

## **PETER H. QUIMBY, PH.D.**

### **STATEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

Those who dedicate themselves to the mission of boarding and day schools understand something that is easily forgotten in other educational settings; many of the most important lessons that students learn take place in interactions outside the classroom. In conversations with teachers and friends in the dining hall, with classmates working on a theatrical production or a community service project, and with coaches on the playing field, students learn about who they are and make decisions about how they want to relate to the world around them. By living on campus and interacting with students in situations well beyond the classroom, teachers in a boarding school setting have the opportunity to nurture young people as they mature into thoughtful, responsible adults. When my family and I lived in a residential college setting at Yale University, we had a clear sense that my work was part of our way of life. Meals in the dining hall were never just about eating. They were opportunities for us as a family to integrate into a broader communal fabric. The college community benefitted from our presence, and I know that my children and wife drew as much energy from the experience as I did. As I look forward to my new role at The Governor's Academy, what I am excited about most is the chance to join a community in which all members encourage each other to develop their talents to a degree they might not have thought possible.

While I love administrative challenges and take great personal satisfaction from leading institutions to achieve their goals, what I enjoy most about working in the field of education is interacting with students. In recent years my work has taken me away from the kinds of direct conversations with students on which I thrive. I dearly miss having regular talks with students about issues that matter to them. I also miss having fun with students, playing intramural hockey or ultimate Frisbee, celebrating with a team after a big win, emceeding the talent show, or delivering candy (assisted by one of our three retrievers!) to students studying for exams. In short, I miss being at home with students. My return to Governor's will mark a return to an emphasis on students as a priority in my personal and professional life.

Much has been made in recent years of the burgeoning residential college movement in higher education. As I have listened to these conversations, I have been struck by two related points: first, that schools like Governor's have for many decades been creating just the kind of environment that many colleges and universities are now seeking to emulate; and second, that many independent schools are already doing a better job fostering this kind of environment than the best colleges. As much as residential colleges can offer students a holistic, well-rounded experience, boarding and day schools can have an even greater impact on the development of young people—both intellectually and emotionally. I am eager to return to this work at Governor's.

When I was the dean of Davenport College at Yale, I enjoyed the immense satisfaction of knowing everyone in the community—dining hall workers, students, custodians, faculty members, and groundskeepers—and worked to create a spirit of common purpose. Where I am in my element, as a teacher, mentor, and administrator, is in a situation where I can work across all manner of boundaries to create a community in which learning can thrive. From consoling a

homesick student and reaching out to a dining hall worker whose husband is ill, to celebrating with a colleague who has just given birth, I find tremendous fulfillment in being in touch with people. What I have come to realize is that I care more about creating and sustaining caring communities than I do about solving administrative challenges for their own sake. Most simply put, I miss working with young people and I miss the feeling of satisfaction that comes from knowing that I am making a concrete difference in the lives of others.

While there is no question that students undergo significant growth in college, I believe that their most formative years are in secondary school. For the most part, when students arrive on a college campus, they have some sense of who they are and who they would like to become. Teachers in a boarding school environment have the opportunity, indeed, the responsibility, to guide children through the challenges of adolescence, and to shape their character in a way that is much less possible in a college setting. I have long believed that independent schools offer a unique educational environment, and I relish this opportunity to lead such a community forward.