UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MILWAUKEE



Incoming Head of School
Tom McManus

Tom McManus, who was selected to serve as University School of Milwaukee's 10th head of school (effective July 1, 2027), brings a rare combination of authenticity, strategic thinking, and deep independent school experience. His leadership style is grounded in vision and process, with a strong understanding of governance, accreditation, and the effective use of data to guide decision-making processes. His nearly 30 years of experience leading complex educational organizations demonstrates both operational strength and the ability to build trust across a community, and he understands the many facets of a complex educational organization like USM.

Originally from New England, Tom's academic preparation reflects the same depth and breadth as his professional experience. He earned a B.A. in English from the University of Pennsylvania, and later received an M.A. in Private School Leadership from Teachers College at Columbia University, where his coursework focused on nonprofit finance, educational law, program development, marketing and communications, and independent school leadership. He also conducted original research on teacher collaboration in independent schools and completed a practicum in advancement and fundraising.

In addition to his background as an English teacher and in school leadership, Tom offers a sophisticated understanding of all areas of school operations, as well as the increasingly competitive landscape of college admissions. He has tremendous experience conducting academic audits, examining curriculum and implementing change, executing strategies for faculty development and retention, and unifying multidivisional programming. Having navigated budget and enrollment challenges, launched strategic initiatives, and led significant campus and program expansion, Tom will arrive at USM well prepared to lead the school.

Tom is motivated not simply to preserve what already works, but to help USM grow into something even stronger, embracing the belief that—while it is acceptable to be good— schools can aspire to be exceptional, especially in their academic programs. His vision for USM reflects both ambition and optimism for the school's future.

Outside of his career, Tom is deeply family-oriented. He is married to Micheline McManus, who currently serves as chair of the English department at Wilmington Friends School in Delaware, and together they have four children, ages 27, 24, 20, and 7. Tom and Micheline's decision to move their family to Milwaukee for this role demonstrates their commitment to putting down roots in USM's remarkable community.