

Letter from the Incoming Head of School: Jennifer Mitchell



Dear VCS Community,

I enthusiastically welcome the opportunity to join Village Community School as the next Head of School, and I am honored to have been selected to do so.

When I learned about the position, I was first drawn to the School's mission, its balanced approach to learning in traditional and innovative settings, its commitment to diversity and inclusion, and its hopeful yield of developing "self-motivated students who value the challenging and rewarding process of learning as an integral part of life." That resonated with me.

As a believer in the value of a K-8 education, I have long admired VCS from afar. Kindergarten and the eight years that follow are formative ones during which children become learners, friends and citizens of the community. I believe the best kind of learning environment is the kind that seeks to preserve all of the wonderment of childhood, including the freedom of asking 'why' and developing a child's imagination and voice, and giving each child the freedom and skills to take academic, social and emotional risks. It was clear to me on my visits to VCS that its staff are true specialists who excel in cultivating those skills, thoughtfully guiding students to take those chances and risks untethered by self-consciousness.

While visiting classrooms, I was pleased to observe engaged learning across grades and subjects. I overheard discussions, laughter, hypotheses and questions that are familiar backdrops in a vigorous and joyous school. I was heartened by the students welcoming smiles and hellos, and equally so by the staff. The students' essays, art and poetry that adorned the walls and shelves were evidence that the children truly are at the center of the school.

It's no surprise that the physical setting in which students learn is incredibly impactful to their journey. I was energized by seeing the physical layout of VCS and how the students learn and interact in its different spaces. The original building, the 2003 addition and the new addition that is currently under construction anchor the School's upcoming 50-year history. Moreover, they represent the many possibilities of the future.

I am eager to get to know each and every one of your children, and to help guide them on their journeys to be intelligent and empathic leaders. VCS is – and will continue to be – an environment primed for students to become the best of who they are.

I am deeply grateful to the members of the Search Committee, the Advisory Committee, the Board of Trustees and the many members of the VCS Community – staff, parents, alumni and students themselves - who warmly and graciously welcomed me throughout this process. In meeting with these groups and in hearing so many diverse perspectives, two consistent themes emerged: VCS is cherished, and VCS transforms lives. I look forward to getting to know all of the VCS constituencies - past, present and future!

Sincerely,

Jen