

## PRESS RELEASE

### GRACE ACADEMY ANNOUNCES DEPARTURE OF HEAD OF SCHOOL MATTHEW FITZSIMONS AT END OF 21-22 ACADEMIC YEAR, LEAVING A LEGACY OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

*Board of Directors launches search for new Head of School*

HARTFORD, Conn., February 9, 2022 - Grace Academy, an independent, tuition-free middle school for girls in grades 5-8 from underserved families in the city of Hartford, announced today that Matthew Fitzsimons, head of school, will be leaving the organization at the end of the 2021-2022 academic year after thirteen years of extraordinary service. Fitzsimons leaves Grace to begin work to found a second school in Bridgeport, another city in need of a tuition-free middle school for underserved students.

“Matt has been an inspirational leader for Grace Academy,” said Michael Bergin, chair of the Grace Academy Board of Directors. “As our Founding Head of School, his steadfast belief in the power of education to break the cycle of urban poverty has been our North star. Matt’s contributions have been significant and enduring. As Head of School, he has helped girls from low-income families receive the high-quality education and ongoing support needed to go on to successfully complete demanding high school and college programs. We are grateful for Matt’s leadership and indelible impact on our school and community.”

Fitzsimons leaves a legacy of accomplishments, including a curriculum that has enabled graduates to attend an impressive roster of college preparatory schools, a graduate support program that monitors and supports graduates through high school and college, the transition to virtual learning during the early days of the pandemic, and the recent relocation of the school to its new location at 457 Main Street in Hartford.

Of his time at Grace Academy, Fitzsimons said, “Working with the faculty, students, families and staff at Grace Academy has been a privilege. I am so grateful to all who have shared this journey with me and for the support of the donors, volunteers, board members, mentors and advisors who have contributed their time and treasure to make Grace Academy a success. I am inspired every day by the dedication of our faculty and staff and the commitment of our parents to ensure our students achieve the education needed to achieve their full potential.”

The Grace Academy Board of Directors has formed a Search Committee comprising board members and faculty, chaired by Kathleen Bromage, Grace Academy Board member and Treasurer, to begin the search for a new Head of School. For more information about the search process, please visit Grace Academy’s web site at <https://www.graceacademyhartford.org>

“We are confident that Grace Academy’s inspiring mission, strong financial position, exceptional faculty and staff, committed Board of Trustees and loyal donors, will enable us to attract several qualified candidates from which to choose”, said Bergin.

#### **ABOUT GRACE ACADEMY**

Grace Academy is a Hartford-based tuition-free middle school for girls in grades 5-8. The school was founded in 2010 to provide girls from impoverished neighborhoods with a high-quality education. Modeled after the NativityMiguel Network of Schools, Grace Academy offers small class sizes, an extended school day, significant parental involvement, and a highly personal approach to education which encourages independent thinking and responsible decision making. For more information about Grace Academy, visit <https://www.graceacademyhartford.org>