

## **Bio for Jim Foley**

### **Candidate for Head of School at Commonwealth School**

Jim Foley is the Assistant Head of School for Leadership and Innovation at St. Luke's School in New Canaan, Connecticut. He has worked at St. Luke's in various capacities for 20 years, rising to his current role in 2015. St. Luke's is a nonreligious, coeducational day school that enrolls 585 students in grades 5-12. Jim began his career in education at St. Luke's as a middle and upper school teacher and coach; in 2007 he was the recipient of the school's Excellence in Teaching Award. Even as Jim assumed more administrative duties, he remained active in the classroom, most recently by teaching a popular senior elective entitled "Principles of Economics." Over the years he has also taught courses in mathematics and American literature. A highly successful coach, he led St. Luke's varsity girls basketball team to championship and record seasons between 2000-2006. Prior to his decision to follow his heart and pursue a career in education, Jim worked for several years in banking and corporate finance.

Responsible for all activity related to assuring the excellence of the faculty and staff, Jim cultivates a culture of future-thinking and innovation throughout St. Luke's School. He redesigned and now leads the school's Talent Development Program, which includes hiring, performance review, onboarding and professional development for all employees. He chaired the successful national search for the school's first Director of Equity and Inclusion, and he created and chaired the resulting Equity Leadership Team. He developed new strategies for recruitment and retention of teachers of color, including the launch of the Fairchester Hiring Alliance, collaborating with regional independent schools in Connecticut and New York. He also led the creation of St. Luke's designLab, a state-of-the-art facility and program for computer science, robotics, engineering and design thinking.

Prior to serving as Assistant Head, Jim was the inaugural director of St. Luke's Center for Leadership from 2011-2015, which fosters intentional leadership development for the entire student body and faculty. From 2009-2011 Jim served as the school's first full-time academic technologist, leading to the development of a sophisticated approach to online and blended learning at the school. Throughout all of Jim's leadership roles he has worked directly and closely with admissions and development officers, as well as with trustees and members of the external community, to advance the mission and strategic priorities of the school.

A graduate of Swarthmore College where he majored in economics, Jim went on to earn an M.A. in Educational Technology from Fairfield University. Jim describes himself as, "a bookworm, enthusiastic amateur musician, and dog owner," with a "competitive itch scratched by golf, mountain biking, hiking and billiards." He is also an avid storyteller, asserting that, "The Head of School needs to be a talented storyteller, must persuasively make the case for the value of an independent school education, and must demonstrate that value in every action, large or small...To do so skillfully...requires a leader to be as dedicated to listening to others' stories as to telling his or her own."