



## Faculty and Staff News

As we prepare for the new school year, we are excited to introduce you to new faculty members and to tell you about several of our colleagues who will be taking on new roles within the Episcopal Collegiate School community. Without exception, these individuals bring a wealth of experience, extraordinary talent and a demonstrated passion to their new responsibilities.

### **New Faculty and Staff:**

- **Pre-K3 Lead Teacher:** *Ms. Aaron Nixon* comes to us from the Little Rock School District, where she taught Kindergarten for seven years, including offering professional development opportunities to her fellow teachers. Aaron received a BS in Education and a MAT from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.
- **Pre-K4 Associate Teacher:** *Mrs. Chase Feland* will work alongside lead teacher Susan Harbour. She returns to Little Rock after recently acquiring her MAT from the College of Charleston in South Carolina. She received her BA from the University of Georgia.
- **Pre-K4 Associate Teacher:** *Mrs. Laura Hum*, known to returning Lower School students as Ms. Scanlon from the Wildcat Club, will be working alongside lead teacher Stephani Brown in the Pre-K4 classroom. She has a BS in Human Development and Family Services (emphasis in child development) from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.
- **Kindergarten Associate Teacher:** *Mrs. Dana Hill* is another familiar face joining our faculty full-time this year. Last year Mrs. Hill worked with our younger students after school on a daily basis in the Wildcat Club. Dana will work alongside Jane Ann Fortenberry in Kindergarten. Dana earned her BS from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.
- **Kindergarten Associate Teacher:** *Mrs. Cindy Rotenberry* joins the Episcopal Collegiate School community from Pulaski Academy, where she taught Physical Education to Pre-K and elementary students for over twenty years. Cindy will work

alongside Anne Antoine McPherson in Kindergarten. Cindy holds a BSE in Education from Arkansas State University.

- **First Grade Teacher:** *Mrs. Hope Douglas* joins us from Terry Elementary School in the Little Rock School District, where she was recently named *Teacher of the Year*. Hope brings ten years teaching experience to Episcopal, including the past five years as a first grade teacher. She has extensive training in *Early Literacy Learning*, *Effective Literacy*, mathematics and technology, infusing her classroom daily with research-based strategies. She received her BS in Education from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.
- **First Grade Teacher:** *Mrs. Heather Gunther* joins us from the Cabot School District, where she taught first grade for several years. Heather has training in many areas including *Early Literacy Learning*, *Cognitively Guided Instruction*, and *Kagan Cooperative Learning*. Heather received her BA in Education from the University of Central Arkansas.
- **Lower School Physical Education:** *Mrs. Mandy Emberson* joins us from the Mineral Springs School District, where she served as the head Junior High and Varsity girls' basketball coach and taught Middle School science. Mandy will head our Lower School physical education program and will serve as head girls' varsity basketball coach; she will also coach 8<sup>th</sup> grade volleyball. She received her BSE in Education from Henderson State University.
- **Lower School Physical Education:** *Mr. J. Troy Jackson* is returning to Arkansas after several years in the Waco, Texas, Independent School District, where he served as the Middle School Director of Athletics and coached football, basketball and track. Troy will teach physical education in the Lower School and will coach 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade football and Middle School basketball. Troy received his BS from Henderson State University, where he played football and ran track. He is working toward his M.Ed at Lamar University.
- **Fifth Grade Teacher:** *Mr. Stephen Evans* joins us from St. Andrew's Episcopal School in Jackson, Mississippi. He has taught fifth, sixth and eighth grades. While teaching sixth grade in a self-contained, elementary classroom setting, Stephen served as grade-level chair, guiding teachers in classroom management, curriculum, and instruction. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, Stephen will be an assistant coach with the Middle School football team. Stephen received his BA from Wake Forest University, where he also ran track. Stephen is a Teach for America graduate, and he attended the Klingenstein Center's Summer Institute for Independent School Leadership at Columbia University.

- **Director of Wildcat Club and Lower School Summer Program:** *Mrs. Mary Lutz* will be joining Episcopal Collegiate as the Director of our Lower School after-school and summer programs. She brings over 14 years of experience in teaching art and language arts at all levels and will continue the wonderful work begun by Debbie Pettibone (who is moving to the Upper School to teach Spanish.) Mary will offer an after-school program that allows for some unstructured play time as well as structured activities which promote learning and creativity. She plans to expand our Super Session and summer offerings in the coming year. Mary received her BA from Louisiana State University.
- **Upper School Mathematics Teacher:** *Mrs. Heather Benton* joins Episcopal from Arkansas Children's Hospital, where she served as a hospital-based school teacher responsible for developing individualized educational plans designed to meet the instructional needs of longer-stay patients. Prior to her work at the hospital, she held positions teaching mathematics at the college and high school levels, and she has presented on topics in math education at numerous workshops and conferences. Heather has a BA from Ouachita Baptist University as well as a MA in Mathematics Education from the University of Central Arkansas. She will be teaching all levels of geometry in the Upper School.
- **On-campus Substitute Teacher:** *Ms. Andrea Richmond* joins Episcopal Collegiate on a full-time basis this year as the School's on-campus substitute teacher. Many of you know her from her service as our varsity girls' soccer coach for the past four years, most recently leading them to the Class 3A Championship game. In addition to continuing her soccer coaching duties, she will coach Middle School tennis and assist Athletic Director Jerry Reese. Andrea holds a BS and MS from Harding University and is working on a M.Ed at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.
- **Director of Academic Achievement Center:** *Mrs. Melissa Carter* will join Episcopal as the new Director of the Academic Achievement Center, responsible for directing and strengthening the School's efforts to ensure that every student understands his or her individual learning strengths, affinities, and challenges as well as helping each of them to maximize their learning potential. Melissa brings nearly 20 years of experience to her position, most recently as the Director of Learning Services for Arkansas Baptist. She received her BSE and MSE from the University of Central Arkansas.
- **Middle/Upper School Guidance Counselor:** *Ms. Laura Laser* will be working with Chris Rule in the School's counseling office. Laura brings over ten years of experience of working with young people and their families to our School. She earned a BA and MSW from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

## New Responsibilities:

- **Pre-K4 Lead Teacher:** *Mrs. Stephani Brown* becomes our second Pre-K4 lead teacher and brings experience and familiarity with our Pre-K4 curriculum from her time working as an Associate Teacher (and long-term substitute lead teacher) in the Pre-K4 classroom alongside Susan Harbour. Stephani worked previously as a Pre-K teacher at the Cathedral School and at St. James Learning Center. Stephani received her BS in Education from the University of Memphis.
- **Kindergarten Lead Teacher:** *Mrs. Anne Antoine McPherson* will teach Kindergarten this year, taking the position held last year by Mary Ann Nichols (who will be teaching 2<sup>nd</sup> grade this year.) Having served as an associate teacher working with Jane Ann Fortenberry last year, Anne is very well-versed in our Kindergarten curriculum and program and joins colleagues Patti Coleman and Jane Ann on the Kindergarten team. Anne received her BS from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, and she is currently working on a Master's degree in Teaching from the University of Central Arkansas.
- **Second Grade Teacher:** *Ms. Mary Ann Nichols* will move from Kindergarten to join Bethany Jennings as we add an additional second grade class to our growing Lower School. Mary Ann brings over ten years of experience in the classroom and is an avid learner herself. She has recently completed professional development in a variety of areas geared toward middle elementary students, including instruction in a multi-sensory approach to phonological processing, *Kidspiration*, *Understanding Numbers*, and *Operations and Teaching for Multiple Intelligences*.
- **Third Grade Teacher:** *Ms. Samantha Pultz* will move to third grade from Pre-K3, taking the place of Mr. Brannon Aaron, who will become a reading specialist. Sam has her BS in Education and MS in Reading from the University of Central Arkansas, and she has worked with children in second, third, and fifth grades through her practicum and student teaching, preparing her well for teaching older elementary children.
- **Reading Specialist:** *Mr. Brannon Aaron* will be moving from his position as a third grade teacher to become our second reading specialist. Brannon's previous experience as a first and third grade teacher, his strong reading background and passion for teaching children to read is a strong match for the Episcopal reading program.
- **Middle and Upper School Spanish Teacher:** *Ms. Debbie Pettibone* will move from directing the Lower School Wildcat Club after-school and summer programs into her new position as Middle and Upper School Spanish teacher, covering 6<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish, Spanish I and II, and Spanish Cultures classes. Debbie has over 12 years of teaching

experience with students of all ages, and she has BA degrees in Spanish and Communication as well as a MAT in Second Language Studies from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. She also studied as a university exchange student in Salamanca, Spain and worked as an English instructor in Madrid, Spain. Prior to joining Episcopal last year, she taught Spanish at Pulaski Academy, UALR and Pulaski Technical College.

- **Director of Fine Arts:** *Mrs. Joy Schultz*, our Upper School art teacher, has been named the director of our fine arts program (art, choral music, instrumental music, theater, and broadcast journalism), filling the position previously held by Mr. Scott Sides. She brings nearly twenty years of experience in the fine arts to her new responsibilities. Joy will continue to teach the Upper School art classes.
- **Co-Directors of Concert Choir:** *Mrs. Karen Clark* and *Mr. Charles Stanley* will continue with their current responsibilities as choral music teachers (Karen teaching Pre-K through 4<sup>th</sup> grade, Charles teaching 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade) and they will bring their significant talents to co-directing the Upper School Concert Choir, previously directed by Scott Sides. Karen received her BM in Applied Voice from the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, and her MM in Applied Voice from Arkansas State University. Before joining Episcopal, she served as a youth choir director at Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church and served as a professor of Music at Tennessee State University. Charles received his BME from Ouachita Baptist University. His previous work experience included teaching music at Romine Elementary School in the Little Rock School District and directing the Middle and High School choirs in the Lonoke School District. Charles has also served in a music ministry, including positions with the Cathedral of St. Andrew and the Present Henderson United Methodist Church in Little Rock.

#### **Summer Departure:**

- We congratulate *Mr. Scotty Thurman* on his acceptance of a new position with the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville as the Director of Student Athlete Development for Men's Basketball. This is a tremendous opportunity for him, and we wish Scotty and his family well in their move to Northwest Arkansas.