

Gateway Leadership Update: Interim Head of School Named

August 1, 2025

Dear Gateway Community,

I hope this message finds you well, and you are enjoying the summer season. I write to share important news about a leadership transition and an update about our Head of School search.

At the end of June, Laurie Gruhn approached the Board about accelerating her retirement timeline to spend more time with her family and embrace the next chapter of her life. Since the Board had already been collaborating closely with John Farber of RG175 on our search for a permanent Head of School, we were in an excellent position to respond strategically to this request.

With our search framework already established and candidate qualifications clearly defined, we were able to expand our efforts with ease to include interim leadership candidates. This allowed us to quickly identify and interview three highly experienced heads of school who could provide immediate, strong leadership and continuity for our school community. We enthusiastically selected Dr. Sherri Helvie to join Gateway as Interim Head of School, serving from August 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026. Laurie's retirement will begin today, August 1.

We are grateful to Laurie for her steadfast leadership and devotion to Gateway. We are especially thankful for the generosity of spirit she has shown, the deep community bonds she has nurtured, her collaborative approach, and her thoughtful stewardship throughout her tenure. Over the past five years, Laurie has been instrumental in the growth of The Gateway School. Under her guidance, Gateway expanded its influence as a special education thought leader and celebrated its 60th anniversary, honoring its legacy as a true pioneer in the field. We thank her for her immense dedication to our community.

Today, we are thrilled to welcome Dr. Helvie to Gateway as Interim Head of School. Dr. Helvie brings over 15 years of leadership experience in PK–8th grade independent schools, including six years as Head of School at The Orchard School in Indianapolis. Her areas of expertise include developing robust student support services, differentiating instruction to meet diverse learning profiles, and building collaborative partnerships with families, faculty, and external stakeholders. Under her leadership at Orchard, faculty and staff retention remained consistently high, with 90% year-over-year retention. Her strong track record of educational leadership and her student-centered approach make her an excellent fit for this transitional year.



Laurie has graciously offered to support Sherri throughout the transition, ensuring a smooth handoff as we prepare for the coming school year. During this interim period, we will continue the important work of finding our next long-term Head of School. John Farber has shared that Gateway has been positively received in the leadership market, and the search process is progressing very well. The Search Committee is continuing to vet candidates this summer and anticipates identifying finalists by late fall.

Dr. Helvie will play an important role by not only helping maintain the strength and stability of our day-to-day operations and academic program but also by providing fresh insights about the school's strengths and growth areas. She will be integral to the seamless onboarding of our future permanent head.

It's important to emphasize that our core curriculum, student services, and educational mission will continue unchanged—what makes Gateway unique and effective will remain firmly in place.

Gateway's exceptional academic program and the way our teachers instruct students will not be impacted. The reason Gateway is able to consistently produce measurable outcomes for its students is because of our reliable integrated curriculum, our robust teacher training using research-backed instructional practices, our intentionally small class sizes, and comprehensive individualized support. All will continue without interruption.

As always, we remain committed to including the entire Gateway community—students, staff, teachers, and families—in this journey. Your input and perspectives have been vital in shaping what we seek in our next Head of School, and we will continue to provide updates along the way.

To ensure clear communication, we have put together an FAQ with helpful information about Gateway's leadership transition and the ongoing Head of School search. [Click here to view the FAQ](#). Please direct any additional questions to the following individuals based on the nature of your inquiry:

- **Parent Questions:** [Katherine Grier](#), PA President
- **Tuition and Finance Questions:** [Maureen Ryan](#), CFO/COO
- **Program Questions:** [Dr. Christy Brockhausen](#), Assistant Head of School and Director of Lower School
- **Governance Questions:** [Polly Brandmeyer](#), Board Chair
- **Head of School Search Questions:** [Chris York](#), Chair of the Head of School Search



You will be hearing directly from Dr. Helvie, and she will be inviting the community to reach out and schedule time with her. I urge you to take her up on her offer. Sherri is warm, genuine, and approachable.

We are entering this transitional year with clarity, confidence, and purpose. Our mission and values remain as strong as ever. With Dr. Helvie's leadership, the support of our exceptional faculty and staff, and the active engagement of our community, we are well-positioned to meet this moment and build an exciting new chapter for The Gateway School.

Warmly,

Polly Brandmeyer
Chair, The Gateway School Board of Trustees

Important School Update for The Gateway Community: Leadership Transition & Next Steps

August 1, 2025

Dear Gateway Community,

It is with a sense of profound gratitude, as well as some bittersweet recognition that I had not originally planned on writing this letter so soon, that I share some important news with you.

In June, I met with Polly Brandmeyer, Chair of the Board of Trustees, to talk about Gateway, my plans for the upcoming year, and our goals for this school that means so much to us and so many others. After thoughtful conversations, we agreed to adjust the timing of my retirement so I can take some needed time to focus on my family.

The timing, in many ways, is in our favor. The school is already working with John Farber of RG175 as part of our search for the next Head of School. He identified a group of very strong interim candidates. Members of our Board met with the candidates and have made an exceptional choice.

I am very much looking forward to working with Sherri Helvie and the Gateway community over the next several months, supporting the school in any way that is needed. I remain 100% committed to Gateways' growth and success as it continues to



transform the lives of bright students with language-based learning disabilities and attention deficits. I will be working closely with the Leadership Team and Sherri to guarantee a smooth and joyful transition as we celebrate our past, embrace our present, and plan enthusiastically and strategically for our future.

When I first professionally joined The Gateway School, I spoke about the importance of building and sustaining strong relationships between home and school, between teachers and students, and among students of all ages. This remains true today, five years later. I am thinking particularly of our students right now. I know Sherri is incredibly excited about meeting them and will lovingly support them through this transition.

Anyone who has ever worked with me knows a phrase I am very fond of: “Health and family first.” When I first started at Gateway, it was the summer of 2020, and that statement held great significance. While I have reminded Gateway families and staff of this over the past years, I now must remember to take my own advice.

I thank the Board, the faculty and staff, the parents, and the students for the opportunity to lead this inspirational school. The next 60 years look bright indeed!

Warm regards,

Laurie Gruhn
Head of School, 2020-2025