

December 1, 2023

Dear Seven Hills Families:

It is my great pleasure to announce that Rick Tate has accepted a position as our next Head of Upper School. Rick, his wife Kim, and their children Joey (25), Juliana (23), and Lauralyn (10) are thrilled to be joining the Seven Hills community this summer.

Rick has had a remarkable 27-year career as an educator. He comes to us from Hawken School in Gates Mills, Ohio, one of the strongest independent schools in the Midwest, where he currently serves as Assistant Director of the Upper School for Teaching and Learning. Rick has spent 14 years at Hawken, first as a Spanish teacher and chair of the Modern and Classical Languages Department. He also directed the concert band for four years prior to moving into his current role.

In his current capacity, he has been instrumental in guiding the continuing evolution of Hawken's innovative academic program in an Upper School division that serves 530 students with nearly 80 faculty and staff. Rick's particular focus has been advancing global education and real world, experiential learning. As the Global Studies Coordinator, he has designed and overseen a robust program of exploratory travel, involving four-to-six domestic and international student trips each year, and has personally led several study-abroad courses in Spain, Mexico, Costa Rica, Chile, Nicaragua, and Cuba. In addition, he has played an integral role in coordinating Hawken's signature Intensives program, a series of robust interdisciplinary courses that immerse students in experiential learning throughout the Cleveland community and beyond. He's also overseen the Junior and Senior capstone program in which students co-design individual learning experiences with the assistance of outside mentors. Finally, Rick has orchestrated hiring, onboarding, and professional training for the entire Upper School division.

Trained as both a linguist and a musician, Rick holds a B.A. and M.A. in Spanish Teaching as well as a B.Mus. in Music Composition from Brigham Young University. He began his career developing courses and providing instruction for adult Spanish learners, before moving on to teach Spanish at a junior high school in Utah and at an independent school in Missouri. In addition, throughout his distinguished career in education, Rick has continued to work periodically as a professional musician, playing the trumpet in musical theater productions, jazz bands, and even on cruise ships!

As impressive as it is, this list of professional accomplishments doesn't really do justice to who Rick is as an educator or as a person. Those who met him during the interview process describe him as warm, insightful, student-centered, and approachable. He has great communication skills and a light, easy manner with students. His references attest to the profound impact he has had on all the schools with which he has been associated, including his skill in hiring and mentoring teachers and in guiding thoughtful curriculum renewal and enhancement. Most striking to me was

a remark made by his current Head of School, who described him as “one of the finest people I have ever worked with, one who will throw himself into your community ...with everything he has, while leading with empathy.” Rick describes himself as having found, here at Seven Hills, a place that feels like home, and he and his family are eager to join us next year.

Our search for a new Head of Upper School has been a long and thorough process. Assisted by our search consultant, we began with more than 30 applications, reviewed the credentials of the 15 strongest candidates, met eight by Zoom, and invited four very able school leaders to Cincinnati for full-day campus visits. I would be remiss if I didn't express my gratitude to the Search Advisory Committee, ably co-chaired by Susan Marrs, Assistant Head of School, and Eric O'Connor, chair of the history department, and made up of Nancy Clark, Director of Admissions for Grades 6-12, and several Upper School teachers, Teresa Bardon, Brian Berning, Karen Glum, Tricia Hoar, Tina Kuhlman, Laura Leonard, Kathryn Rosenberg, Marcus Twyford, and Amaris White, for their tireless efforts.

We are also grateful for the valuable input we received from the Parent Advisory Committee, including many of the leaders of the Parent Community Board.

In the meantime, with some six months left in the school year, the Upper School remains in the capable hands of Head of School-Elect Matt Bolton. As he transitions to his new role as Head of School, I want to thank Matt for all the energy, passion, and creativity he has brought to the Upper School over the last 10 years. In the months ahead, I know you will all join me, both in thanking Matt for his service to the Upper School and in welcoming Rick to our community. They will make a very formidable team!

Sincerely,



Christopher P. Garten,
Head of School