



December 14, 2017

Greetings Gateway Families,

We are writing today to share some exciting news about our school campus.

The lease on our current site comes to an end in 2019. The Campus Task Force has been working for nine years to identify and secure the best property for the future of our school. During discussion with our current landlords and due diligence on our Eucalyptus Avenue property, it has become evident that the level of investment our current building requires to be a viable option for our future is beyond our landlord's capacity. As a result, our landlords have withdrawn from negotiations and are exploring other options for this property.

We now have an excellent opportunity that we are delighted to share with you. The Campus Task Force assessed a number of properties county-wide, and after careful consideration, it identified the Natural Bridges campus as a great choice for Gateway. Natural Bridges is an existing, unoccupied school site only a mile away from our current campus, which offers numerous advantages.

The Board of Trustees directed the Gateway administrative team to enter into negotiations with Santa Cruz City Schools (SCCS), who own the Natural Bridges property. The negotiations have been successful and we are moving towards an agreement in January.

The Natural Bridges site represents an opportunity to locate our exceptional K-8 program on a property which was built to be a school. The site has considerably more classroom space, extensive fields, communal areas for collaboration, a covered outdoor eating area, and a gym where our community can come together. There is ample space to design and build a new Life Lab, expand the Discovery Center, and develop the campus to support our unique educational programs. City Schools has already assigned funds to help improve the facility, including repairs to the parking lot, replacing the roof, improvements to the gym, repainting inside and outside, and other general repairs and replacement.

We share your affection for our current site, and assure you that this decision has been made after extensive research and a great deal of careful consideration. Our administrative team has already begun planning to make the move as seamless as possible. Our teachers recently toured the site and are excited at the possibilities it presents for their programs. This move will be an extraordinary opportunity for our whole community to come together to envision a beautiful environment where our children can play, learn, create and grow.

As parents ourselves, we know how important Gateway School is to your family, and recognize that you may have many questions. We have addressed what we think will be the most frequently asked questions below. Starting today, our Board of Trustees will begin calling each family to answer questions and discuss this news. We will also have Trustees available at school at pick-up and drop-off, and we welcome the opportunity to answer your questions.

The heart of Gateway lives in its students, our amazing faculty, and the families who entrust this special school to nurture and educate their children. In the weeks and months ahead we look forward to sharing more with you, and invite you to engage with us in shaping this exciting new phase of our school's story.

Warm regards,

Paula Grainger
President, Board of Trustees

Dr. Zachary Roberts
Head of School

Q & A FOR GATEWAY FAMILIES

Q. 1 - How long has this issue been in the works?

The New Campus Task Force has been working for nine years to identify and secure the best home for our school. We've looked at locations from Davenport to Aptos, visited other schools to consider what we might build from scratch, and submitted letters of intent on other properties. Our negotiations with City Schools began this fall and we have had to maintain a certain level of confidentiality thus far. We have reached a point in the negotiations where we feel confident we can share concrete information about what is happening and what comes next.

Q. 2 – Can we stay at the current campus or purchase the existing building?

We've attempted to purchase our current campus twice, but the Oblates declined to sell it. Our landlords have halted our negotiations around a long-term lease, so that they can consider all of their options, but we do not anticipate a decision in the near future. The main building is now 60 years old, and the level of investment and repair necessary to improve the existing facility is beyond their capacity.

Q. 3 – Do we have more time to consider our options?

We have been working on this issue for nine years and we are very fortunate that the Natural Bridges site is currently available. We've done our due diligence and are very confident this is an excellent opportunity for Gateway. If we pass on this opportunity now, City Schools will use the site for administrative purposes and the campus will no longer be available.

Q. 4 – Is the faculty aware of this change?

They are aware and excited. Zaq led them on a 'field trip' to Natural Bridges on Dec. 5, and they are already engaged in brainstorming ideas for how our programs will flourish there.

Q. 5 – How long is the agreement?

The agreement is for 10 years and starts with the 2018-2019 school year. We are optimistic that we could stay on the Natural Bridges campus for longer if we want to.

Q. 6 – What condition is the Natural Bridges campus currently in?

The Board of Trustees, administration and faculty have all toured the site in recent weeks to make sure we have a full understanding of the current condition. The school certainly needs some work, but fortunately City Schools has already assigned funds to help improve the facility from an infrastructure standpoint. These improvements include repairing the parking lot, replacing the roof, improvements to the gym, painting inside and outside of buildings as well as general repairs and replacement of carpet, windows, cabinets, lighting, etc. We will also have the opportunity to make additional improvements such as installing play structures and a Life Lab. This will be less expensive than making the necessary repairs to our existing campus.

Q. 7 – What will be the impacts to Life Lab, Discovery Center and other essential programs?

The Natural Bridges campus is considerably larger than our existing site and has many large indoor and outdoor spaces where our specialist teachers can expand their amazing programs.

Q. 8 - Will this move raise tuition and fees?

The move itself will not cause an increase in tuition and fees. As you know tuition and fees increase so the school can continue to offer competitive salaries and benefits to faculty, and to support our programs, but this move will not necessitate an increase.

Q. 9 – When will the school move to the Natural Bridges campus?

We are fortunate to have the option to move for either the 2018 or 2019 school year. Once the agreement with City Schools is finalized in January, we will immediately begin working to determine the best timing for the move.

Q. 10 – What are the next steps and timeline?

Right now, our primary focus is finalizing terms with City Schools. In January, our board and City Schools board will formally agree to the terms. At present, we are also focused on notifying all Gateway families and stakeholders so they are aware of the transition. Once the agreement is finalized, we will work on a timeline and next steps to ensure the move is as seamless as possible.

Q. 11 – How can I get more information and stay informed about this?

We will be working hard to keep everyone up to date throughout this process. Right now, our focus is on notifying all Gateway stakeholders and finalizing an agreement with City Schools. Once we finalize an agreement, we will start planning the transition, and we will keep everyone up to date on all the details. If you would like to discuss further, please email Paula Grainger, our Board Chair at lemonbalmonline@mac.com or call at (831) 818-5430.

