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# LANCASTER COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

STEVEN D. LISK, HEAD OF SCHOOL

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August 25, 2021

Dear LCDS Families,

Last year began a new tradition of sending you all our back to school forms and information digitally. Though this was partly due to pandemic necessity, the success of that “mailing” inspired us to once again kick the year’s communications off in this format. The quieter nature of this summer means you have heard from me less often than last year, so please review all the information presented here so that your child may get off to a smooth start. You will see icons below directing you to information and forms. Note that health forms should be completed prior to September 1 and, as I stated in my email a few weeks ago, mask wearing is mandatory in our building for now.

Like all of you, as we handed diplomas to the Class of 2021 in Gardner Theatre three months ago, I hoped for a summer of normal events and a return to school without too many vestiges of the Covid pandemic. Clearly, conditions around us have changed since then. We are continuing with masking and other basic precautions within our building as we open this school year, and we remain prepared to meet the challenges the coming school year might bring. On our side is the fact that our students, parents, and faculty are now well-practiced in responding nimbly to keep our school a safe place.

Please note that we have made updates to our [Health and Safety Plan](#) posted on our website. I continue to believe this plan ensures the safety and quality of your child’s education. As we start our 114th year, that commitment remains an assuring constant.

Additionally, we will continue to address the overall safety needs of our students by continuing with our standard safety drills, done again this year with Covid protocols in mind. For more information about the drills and instructions for signing up for Connect5, our automated emergency notification system, please see [this letter](#) from Assistant Head of School Todd Trout.

## Opening Of School

The first weeks of every new school year are filled with events to welcome new families and introduce them to the Country Day community. The [school’s online calendar](#) lists all events and is updated as needed, but here are some particularly significant events from the first few weeks:

- Wednesday, 9/1: First Day Of School including our 9:20 a.m. opening procession
- Friday, 9/3: All-School Picnic

[Sign up](#) to volunteer at the picnic!

- Thursday, 9/9, 6:30 p.m. Lower School Parents' Night
- Tuesday, 9/14, 6:30 p.m. Middle School Parents' Night
- Tuesday, 9/14, 6 p.m. Senior Parent Meeting

- Tuesday, 9/14, 6:30 p.m. Upper School Parents' Night
- Monday, 9/20: Picture Day

## **2021 New Hires**

Hiring outstanding people to teach and to anchor our various departmental offices is central to our positive growth and evolution as a school. This year we believe we have an exceptional group of new hires to introduce to you. We are also happy to single out a few familiar faces who are returning or taking on new roles within our school. Individually, they are impressive; collectively, they bring welcomed depth and reach to our community. Please join me in welcoming them.

### **Laura Athey - Varsity Girls Tennis Coach**

A native of Lancaster, Laura is a graduate of JP McCaskey and Brown University where she played in the women's tennis program. Laura also received an Associates Degree in Culinary Arts from the Culinary Institute of America and a Master's Degree in Elementary Education from Duquesne University. In addition to successfully raising two sons, Laura has experience teaching in the Ephrata Area School District and coaching tennis at JPM (Interim Head) and Hempfield (Assistant) and is currently involved with Girls on the Run of Lancaster.

### **Heidi Caputo - Kindergarten Assistant**

Heidi K. Caputo, whose name may be familiar to you as the daughter of our school nurse, spent the last year as a virtual teacher for grade school students at a learning center. Heidi has an Associate's Degree from HACC in the Arts. She also worked in the LCDS Lower School ASP program and as a Rehabilitation Specialist for young adults in human services.

### **Ali Charles '13 - Preschool Assistant**

Ali graduated from LCDS in 2013 and went on to earn a Bachelor of Science degree from Penn State University (University Park) in Childhood and Early Adolescent Education. In 2016-17 Ali was a student teacher at the Kindergarten level at the Clearfield Area School District. In 2017-18 Ali served as a Reading Assistant at Martin Meylin Middle School in the Lampeter-Strasburg School District. In 2018, Ali was a long-term substitute for LCDS 3rd grade teacher Melissa Stein, and in 2020-21 she served as a substitute for LCDS Kindergarten teacher Alexis Rineer.

### **Rita Foster - Upper School Counselor**

Rita will be joining the Upper School in the role of School Counselor. Although a familiar face to the LCDS community, having spent many years in the role of IU 13 Lower and Middle School Counselor, Rita has become a direct employee of our school. Rita began her career in the counseling field after completing her Undergraduate Degree in Social Work at Millersville University. In addition, Rita completed her Master's Degree in Education and became certified in the state of Pennsylvania as a School Counselor. Rita has worked in both public and private school settings for over twenty five years supporting students in a variety of ways to remove barriers and enable them to be the best version of themselves and achieve to their greatest potential.

### **Kellen Gault - 5th grade Teacher**

Kellen brings over 15 years of teaching experience with her to the LCDS community. She received her Master's degree in teaching from Marywood University where she graduated magna cum laude. Kellen was a daVinci Scholarship recipient and strives to embody the values of this honor in all aspects of her life: achievement, service to the community, leadership, and commitment to diversity education. Kellen also joins LCDS as a parent of an incoming 5th grader.

**Kim Gladys - Lower School Learning Specialist**

Kim returns to LCDS with over 10 years of experience working as a Reading Specialist. She began her career as a classroom teacher for students with learning differences and has since worked with students from preschool through high school in a variety of capacities. Kim initially went to college for fine arts and then architecture before discovering her passion for education. She earned an undergraduate degree in elementary education from Millersville University and a Master's with a reading specialist certification from Cabrini College.

Kim re-joins the LCDS community as both a teacher and parent of an incoming preschooler and a kindergartner.

**Heather Groff - IU-13 Employee, K-8 School Counselor**

Heather is transitioning from a part-time role at LCDS to full-time, serving students in grades K-8. Heather graduated from Millersville University in 2001 with a M.ed. in School Counseling. She began her career at South Middleton School District working in a building of all fourth and fifth graders and began working for the IU 13 in 2004.

**Tracy Habacivch - IU13 Employee, Part-Time Middle School Counselor**

Tracy received her undergraduate degree from Penn State University and her counseling degree from Villanova University. Tracy began her school counseling career at a public school in Lancaster and spent 12 years there as a middle school counselor. She joined the IU in 2005 and began serving private schools at all levels.

**Emily Herbert - Assistant Director of College Counseling**

Emily has worked in education for the past 11 years, both in college admissions and school counseling. She was most recently in the Office of Admission at Franklin & Marshall College. During this time she held a number of roles, including managing the visit program and tour guides, overseeing transfer admission, and developing community partnerships. She also worked in college admissions at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where she oversaw admission to the Honors College and specialized schools within the University. In the secondary school setting Emily worked as a school counselor at two high schools, meeting college, academic and social needs. Emily earned her Bachelor's degree from Franklin & Marshall College, and her Masters and Education Specialist degrees from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

**Susan Hibshman - 2nd Grade**

Susan returns to her hometown of Lancaster to teach second grade at LCDS. Susan attended Furman University in Greenville, SC where she completed her Bachelor's Degree in 2018. She majored in elementary education and minored in linguistics and TESOL. She continued onto graduate school at Furman where she completed her Literacy Master's Degree in 2020. She spent two years teaching second grade at a project-based learning school in Greenville, and one year teaching third grade in Cary, NC. She is passionate about implementing elements of PBL and hands-on learning into her teaching.

**Carrie Martens - Preschool Teacher**

Carrie is transitioning from 5th grade to preschool. Originally from the small town of Harford in northeast Pennsylvania, Carrie attended Indiana Wesleyan University where she earned a BS in Elementary Education. After graduating, she moved to Tianjin, China where she lived and worked for eight years, teaching various elementary grades (including PS) at Tianjin International School. Carrie also has a MA in Ministry from Capital Seminary with a concentration in Formational Children and Family Ministry.

### **Eden Parks - Director of Library Services**

Eden Parks comes to LCDS from Towson University, where she has served as Student Success Librarian, teaching information literacy to freshmen and planning events for the Albert S. Cook Library. Eden has a Bachelor of Arts in English with a minor in Medieval and Renaissance Studies from James Madison University ('11), and her Master's in Library Science from the University of Maryland ('13), with a focus on children's services.

### **Devonne Pinkard - Girls Varsity Basketball Coach**

A native of Lancaster, Devonne graduated from JP McCaskey in 2013 and the University of Delaware in 2017 where he majored in Sociology and was a member of the Blue Hens men's basketball team. After playing professionally in Mexico for one year (2017-18), Devonne returned home to Lancaster, and has served in multiple capacities in public education as a substitute teacher, counselor and assistant coach with the JPM boys' basketball program. In addition, Coach Pinkard is currently working towards a master's degree in Higher Education Leadership and Administration.

### **Brian Sheehan - Middle and Upper School Theater Faculty & Director**

Brian started with us in April 2021. He has been an educator of Drama and English since 1999. He has taught both MS and US in a variety of settings. Brian has an M. Ed in Secondary Education from Loyola Marymount University and a BA in both English and Drama from the Franciscan University of Steubenville. Brian has studied drama at HB Studios (NYC) and Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (London).

Brian's background in education is enhanced by his professional work as both an actor and director. Brian is a proud member of Screen Actors Guild, American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, Actors Equity Association, European League of Middle-Level Educators, National Association of Independent Schools, and European Council of International Schools.

### **Amanda Sherretta - LS Science and Technology**

Mandi comes to LCDS from Penn State University, where she completed her Bachelor's degree in Elementary and Early Childhood Education. Last year, Mandi took on her student teaching and practicum assignment with a 2nd grade classroom at Benner Elementary School, in the Bellefonte Area School District. This summer, she worked with a number of our students in our nLCDS Summer Program. Mandi comes from a large family of teachers, including her father, Ed, who was our former LS Coding and Robotics teacher.

### **Kelley Sloss - IU13 Employee, Reading and Math Specialist**

Kelley has been a regular classroom teacher of 1st and 2nd grade for eight years. After taking time off to raise her three children, she returned to teaching as a reading specialist. Kelley has worked with nonpublic schools for the last 17 years.

### **Pam Troxell - Upper School Administrative Assistant**

Pam has spent the past three years substituting at LCDS across all our divisions and is the mother of two current Upper Schoolers. Pam is a graduate of Rutgers University and prior to joining us she spent most of her time in the corporate and non-profit worlds.

### **Emma Vitolo - Lower and Middle School Music Teacher and Band Director**

Emma is excited to return to Pennsylvania and start her role with LCDS as the LS/MS Music Teacher and Band Director. After growing up playing Clarinet in New Hampshire, Emma moved to Pennsylvania where she earned her Bachelor's Degree in Music Education from Bucknell University with a Clarinet concentration followed by her Master's in Arts Management from Carnegie Mellon University. For the past five years Emma has lived in Sarasota, Florida where she worked for the Sarasota Opera and Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall before realizing how much she missed being in

a classroom. Emma has taught Elementary Music at Fruitville Elementary School in Sarasota, FL with a focus in Modern Band for the past 2 years.

**Abby Zielinski - Athletic Department Administrative Assistant**

Abby joins LCDS as our Head Girls' Soccer Coach, Assistant Girls' Basketball Coach and Youth Girls' Lacrosse Coach. She will also be assisting Athletic Director Zac Kraft in the Athletic Department. Abby studied and played varsity soccer first at George Washington University and then at Mercy College, where she was twice team captain and twice selected as an All-American soccer player. She earned her BA in Psychology.

Links to [lunch information](#), [the school store](#) and [Canvas](#) are also identified by icons in this email. You can always reference LCDS communications and links for further information related to COVID-19 on [our website](#). Please reach out with any questions regarding COVID-19 to our COVID-19 Coordinator, [L.J. Bloom](#).

Please continue to reach out with questions to our division heads, [Jenny Gabriel](#), [Meg Reed](#), and [Caroline Badri](#), as well as Director of Global and Summer Programs [Heather Woodbridge](#).

We all look forward to seeing our students as we open school next Wednesday, September 1st - and then to a safe and productive school year together!

Warmly,

Steve



Steven D. Lisk  
Head of School