

Dear Watershed Community,

Greetings from Washington, D.C.! I am at the Annual Conference of the National Network of Schools in Partnership where I am honored to be presenting the Friday Keynote in collaboration with [Sara Mierke](#), Founder of Anchor Schools and [Ross Peters](#), Managing Partner of EXPLO Elevate. Our presentation is *Expanding our Purpose: Leveraging independent school resources for the common good*. I am excited that Watershed is helping lead the conversation about how independent schools can move beyond being pipelines of privilege to become essential organizations in the fabric of our communities – helping students learn and grow toward lives of purpose, contribution, and joy.

But on the real news!

As you likely remember, In September Hannah Nelson was appointed Head of School at the Midland School (beginning July 1, 2024). We will sorely miss Hannah's energy and her devotion to Watershed. You can read more about her time at Watershed and her transition [here](#).

We are thrilled to have hired Bridget Collins to serve as Upper School Division Head beginning in July. Bridget will lead the high school, while Jeff Steele will continue to lead the middle school. Bridget currently serves McDonogh School in Maryland as Director of Character and Service and as Director of [Greatest Good McDonogh](#). In that role, she helps students engage in work that matters – work that has a positive impact beyond the walls of the school. Bridget holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in history and education from Bucknell University and a Master of Arts degree in history from the University of Kentucky. She has also served as a high school history teacher for over 20 years and led programs with students across the world, including in Portugal, Peru, New Orleans, and here in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado.

From Bridget's personal statement:

On my desk, there is a placard that announces my title as "Director of Joy." My colleague gifted it to me years ago after overhearing an upper school student leading an admissions tour. The student was standing outside my office with a group of prospective families and was trying to describe my position at McDonogh. He said, "Ms. Collins creates and leads all of our traditions, whether silly or serious. She leads the spirit parade but is also there for us when sad things happen. She encourages us to serve others and be good people. She's basically the Director of Joy." Of all the titles I have had as a professional, this one, bestowed on me by a student, is my most cherished. As an administrator and teacher, I want to help build and be a part of a joyful learning community. Independent schools have a unique opportunity to center joy in their missions by teaching young people the joy that comes from doing purposeful and rigorous work while experiencing high levels of care and support.

.....

Research shows that engaging in work that improves the lives of others and thinking about others leads to a healthy, joy-filled life and promotes positive mental health. Independent schools enjoy the freedom to develop innovative programs and teaching approaches. I am fortunate to have been empowered to envision and build a new program as the Director of Greatest Good McDonogh, our school's signature

social impact initiative. I create curricula and develop initiatives that foster strong relationships with community partners and encourage students to find their purpose, grow their empathy, and realize their power and potential to do the greatest good in the world.

As Watershed continues to be a leader in progressive education, we are fortunate to be a destination for exceptional educators. We are thrilled that Bridget is joining us, bringing her experience, her wisdom, and her joy for education to Watershed!

Thanks for reading.

Warmly,

Tim