

Barrington 220 Welcomes Fine Arts Director

The Barrington area community has always valued fine arts education in its schools. Student theater and musical performances bring people together under one roof, or outside with talent presented here at home, at America's White House, or overseas. Visual artists in Barrington schools receive hands-on training, expert feedback, and a place to show their work. Elementary students develop confidence and fine motor skills through the arts.

Beginning this fall, fine art programming will be aligned at all grade levels under the leadership of Brigid Tileston, the District Director of Fine, Visual, and Performing Arts, who joined the Barrington 220 staff on July 1, 2015. This position oversees fine arts instruction at all grade levels, and takes over responsibilities formerly held by the Barrington High School Fine Arts Department Chair.

Quintessential Barrington asked Brigid Tileston about her new role and professional experience.



Brigid Tileston (left) interacts with a student during her final exam in painting.

QB: What does the Director of Fine, Visual, and Performing Arts position entail?

BT: The director of arts position was created as a means to both advocate for the arts and to align the fine, visual, and performing arts for grades pre-K through high school. I believe that the creation of this position demonstrates the respect that the district and board of education have for the arts. To have a coordinator for the arts is both unique and forward-thinking. In my new position, I look forward to advocating and supporting the various arts programs, and to continue a tradition of excellence while fine-tuning any areas of need. Because Barrington 220 is a unit district, I would like to forge strong connections between all grade levels. I will tap into the incredible talent of the students, the staff, and the greater community in order to make our arts program even stronger and more cohesive.

QB: Tell us about your experience and professional background.

BT: I taught English and Theatre Arts for 10 years, first at Brookfield Central High School, and then

at Neuqua Valley High School in Naperville. During my first 10 years of teaching, I directed more than 30 theater productions. I also oversaw an expansive theater program as the artistic director of Neuqua Theatre, coordinating six productions per year. Some of my favorite experiences were directing “Les Miserables,” “Pirates of Penzance,” and “Damn Yankees.” I also greatly enjoyed serving as the artistic designer for productions that included

“Charlie and the Chocolate Factory,” and “The Wizard of Oz.” During my time at Neuqua, I was able to initiate strong connections between the elementary and high school arts programs, which I hope to do in Barrington, as well.

QB: What job position brought you closer to the Barrington area?

BT: In 2009, I moved to District 211 where I served as the English Department Chair at Fremd High School in Palatine for three years. As the English Chair, I was able to work with a creative department in a high-achieving community. I particularly enjoyed working on Fremd’s Writers Week, which bridges writing and performance. For the last three years, I have worked as an assistant principal at Hoffman Estates High School in District 211. At Hoffman, I have enjoyed working with an incredibly creative staff to meet academic and behavioral needs of our diverse student body. My leadership experiences at both Fremd and Hoffman have been invaluable; however, I am greatly looking forward to returning to the arts in this new position.



Hough Street School displays its student artwork prominently on the wall.



The BHS Marching Band entertains crowds during a recent Homecoming parade.

QB: *What attracted you to the District 220 position?*

BT: I love the idea of being an advocate for the arts, district-wide. As a child, I learned so much from being involved artistically: how to take risks, how to problem-solve, how to be a part of a community outside of just myself, how to understand the nuances of the human experience, and how to form an argument through creative expression. Specifically, I learned fractions through music, history through artistic movements, and, in general, became more well-rounded. The arts are incredibly important to students at every age. Young children learn to gain confidence in themselves, gain self-control, and develop fine motor skills through music, art, and performance. This position enables me to advocate for the importance of the arts within a wonderful district, and to strengthen the great programs already in existence. Additionally, I was attracted to the elementary and middle school aspects of the position because they build a foundation for the capstone programs at the high school level.

QB: *What do you hope to accomplish during your first year on the job with Barrington 220?*

BT: I hope to forge strong relationships and connections with staff, students, and community members. I would like to strengthen curriculum and program alignment from the early grades through high school. In general, I would like to assess strengths and areas of need across the district, and implement a plan for further developing our programs through the involvement of all of our stakeholders. I would also like to work with staff and students to demonstrate awareness that we cannot view the arts in a vacuum. We live in an incredibly visual society, and as educators, we need to teach our students how we are manipulated by visuals, music, and performance.

QB: *Why do you think Barrington 220 will benefit from having a district-wide fine arts director?*

BT: The creation of the fine arts director position will help to develop cohesiveness in terms of both curriculum and community. Having one person in the key roles of problem-solver, advocate, and community-builder will strengthen our already impressive arts programs. U



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