

## Brenda Leaks Biography

Brenda Leaks earned a Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education with a minor in Spanish from Notre Dame of Maryland University and a Master of Science in Educational Leadership from Teachers College, Columbia University, where she completed the Klingenstein Private School Leadership Program. Her academic preparation reflects a deep commitment to teaching and learning, as well as to the thoughtful leadership of mission-driven independent schools. Brenda currently serves as Board Chair of the Northwest Association of Independent Schools among several additional trusteeships. She is also a faculty member for the NAIS Institute for New Heads.

Brenda currently serves as Head of School at Seattle Girls' School, a grades 5–8 independent school for girls and gender-expansive students in Seattle, a role she has held since 2016. During her tenure, she has led the school through a period of strategic growth and programmatic development. She oversees a \$4.5 million operating budget and has strengthened the school's financial position, growing reserves from zero to nearly \$2 million while supporting ambitious strategic initiatives. Under her leadership, the school successfully completed a \$9.5 million fundraising campaign as part of a \$17 million project to build a permanent campus, and later led an additional \$7.5 million campaign to construct a gym and multi-purpose facility. She has also championed faculty professional learning, strengthened student support systems, and expanded diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives across the community.

Prior to her current role, Brenda served as Middle School Head at The Overlake School in Redmond, Washington from 2010 to 2016. In that role she led major academic initiatives including the development of an instructional coaching program, clear articulation of curriculum across grades, and improved student assessment practices. She also helped design a grade-level team structure to strengthen collaboration among teachers and to create a more cohesive middle school experience for students. In addition, she contributed to school-wide strategic efforts focused on faculty recruitment and mentoring programs for new teachers. Earlier in her career she held leadership roles including Middle School Head at Trinity Episcopal School of Austin and leadership positions in programs dedicated to expanding educational access.

Brenda began her career in the classroom and remains deeply connected to teaching and student life. She taught Spanish at the middle and high school levels at Forest Park High School in Baltimore, as well as at The Baldwin School and The Shipley School in Pennsylvania. Throughout her career she has continued to teach electives, lead experiential learning opportunities, and support student programs. She has also coached basketball and served as an advisor to student clubs and affinity groups, experiences that reflect her belief that the relationships formed through teaching, coaching, and mentoring are central to the life of a vibrant school community.

On the personal side, Brenda has a high-school aged son, Jackson, who regularly advises his mother on “all current trends.” She loves music—sings (often) and plays drums (occasionally)—and relishes a good book and a delicious meal with friends. She's also enjoys West Coast Swing dancing!

Please help welcome Brenda Leaks to San Francisco Friends School!