



GATES

January 28, 2012

We are now “officially” approved by the School District of Hillsborough County to operate a charter high school in Lutz. We will apply for SACS accreditation in the next few months. The accreditation process takes about one year and along with a lot of paperwork, a team will visit the school and observe teachers and students. High Schools that have SACS Accreditation make the application to college somewhat easier because colleges understand the process SACS takes to insure quality education.

In addition to Honors, AP classes and dual enrollment we will offer, our 11th and 12th grade students the unique opportunity to intern in varied and diverse fields such as architecture, research and development of green solutions, engineering, environmental law, art museums, theatre and audio/video production. We will also offer opportunities to work at trades such a plumbing, electrical, framing and agriculture. This is just a small example of our internship possibilities. Internships will provide students with real world work experiences in the corporate and professional arenas.

We are also planning unique opportunities for 9th and 10th graders to operate business ventures within the school. Our plans include a fair trade store and solar oven bakery that will expose our students to entrepreneurship.

Because of our proximity to Nye Park we will be able to use their facilities for baseball, soccer, basketball, tennis, etc.

As you can see we are planning an educational program for your student that will go far beyond the typical high school curriculum. We will continue to expect high academic performance in class work and projects.

Our temporary location serves its purpose but we are well aware of its limitations. Our teachers are very creative when using our outdoor and indoor space for physical education, presentation of projects, labs and even dancing.

I can only imagine what they will do with 66 acres, a floating classroom, tree house, huge agricultural facility and a food center for culinary programs. GATES will also have an amphitheater/arts center, and state of the art labs for science and math. Our technology component is already strong with every

student using a laptop for projects and class work. The students are learning invaluable skills designing projects and learning new ways of presenting them.

There is a lot of work going on behind the scenes right now but we have set a tentative date for construction to begin in late September or early October. Phase One will include the Gateway Center, Agricultural Barn and two Learning Communities.

I met with the BECK group last week to design the Gateway building that will house our library, clinic, a café, administrative offices and a Visitors Center. The visitor center will allow visitors an opportunity to see our buildings operation in real time. The information center will also have a self-guided tour that will take them through the construction process. The center will highlight exemplary projects by our students and educate visitors on the philosophy of the school.

As parents, your students will have the advantage of attending one school that showcases many disciplines rather than a “magnet” school that concentrates on only one.

We are scheduling several information sessions in February that will address courses offered for 9th and 10th grade, as well as updates on the progress of our new facility.

I look forward to seeing you at one of our information sessions.

Patti Girard
Executive Director
Learning Gate Education Foundation