

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Erinne Markwas, Executive Assistant

131st Annual Meeting  
of  
**THE  
HEADS AND PRINCIPALS  
ASSOCIATION**



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*Educational Opportunities  
in a Complex World*

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February 7, 8 and 9, 2024  
Washington Duke Inn  
Durham, North Carolina

**Meera Viswanathan, Head of School, The Ethel Walker School, Connecticut**

**Meera Viswanathan** was born in Madras, India, and emigrated to Los Angeles at age five. She holds an M.A. and a Ph.D. from Stanford University. Meera joined Brown University in the early 1980s as a Japan Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow in the Comparative Literature and East Asian Studies departments. Subsequently she became an Assistant Professor for Studies at Brown, a role that spanned three decades. Meera and her husband, also a head of school, were asked by King Abdullah II of Jordan to establish King's Academy, the Middle East's first co-educational college preparatory boarding school with financial aid. The school opened in 2007. Meera served as the principal architect of the school's curriculum and Dean of Faculty for two years, receiving the King Hussein Medal, Jordan's highest honor, for her endeavors. This is Meera's eighth year as Head of The Ethel Walker School, a single-gender boarding school in Simsbury, CT.

**Jennifer Zaccara, Head of School, Vermont Academy, Vermont**

**Jennifer Zaccara** is in her seventh year as Head of Vermont Academy with a satellite school in Madrid. Before coming to Vermont, Jen spent two years as Associate Dean of Faculty at the Taft School and then four years as Associate Head of School at the Nightingale-Bamford School. Prior to that, she spent 20 years teaching English at Convent of the Sacred Heart, Rye Country Day School, Avon Public High School, the University of Connecticut, Trinity College, Phillips Andover Academy and the Winsor School. Jen also served as Site Director of the Middlebury-Monterey Language Academy of Middlebury College for two summers. She received a B.A. and M.A. from Trinity College and her Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut.

**Andrew Menke, Head of School, Waterford School, Utah**

Head of Waterford School in Utah for the past eight years, **Andrew Menke** holds a B.A. from Towson University and an M.A. from Dartmouth College. Andrew embarked on a career in education as an English teacher, coach, Director of Admission and finally Director of Development at Bridgton Academy. He moved west to accept the role of Head of School at Colorado Rocky Mountain School in 1999, and then returned to New England to lead New Hampton School for 11 years, where he helped to pioneer the International Baccalaureate Program.

**Aaron Sicotte, Principal, Needham High School, Massachusetts**

**Aaron Sicotte** is in his eighth year as Principal of Needham High School in Massachusetts. Originally an English teacher at Framingham High School, Aaron moved to New York to teach English at Guilderland High School and went on to serve Guilderland as Assistant Principal for five years. During this time, he also taught a summer program for teachers at Union College. Aaron then returned to Massachusetts as Assistant Principal of Needham High School for three years before assuming the role of Principal. He earned his B.A. and M.A. from Union College and Harvard University and an M.S.Ed. from the College of Saint Rose.

**Nancy Spencer, Head of School, Shorecrest Preparatory School, Florida**

**Nancy Spencer** is in her fourth year as Head of Shorecrest Preparatory School in Florida. After earning a B.A. from Brown University, Nancy spent two years at the Madeira School as Assistant Director of Admission. She went on to earn an M.A. from Yale and an MBA from Northwestern, following which she joined Albuquerque Academy as a history teacher and became Assistant Director of College Advising and Assistant Dean of Students. Nancy transferred to the Bullis School in 1995 as Director of Admissions and Financial Aid, and later spent 15 years at Westminster School in Connecticut as Assistant Head and then Associate Head. She has served on numerous NEASC visiting accreditation teams throughout New England.

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7**

- 3:00-5:30 p.m. REGISTRATION  
*Duke University Room*
- 5:30-6:00 NEW MEMBER WELCOME  
*Rotunda*
- 6:00-7:00 RECEPTION – *President's Gallery*
- 7:00 DINNER – *President's Ballroom I*  
Invocation: *Bill Burke*
- 8:30 WELCOME & INTRODUCTION OF INDUCTEES  
*Aime Claire Roche, President*
- SELF-INTRODUCTIONS, NEW MEMBERS
- CHARGE TO NEW MEMBERS  
*Bob Littlefield*

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8**

- 6:30-8:15 a.m. BREAKFAST - *Vista Restaurant*
- MORNING PROGRAM - *Ambassador Ballroom*
- 8:30-10:30 Session 1: *Shabana Basij-Rasikh, Founder, School of Leadership, Afghanistan*
- 10:30-11:00 Announcements and BREAK
- 11:00-12:15 Session 2: *Breakout Groups*
- 12:15 p.m. LUNCHEON – *Vista Restaurant*
- 1:30-3:00 Optional Breakout Groups:  
*Contemporary Challenges for Public School Leaders*

## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8 (continued)

- 4:25 and 4:45 Buses to Goodson Chapel
- 5:00-6:15 MEMORIAL SERVICE – Goodson Chapel  
Celebrant: *Bessie Speers*
- 7:00 DINNER - *President's Ballroom I*  
Invocation: *Kate Windsor*
- SELF-INTRODUCTIONS, NEW MEMBERS

## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9

- 6:30-8:15 a.m. BREAKFAST – *Vista Restaurant*
- MORNING PROGRAM - *Ambassador Ballroom*
- 8:30-9:45 Session 3: *Abdullah Antepli, Associate Professor, Sanford School of Public Policy/Duke Divinity School*
- 9:45-10:00 BREAK
- 10:00-11:15 Session 4: *John Palfrey, President, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation*
- 11:15-11:45 BUSINESS MEETING  
Chair: *Aime Claire Roche, President*
- Treasurer's Report  
*Kathleen C. Giles*
  - Nominating Committee Report  
*Kerry P. Brennan and the Head Voices*
  - Executive Secretary's Report  
*Doreen Kelly*
  - President's Valedictory  
*Aime Claire Roche*
- 12:00 p.m. CLOSING LUNCHEON

## Jason Gallagher, Principal, Boston Latin School, Massachusetts

**Jason Gallagher** is completing his second year as Principal of Boston Latin School, his alma mater and the oldest public school in the United States. He has served the Boston Public Schools for more than 20 years in various capacities, beginning as a General Education teacher at Harvard-Kent School, then Director of Special Education at Gavin Middle School, Assistant Director of Special Education for the Boston public school system, and finally Principal of Harvard-Kent School. He presently serves as a mentor to fellow principals across Massachusetts via the Lynch Leadership Academy. Jason earned his B.A. from Merrimack College, an M.S. from Simmons College and an M.A. from Framingham State University.

## Julia Heaton, Head of School, Miss Hall's School, Massachusetts

**Julia Heaton** has been Head of Miss Hall's School since 2014. After earning her B.A. from Yale and her M.A. from Columbia University, Julia worked as an assistant teacher at Manhattan Country School, spent two years teaching history, literature and writing at Prep for Prep, and then taught English and history and directed the drama department at the Chapin School. Over the course of 10 years at the Little Red School House-Elisabeth Irwin, Julia served as an English teacher, eleventh grade Dean, Academic Dean, Acting High School Principal, Adult Education Instructor and Director of Admissions. She is currently VP of the International Coalition of Girls' Schools.

## David Lourie, Head of School, Collegiate School, New York

**David Lourie** began his headship at Collegiate School in 2020 in the throes of the COVID pandemic. Earlier in his career, David left Tampa Preparatory School, where he had been a teacher, coach, advisor, and Director of Admissions, to take on the role of Founding Head of Terrace Community Charter School, a public charter school founded in Tampa in 1998. He spent the next six years at Midland School as a history teacher, Director of Admissions and Financial Aid and then as Head of School. Subsequently, he served as Head of School for 14 years at St. Anne's-Belfield in Virginia, where he taught history and citizenship courses. David received his B.A. from Yale, where he was a member of the venerated Whiffenpoofs, and his M.A. from Columbia University.

## Class of 2024

### **Charles Baldecchi, Head of School, Charlotte Latin School, North Carolina**

**Charles Baldecchi** has served as Head at Charlotte Latin School for the past five years. Chuck spent several years as an English teacher, dorm parent and coach at Episcopal High School and at Asheville School. He went on to create and lead a successful summer program at Asheville and later became Director of Admission and Enrollment there. In 2004 he began a 15-year headship at The Lexington School, during which he designed and launched an integrated learning difference program and a college counseling program on behalf of the school. Chuck serves on the Board of Directors of INDEX and the Elementary School Heads Association. He earned a B.A. from Denison University and an M.A. from St. John's College.

### **Dennis Bisgaard, Head of School, Maret School, District of Columbia**

Now in his first year as Head of Maret School, **Dennis Bisgaard** began his career as an English and PE teacher and coach at a co-ed high school in Vejle, Denmark and subsequently at the Bryn Mawr School for Girls. During his six years at Collegiate School he served as Director of Faculty Recruitment, Associate Dean of Faculty and Director of Diversity. He then spent six years at Shady Hill School as Associate Head of School, Acting Middle School Head and Acting Head of School before accepting the headship at Kingswood Oxford School in 2006. Notably, Dennis founded institutes for educators and students of color while at Collegiate and established the Kingswood Oxford Leadership Institute for Educators of Color in 2012. After two years as the founding Head of Whittle School & Studios, Dennis has spent the past three years in the role of interim Head at schools on both coasts. He earned his M.A. and Ph.D. in Denmark and an M.A. from Columbia University.

## 2024 Speakers

### **Shabana Basij-Rasikh**



Shabana Basij-Rasikh is the co-founder and president of the School of Leadership, Afghanistan (SOLA). SOLA is the first and only boarding school for Afghan girls, operating in Kabul from 2016 through the summer of 2021 and the Taliban's return to power. That August, Shabana led the evacuation of her entire school community from Afghanistan to Rwanda, where SOLA has reestablished its operations and its students have resumed their studies.

Shabana is a magna cum laude graduate of Middlebury College and earned her Master in Public Policy from Oxford University; she also holds honorary doctorates from SOAS University of London and Cedar Crest College. In 2018 Shabana was awarded the Malalai Medal, one of Afghanistan's highest national honors, for her work in promoting girls' access to education. In 2019 she was named to the *Forbes* 30 Under 30 Asia list in the social entrepreneurship sector; in 2021 *The Washington Post* named her a contributor to their Global Opinions section.

Thus far in 2023, Shabana has received the Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year award from the National Geographic Society and the Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez Prize from UNICEF Spain, and has been named an Inaugural Carnegie Distinguished Fellow at the newly-launched Institute of Global Politics at Columbia University in New York.

## Abdullah Antepi



Professor Abdullah Antepi is a globally acknowledged scholar and leader of cross-religious and cross-cultural dialogue in American higher education and in the non-profit world. He has built multiple organizations and initiatives that facilitate religious and spiritual life on American college campuses, sowing seeds of understanding between religions while upholding their

cultural integrity and dignity. Abdullah is Vice President and Provost of Community Engagement at Duke University with a dual faculty appointment at Duke's Sanford School of Public Policy and Divinity School as Associate Professor of the practice of religion, politics and interfaith relations.

Abdullah has worked on a variety of faith-based humanitarian and relief projects in Myanmar (Burma) and Malaysia with the Association of Social and Economic Solidarity with Pacific Countries. From 2003 to 2005 he served as the first Muslim chaplain at Wesleyan University. He then moved to Hartford Seminary in Connecticut, where he was the Associate Director of the Islamic Chaplaincy Program & Interfaith Relations, as well as an adjunct faculty member.

He served as Duke University's first Muslim chaplain and Director of the Center for Muslim Life, and then as Duke's chief representative for Muslim affairs and the Associate Director of the Duke Islamic Studies Center. Abdullah is also a senior fellow on Jewish-Muslim Relations at the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem, where he founded and co-directs the Muslim Leadership Initiative. The *NonProfit Times* recognized Abdullah as one of their Power & Influence Top 50 leaders of 2019, calling him one of the most prominent Muslim leaders in higher education today. As a Muslim-American imam and one of the few scholars bridging faith, ethics, and public policy, Abdullah offers the academic world an important element of intellectual, ethnic, religious and cultural diversity.

## John Palfrey



John Palfrey is President of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, one of the nation's largest philanthropies. He is a well-respected educator, author, legal scholar, and innovator with expertise in how new media is changing learning, education, and other institutions.

Prior to joining the Foundation, John served as Head of School at Phillips Academy, Andover. During his tenure, he oversaw the creation of the Tang Institute at Andover, which seeks to reform and democratize excellent teaching and learning. John was the Henry N. Ess III Professor of Law and Vice Dean for Library and Information Resources at Harvard Law School. John is the board chair of the United States Impact Investing Alliance and serves on the board of the Fidelity Non-Profit Management Foundation. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences and serves on the governance council. He is the former board chair of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

From 2002 to 2008, John served as Executive Director of the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society, which seeks to explore and understand cyberspace. He is founding Board Chair of the Digital Public Library of America and is the former Board Chair of LRNG, a nonprofit launched and supported by MacArthur.

John is the author or coauthor of several books, including [Safe Spaces, Brave Spaces: Diversity and Free Expression in Education](#) and [Born Digital: How Children Grow Up in a Digital Age](#). John holds a J.D. from Harvard Law School, an M.Phil. from the University of Cambridge, and an A.B. from Harvard College.