

July 2007

Dear Parentteacher:

(Reading time :10 minutes)

Enrollment for 2007-08—To re-enroll a student, it is necessary to send an application *each year*; the time to do this is the *beginning* of each school year. Enclosed in this mailing are applications and initiation form for the 2007-08 school year. Be sure that the applications you send are complete, including educational plan. Incomplete applications may be returned to you, sometimes causing weeks of delay in enrollment. Sorry, but due to increased fuel and postal costs, we are not offering the early-bird incentive this year.

Avoid Pitfalls—You would not believe the problems that can result when families do not enroll their child or children until the end of the school year or the year after that. Hopefully, it should come as no surprise that Gateway's program is intended for parents to enroll their children at the *beginning* of the school year. Acceptance of applications later in the year is intended for those who transfer out of public or private schools during the school year.

Grade/Attendance Reports—The target date for sending final grades was June 30. (THIS LETTER IS BEING SENT TO ALL FAMILIES, EVEN THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY SENT IN GRADES. It is, therefore not necessary to call if you have already sent in your grades.) The grade forms were sent to you with your confirmation of enrollment letter. Question: Have you read the directions on the reverse of the form?

What's New—We have a new policy of **returning** Grade/Attendance forms if they have significant problems, such as: failure to use specific course titles for high-school subjects, lack of appropriate dates, or omission of parental signature. (Previously such problems may not have been addressed until a transcript was requested to be sent to another school.)

When you submit enrollment applications for high school students, we now ask for specific *course* names for high school subjects (along with the specific titles or publishers or a description of the program). At the high-school level, studies in science should be specified appropriately as Biology, Chemistry, Physics, etc.; those in math designated as Algebra I, Geometry, etc. If you are home educating your child, we expect you to know what specific courses are being taught. In some cases, you may need to check the website or catalog of the publisher of your curriculum (or call them) to find the specific name of the course. Again, this new policy is designed to remedy problems encountered when preparing transcripts.

Please review our "High-School Guidelines" on the internet at www.GatewayChristianSchools.com. We want to share with you the guidelines we have used to prepare credible transcripts. Many parents have found them helpful.

Our Senior Counselor suggested the following reminders to help avoid some of the more common problems: Personal Finance, Accounting and Home Economics do not satisfy the Economics requirement for high school graduation. Course titles such as Life Science and Earth Science typically designate junior-high courses. Don't forget graduation requirements such as Physical Education or Health.

Who's Teaching At Your House?—Gateway's program of home education is designed for parents or guardians to teach their own children. Home-educating parents may utilize a tutor or group class for a specific subject, but these are not to take the place

of home education. Beware if someone offers to school your child, saying you must pretend home education and register with Gateway to make it legal.

Because Gateway's home-education program is based on a teacher-student relationship between parent (or guardian) and child, Gateway considers a student to be **WITHDRAWN** if the student moves out of the home. Also, we consider it a serious ethical violation for a student to prepare and sign his or her own Grade/Attendance Report. Because this compromises Gateway's honor system, such students are typically dismissed from the Total Home Education program.

E-mail Considerations—In order to prevent infection by viruses or worms, we do not open e-mail attachments. Also note: We do not accept applications or grade forms by e-mail.

Website Update—Check out GatewayChristianSchools.com on the web. Check the "Total Home Education" page. It will soon include links to "Total Home Education News," "From the Heart," and "Life at Our House," as well as "High-School Guidelines," and "High-School Course of Study." The latter includes further links to some great resources for foreign-languages and other subjects.

Getting-Started Seminars—About once a month we have a free seminar at Gateway entitled, "**A Good Start in Home Education.**" The next will be from 10 a.m. till noon on **Saturday, August 18, 2007.** The seminar will include:

- The importance of a right foundation
- Turning the hearts of the children
- Minimizing frustration & discouragement
- Working with learning styles
- Curriculum as a tool—not a tyrant
- The importance of wise counsel
- Lifestyle of learning
- Questions & Answers

About four times a year we also have a free supplemental seminar entitled, "**Teaching High School at Home.**" The next will be from 1 p.m. till 3 p.m. on a **Saturday in Fall 2007.** Check Gateway website for more information and directions. This seminar will include:

- High-school credits
- Resources for challenging courses
- Foreign languages
- How to prepare for college
- Advanced math courses
- Questions & Answers

From the Heart—Having right priorities is the key to successful home education. I refer to a sense of what is important or essential, what is nice to know but not necessary and what is a waste of time. I don't mean the priorities of a veteran schoolteacher who knows exactly what is to be taught in a given grade (and which might be tested on an achievement test). Home education works, not because parents are such good schoolteachers, but because of what I call the 24-7-365 advantage. Every minute of every day provides opportunity for your children to learn. Having a desire or sense of duty to teach your children and to provide them a good education is not enough. I believe life will prove home education to be a great experiment—a multitude of families educating their own children each in their own way. Some do things precisely "by the book" in a way that veteran schoolteacher would applaud. Others approach education so radically differently that the schoolteacher would consider them educational heretics. As the saying goes, the proof will be in the pudding. Well, maybe it takes longer than that. Jesus said, "Wisdom is proved right by her children."

Looking back over the past year, what are the voices inside your head saying? Although I find one voice standing on my shoulder that keeps trying to tell me that I have

not accomplished all the things that fifth graders are *supposed* to learn, I keep asking, seeking, knocking. Who sets the standards? Is it essential that you *cover* in a year all the things a textbook or schoolteacher would dictate? Apply the test of parental judgment to your own education: How much of what you learned in school have you *never* used? How many things did you *cover* in school that you have not been able to keep straight since? In my estimate, the key to successful education is not *covering* all the right stuff, but rather connecting and applying the things learned even when (or precisely because) we did not "cover" it all. We have emphasized *context*, sometimes even at the expense of content. Our goal has been to make connections, to make what we study practical, real, relevant and interesting—in short, alive. We have sought to make our children learners. Although we have not covered it all, we have taught our children to ask questions and to seek wisdom and understanding and knowledge. And when we're done . . . they won't be—because they learn by the appetite mentality and the joy of learning continues.

Learning from The Master Teacher,

Greg Stablein