

SEVEN QUESTIONS WITH....

DR. VALAIDA WISE, HEAD OF THE NATIONAL CHILD RESEARCH CENTER



How did you first get involved with AIMS?

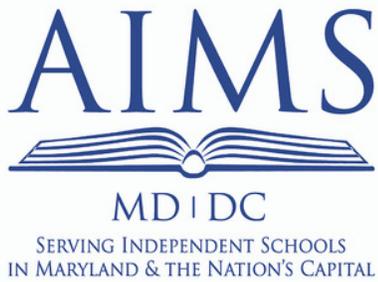
I remember the first time I first met Ron Goldblatt, then Executive Director of AIMS. I was the newly minted Head of School at a small school in Prince Georges County, Maryland. He took me out to lunch and talked about the importance of accreditation. He also wanted to make sure that I felt supported since at that time there were no other heads of color. I was sold by his knowledge and passion. He opened up a whole new world for me and I've been grateful to AIMS ever since.

What's your first memory of being a Head of School?

I was hired from within at my first Headship. I remember learning- not 24 hours after I received the news that I had been picked- that a significant number of faculty were not going to return to the school. I spent all summer hiring faculty and worrying that I wouldn't find enough people or the right people. But, it all worked out. I stayed at that school for 9 more years as head and some of my fondest memories are from that time period.

What has surprised you most about working with schools and or students?

I am still amazed every time a teacher, student or parent from the past remembers me and talks about the impact I've made on their lives. It truly is remarkable and quite humbling. I don't know many jobs where you can have that kind of experience.



SEVEN QUESTIONS WITH....

What do you find most challenging about independent education?

Trying to provide the best possible educational opportunities for our students without having tuitions that are so high it's impossible for everyday folks to attend-that is a huge challenge.

Tell us about someone who has influenced your work.

I will always owe a special debt to Elizabeth Ely, founding Head of The Field School. I like to think that I pattern my leadership style after her. She was the epitome of the "servant leader". And, while I don't have the quiet passion she had (no one has ever called me quiet) I hope I embody her spirit of service to the school community.

What might AIMS members be surprised to know about you?

I was born in Fairbanks, Alaska.

If you weren't serving as a Head of School.....

I would be a research fellow or college professor. I love the field of education and hope to add to the body of knowledge in some small way