



**Gateway Secondary School**  
Closure Proposal Overview  
December, 2012

**Background**

Gateway Secondary School began in 2010 to pursue authorization as an IB Middle Years Program in order to serve Walnut Street and Park Avenue Primary Years Program students. Central Campus was chosen as the location for the school due to its proximity to both Walnut Street and Park Avenue and also because recent renovation of classroom space for ELL programming on 3rd floor could be utilized to start the school.

At the time, Des Moines Public Schools had Middle Years Programs in process at Merrill and Goodrell to serve other Primary Years Programs and none available to serve Walnut Street or Park Avenue.

In addition, Gateway Secondary School was planned to serve students through 10th grade by the 2013-2014 school year, thus bridging the gap for the 9th and 10th grade years for interested students.

**Changing IB Middle Years Offerings**

Since 2010, two additional comprehensive middle schools have begun pursuit of IB Middle Years Program authorization; Meredith Middle School in 2011 as a 6th – 10th program in collaboration with Hoover High School and most recently Brody Middle School as a 6th – 8th program. With these changes, Des Moines Public Schools will have a comprehensive IB middle school in the north, south, east and west section of Des Moines, serving a total of more than 2,600 students.

**Current Gateway Secondary School Enrollment**

6th – 52  
7th – 58  
8th – 49  
9th – 12  
Total = 171 Students

Capacity for each grade level is 60 students. There are no students on a waiting list. Average enrollment at the other middle schools in Des Moines is 636 students.



## **Rationale for proposing closure of Gateway Secondary School**

Two major factors contributed to this proposal:

### 1. Duplication of programs

The four comprehensive IB Middle Years Program schools can now fulfill the original need for Gateway Secondary School. The addition of Meredith 6th – 10th and Brody 6th -8th will provide capacity to support IB students from Walnut Street and Park Avenue and provide an option for those students wishing to participate in a 9th-10th IB program.

### 2. Fiscal responsibility

Operating a school with 171 students, from a staffing standpoint, is inefficient. Every school needs certain levels of base support (e.g. office, administration, etc.) regardless of size. Teaching staff requirements for a small school are also less efficient. The district staffing formula for middle schools is based upon student enrollment. Currently, district middle schools are staffed at a 21:1 ratio. Gateway Secondary School currently requires a ratio of 17:1. This represents just over \$700 of extra funding per student compared to the other district middle schools. If Gateway remained open and became full with 120 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students, staff inefficiency would increase due to the need to offer high school students a complete compliment of credit-bearing courses.

Additionally, the small school size limits curriculum and extra-curricular options. Currently, for example, Gateway is operating without band, orchestra, athletics, and other options larger schools can offer. If any of these opportunities were added, the staffing inefficiency would increase further.

Duplication of IB programming in a small school does not efficiently utilize district resources. Gateway Secondary School requires physical space. In order to maintain Gateway Secondary School in its current location and provide similar space for other Central Campus programs originally intended to occupy the Gateway Secondary School area, renovations to other sections of Central Campus would cost an estimated \$1.7 million. If Gateway Secondary School closes, this renovation and cost would be unnecessary.



### **Proposal for Gateway Closing**

- 1) Continue during this year with current grade levels, schedule, and staffing.
- 2) Remain open for 2013-14 school year:
  - a. Allow all current students to participate in the final year of Gateway:
    - i. Serve grades 7-10
    - ii. No new student enrollments (no 6<sup>th</sup> grade program)
- 3) Continue IB philosophy in 8 content areas
- 4) Maintain current staffing and schedule
- 5) Continue IB professional development support for teachers
- 6) Continue Central Academy/Campus opportunities for students

### **Gateway Student Support**

Families wanting to continue with IB programming after the closure of Gateway Secondary School would be guaranteed placement in an IB program for 2014-2015.

Seventh graders moving on to 8<sup>th</sup> grade would be guaranteed placement in their 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> choice IB middle school (Merrill, Goodrell, Meredith, Brody).

Eighth graders moving on to 9<sup>th</sup> grade would be guaranteed placement in 2014-2015 for 10<sup>th</sup> grade at an IB program (Hoover High School).

Tenth graders going on to 11<sup>th</sup> grade would enroll in their neighborhood comprehensive Des Moines High School. These students could choose to participate in the IB Diploma Program at Central Academy.

All students could also apply for open enrollment to other schools through the standard district procedures.



### **Walnut Street and Park Avenue Student Support**

Having four IB Middle Years Programs spread throughout the city will ensure students from Walnut Street and Park Avenue will have the opportunity to continue their IB education beyond 5th grade.

Park Avenue – All 5<sup>th</sup> grade students would be allowed to enroll at Brody Middle School, regardless of their open enrollment or attendance area status. This enrollment option would continue in future years as well.

Walnut Street – All current 5<sup>th</sup> grade students would be guaranteed open enrollment acceptance at any Des Moines middle school, including our other IB middle schools (Goodrell, Meredith, Merrill, Brody). In future years, 5<sup>th</sup> grade students would be guaranteed open enrollment into their 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> choice IB middle school.

All students from both schools could also attend their neighborhood middle school or apply for open enrollment to other schools through the standard district procedures.

### **Timeline of Process**

<b>When</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>How</b>
Early December 2012	Staff/Parent/Student notification of proposal	Staff/parent/student meetings and written communication
December 2012	Feedback on proposal collected and analyzed	Meeting comments, written and online survey
January 2013	Re-evaluate current proposal based upon feedback from stakeholders	District staff in collaboration with Gateway staff
January 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2013	Recommendation to school board for discussion	District leadership present revised proposal at school board meeting
February 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2013	Recommendation to school board for action	Final version acted upon by school board