



January 15, 2010

Dear SGS Community,

I once dreamed a school.

And miraculously, I have had the rare opportunity to see the dream become a glorious and joy-filled reality, a reality that has only just begun to change the world. Thus it is a bittersweet challenge for me to write this letter to you all, letting you know of my decision to step down as Head of Seattle Girls' School effective this coming June 2010.

The school has hit or exceeded nearly all of the markers we set at the founding, and in the process has created a ground breaking educational model. I am confident that the school is able to stand on its own, which was the ultimate goal of its founders. In short, we have succeeded. The school is now ready to find a Head who will take it into its next decade, sustaining and strengthening everything we began. While I will always hold a special place in my heart for SGS, my personal joy comes from creation and visioning, and that work here is done. My next adventure is still taking shape, but I assure you that my trajectory will remain true to form.

The last ten years have been filled with so many memories and highs, to recount them all would be like trying to recount your child's first ten year's of life. I have made countless friends among faculty, staff, and SGS families, many of whom my own children and I now consider as our west coast family. In many ways, SGS became yet another one of my children, demanding as much time and nurturing, and often providing as much anxiety as well as laughs along the way.

Nothing has brought me as much pride, however, as seeing the amazing young leaders we have launched and are launching, as they start to take their rightful place in the world. Full of confidence and strong in voice, they are equipped with the skills and knowledge to make our world better. They are no longer bystanders or witnesses, but rather active participants in their communities, and they fully grasp that this participation is their responsibility as global citizens and world leaders. They have taught me that "leader" can be defined and shaped in as many different ways as girls we have graduated; each one will bring value to our world.

I will continue to watch with pride as SGS moves into its next decade. I will continue to believe in each and every student and graduate, just as I hold my expectations and hopes high for our future because of them. Thanks to the very capable and seasoned leadership of Rafael del Castillo, who will serve as Interim Head, as well as our unsurpassed faculty and staff, I know that the mission and vision are firmly in place and will continue on well past my tenure.

Thank you to everyone who has enabled me and my family to be a part of this journey. I would not trade a moment of it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marja Brandon', written in a cursive style.

Marja Brandon
Founding Head of School



January 15, 2010

Dear SGS Community,

It is time to reflect and celebrate. After ten years of effort building an innovative, wonderful, and stable program, Marja has informed the Board that she would like to move to new opportunities in July 2010. Marja has accomplished all we have asked of her and more, and she tells us it is time for her to spread the message about changing education beyond Seattle Girls' School.

The founders and the founding Head created the wonderful program that drew us all in, and that program is vibrant, documented, and living each day in the faculty, staff, and students of the school. I see it every time I interact with girls at the school and when I hear from supporters why they care. It is time to celebrate ten years of achievements, and look to future decades as we complete our strategic planning and reveal what comes next.

The Board has asked Rafael del Castillo to serve as Interim Head of School, starting at the end of this school year, while we conduct a search for a permanent Head. The Board will begin identifying members for a search committee and will work to engage students, faculty, staff, parents and our other supporters in selecting the next person to advance SGS into its second decade of success.

Many of you know Rafael in his present role as Assistant Head. He is respected by faculty and staff and beloved by students. Over the past few years, the Board shifted Marja's focus to spreading the news of the school and what we do, while Rafael and the faculty and staff gave careful attention to the day to day. We are grateful he so faithfully shepherds the vision of the founders and is willing to continue doing that through this transition.

As you know, our Mission is to inspire and develop courageous leaders who think independently, work collaboratively, learn joyfully, and champion change. Change always brings a combination of apprehension and opportunity—we look forward to using this transition to demonstrate to our girls how to succeed as things change. To do that, we want to create occasions with Marja and the founders over the next school year to recognize what has been accomplished and what is to come. I would love to hear ideas from our supporters; you can contact me at brendabauer@honeymark.com. Let's celebrate all that is Seattle Girls' School, and honor all that Marja has done for our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brenda Bauer', written in a cursive style.

Brenda Bauer, Chair
Board of Trustees