

## **Greetings, Bowen Alumni!**

My name is Jennifer Kirmes and I was just appointed as principal of the newly re-consolidated Bowen High School. I am absolutely thrilled to have the opportunity to lead the work of revitalizing Bowen High School and promise you that I will work tirelessly until Bowen provides excellent educational opportunities to all of the residents of South Chicago and is a model neighborhood school for our city and nation.

I began my career in education as a math and science teacher in southeast Washington, DC. From there, I moved to Chicago and became a program director for Teach For America. My work as a program director took me to more than 100 high school classrooms in Chicago and Gary, where I served as an instructional coach and mentor for first and second year teachers. In January of 2010, I joined the Urban Education Leadership Program at UIC and in the fall of 2010 was placed in a Principal Residency at Wells Community Academy. Because of what I accomplished at Wells, when my residency ended, I was named an Assistant Principal and reminded in that role until I was called to Bowen.

Though I was not at Wells long, the results of my work there were significant: during my year there, the school moved from level 3 status (poor performance) to level 2 status (good performance) on the Chicago Public School High School Performance Policy. I led the climate team, which increased attendance by more than 7 percentage points, decreased student misconducts by more than 20% and cut tardiness to school by more than half. I also worked with departments and teachers to increase academic achievement: the average ACT composite went up almost a full point, and the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards in reading, math, and science nearly doubled. Under my leadership, post-secondary options for students were increased through systematic application and FAFSA completion tracking and increased parent involvement in the college application process. Just before I left Wells, I designed and monitored the implementation of a new process which increased student access to the courses they needed to get on-track for graduation.

I am a well-rounded leader with an ambitious vision for Bowen: I want it to become a school that you are more proud than ever to call your alma mater, a school that meets the social and academic needs of all of its students and pushes all students to graduate and to be college and career ready when they do. I am committed to Bowen and to doing whatever it takes to make it the best neighborhood school in the city.

I am looking forward to working with you to achieve these ambitious goals and ask you, as alumni, to help me make it happen. I welcome alumni events like Homecoming, reunions and school tours and invite you to come to the school to meet the staff and to see the hard work we are doing. I am excited about what lies ahead of us and believe that if we work together we can make our school into the Bowen we all hope for. I appreciate your membership and participation in the Bowen High School Alumni Association, and welcome whatever donations of funding and time you can give to help us achieve the best Bowen yet.

Sincerely,

Jennifer L. Kirmes