



To: All Sullins Families
From: Ronald P. Sykes, Interim Head of School
Re: Catching Up

My first official day at Sullins Academy was August 14, and everything since has happened at warp speed. Wow, what a month! I thought I would give you a brief update and share my impressions of the first month.

The good news is that we opened school with an increase in our student body over last year! Opening day enrollment was 227 and as I write this we have continued to grow. We are not a school with waiting lists so we still have opportunities for enrolling in most areas. Tell your friends why you have chosen to invest in a Sullins Academy education and invite them to contact Mrs. Becca Powers at 276-669-4101 to schedule a visit or gather more information.

Over the years, I have learned that one measure of an excellent school is the stability of its faculty. The Sullins Academy faculty is stable and experienced. Nevertheless, each year will bring new faces. New to Sullins this year are:

1. Amanda Sills – Preschool 3's Aide and Children's Center – Amanda holds a B.B.A. from King College and is currently completing her Masters in Counseling at Liberty University.
2. Summer Brunty – Jr. Kindergarten – Summer graduated from Lee University with a B.A. After working three years in the business world she returned for a Masters in Teaching. She brings six years elementary teaching. Two of her three children are attending Sullins Academy.
3. Lucinda Taylor – 1st grade – Lucinda received both her B.A. and her Masters from King College. She has taught 4 ½ years in the regions public schools.
4. Shannon Sanders – 3rd grade – Shannon earned her Masters at Milligan College and has taught at-risk children and last year public kindergarten.
5. Taryn Powers – Middle School Math – Taryn received a B.S. in Middle School Education from Georgia Southern. She has taught middle school math for the past four years in Statesboro, GA at a charter school.
6. Joshua Rudd – Middle School Science – Joshua earned his Masters in Biology from ETSU. Most recently he taught Biology, Anatomy and Physiology at Highlands and Northeast State.

7. Amy Merrihue – Algebra and Geometry – Amy received her B.S. in Special Education from Lesley College, her Masters in Curriculum and Instruction from Tusculum and earned her Ed.S. degree from the University of Virginia. Amy brings 26 years of classroom experience along with 11 years as Math Supervisor for Washington County Schools. She is a past president of the Virginia Council of Teachers of Mathematics and serves as adjunct faculty for U.Va. and Highlands Community College.
8. Kim Long – Preschool 3's Aide – Kim has an A.S. degree in Computer Information Systems from Virginia Highlands Community College. She was General Manager and Operator of Sonic CD's & Cassettes for 15 years. She has been Co-Commander of the Awana Program at Euclid Avenue Baptist Church for 16 years. The program is for ages 3 years – 6th grade. She has also been a substitute for Sullins Academy for 2 years.

We welcome each of them as they have made a commitment to provide excellence in teaching our children.

I also believe a measure of a school of excellence is the culture seen everyday in the halls and in the classrooms. I am happy to report that Sullins Academy has succeeded in building a wonderful learning environment! I have served on accrediting committee in numerous Virginia independent schools. Our school rates at the top for the culture and environment I have observed. Last week at the parent meeting I used the words family school. Sullins is to be complimented in having successfully teamed students, faculty and parents for a positive learning experience.

After four weeks, I am elated to be serving as Interim Head of School. I will look forward to seeing each month unfold. Because I will have a "fresh set of eyes" I will continue to update you on the strengths I observe as well as areas in which we can continue to refine and improve our programs.

My wife Jane and I thank you for your encouraging welcome as we have become Sullins Academy Eagles.

Go Eagles!

Ron Sykes