

SEVEN QUESTIONS WITH....

SUSANNE JOHNSON, HEAD OF SCHOOL, BARNESVILLE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES



Tell us how you first got involved with AIMS?

My first involvement with AIMS was in 2012 when I had the opportunity to serve on an accreditation team. It was exceptional professional development to prepare me for our reaccreditation process.

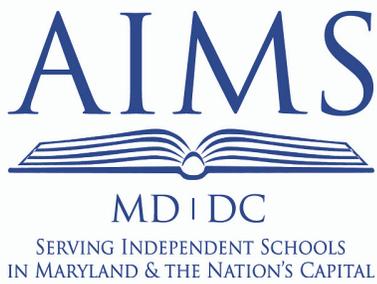
What's your first memory of being a Head of School?

Believe it or not, on my first official day as Head of School the school sustained extensive damage due to a direct lightning strike. As luck would have it, our Director of Facilities was on a two-week vacation. I am proud to say that my administrative team pulled together and we were able to still run summer camp. I quickly learned more about insurance, alarm/fire systems

and facilities management then I care to admit. Nothing quite like starting off with a bang!

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

Even though I have been in the community for seventeen years, I was surprised by how much my perspective changed when looking through the lens of a Head of School. I am fortunate that the school already had a detailed emergency action plan in place but I still am constantly cognizant of keeping safety as the top priority for our community. I often feel like an overprotective grandmother working tirelessly for each and every child.



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

Having had a child who was a “lifer” at the Barnesville School, I know personally the impact an independent school can have on the life of a student. In my role as Head of School I witness our mission of Joy, Support and Excellence changing lives on a daily basis. The one thing that I would change about independent schools is the tuition structure to be more affordable to a broader community.

What do you wish other people knew about AIMS?

We are proud to be associated and accredited by AIMS. I wish that the parents better understood how very rigorous the accreditation process is for an AIMS schools. We certainly demonstrate our value every day in the classroom but I think parents would be surprised at how extensive and thorough the peer evaluation process is through AIMS.

What might AIMS members be surprised to know about you?

My path to becoming a Head of School might surprise some AIMS members. My first career was in the “corporate world” in sales and marketing management. I joined the Barnesville School of Arts & Sciences community as a parent in 2000. I had the honor of serving on the Board of Directors for six years prior to being hired in 2009 as our Director of Admissions and Advancement. I am fortunate to have been in so many roles at the school to guide my leadership.

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

I would be founding an intergenerational non-profit connecting our youth with the elderly. Our society would greatly benefit from the lessons of our seniors not to mention the joy that children would bring to them.