

Jeannette LutterGardella

Jeannette began her career in education as a counselor for a residential program serving children and youth from rural Appalachia and New York City, focusing on environmental education. She then became the year-round leadership training coordinator for the 14-18 year-old program, before going back to school for her M.Ed.

Jeannette's classroom experience includes being a 7th grade reading teacher and a 6th grade language arts and social studies teacher, in the Stamford, CT public schools. Early in Jeannette's teaching career she was selected to be an instructional coordinator for one of the first school readiness programs in the country, both teaching children and coaching teachers, in providing three and four year olds, of all economic levels, with a high quality preschool experience. It was an opportunity of a lifetime to be able to be with her young daughter while doing work that was inspiring and fulfilling.

During that time, Jeannette was able to combine her passion for middle school students and literacy. She created an early childhood literacy program "Let the Circle Be Unbroken", providing middle school students the tools and skills to enable them to read to preschoolers to increase their vocabulary, while increasing their own reading fluency. This led to the creation of a middle school project-based community service model for middle school summer school students. Jeannette sought out and collaborated with community agencies; outlined project frameworks and goals; aligned project activities with language-arts curriculum; and supervised, assigned and scheduled 23 project teachers and 3 reading teachers per-project group.

Jeannette has worked at Friends School of Minnesota since 2006, as the Assistant Head of School. As Assistant Head of School, Jeannette prepares the master schedule, ensuring that the developmental needs of children and professional needs of faculty are both met and respected. She oversees assessment, including managing the creation and adoption of a new benchmark assessment system for middle school. She has worked to improve the identification, communication, and documentation of special learning needs, by actively involving teachers, parents, students and other experts. She increased the efficiency of high school placement events, communications, and processes. As the coordinator of faculty training, Jeannette launched and continues to organize professional development opportunities for cohorts of faculty. She was the lead administrator in bringing Healing Roots to FSM. Healing Roots provides effective and comprehensive trainings for understanding whiteness, working respectfully across cultures, and helping individuals and organizations to become agents of positive change. Jeannette is committed, heart and soul, to ensuring this is at the forefront of FSM's work now and into the future.

Jeannette created a highly successful, weekly, all-school recess for K-8 students, strengthening the buddies program of partnering older and younger students to learn and play together. Last year Jeannette facilitated and supported students' excitement and curiosity, regarding recent MN environmental regulations. Jeannette engaged guest speakers and politicians to discuss social action, and supported students in bridging the intersection of social action and Quaker values, culminating in a trip to the state capitol.

In 2016 Jeannette was asked to be a part of an interim leadership team for six months, to help Friends School of Minnesota during a time of transition. Jeannette dedicated herself to maintaining and strengthening the School's commitment to the philosophy and practice of progressive education, while upholding the School's mission and Quaker values. Jeannette led the effort to create school-wide consensus, for engaging with the Friends Council on Education membership renewal process, a self-study process for renewing and strengthening our Quaker identity. She served on two standing committee's over the years: Equity and Justice, and, currently, CoT. Last year, she attended finance committee meetings, to familiarize herself more with the budget cycle and financial management of the school, as well as attending non-profit financial management workshops.

Jeannette has attended the National Association of Independent Schools' Diversity Institute and focuses her professional development on special education, progressive education and Quaker pedagogy. She has also participated in the University of Minnesota's Urban Leadership Academy. It has also been Jeannette's privilege to play a leadership role in two cycles of the ISACS accreditation process. She is also a trained Study Circles facilitator, having worked with groups on sustainability and family literacy. Recently, Jeannette has been selected to be a part of Friends Council on Education 2017-2019 Leadership Cohort.

Jeannette has a B.A. in liberal arts and a M.Ed. from the University of Bridgeport. In 1987, Jeannette was awarded a Halsey International Language scholarship and studied at the University of Siena, Italy. Jeannette's daughter is now twenty-one and an alumna of Friends School of MN. Her son is a 7th grader following in his sister footsteps. Jeannette and her family live in Minneapolis. She enjoys spending time with her family, cooking, reading, biking and taking long walks in nature.