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**A poem is
a tiger
hidden
in the question.**

By Rafael, 3rd grade

Dear WITS Family,

This pandemic has had a profound effect on each of us. I'm writing today to let you know that in contemplating my own future, I have decided to resign from my position as Executive Director of Writers in the Schools. I want to assure you that I leave the organization in a position of strength. In my 22 years in leadership, we have accomplished so much. Together we have:

- increased the number of students served from 2,000 to 65,000 a year
- engaged over half a million students in long-term educational experiences of power and joy
- set the bar for best literacy practices in our field -- we will be honored this fall by the Library of Congress
- created an international alliance of over 40 WITS programs across the nation, Canada, and the UK
- grown to become one of the biggest arts organizations in Houston and one of the biggest literary organizations in the nation
- created a stellar program for teachers with proven success for teachers and students alike
- continually improved our programs, most recently using a lens of equity, diversity, inclusion, and access
- built a team more reflective of our community, with nearly 50% BIPOC on staff and board
- mastered two huge pivots, for school programs and summer camps, utilizing an entirely new delivery system
- navigated the dual aims of service to students with entrepreneurial business practices to become a strong, vibrant organization

In order to help WITS start its new chapter, I will remain available to assist leadership, as needed. In the meantime, I will be writing my own "next chapter," and I look forward to finding new ways to contribute to our community. Quite literally, I plan to focus on my own writing, with books planned in both poetry and nonfiction. I am confident that WITS will go on to achieve great things in the coming years.

WITS is not one certain person or group of people; it is a framework for education in which, as explained by Paulo Freire, students lead the way, becoming more and more themselves. Writing provides a powerful way to understand ourselves better, inspire others, and make positive change in the world. WITS engages

ENGAGING CHILDREN IN POWER OF READING AND WRITING

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writers in the schools

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students in the process of creative writing better than any approach I know. All young people deserve this opportunity.

We all hold the WITS mission deep within our hearts, and I appreciate your partnership in this amazing journey. It has been an honor to do this work with you. I will always cherish the opportunity that I have had at WITS to make a true difference in the lives of thousands of children.

Yours,

Robin



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Dear WITS Community,

I write today to tell you that Robin Reagler has tendered her resignation as the Executive Director of Writers in the Schools (WITS). As I accept her resignation, it is with deep gratitude and appreciation that I pause to recognize Robin's role over the last 20 years at WITS. She has nurtured the organization into the largest and best-regarded literary arts organization in Houston, one which has become a global model for 40 similar organizations in 3 cities in the US, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Last year WITS served more than 65,000 students and 400 educators in the Greater Houston Area with an annual budget of close to \$3,000,000.

Working with Robin over the past 11 years, and especially as board president for the past year-and-a-half has been an honor and a pleasure, and I speak for the whole WITS Board of Directors to offer our profound thanks for her visionary leadership. She is leaving WITS on a high note, having built up a dynamic team and a platform for delivering effective and inspiring writing instruction during an otherwise frightening time for teachers and learners everywhere.

I have appointed a transition committee from the WITS Board and charged them to begin the search for a new executive director immediately. In the meantime, we are fortunate to have the highly-qualified Associate Director of WITS, Jack McBride, who has graciously agreed to step in as Acting Director of the organization. Jack has been with WITS in various staff positions since 2004, and we are confident that he will continue Robin's great work while we identify our next executive leader.

We are committed to keeping all WITS stakeholders and community members up to date through this transition process, and I invite you to contact me at any time with questions or concerns. Thank you for all of your past support for and involvement with Writers in the Schools Houston. We look forward to your continued support as we forge a bright future engaging young minds and hearts with the joy and power of words.

Yours truly,

Garrick Malone

Garrick Malone
WITS Board President
Email: board@witshouston.org

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