



THE PENNINGTON SCHOOL

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PENNINGTON, N.J., March 7, 2024—Dr. William S. Hawkey, head of school at The Pennington School in Pennington, NJ has announced the appointment of Maria Capelle-Burny as Head of Middle School, effective July 1, 2024.

Capelle-Burny comes to The Pennington School from Smith Street Arts et Lettres in Brooklyn, NY, where she currently holds the position of assistant head of school and elementary-division director through the end of this academic year. Prior to that post, she spent many years at Grace Church School in Manhattan, starting there as an associate teacher in 2011, then taking on increasing responsibilities first as a third-grade classroom teacher, then as elementary and middle school French teacher, a class advisor to grade 7, a class dean for grades 7 and 8, a scheduler for all grade levels from pre-K to grade 8, and an advisor to families of color. Capelle-Burny also served as a member of the middle school leadership team at Grace Church. She started her career at the International School of Brooklyn, NY, as an associate elementary teacher. Maria earned a BFA in theatre and French from Concordia University in Canada and a master's degree in educational theatre from New York University. She speaks Spanish and Portuguese and is fluent in French.

Dr. Hawkey, in his announcement to the Pennington School community, said that Capelle-Burny “is a thoughtful, dynamic educator who centers her educational philosophy on her students, while maintaining an open door for conversations with colleagues. I know that she will bring an exceptional set of skills and experience to our Middle School, and her talents were evident to our search committee as well as to the parents, students, faculty, and staff she met during her February visit to our campus.”

Capelle-Burny is excited to join The Pennington School, and wrote, “I feel it is essential to impart to students social and emotional skills, coping mechanisms, as well as executive-functioning and time-management skills. When we hold students accountable to high standards and support them as they navigate their way through school life, all while prioritizing their agency, independence, and emotional well-being, we see incredible things happen.” Capelle-Burny will succeed Chrissie Knight as head of Pennington’s Middle School beginning this summer.

The Pennington School is an independent coeducational school for students in grades 6 through 12, in both day and boarding programs. The curriculum is college preparatory, with an emphasis on individual excellence, fostering the development of the whole student through academics, athletics, community service, and the creative and performing arts.

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