

Head of School Search Announcement

March 11, 2025

Dear Gateway School Community,

After a career in education spanning over 40 years, Laurie Gruhn has announced her well-earned retirement as Head of School at the end of the 2025-26 school year. Throughout what will be her six-year tenure, Laurie has advanced The Gateway School in innumerable ways. With her collaborative leadership style and ability to identify talent and devotion to Gateway, Laurie has been a dedicated leader, taking the helm at one of the most difficult times in education – the COVID years. We are grateful to Laurie and especially her Senior Administrative Team for successfully navigating the school through that historic time. They proved Gateway's nimbleness and resilience by delivering successful learning outcomes for our children.

In 2020, under Laurie's guidance, Gateway demonstrated its capacity to pivot and refocus attention to strengthening the school. The Board of Trustees and school leadership embarked on a five-year Strategic Plan intended to ensure Gateway continues to lead in its mission to transform the lives of bright students with language-based learning disabilities and attention deficits. Next year, Laurie will steer us into the final phase of that plan. One of her greatest achievements has been expanding Gateway's reach through a variety of marketing initiatives and positioning the school as a special education thought leader at local, state, and national conferences and workshops. It is, therefore, fitting that Laurie is our steward in this important milestone 60th anniversary year, celebrating Gateway's legacy as one of the earliest pioneers in New York City for language-based learning disabilities education.

Laurie's unique perspective and devotion as a former parent of a Gateway Alumna, a former Trustee, and now Head of School will be hard to replace. However, as we start the Head of School Search process, we are confident that The Gateway School's outstanding national reputation will attract highly qualified and exceptional candidates.

To lead this vital initiative, I am pleased to announce the appointment of Chris York as Chair of the Search Committee for our next Head of School. Chris is the parent of Vera (Class 622) and sits on the Finance and Enrollment, Retention & Marketing Committees on the Board of Trustees. We are fortunate to have Chris's leadership, strong analytical approach, and critical strategic skills to ensure this process is conducted at the highest caliber. You will hear from Chris later this week with more information about the search process.



I am also pleased to report that in addition to Chris and me, the following Trustees were appointed members of the Search Committee:

- Patrick Brennan – Parent to Colin (Bridge Program)
- Leslie de Oliveira – Parent to Bea (8th grade)
- Sandhya Espitia – Parent to Paloma (Class 618)
- Katherine Grier – Parent to Kate (Bridge Program)
- Jennifer Mitchell – Head of School, Village Community School (K-8)

An Advisory Committee of Faculty, Staff, and Administration will also be formed this spring. We are a small, tight-knit community, and as such, our search process will be comprehensive and inclusive to ensure that all voices can be heard. We will make sure the entire Gateway community has the opportunity to share its thoughts and ideas along the way.

This is an inspiring time for Gateway. The school is well-positioned. Our academic program is top-notch, admission inquiries are strong, and our finances are stable. Our next Head of School will be the beneficiary of the strong foundation that is in place, and they will have the opportunity to partner with the community, envisioning and creating strategic initiatives to drive our mission forward, and ensure we grow our reputation as thought leaders and vanguards of language-based learning differences.

Sincerely,

Polly Shih Brandmeyer
Chair, Board of Trustees