



## ***Exceptional Education Through Arts Integration***

**7 Henry Clay Drive Merrimack, NH 03054**

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**[www.gatecitycharterschool.org](http://www.gatecitycharterschool.org)**

August 5, 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome from Gate City Charter School for the Arts (GCCSA)! It's hard to imagine that in just a few weeks time your children will embark on, what we hope to be, their best school year yet.

In writing this, the Administrative Team at Gate City would like to take a moment to introduce ourselves.

Betty Mulrey is currently the Director of Curriculum and Instruction at GCCSA, as well as an instructor and field-based experience facilitator at Merrimack College. She has taught in both public and private settings, including a lab school where she mentored student teachers. As a principal, she organized and designed elementary school structure for a new school district. She holds an MBA from Chapman University, an M.Ed from Rivier University and a Doctorate of Education in preK-12 Leadership from New England College. She was recognized as Educator of the Year in 2009 by the Education Division at Rivier University.

Suzanne Wheeler is currently the Director of Student Services for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Previously, Suzanne taught third grade for 30 years for the Merrimack School District. Her tenure there included being a mentor facilitator, science facilitator, and sitting on many committees. During her summers she directs the Extended Summer Year Program for the Merrimack School District. Suzanne came to Gate City Charter School four years ago as a Special Educator for Merrimack students. She is a magna cum laude graduate of Boston College with dual degrees in elementary education and special education.

Astrid Alvarado is returning as the Interim Director of Operations. Astrid has served the Gate City community in multiple roles over the course of her five years with the school. She began as a 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade classroom teacher, moved to our Special Education Coordinator, and spent the last year designing the first School Counseling program at Gate City. Astrid holds a dual certification in Early Childhood Education and Special Education and a M. Ed with a counseling concentration from Rivier University.

**Staff:** There is so much enthusiasm and passion from all the classroom teachers. Below is a list of all the teachers and the various grade levels they will be working with:

- Kindergarten – **Mark McHugh**
- First Grade – **Julia Waterman**
- Second Grade – **Nicole Riddell**
- Third Grade – **Erin Wielgoszinski**
- Fourth Grade – **Amanda Tanguay**
- Fifth Grade Advisory and 5-8 Math – **Alicia Durand**
- Sixth Grade Advisory and 5-8 Science – **Chelsea Bibeau**
- Seventh Grade Advisory and 5-8 Social Studies – **Mary Ellen Wessels**
- Eighth Grade Advisory and 5-8 English Language Arts – **Jennifer Blanchette**
- Special Education – **Briana Fortunato**
- Guidance Counselor – **Gemma Bates**
- Art & Technology – **Beth Ashton**
- Music – **Jessica Mason**



**Building:** We have many parents and staff who put in significant time, energy, and dedication to ensure that the classrooms and general school areas will look amazing for the school year ahead. Painting of walls and installing lockers for our Middle School students is scheduled by our PTO to happen on August 10<sup>th</sup> from 8am to 12pm and 11<sup>th</sup> from 1pm-5pm.

**Curriculum:** Throughout the summer and right through the start of school a number of staff have participated in professional development and training in many curricular areas. In particular, we have been fortunate to have staff participate in Advanced Responsive Classroom Training, New England Math Plus Institute, and Performance Assessment: Creating Meaningful Learning and Assessment Opportunities. We also have administration attending the Every Student Succeeds Summer Leadership Summit in August.

As we look to the school year ahead of us, our focus remains on striving towards our school community mission statement. Integration of the Arts, upholding a sense of academic personalization and rigor, and stabilizing our day to day operations where every student feels safe and supported to commit to a life-long love of learning.

We look forward to our annual meet and greet Ice Cream Social August 26, 1:30-3:00 pm. It's a perfect opportunity to meet your teacher and drop off your student supplies.

Please do not hesitate to contact your child's classroom teacher or the administrative team directly with any thoughts or questions you might have.

With Gratitude,

Suzanne Wheeler  
Director of Student Services

Betty Mulrey  
Director of Curriculum

Astrid Alvarado  
Director of Operations