a person who knows, understands, and loves urban neighborhoods. Helen is clearly passionate and committed, not only to arts excellence, but also to the School's mission of service. We believe she will follow successfully in the footsteps of the School's superb leaders. Equally important, we believe she will become a vital and collaborative member of the Philadelphia arts advocacy community."

Ms. Eaton, who holds degrees in Viola Performance from Julliard and a Master of Arts in Music History and Theory from the University of Chicago, is also a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, where she received a Bachelor of Arts in French. She spent her childhood in Washington, D.C., and has family ties to the Philadelphia area

Since 2007, she has been Executive Director of the Chicago Children's Choir, the largest comprehensive choral music education program in the United States serving almost 3,000 children in eight Chicago neighborhoods. She has led the organization on international performance tours.

Ms. Eaton was an instructor and later the Associate Director of Operations and Dean of Programs for five years at Merit School of Music in Chicago, a community school of the arts considered among the largest in the United States with programs and a mission similar to those at Settlement. She serves on several community boards in Chicago.

Ms. Eaton will relocate to the Philadelphia area with her husband, violinist Guillaume Combet, and their two children.

"It is an honor to serve as the next Executive Director of Settlement Music School," remarked Eaton, "Settlement's dedication to excellence and access is key to its success in nurturing talent and creativity in students of all ages, backgrounds and levels of ability. I look forward to working with the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, students and families,

and the greater Philadelphia community to build upon the School's many accomplishments and to extend its vision of preserving and promoting the arts as an absolutely essential component of our society."

Settlement Music School is the largest community school of the arts in the United States and a founding member of the National Guild for Community Arts Education. With a faculty of more than 225 professionals, Settlement provides lessons and classes in music and the related arts to 15,000 students each year, regardless of age, race, artistic ability or financial means at six branches in PA and NJ. Among its many programs is the nationally recognized, award winning Kaleidoscope Preschool, that prepares Head Start qualified children for kindergarten using an arts-integrated school-readiness curriculum. Settlement Music School awards more than \$2 million annually in scholarships and financial aid. For more information, visit [www.smsmusic.org](http://www.smsmusic.org) or call 215-320-2600.

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