

Portsmouth Abbey School Announces New Head of School



Following an extensive national search, Abbot Michael G. Brunner, O.S.B., announces the appointment of Matthew P. Walter as the new Head of School at Portsmouth Abbey, effective immediately.

Mr. Walter brings a wealth of experience, insight, knowledge and passion to the position having served as Development Director and then Assistant Headmaster for Advancement at Portsmouth Abbey School for seven years. In 2021, he was appointed Acting Headmaster.

“The response to our position announcement and candidate recruitment was significant, and many qualified applicants were considered. Following the search Committee’s extensive interview and assessment process, we enthusiastically believe that Matt possesses the skills, experience and vision we require in our next school leader,” said Cara Hume Gontarz ’99, Search Committee Chair.

Mr. Walter holds a Juris Doctorate from University of Texas School of Law, and an undergraduate degree from Princeton University. Prior to joining Portsmouth Abbey he led the development efforts at St. Mary’s High School in Colorado Springs from 2002 – 2014. Earlier in his career, he returned to his alma mater, Cistercian Preparatory School, in Irving, Texas as Director of Development and Alumni Relations. Over his 23-

year career in advancement, Mr. Walter has developed a deep understanding of all aspects of Catholic secondary education, particularly at monastic-led schools. The son of a life-long Catholic school educator, he developed his own classroom experience through teaching legal research and writing to 1st year law students and through the outdoor classroom of a football field where he coached at the secondary and collegiate level for 12 years.

"I am honored and humbled by this appointment," Mr. Walter said. "I look forward to working with the entire Portsmouth Abbey community to build on the School's already stellar reputation for academic excellence in the Catholic intellectual tradition, innovative electives, competitive athletics, and inspirational arts. Our mission of helping young men and women grow in knowledge and grace challenges us to be our best. For me, that means being the best Catholic boarding school in North America with a global reach that attracts the best and brightest from around the world. Bolstered by our traditions of the past and reassured by the accomplishments of today, we look boldly to Portsmouth Abbey's bright future and are poised for a second century of excellence."

During his years in Advancement at Portsmouth Abbey, Mr. Walter set annual fund records for seven consecutive years, oversaw the creation of several endowed funds, directed the successful \$20 million campaign for the new science building, and helped secure the single largest gift in the School's history in support of a new student center.

Mr. Walter has been married to Paula Walter for 26 years, 21 of which they have shared working at boarding schools in various capacities, and they are the proud parents of John Patrick '18 and Matthew Thomas '20.

"This Search Committee has learned a great deal about Matt over the past months, about his many strengths and his forward-looking vision as we inch closer to the 100th anniversary of Portsmouth Abbey School. Matt's educational background, professional experience and capacity to build a community characterized by friendship and joy make him the perfect fit for Portsmouth Abbey," said Brother Sixtus, O.S.B.