

**Feb. 18, 2025**

Dear Lower School Families,

As we look ahead to unifying our two Lower Schools, one important decision involves our leadership and organizational structure. I'd like to share with you today the plan for these related topics and what this will look like during each of the next three years.

Seven Hills has long consisted of four divisions (Doherty, Lotspeich, Middle, and Upper), each led by a division head. This allows our teachers and administrators to develop a common culture and to cultivate practices that are most suitable for a particular age range and developmental stage. Furthermore, this divisional structure creates smaller communities within our larger school.

**A New Organizational Structure Starting in 2026-27**

As we unify the programs, we will continue to have four divisions, but they will be restructured in the following way:

- In school year 2026-27, a year and a half from now, the **Taft Early Childhood Center on the Hillsdale Campus will become its own division. Tracy Murch, current Head of Doherty, will become Head of ECC. Nichole O'Rourke, current director of the ECC, will become Assistant Head of ECC.** As you know, 2026-27 is the year that all of our pre-kindergarten students and teachers will unify on the Hillsdale Campus in the expanded Taft ECC.
- That same year, the Lotspeich and Doherty **first through fifth graders will unify on the Doherty Campus as their own division, with Susan Miller, current Head of Lotspeich, as Head of Lower School and Danielle Necessary, currently Assistant Head of Lotspeich, as Assistant Head of Lower School.**
- As a reminder, we will continue to offer **kindergarten on both campuses next year (2025-26) and in 2026-27.** Once we are fully unified on the Hillsdale Campus in 2027-28, kindergarten will become part of the Lower School.
- To provide continuity on the Doherty Campus, our incoming **Assistant Head of School Laura Leonard will be primarily based at Doherty in both 2025-26 and 2026-27.**
- We anticipate appointing an **additional administrator** to the Lower School (K-5) leadership team beginning in 2026-27.

**Learning about the Other Campus and Community**

To learn more about the other campus and community, **Tracy will be regularly visiting the Taft ECC next year, while Susan and Danielle will be regularly visiting Doherty.** In 2026-2027, they will continue to spend time on each of the two campuses to ensure a smooth transition.

Here is a chart showing the organizational structure and leadership on each campus over the next three years:

	2025-26*	2026-27*	2027-28 & Beyond
<b>Hillsdale Campus</b>	<b>LOTSPEICH LOWER SCHOOL (PreK-5)</b> Susan Miller Head of Lotspeich Lower School Danielle Necessary Assistant Head of Lotspeich Lower School Nichole O'Rourke ECC Director	<b>TAFT EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER (PreK)</b> Tracy Murch Head of ECC Nichole O'Rourke Assistant Head of ECC	<b>TAFT EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER (PreK)</b> Tracy Murch Head of ECC Nichole O'Rourke Assistant Head of ECC  <b>LOWER SCHOOL (K-5)</b> Susan Miller Head of Lower School Danielle Necessary Assistant Head of Lower School Additional Administrator TBA
<b>Doherty Campus</b>	<b>DOHERTY LOWER SCHOOL (PreK-5)</b> Tracy Murch Head of Doherty Lower School	<b>LOWER SCHOOL (K-5)</b> Susan Miller Head of Lower School Danielle Necessary Assistant Head of Lower School Additional Administrator TBA Laura Leonard Assistant Head of School	

\*During the 2025-26 and 2026-27 school years, all Lower School administrators will regularly travel between both campuses.

**Advantages to this Plan**

This plan meets several priorities at once. Specifically, the plan...

- Distinguishes between the needs and developmental stages of pre-kindergarteners and K-5 students.
- Empowers teachers and administrators to specialize by division and by developmental stage.
- Places a division head in each school building and adds an administrator to each team, thus providing for a better administrator / teacher / student ratio.
- Creates two appropriately-sized "communities within the community."
- "Follows the students" as they unify in 2026, putting a long-term organizational structure and leadership team into place before our new Lower School building is completed the following year.

**Meet the Leadership Teams**

Realizing that not everyone knows the leadership teams from the other campus, I thought this would be a good time to (re)introduce our administrators.



**Tracy Murch**

Tracy joined Seven Hills as the Head of Doherty in 2018. She has a B.A. in education from St. Michael's College, a master's in special education from Notre Dame College, and a master's in educational leadership from Plymouth University. Before coming to Seven Hills, Tracy served as a head at TASIS England and the GEMS Dubai American Academy in the United Arab Emirates. Tracy plans to continue our student-centered approach as the Head of Early Childhood Center.

*"The kids are truly at the center of all things education. We have to make decisions that focus on them and work to make new transitions happen smoothly and positively for the students." - Tracy Murch*

**Nichole O'Rourke**

Nichole began at Seven Hills as a Lotspeich pre-kindergarten for 2-year-olds teacher in 2022 and was made Director of the Lotspeich Early Childhood Center in 2024. Nichole has a B.A. in early childhood education and teaching from the University of Cincinnati and Lourdes University and has more than 14 years of experience in early childhood education teaching in preschool and kindergarten classrooms and directing learning centers. Nichole is excited to build strong collaborative relationships with colleagues from both campuses.



*"I know we will create a cohesive unit that contributes to hands-on, nurturing, and engaging classrooms that promote children's social-emotional, and cognitive development." - Nichole O'Rourke*



**Susan Miller**

Susan began as Head of Lotspeich at the start of the 2021-22 school year. She has a B.A. in education and child study from Smith College and a master's in educational leadership from Miami University. Before coming to Seven Hills as the Head of Lotspeich, Susan was the Head of Lower School at Tower Hill School in Wilmington, DE, and has previously worked as a principal, assistant principal, and middle school librarian. Susan has deep Cincinnati roots and ties to independent schools, as both an alumna of Cincinnati Country Day School and a former principal of Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy. Since her start as a Lower School Head, Susan has always believed it is teachers who make a school great.

*"For people who go into teaching, it isn't a job, it's a calling. You see it clearly in the teachers here. The heart of a school is its people, and I'm happy to lead ours into this next chapter." - Susan Miller*

**Danielle Necessary**

Danielle has been at Seven Hills since 2007, serving as a second grade teacher at Lotspeich before being named Assistant Head of Lotspeich in 2023. Danielle has a B.A. in speech communication from Northern Kentucky University and a master's degree in early childhood education from Xavier University. Danielle hopes to guide students as the new Assistant Head of Lower School.



*"I love that I can take advantage of those 'teachable moments' and instruct students on those essential skills in a variety of ways from year to year, based on the chemistry of the class, their strengths and interests." - Danielle Necessary*

**Looking Ahead to the Next 18 Months**

It's been a great pleasure working with Tracy, Susan, Danielle, and Nichole over the years, and I'm excited to see all that they will accomplish in their new roles and divisions.

Announcing this organizational plan and the leadership teams now gives us the next 18 months to deliberately and thoughtfully organize ourselves along these new divisional lines. As always, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or to anyone on the team should you have questions or comments about this new organizational structure or any other topics.

Best,  
Matt

Matthew Bolton, Ph.D.  
Head of School



**The Seven Hills School**

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