

## Looking Ahead to the 2010-2011 School Year

### Joel Bicknell

In developing new skill sets in the classroom and performing on stage, in the art studio, and on the athletic fields, students can look back at the 2009-2010 school year and their achievements with pride. Whether it is in executing new curricula or creating new programs, the MS faculty also has much to be proud of in what they have accomplished this year. As the school year winds down, we are already planning for an equally successful 2010-2011 school year.

The next school year will welcome new faculty to the Middle School and new opportunities for faculty transitioning into different roles. With our beloved Ms. Janice Green retiring after 38 years as the Middle School Librarian, Mrs. Marian Dresser will be transitioning from her current sixth grade math position into the role of librarian. Mrs. Dresser will capitalize on her 30 years of educational experience including many years in curriculum development in the language arts. Her love of reading and curriculum development will serve both our students and faculty tremendously.

At the end of this school year, Mr. Fred Utter will be transitioning out of the classroom into a full-time role as Assistant Athletic Director. I am pleased that Mr. Utter's presence in the Middle School will remain strong. He will continue to coordinate MS Athletics and coach sixth grade basketball.

Another beloved faculty member, Mr. Rob Butler, will be leaving us after this school year. He has accepted a position with the Whitfield School in St. Louis, MO. Mr. Butler has made a big impact on many MS and US students' lives during his time at Holland Hall. It is hard to imagine the Middle School without him. I know you join me in wishing him well. Mr. John Marshall, current teacher of sixth grade English and history, will transition into the role of sixth grade English teacher next year.

Next year, we will welcome Mr. Tommy Sharp to the MS faculty as teacher of sixth grade history. Mr. Sharp joins us from the University School of Nashville. With a Masters of Education from Vanderbilt University and significant experience teaching sixth graders, coordinating service learning, and developing curriculum, Mr. Sharp will play a positive role on a strong sixth grade team.

With Mrs. Dresser moving to the role of MS Librarian, we will welcome Mrs. Anne Marie Moore as teacher of sixth grade math. Some of you may remember Mrs. Moore from her days in the Upper School. Since her departure, she has remained immersed in mathematics. From tutoring students to mentoring area middle school teachers, Mrs. Moore brings with her a wealth of experience and familiarity with the culture of Holland Hall. We are excited to have her on board!

Throughout this school year, Middle School faculty has engaged in reflective dialogue regarding the Middle School experience. As a result of those ongoing conversations, our advisory program will take on a new focus next year. This past week, our current seventh graders, next year's leaders of the school, discussed and decided upon a theme for the upcoming school year. That theme, the virtue of community, will be tied into all that we do ... whether it is in Forum or Chapel, but certainly in our advisories. Our grade-level teams will be developing advisory activities to include current event discussions and debates, service learning, and cross-age learning opportunities that capitalize on this theme.

I'm already excited to welcome families back in August. Before then, though, we must head off for our summer adventures. The faculty and staff of the Middle School hope you and your families have a joy-filled summer. I look forward to hearing the stories of family trips, reading, going to camps, playing outside, writing, making new friends, watching sunrises and sunsets, and getting excited to fill the hallways and classrooms of our middle school again with the sounds of laughter and learning.