



From: Bricker, Erin <ebricker@santarosa.edu> **On Behalf Of** Chong, Frank
Sent: Friday, April 10, 2020 11:42 AM
To: Chong, Frank <fchong@santarosa.edu>
Subject: Appreciation for Gateway to College, which is being discontinued
This email is sent on behalf of President Frank Chong

(Bcc'ed: Board of Trustees, Student Trustee & dl.staff.all)

Dear Colleague,

Over the past seven years, SRJC and Petaluma City Schools (PCS) have jointly run the Gateway to College Academy charter high school, which has successfully helped hundreds of Sonoma County high school students complete their high school diploma and transition to college by allowing them to take both high school and college courses on the SRJC Petaluma campus. With a mission to support high-promise youth, Gateway has provided universal support and transformed the lives of students and their families. Through Gateway, more than 100 students, many of whom may not have otherwise completed their diploma, successfully graduated with an average of one year of college units earned at time of graduation.

With a heavy heart and pride for what we created, I am sharing with you the news that Gateway to College will be discontinued as of the 2020-21 school year. Over the last two years, changing structural and economic circumstances have made the existing program configuration impossible to maintain, in spite of the dedicated, collaborative efforts between SRJC and PCS.

Many of you supported the Gateway to College program with outreach and enrollment efforts, educational planning in counseling, and having these students blend in to your SRJC classes. I want to acknowledge the Petaluma City Schools high school staff who embedded themselves on a college campus seamlessly: Seana Dooley McDonald, Gustavo Shinzato, and Sean Kelsey, as well as the staff and administration on the Petaluma campus who embraced these students and created a community that allowed for their success. I would especially like to thank Director of the Gateway to College program, Vanessa Luna Shannon, who truly brought this program to life and worked closely with each and every Gateway student to help them succeed. Vanessa was recognized for her work by receiving the Excellence in Education Award by the Petaluma Chamber of Commerce in 2018. She is a credit to the mission and values of SRJC and I'm sure will continue to be in the future.

While it is always disappointing to end a program that has helped so many students, we are exploring a variety of different partnership opportunities and hope to grow our dual enrollment offerings to continue SRJC's support for Sonoma County's high promise youth.

In appreciation,

Frank Chong, Ed.D.

President/Superintendent

707-527-4431, fchong@santarosa.edu





April 7th, 2020

Dear Gateway to College Students and Families,

Over the past seven years, Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC) and Petaluma City Schools (PCS) have developed a strong partnership, forged by the joint development and implementation of the Gateway to College Academy charter high school program.

With a mission to serve high-promise youth, Gateway to College has successfully helped hundreds of students transition from high school to college, by offering PCS students the opportunity to attend high school on the SRJC Petaluma campus, while simultaneously taking college courses. Through its history, the program has transformed the lives of students and their families in a positive way.

For the last two years, changing structural and economic circumstances have made the existing Middle College High School configuration difficult to maintain. Last year, PCS and SRJC leadership met with the Sonoma County Office of Education to discuss ways to address this issue. While both parties have been able to sustain the program for the 2019-20 school year, it was determined that we will not be able to continue Gateway to College in the 2020-2021 school year. Both parties are hopeful to explore a variety of different partnership opportunities between the District and the Junior College as we strive to expand student services throughout Petaluma.

Gateway and PCS staff are reviewing each of the current Gateway to College student's individual circumstances, so that we can offer the best placement for the coming school year. We are confident that our students will transition successfully in light of program closure. In the coming months, Gateway staff will review each student's individual progress towards graduation and will contact each student to discuss next step options. PCS high schools and Adult Education will reach out to students to offer information about their programs.

Throughout the transition, SRJC and Petaluma City Schools encourage all Gateway students to continue to take classes at the college. This option will remain open as students transition away from the current program structure.

We have included a question and answer (Q & A) section on our [Gateway to College website \(https://gtc.santarosa.edu/\)](https://gtc.santarosa.edu/) for more information regarding the program change.

Thank you



Gateway to College Academy Charter High School

Questions & Answers

April 7, 2020

We understand that as Gateway to College (GtC) students and caregivers you will have questions, primarily about the reasons for the closure, and what you should do next. We want to support you through this transition, so we have developed a set of what we anticipate will be frequently asked questions (FAQs) in an effort to provide information, guidance, and assistance. We welcome your additional questions and will do our best to swiftly respond to each person and/or update this Q&A and resend to the GtC community.

REASONS FOR SCHOOL CLOSURE

1. Why is Gateway to College Academy closing?

While both Petaluma City Schools (PCS) and Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC) have been able to sustain the program for the past six years, for the last two years the changing structural and economic circumstances have made the program configuration difficult to maintain. Last year, Petaluma City Schools and SRJC leadership met with the Sonoma County Office of Education to discuss ways to address these challenges. After thoughtful consideration, it was determined that we will not be able to continue Gateway to College after the 2019-2020 academic year.

2. What structural and economic circumstances have changed?

The program's sustainability is reliant on a number of factors. Similar to other schools, student enrollment has gradually decreased since it opened in 2013; additionally, grant funding has decreased and/or been eliminated. Therefore, past funding sources that were used to offset any short-term losses are no longer available. In addition, the unique design and mission of the Middle College High School is restricted by Charter School laws and escalating charter expenses.

3. When will Gateway to College close?

Gateway to College Academy charter high school will close on June 30, 2020.



NEXT STEPS FOR STUDENTS

4. Will currently enrolled students still be able to attend Gateway in the coming school year?

No. This program will come to a close at the end of this school year and will not be serving new or continuing students in the 2020-2021 school year.

5. What is the plan for currently enrolled students (who do not graduate this semester spring 2020)?

There are a variety of pathways for our currently enrolled students who were anticipating attending Gateway to College in Fall 2020. Student placement options are dependent on factors such as age, grade level, the amount credits completed, and a student's district of residence.

Petaluma City Schools has reviewed each of our Gateway to College student transcripts to make a determination about which program will best meet students' needs. This may include participating in our Adult Education program, attending continuation school, enrolling in one of our alternative education schools, or returning to a comprehensive high school to complete your diploma.

6. If I do not live in Petaluma, what are my school options?

Gateway to College students who are under 18-years of age and are not Petaluma City residents will need to enroll in their K-12 district of residence, for the 2020-2021 school year moving forward.

Students who are 18-years of age or older are able to enroll in Adult Education, regardless of district of residence.

7. Can a current Gateway To College student still take classes at Santa Rosa Junior College next semester?

Yes. Gateway to College students can continue to be dual enrollment students and register for courses offered at Santa Rosa Junior College. Course selection will be based on advising from the Gateway academic counselor and SRJC course availability. You may speak with your Gateway to College counselor this semester about registration for the Summer and/or Fall 2020 semester.



8. How will Gateway help us in these next steps?

This semester, the Gateway to College director and counselor will reach out to each student individually to discuss education options for the 2020-2021 school year.

Gateway to College will work to connect students with the program staff of other PCS schools during this current semester and students will then receive information directly from the program in which they can enroll.

CONTACT INFORMATION

9. As a student or caregiver, who do I contact if I have any questions?

- **General Questions**
Vanessa Luna Shannon
Director, Gateway to College
vshannon@santarosa.edu
- **PCS Administration**
Liz Chacón
Assistant Superintendent, Student Services
lchacon@petk12.org
- **Student-Related Questions**
Gustavo Shinzato
Academic Counselor
gshinzato@petk12.org
- **Special Education Questions**
Jessie Jirik
Resource Specialist Program
JLJirik@petk12.org