



St. Thomas High School

Tom Walsh

Dear Members of the St. Thomas High School Community:

I am deeply honored to be selected as a finalist and look forward to learning more about your school community, the Congregation of St. Basil and the Basilian Fathers, and the greater Houston area. I have greatly enjoyed coming to know the school at an introductory level from afar and am eager to experience the ethos of the community firsthand in the coming weeks. Education and spirituality have been central to my life - in different measures - from my schoolboy days at St. Thomas Aquinas Grammar School through my three-plus decades as an independent school teacher, advisor, coach, and administrator. The possibility of unifying those elements in a supportive, guiding role as an academic leader at St. Thomas High School – for the betterment of the students, their families, and the faith – energizes and excites me at this point in my professional career.

Current Career Situation

I currently serve my alma mater, Roxbury Latin School, in the role of director of college guidance. In this post, I oversee the entire college guidance function for this established, boys, independent, day school. From guiding the students through their respective college searches, to educating parents about the current realities of the selective college admissions landscape, to serving as a liaison and advocate with college admissions representatives, my days are filled with encouraging exploration, accentuating strengths, acknowledging weaknesses, managing expectations, considering curricular enhancements, striving to streamline our process, and reiterating the mantra: Match matters most! I also teach a yearlong section of Latin; my focus for several years has been the second year of a two-year accelerated sequence intended for boys who did not enter Roxbury Latin in Grade 7. First, we complete the grammatical structure of the language; then, we consider a range of authors, culminating with a consideration of highlights of Book II of Vergil's *Aeneid*. My job description also includes serving as the school's coordinator of services for students with disabilities (SSD), attending Curriculum Committee meetings, working on other committees on an ad-hoc basis, and reporting directly to the Board of Trustees. Always believing that the best teaching happens *in situ*, I have helped lead student trips to Italy and Spain.

Prior to This

Prior to returning to Roxbury Latin, I spent 19 wonderful years at the Rivers School (Weston, MA), serving in a number of different roles. I grew and evolved as a teacher at Rivers, gaining expertise in methodology (e.g., variable modes of presentation and assessment) and pedagogy (e.g., addressing disparate learning styles). Beyond teaching all levels of Latin, during my tenure I was dean of the 7th and 10th grades, director of admissions, chair of the language department, first-ever associate director of college counseling, chaired the discipline committee, served on numerous committees, and coached football, basketball, and lacrosse at the varsity level. Among my most memorable accomplishments, I would list: leading the school's move into coeducation; successfully authoring a grant for the installation of a language lab; adding Spanish to my teaching repertoire; leading student trips to England, Spain, and Québec; contributing facets to the college-counseling experience and helping to expand the matriculation list. I will always be grateful to Rivers for allowing me to test myself in so many different areas of school life.

Personal, Education, Family

I am a native Bostonian – bringing with me all the pride and baggage that designation entails! An only child, son of a Boston police officer and hospital admissions staffer, I was raised in a multi-generation, extended family – with both grandmothers and two older cousins – sharing a typical two-family home in Jamaica Plain. Neither of my parents attended college; it was a triumphal moment for them when I matriculated at Bowdoin College after spending my middle and high school years at Roxbury Latin – another perpetual source of parental pride. They always encouraged, never disparaged. They valued education and appreciated the relationships I formed with friends and faculty at RL. All they ever asked was that I try to do my best. Their example has informed and inspired my teaching and parenting to this day. It was striving to do my best that allowed me to complete my Master’s degree at Dartmouth College during several summers of juggling work, family, and academic commitments.

I married Susan Duffy, a longtime friend and now my longtime best friend, in 1991. We are raising two children without the benefit of a manual and are thankful that both Julia and Edward are healthy, happy, and heading forward on their respective paths. We have been assisted in our parenting by an incredibly supportive network of family members, including our respective mothers and Susan’s numerous siblings. The gift of family is one of God’s greatest blessings.

I have much for which to be grateful and that is why I have found myself returning with more fervor to the faith of my childhood and the faith of my fathers in recent years. I have wandered, wavered, and wondered in the past. In the end, the imprint and impact of my parents and the Sisters of St. Joseph have been more influential than I could have ever imagined. Now, more than ever, my Catholicism is an important part of my self-definition.

Closing Comment

Since first reading about the opportunity at St. Thomas High School, I have been quite intrigued. The combination of a high-caliber academic institution and the Basilian tradition speaks to me as an educator and a Catholic. I am drawn to the Basilian community at St. Thomas and the values of goodness, discipline, and knowledge the order espouses. The combination of zeal required to commit to missionary work and the humility which grounds the Basilians inspires me. As we read in Micah, “...and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (6:8) It appears to me that the community of St. Thomas strives toward these goals. I believe that I could help contribute to the school on its path toward justice, kindness, and humility in service of others and our God. Together - with patience, persistence, and devotion - I am confident that we can make progress in our shared journey.

Thank you for your interest in my candidacy and your consideration of my qualifications.

Tom Walsh
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