

# Sandy Spring Friends School Announces Appointment of Dr. Sean Hamer as Head of School

**SEAN  
HAMER**  
  
**HEAD  
OF SCHOOL**



SSFS is thrilled to announce that Dr. Sean M. Hamer has been selected as the next Head of School at SSFS, beginning his tenure on July 1, 2025.

Sean is an accomplished educator and leader with a wealth of experience in Quaker, independent, and public school environments. His leadership is grounded in fostering inclusive communities, advancing innovative academic practices, and promoting the holistic development of students. His deep alignment with Quaker values and his commitment to nurturing student-centered learning make him an exceptional choice to lead SSFS into its next chapter.

Sean's career has been defined by a focus on community engagement, academic innovation, and operational excellence. As Head of School at Alta Vista School in San Francisco, he led record-setting growth in enrollment, fundraising, and diversity initiatives, while also overseeing the launch of a capital campaign for a unified campus. His previous experience at Germantown Friends School further solidified his expertise in cultivating meaningful learning experiences and fostering equity-focused school cultures.

Sean's collaborative leadership style and passion for inquiry-based learning are perfectly suited to the SSFS mission. He believes in the power of experiential education and the importance of preparing students to thrive in an ever-changing, interconnected world. His dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion aligns with SSFS's commitment to nurturing a community where every voice is valued.

## EDUCATION

- Ed.D., College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA
- Ed.M., Columbia University - Teachers College, New York, NY
- M.Ed., Lesley University, Cambridge, MA
- B.A., Human Services, University of Massachusetts, Boston, MA

## ADMINISTRATIVE AND TEACHING POSITION HIGHLIGHTS

- 2024-2025 - Head of School (Interim), Brightworks School, San Francisco, CA
- 2019-2024 - Head of School, Alta Vista School, San Francisco, CA
- 2015-2019 - Head of Middle School, Germantown Friends School, Philadelphia, PA
- 2012-2015 - Head of Middle School, Friends Academy, North Dartmouth, MA
- 2007-2012 - Lead Grade Level Advisor and 7th Grade Math & Science Teacher, The Gordon School, East Providence, RI
- 2005-2007 - 7th and 8th Grade Math and Science Teacher, Charles River School, Dover, MA
- 2005 - 7th and 8th Grade Math Teacher, Graham & Parks Public School
- 2004-2005 - Science Teacher, Grades 3, 4, 7, and 8, Shady Hill School, Cambridge, MA

## STATEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

“Knowledge is power” is a term used often, and in my opinion, it’s often used incorrectly. I would modify the term to be stated as “applied knowledge is power.” Education is a process that empowers individuals with the resources to experience a life of understanding, promise, and options.

My belief that students’ learning processes and ability to be introspective are just as important as the subject matter they study has been consistently reinforced as I’ve experienced students embrace their educational studies over the years. When people think about school, they frequently focus on the brick buildings where they spent most of their days when they were young. I recall long distant hallways lined with metal lockers and rows of immovable desks that separated the students from each other and the instructors. However, education is the embodiment of one’s social and academic learning experiences within the setting. In the information age, technological advancements and independent inquiry have made the physical walls optional and exponentially advanced local and global communications. The variety of touchpoints for students and families in diverse educational settings continuously iterates my views on education from those dismal early impressions.

Personalization is a key to all educational experiences. I look upon the classroom of the present and it’s comprised of all the possible opportunities that individuals possess to share knowledge and enhance their skill base. A student can be defined as anyone in the environment who comes to these opportunities willing to learn. It is especially helpful to assist students’ understanding by using imagery to follow theory and bringing real-world connections across time and space to the learning experience. While students’ unfettered access to technology can be debated as a questionable tool for learning, I contend that the proper application of technology is crucial to enhancing not only the educational experience of our students but also the resources at hand for educators. To balance technology exposure, time spent in nature, in live engagement with peers, and in self-reflection can round out the whole child experience. As time progresses and trends in education shift dramatically, the methods instructors use to interest, engage, and challenge students must evolve using contemporary tools.

I advocate for educators to be accountable to create environments that allow for high levels of personalization within the classroom. Not only should teachers disperse information, but they should listen and learn from the students’ perspectives to make connections. Opportunities should be created that give our students the option to choose areas of interest and allow multiple ways to express their understanding. Instruction should be delivered in a variety of modes to support multiple learning styles with equal effectiveness. Activities should combine hands-on work, group and individual efforts, and authentic real-world contexts. I value a school culture where the community of learners, including teachers, feel it is safe to take risks.

As demographics and cultural connections continue to grow and shift around us, we, as leaders and educators, should work cooperatively to create inclusive and culturally diverse curricula designed with global and multicultural perspectives. Adults and students alike should show respect for one another and advocacy of belonging across sociocultural identities. For students to experience, understand, and succeed in life beyond the school walls, we must offer both complete and personalized opportunities during our students’ educational journeys that are attuned to their myriad social and developmental needs. I view the progress that educators and students can make as directly impacted by the effectiveness of the distributed leadership integrated throughout their institutions. Education is an equalizer, giving society a mechanism to connect individuals, families, cultures, nations, and generations through a shared engagement of knowledge, beliefs, and possibilities for a greater future.