



Cathleen Eclarinal Named Head of School at The Girls' School of Austin

The Board of Trustees at The Girls' School of Austin has voted to appoint Cathleen Eclarinal to be the next Head of School following a national search. Cathleen brings extensive experience with independent schools and comes to GSA from Hyde Park in Austin, where she has been serving as head of the lower and middle schools for the past five years. A strong advocate for educating the whole child, Cathleen began her teaching career serving communities in need in Houston and New York City schools.

Cathleen then spent 13 years as a faculty member at St. Andrew's Episcopal School in Austin, where she taught third grade, and served as Learning Differences Facilitator and Social Emotional Learning Director. In 2007, Cathleen created, designed, and led the St. Andrew's community through the development and strategic implementation of a signature SEL approach, transforming the academic community. Under her leadership, the St. Andrew's SEL program grew from a Lower School initiative to comprehensive integration in all divisions from 1st-12th grades.

Throughout her educational career, Cathleen has been inspired by opportunities to create school communities in which every student, teacher, and parent is deeply engaged in seeing the mission come to life daily. For the past five years, Cathleen has guided an inclusive Hyde Park lower and middle school environment of 350 students and 50 faculty members through a period of visionary growth. Leading strong and stable leadership teams in unity of vision at Hyde Park, Cathleen has fostered a dynamic collaborative culture, articulating and guiding strategic curricular implementation, and shepherding the community as a diverse, equitable and inclusive place for all to flourish.

Cathleen earned her Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education at the University of Houston and her Masters of Education from the University of Texas with a concentration on Academic Educational Psychology and Educational Leadership, graduating from both programs with high honors.

Cathleen's skills and experience combined with her passion for girls' education make her an excellent choice for Head of School at The Girls' School of Austin. She will build on the strong foundation of innovation and community GSA has enjoyed through collaborative vision, inspiration, and momentum.

Cathleen is married to Rommel Eclarinal, filmmaker and instructor at St. Andrew's. Together, they are raising two sons, ages 13 and 10. Cathleen will be joining the GSA community fulltime on July 1, 2019.

A Message from New Head of School Cathleen Eclarinal

Dear GSA Community,

It is not often an exciting opportunity comes along that aligns so well with my qualifications as an educator and values as a person. Over the past seventeen years I have had the joy of serving the Austin community as a teacher and administrator, and in that time I have come to learn of the good work of The Girls' School of Austin. I am honored to have the opportunity to lead this community to realize her full potential.



Cathleen hiking with her husband and two sons

I believe education must be challenging and meaningful, engaging students to think well beyond the doors of the classroom where endless possibilities await. Navigating today's ever-changing world requires our students to become authentic leaders who know who they are and what they stand for, and who define success on their own terms. At the heart of this leadership is teaching students to own their learning, embrace their strengths, grow from their failures, and develop the resilience they need to ultimately live confident lives of purpose and impact.

A school with one heartbeat requires all community members to model in our own actions the values we seek to develop in our students: respect - for self and others - compassion, empathy, a love of learning and the openness to new ideas, a commitment to equity and, finally, the pursuit of truth and the toil necessary to find it. The Girls' School has a rich and unique culture, and I look forward to listening to the community to discover that culture and how best I can lead it. We need to be sensitive and collaborative when there is momentum to 'move forward' and ensure that traditions are part of that modern and forward-thinking experience. I am excited about all-girls education and the opportunities to help these young women become leaders in our community and our world. I consider it a tremendous privilege to be a part of your child's journey and so look forward to meeting each of you.

Most Sincerely,

Cathleen Eclarinal



What Our Community Had to Say

"She's warm, engaging, enthusiastic and passionate about all-girls education."

"I found Cathleen to be engaging and inspiring. I appreciated the tenor and content of the conversation we had with her. She was already thinking about the school and opportunities to evolve and deepen what we do. I could feel her ideas and enthusiasm and they excited me. The way she spoke about what might be next for us resonated-- a deepening and aligning of our offering so that what we do and how we act is deeply aligned with our values. I had the sense Cathleen could do this work, and in fact, welcomed the chance to rumble with it all."

"Qualities I am excited about - experience in curriculum development, especially SEL. Also, her dedication to the profession is palpable. I have no doubt that she will be committed to the GSA vision, and spirit."

"Cathleen will take a thoughtful approach leading GSA into further development of our educational mission."

"She connected with me and resonated as someone who wants this position as GSA head of school as her dream "Forever" job. She had great energy, personality and vision. She was easy to talk to, kind and aware, excited and motivated as a leader and colleague."