

Susi Hochrein, Featured By Influential Women, Leads Sandia Prep's Middle School With Connection, Character, And Purpose

ALBUQUERQUE, NM, UNITED STATES, October 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Assistant Head of School for Middle School at Sandia Prep Builds a Culture of Belonging, Character, and Curiosity Rooted in Authentic Relationships With Students, Families, and Colleagues

Albuquerque, New Mexico – Susi Hochrein is the Assistant Head of School for Middle School at Sandia Prep in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where she oversees the middle school program. With nearly two decades of dedicated service to the institution, she has become a steady and trusted presence on campus, known for leading with warmth, high expectations, and an unwavering belief in the power of education to transform young lives. Susi



brings to her role a Bachelor's of Science in Education with an emphasis in mathematics, along with multiple leadership trainings and workshops. She is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools, and her school is accredited by the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest.

Susi began her career as a math teacher in the public school system before joining Sandia Prep, where she first taught mathematics full-time at both the middle and high school levels. She soon took on the role of grade-level lead and then became Dean of Students for seventh and eighth grade, a position she initially hesitated to accept because she had never pictured herself as an administrator. With encouragement from her husband, she went through the interview process and came to see the role as a chance to expand her classroom and reach more students, teachers, and families. After her first year as Dean, she realized that the community simply needed her to be herself, someone who could hold students to high standards while seeing

them for who they are. She now serves as Assistant Head of School for Middle School, stepping into this position in 2017. Each step has strengthened her conviction that true leaders serve and support others by giving them the resources they need to succeed.

Susi attributes her success to building authentic relationships with students, families, and colleagues. From her earliest days as a math teacher, she understood that real impact comes from genuine connection, and she has carried that belief into every leadership role she has held. Rather than directing families through difficult situations, she teams with them as a true partner, an approach that has earned their trust and allowed her to support students more effectively. Some of the most rewarding moments of her time as Dean came from working alongside parents to help their children understand, reflect, and take responsibility for their actions. Remaining true to who she is and bringing the relational spirit of the classroom into administration has been the foundation of everything she has accomplished.

The best career advice Susi has received came from her mentor, Bill Sinfield, who encouraged her never to be apologetic about who she is or how she leads. He empowered her to step into her role with confidence and to be a driving force for the school, guidance that gave her the courage to lead authentically and to trust the value of her own voice. For young women entering education, her advice is: lead with your heart, build on the strengths of those around you rather than focus on their weaknesses, take care of yourself so that you can take care of others, and be yourself. She encourages new educators to see students for who they truly are, meet them where they are, and hold high expectations, because students rise to the challenge when they know someone believes in them. She also urges them to stay collaborative, creative, and flexible, and to support students as whole people rather than only as learners. In her view, the relationships teachers build and the way they show up for children every day define their impact far more than any title or credential.

Looking at the broader field, Susi sees one of the greatest opportunities in education as creating and sustaining a genuine sense of belonging within school communities. Through the Challenge Success partnership with Stanford University, her team has used surveys, fishbowl sessions, and targeted programs to strengthen community cohesion and keep students at the center of the experience. She also sees great promise in integrating community service meaningfully into the curriculum, not as an add-on but as a core part of how students learn to engage with the world. Maintaining flexibility in how and what schools teach is equally essential to her, as students' needs continue to evolve.

Relationships, empowerment, and belonging sit at the heart of everything Susi does. She is deeply committed to helping students discover their strengths and find their voice, believing that when young people feel truly seen and heard, they are inspired to be their very best. Collaboration matters just as much to her. She does not see herself as someone who has all the answers, but as a partner to families and colleagues as they navigate challenges together. Whatever brings someone to her office, she wants them to leave knowing they were seen, cared for, and valued.

Service is a defining thread of Susi's work, both at Sandia Prep and across Albuquerque. She created a partnership with Los Ranchos Elementary, a school just down the road from Sandia Prep, beginning with 10 to 15 students from her Helping Hands community service club who worked with third graders on reading literacy and math skills. The program has since grown to 70 of her students visiting Los Ranchos once or twice a month to support students in kindergarten through third grade. Beyond campus, she is involved with community organizations including Carrie Tingley Hospital, the University of New Mexico, Joy Junction, PB&J, Roadrunner Food Bank, and Watermelon Mountain Ranch. She has also shared her leadership journey in an article published through Influential Women, reflecting on her path from math teacher to educational leader.

Even after many years at Sandia Prep, Susi still smiles each time her key unlocks her office door. Although her roles have changed, the compassion and kindness of the Prep community have remained constant, and she remains committed to ongoing professional development so she can model a commitment to growth for students and teachers alike. Her hope is to help them discover strengths within themselves they never knew were possible, just as Sandia Prep once helped her discover her own. Guided by empowerment, authenticity, and connection, Susi Hochrein shows what it means to lead with heart and purpose, shaping both the academic journeys of her students and the character they carry long after they leave Sandia Prep.

Learn More about Susi Hochrein:

Through her Influential Women profile: <https://influentialwomen.com/connect/susi-hochrein>

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