

## **Ruth Bammes – Academic Dean**

Ruth Bammes is Topeka Collegiate's first Academic Dean, named to the position in the fall of 2013. Before moving into this administrative role, Ruth spent 30 years in the classroom, mostly teaching second graders. Now she helps oversee a wide variety of areas, including curriculum, teacher hiring and evaluation, parent and faculty communication, student discipline, class schedules and academic progress.

The transition from classroom teacher to Academic Dean has brought challenge and discovery for this lifelong learner. "I appreciate the opportunity to leap into something new," she says. "I enjoy seeing the bigger picture. For example, I have been doing a lot more reading about broader curricular areas, current issues in education, and best practices in teaching and working with children and families."

Ruth has participated in a variety of webinars through our school's accrediting organization, the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and others. One recent professional development opportunity led her to an in-depth look at reading. Another explored the social and emotional development of middle school age students and how to help them work through conflict. "This gave me valuable new insights for working with students," she explains.

In addition to the new things she has learned, Ruth's many years of teaching experience stand her in good stead. "I have a pretty good idea of what is normal-student-pushing-the-limits behavior and what needs to be dealt with more strongly," she says. Her philosophy for helping students hasn't changed, regardless of their age. "I talk to them first, and listen to their side of the story so they know they're being heard. Then I help them focus on what they can do differently because they're the only person they can control. My goal is to try to get students to take responsibility. That's the way to help them grow."

One unexpected benefit Ruth has experienced as Academic Dean is a new perspective. "I see the school with new eyes, because I'm looking at it in broader, bigger ways," she observes. "There are a lot of strengths and great things going on that I didn't know about!"