



CN 5339
Princeton, NJ 08543
www.admission.org
609.683.4440

Tommy Adams, Mercersburg Academy's Assistant Head of School for Enrollment, Receives SSATB Bretnall Award



Bretnall award winner Tommy Adams (center) with SSATB Board Chair Kilian Forgas (l) and SSATB Executive Director Heather Hoerle(r), Photo credit: Jenna Dosch photography.

September 18, 2015, Las Vegas, NV: Tommy Adams, Assistant Head of School for Enrollment at Mercersburg Academy (PA), received the William B. Bretnall Award from the Secondary School Admission Test Board (SSATB) at a recent convention in Las Vegas.

The Bretnall Award, named for distinguished educator and first SSATB Program Director William B. Bretnall, is given each year to a leader and educator who has made significant contributions to the field of admission. This prestigious national award was first presented in 1982.

SSATB Executive Director Heather Hoerle stated, "Tommy's deep commitment to this profession and the people who serve in it, as well as those it serves, is palpable. He is the embodiment of leadership with a heart and an example to all who seek to enrich both the career of enrollment management and the wellbeing of the independent school community. Tommy is an inspiration."

Suzanne Walker Buck, Rector at Chatham Hall (VA), presented the award to Mr. Adams, saying “There is much to appreciate about Tommy, including his authentic interest in ideas. Talk to him about a concept and he investigates it thoroughly. He asks about further reading, research, and thoughts on how to best include others in the conversation. After you introduce him to the work of a thought leader like Brene Brown, two months later, he calls you to share his takeaways from her book. He tells you how he has applied her concepts to his work with his team. He then takes it one step further to suggest that the content needs to be part of a conference presentation. Not to worry, he will draft the proposal. As you can see, Tommy converts ideas into action.”

When he took to the podium to accept his award, Adams spoke of the importance of teamwork and his gratitude to have the opportunity to work in tandem with his colleagues.

Tommy’s ties to the independent school world are broad and deep. As an elementary and middle school student, he attended East Woods in Long Island, NY. He graduated from Avon Old Farms and upon earning a bachelor’s degree from Roanoke College in Virginia, Tommy joined the independent school world as a teacher and soon became an admission professional. He has worked at a variety of schools including Storm King and The Gunnery, and currently serves as the Assistant Head of School for Enrollment at Mercersburg Academy (PA). He holds a Master’s Degree of Science in Education with a focus on Educational Leadership from the University of Pennsylvania. He is the director of the newly-formed Erdmann Institute for Enrollment Leadership and was a longtime fellow at its predecessor, The Essex Institute. Tommy has been a regular presenter at national meetings for TABS and SSATB, is a current member of the ASSIST School Retention Task Force, and serves on Mercersburg’s Accreditation for Growth Planning Committee.