



June 23, 2022

Dear Middlesex Community,

I write to you today with exciting news. Following an extensive search that distilled an initial pool of over 150 candidates down to three exceptional finalists, I am thrilled to announce that the Board of Trustees has unanimously voted Elizabeth “Bessie” Speers as Middlesex’s next Head of School beginning in July of 2023.

Bessie comes to Middlesex with over three decades of experience in independent school education, including 15 years as a Head of School. Serving in her current role as Head of the Tower Hill School in Delaware, Bessie has distinguished herself as a visionary leader whose steadfast commitment to intellectual, ethical, and inclusive education has cemented Tower Hill as a nationally renowned K-12 program. Before joining Tower Hill in 2015, Bessie had served eight years as Head of School at The Ethel Walker School in Connecticut, where she oversaw the rejuvenation of the campus through several transformational building projects and the development and implementation of a 10-year financial plan that materially improved the school’s financial strength. Throughout her career Bessie has been a fierce advocate for students, faculty, and staff as she has sought to deliver an exceptional educational and professional experience for all concerned.



Bessie’s experience in leading both internal and external facing school functions and departments is broad and deep, as is the warmth and energy she has brought to each position. Her former roles include Assistant Head of School, Dean of Faculty, English teacher and coach at Episcopal Academy outside Philadelphia; Director of Placement and Strategic Planning at Calvert School in Baltimore; Director of Admission and Financial Aid, teacher and coach at The Bryn Mawr School in Baltimore; and Associate Director of Admission, coach and advisor at The Loomis Chaffee School in Connecticut. A graduate of Middlebury College, where she now sits on the Board of Trustees, Bessie also holds a Master of Liberal Arts degree from Johns Hopkins University.

As the Search Committee and other Middlesex stakeholders got to know Bessie this spring, we were struck not only by the depth of her leadership experience, but also by the depth of her understanding of the qualities, challenges, and opportunities that are unique to Middlesex. Her educational philosophy overlaps precisely with the values our community has identified as priorities for Middlesex: a dedication to fostering a close-knit community, the belief in the power of engagement across academics, athletics, and the arts, and an unwavering commitment to creating a more equitable and inclusive place for our students, faculty, staff, families, and alumni. As a brief introduction to Middlesex, Bessie writes:

“Middlesex stands for so much in the world of education. The school has a storied history and yet is not content to rest on its laurels. This powerful combination of pride and humility has never been more

important in our world. At a time when the values of our communities are being challenged, learning and life on the Circle at Middlesex, and actually beyond the Circle, are ever more important to the next generation. I am honored to be called as the school's next Head of School and look forward to contributing to the ongoing development of the Middlesex story. Karlyn McNall is an exceptional leader and I look forward to partnering with her and all of Middlesex's talented faculty and staff to ensure a bold and bright future for this wonderful school—together we will indeed continue to find the promise in our students and one another. The Speers family looks forward to life on campus, especially our dog Nola who already has a red collar! Tom and I are excited to join the Middlesex family, and our children Nellie and Guthrie will enjoy exploring a new campus when they come for family holidays.”

As Bessie completes her tenure at Tower Hill during the 2022-23 school year, there will be several opportunities for her to come to Middlesex and meet the community. She has already met with Interim Head of School Karlyn McNall, who remarks that “Bessie has had great experience and success leading two high quality schools. This experience will be incredibly valuable for Middlesex in the years ahead.”

The School will be forming a Transition Committee to facilitate a smooth change in leadership over the coming year, and you can expect updates on that process as the year progresses. As we move into this next phase of the leadership transition, I'd like to offer my heartfelt gratitude to the Search Committee for their spirited commitment and diligence throughout the process: John Bishop P'24, Johanna Boynton P'20'23, Mary Canniff P'12'15'18, Joy Connolly '87, Alexander Fernandez, Sarah Leary '88, Patricia Melton '77, Stanoy Tassev '95 P'21'24, and Robert Trumbull '00.

As we prepare for the 2022-2023 academic year, Middlesex is extremely fortunate to be under the superb leadership of Karlyn McNall. There is much to look forward to on campus, and I'm sure you will join me in extending our warmest welcome to Bessie, her husband, Tom Speers (a Middlesex alumnus from the class of 1976), and their two children, Nellie and Guthrie.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jason Robart '83 P'11'13
President, Board of Trustees