

SEVEN QUESTIONS WITH....

DAMIAN R. JONES, HEAD OF SCHOOL, EDMUND BURKE SCHOOL



Tell us how you first got involved in with AIMS?

My involvement with AIMS began with a meeting with former Executive Director Ron Goldblatt. He graciously paid a visit to Burke within my first few months of serving as Head of School, and asked if there was anything that AIMS could do to support me in my transition to DC and into my role as a new Head of School.

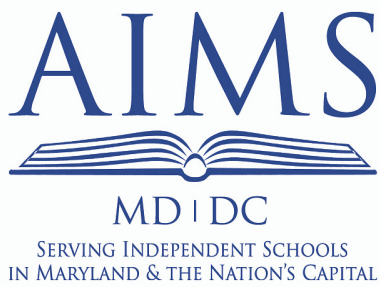
What's your first memory of being a Head of School?

Of the many things I encountered in my first months at Burke, my most memorable was our first all school assembly.

I was dazzled by the sight and sound of such a vibrant and diverse school community gathered together in one place. I watched students, faculty, and staff, who really know and enjoy one another, welcome the start of another year in a manner that fully embraced and celebrated the rich diversity of their identities, talents, interests, and ideas. It was an awe-inspiring experience that set the tone for my start at Burke.

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

I continue to be surprised by how much growth students experience in such short periods of time. That they learn and achieve so much intellectually, socially, and emotionally so quickly is astonishing. I am lucky to have a front row seat from which to watch the dynamic and complex lives of adolescents unfold, and I'm grateful that I have some hand in their learning.



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What do you find most challenging about independent education?

One of the greatest challenges to independent education is the affordability of our schools. Maintaining a socioeconomically diverse community is important to all of us. However, we are all experiencing an increasing strain on our financial assistance programs. This will only become more challenging if tuitions continue to climb as they have for the past 10 years. We have to consider new and different ways to make independent schools accessible to all qualified students.

If you could change one thing about independent schools, what would it be?

As I mentioned earlier, I would like to see independent schools become affordable for all families. Beyond that, our schools are so different and offer such a range of educational experiences, it's hard to pin down one thing to change about all of them.

Tell us about someone who has influenced your work.

The greatest influence on my work has been my wife, who has been an independent school educator for more than 20 years. Her dynamic perspectives, careful insights, and years of experience have provided me measured and informed counsel that has guided me well over the years.

If you weren't serving as a Head of School, what would you be doing instead, or what would your life be like?

I'd be teaching in high school or I'd return to my previous work running a non-profit organization that serves adolescents. And perhaps get home from work a bit earlier!