



SEEDS OF WISDOM

PERCY ABRAM

Percy Abram
Head of School
The Bush School
Seattle, WA

On Starting as a New Teacher

I would give the same advice to a new teacher as I give to new parents. It is really important that very early on you become involved. Find an area of the school in which you not only have a background and expertise but are willing to take a risk and try something new. I'm fond of saying that the more you learn about the Bush School the more you come to love the Bush School. I really believe that through coaching, through running an activity, through our Action Module Program or the electives program, the more faculty members get involved, the more excited they are about working at the school.

On Leadership Opportunities Within NWAIS Schools

We're very fortunate in the Pacific Northwest, and here in Seattle, to have an organization like the Northwest Association of Independent Schools that really focuses on fostering collegial relationships among teachers and educators. NWAIS also provides rich leadership opportunities for educators over the course of their career. For example, NWAIS offers workshops for women who are considering becoming a head of school. There is also a cohort model working to develop leaders of color within independent schools. I think that NWAIS's focus is helping teachers understand how they can play a role in advancing their school's mission not only through the work they do in the classroom but also the work they can do in their communities.

On Successfully Transitioning as a Public School Teacher

I would try to acclimate new faculty by helping them understand the culture of an independent school. One of the virtues of being an independent school is that the class size, the number of students you are working with on a daily basis, is often less than what you would experience working at a public or a charter school. The relationships that are built often are more enduring and the expectations to help foster close-knit relationships are greater. The expectation is that you are not only there as a teacher, but as a student's mentor, guide and counselor.