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## Important Update: Start of School and Phased Approach to Reopening Campuses

Sharon Olken • 6 minutes ago • Wednesday, Jul 15 at 11:33 AM • **Gateway Middle School, Gateway High School**

**Dear Gateway Families,**

From our families to yours, we hope you're finding time to relax, reflect, and sneak in some fun during this most unusual summer. Thank you for participating in our Return to Campus survey, for sharing your perspectives and feedback, and your hopes for the upcoming school year. Based on your feedback as well as recently released public health recommendations for reopening schools, we are sharing Gateway's plan for beginning the 2020-2021 school year.

Like you, we desperately wish the public health situation would enable us to bring all students back to campus. Personalized and relationship-based instruction are at the heart of Gateway's model, and we know this is an important part of what makes Gateway special. We are committed to translating these important aspects of the Gateway experience into this phased-in model as fully and effectively as we can.

### **Start of School and Phased Approach to Reopening Campuses**

In order to create as much stability as possible as we begin a new school year during these extremely uncertain times, as well as to protect the health and safety of all Gateway community members, we have decided to implement a phased approach for welcoming students and staff back to Gateway's campuses. We want to make sure that we can successfully start, and more importantly sustain, in-person learning in a healthy and safe way.

Gateway's phased approach to reopening starts the school year as scheduled on August 17 with distance learning for all students. New students will be invited to an in-person orientation that week. Our students with IEPs and other learning needs will be a priority group for early in-person learning. More detailed information about each phase is outlined in the Key Dates section below.

### **Gateway's Start of School and Phased Approach Key Dates**

#### **Week of July 20 - Gateway Virtual Town Hall Forum for Families**

Gateway will host virtual Town Halls for each school site and one in Spanish. Families are encouraged to attend via Zoom to hear from Gateway staff; families will have the opportunity to submit live questions via the webinar Q&A feature.

#### **Tuesday, July 21, 6-7pm PST - "Ayuntamiento" en español para todas las familias**

**[Register Here](#)**

#### **Wednesday, July 22, 6-7pm PST - Gateway Middle School Town Hall**

**[Register Here](#)**

#### **Thursday, July 23, 6-7pm PST - Gateway High School Town Hall**

**[Register Here](#)**

If you cannot make the Town Hall for your students' school or you have students at both schools, you can attend either event; the same general information will be shared. All three will be recorded and available online after July 27.

#### **Week of August 10 - Laptop Pick-up for All Gateway Students**

This school year, Gateway is moving to a one-to-one computer model, providing every Gateway student with a school-use laptop.

All returning Gateway Middle 7th and 8th grade students and Gateway High 10th-12th grade students will be scheduled for

a laptop pick-up the week of August 10 in advance of school starting. Please look for your students' pick-up time in an email in the next few weeks.

### **Week of August 17 - Distance Learning and In-Person Orientation for New Students**

New students - 6th, 9th and transfer students - will have in-person orientations in small, socially-distanced groups throughout the week of August 17. They will receive their laptops at orientation. We believe it's important for new students to have the opportunity to meet their teachers in person and build community and relationships before starting school. New families will receive an email invitation with the orientation schedule in the next few weeks.

It is important to Gateway to provide the necessary academic and social-emotional support for students with learning differences. Students with IEPs and other learning needs will be prioritized for early in-person learning. Gateway partners with SFUSD to provide services for our students with IEPs – including the additional staffing for instruction – and we are awaiting specific information and requirements from the district about providing in-person support.

All other Gateway students will start school on August 17 through distance learning and Google Classroom. Distance learning will include structured daily and weekly schedules for students, required attendance, live instruction on Zoom, engaging remote learning content, assignments that are graded and reviewed by teachers, and consistent communication with students and families.

### **Week of August 24 - Tentative Schedules for In-Person Learning Shared**

Families will receive their students' schedule for the in-person learning and distance learning hybrid that will begin tentatively on September 15 (see below). The early release of students' schedules gives Gateway families and teachers time to plan for childcare, transportation and other necessary considerations for starting on-campus learning. As much as possible, siblings will be scheduled for school on the same days.

### **Target date of September 15 - Hybrid Model of In-Person and Distance Learning**

Pending guidance from public health officials, Gateway hopes to transition from distance learning to increased in-person instruction for all students on September 15. Students will have two days per week of on-campus instruction and three days per week of distance learning. This is step one of phasing in on-campus instruction and plans for next steps will be shared as new public health recommendations are released later this fall.

### **Gateway's Commitment to Health and Safety**

Gateway is committed to providing families and faculty with a dependable plan for the start of the school year as early as possible. It's our priority to decrease the impact of moving timelines and last minute changes as COVID-19 infection rates increase and local health policies change every week.

A phased approach to reopening our campuses gives Gateway teachers and staff the certainty to begin planning for a distance learning curriculum for the fall, incorporating feedback from the spring and **new state requirements** for online learning. Gateway teachers will have time to assess and understand the impacts of school closure on learning last year, how to support students' social emotional needs, and receive training on in-person education protocols for faculty and staff.

This will also give Gateway more planning time to better understand and address local and state public health requirements for schools. These requirements have changed rapidly in the past two weeks and may continue to change as fall approaches. Our phased approach acknowledges that Gateway will need time to address health and safety concerns of our families and staff, and that our schools will need capacity and capital – including personal protective equipment (PPE) – to support the logistical demands of coming back to campus.

This morning, Superintendent Matthews sent **a message to the SFUSD community** sharing that students will begin school on August 17 with distance learning and a phased approach to coming back to campus. The district will share a more detailed plan on July 28. Gateway is aligning with the expected next steps of SFUSD, while taking advantage of the fact that

as a smaller organization, we can give families and staff as much time to prepare for the new year as possible.

### **Next Steps for the Gateway Community**

Gateway will make every effort to begin transitions back to campus by mid-September, but if COVID-19 cases continue to rise in our community and public health experts alter their recommendations, we will err on the side of keeping our students and staff safe and at home.

We encourage all families to join us for the Gateway Town Halls in two weeks for more information and to connect with the Gateway community. The Town Halls will be recorded and available online by July 27, and a feedback survey will be available for families who cannot attend the virtual events.

Our teachers and school staff are on summer break and will be available once school resumes. If you'd like to speak to someone after the Town Halls, please contact Stephanie Khaziran ([skhaziran@gatewayhigh.org](mailto:skhaziran@gatewayhigh.org)) or Becca Wieder ([bwieder@gatewayhigh.org](mailto:bwieder@gatewayhigh.org)) at Gateway High School or Hollie Mack ([hmack@gatewaymiddle.org](mailto:hmack@gatewaymiddle.org)) at Gateway Middle to set-up a time with an available administrator.

Thank you for all your support during these extraordinary times, and I look forward to when we are able to be back together on campus.

Warmly,  
Sharon Olken