



# FORSYTH SCHOOL ANNOUNCES NEW HEAD OF SCHOOL

Forsyth School is pleased to announce Robert Butler, Jr., as new Head of School, effective July 1, 2021. Butler comes to Forsyth from University Liggett School in Grosse Pointe Woods, Michigan, where he has been the Assistant Head of School and Head of the Middle School since 2017. Before that, he worked at Whitfield School in St. Louis for seven years in a variety of teaching, coaching, and administrative roles, ending his tenure there as the Middle School Director.

Butler was selected from a large pool of candidates following a comprehensive, national search conducted in partnership with [The Education Group](#), led by Katherine Stuart, President. His appointment was approved by a unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees based on the enthusiastic recommendation of the Committee, comprised of trustees, parents, faculty, staff, and alumni.

Butler has served on the [Independent Schools Association of the Central States](#) (ISACS) Board of Trustees since 2015 and recently participated in the ISACS Leadership Academy in partnership with the Northwestern University Kellogg School of Management. He holds a Master of Arts in English from Oklahoma State University and a Bachelor of Arts in Education from Northeastern State University.

Butler will be the sixth permanent Head of Forsyth School. He succeeds Dan Hildebrand, who will retire at the end of the 2020/21 school year after serving as Head of School for three years. Hildebrand and the administrative Leadership Team will work closely with Butler in the coming months to ensure a seamless leadership transition.

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## WHAT THE FORSYTH COMMUNITY HAD TO SAY:

"Rob's knowledge and experience with school leadership were quite impressive, but his honest and open answers to questions made me see what a great leader he would be for our school."

"He is a strong leader who really seems to listen and hear what others are saying. He embraces collaboration and understands the importance of being clear and transparent regarding communication. He has a strong vision, a willingness to stretch his employees to be the best they can be, and a wonderful sense of humor."

"Rob emphasized growth as personal, professional, and institutional. . . He talked about student growth and empathy. He spoke directly to equity and inclusion. He talked about collaboration and decision-making. . . He spoke to both the human and institutional elements of running a school. In short, Forsyth would be lucky to have him."

"Rob seems to be highly experienced and knowledgeable, caring, and genuine. I could definitely see him easily connecting with faculty, parents, and students alike."



# FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES & HEAD SEARCH COMMITTEE

Dear Forsyth Community,

On behalf of the Forsyth School Board of Trustees and Head Search Committee, it is our great pleasure to announce and introduce Robert Butler, Jr. as Forsyth's new Head of School. Rob will officially join Forsyth on Thursday, July 1—although his transition work with the Board and administrative team has already begun!

Rob returns to St. Louis with 20 years of experience as a teacher, coach, and administrator. His familiarity with St. Louis and the independent school community and landscape here, together with his private school experience outside of the region, make him a uniquely qualified candidate for this role.

Special thanks to our Search Committee members listed below, who dedicated countless hours to help secure the best fit for Forsyth. Additional thanks to all members of the larger Forsyth community—including current trustees, parents, faculty, and staff—who played an active role in the interview process.

We are eager for the school community to get to know Rob over the coming months before his arrival this summer. Most importantly, we are so excited for the future of Forsyth School.



Kelly Richert  
Board President



Jonathan Giokas  
Search Committee Chair

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## SEARCH COMMITTEE:

Tymesha Buckner-Dobynes, Board Member  
& Current Parent

Abigail George, Board Member & Forsyth Alum

Jonathan Giokas, Board Member & Current Parent

*Search Committee Chair*

Austin Hasek, Board Member & Current Parent

Hope Jernagan, Current Parent

Kelly Richert, Board President & Current Parent

Heather Rynasiewicz, Board Member & Current Parent

Chris Thomas, Music Teacher

Deborah White, Director of Extended Day  
& Pre-Kindergarten Classroom Aide



# FROM ROBERT BUTLER, INCOMING HEAD OF SCHOOL

Dear Forsyth Community,

With a profound sense of honor and gratitude, I welcome the opportunity to serve as Head of School at Forsyth. Before my tenure at University Liggett School in Michigan, my family and I proudly called St. Louis home. I learned quite a bit about Forsyth when I worked at Whitfield School, and I was consistently impressed with the quality of Forsyth graduates. In addition to being academically sound, Forsyth students were well-equipped with the tools needed for success in secondary school and beyond. Moreover, Forsyth students always stood out for being incredibly thoughtful, articulate, determined, and prepared to embrace challenges.

For all of these reasons, the opportunity to serve as a leader at Forsyth felt more like a calling than a job prospect. And throughout every step of the hiring process, from the initial Zoom candidate interviews to my campus visit in November, I was struck and inspired by each community member's passion for the school and dedication to its success.

The magic of Forsyth became abundantly clear from the moment I set foot on campus. Even through the masks, social distancing, and other (necessary) safety protocols, the community's warmth, passion, and joy were palpable. From the bright young eyes shining in the Eyas Program's Falcon's Nest, to the Grade 6 students who warmly engaged me in a conversation about math, to the intense energy of the Grade 5 students on the playground, I found a place that is a testament to the value of private elementary education. Forsyth is a place where the bedrock of honorable, confident, impactful global citizens is cultivated and nurtured by a talented and dedicated faculty and staff. At every turn, it was clear to me that all members of the community are deeply devoted to upholding and advancing Forsyth's mission.

Now, as I prepare to join the community, I am eager to preserve and amplify what has made Forsyth a leader in elementary education in St. Louis. Together, we will turn boldly to the next chapter in the life of the school with a continued focus on the core elements of the Honor Code—honesty, kindness, respect, and responsibility. We will move forward with a fervent commitment to growing our role as responsible stewards of the environment and becoming a model for equity and inclusion. We will strive to build upon Forsyth's 60-year tradition of challenging young learners and supporting their development and growth. Together.

My wife Robyn, our high-school-aged children Musa and Safiya, and I cannot wait to return to St. Louis. It is the city that holds some of our fondest memories: picking up confetti at the Cardinals' World Series parade, picnicking in Forest Park, and sledding down Art Hill in the winter with little regard for life or limb. Although we weren't born in St. Louis, we do consider it home. And there's no place like home!

I look forward to being with you in July.



Robert Butler  
Incoming Head of School