

An Announcement from the WFS Board of Trustees

We are writing to share exciting news that will mark the beginning of another incredible chapter for our Wilmington Friends School. With a strategic eye on the future, and after thorough and careful thought and consideration, the Wilmington Friends School Board of Trustees is exploring the possibility of building a state-of-the-art lower school complex on our main campus--enabling us to fulfill the goals of increased interdivisional collaboration and contact, greater community inclusion, and a more eco-friendly physical plant. This new lower school will enable us to meet the student and faculty needs of a 21st-century educational experience.

To that end, the Board has just entered into an agreement with Incyte Corporation for the sale of our lower school property. In addition to creating a new lower school building, this sale will also serve as a catalyst for new opportunities, including the potential for capital improvements in the middle/upper school building. Now that an agreement is in place, we are happy to be able to share this news with you and wanted to do so as soon as possible.

For several years, the Board has been looking at ways to invest in the lower school facilities, whether through renovating or rebuilding. This opportunity provides the best path forward to create a brand new, state-of-the-art lower school building—which we will plan for and envision together—that best serves our students today and beyond.

The Board also recognizes that the marketplace is changing for independent schools in Delaware, with downward trends in demographics and the availability of more cost-free educational options for families. This opportunity to significantly grow our endowment could be transformative, advancing and aligning with many of our core Quaker values by freeing up resources to better meet the financial needs of our families, invest more in our faculty and staff, build upon student QUEST service-learning programs, and nurture a culture of research and development (R&D) and entrepreneurship for our students.

This sale of the lower school property is not final. There are a number of contingencies that must be cleared by our school--and by Incyte--before we can proceed, including zoning requirements, traffic studies, and community review. If the School and Incyte are unable to meet all of the contingencies, the Board will consider other options to improve our lower school campus.

While we are optimistic that we can meet these contingencies, there is a lot of work ahead of us, and much still is unknown. As part of the process we will complete feasibility studies to see how best to consolidate our campuses, conduct traffic studies, and look at parking options. We also want and need to hear from you.

In the Quaker tradition, we want this journey to be collaborative, with all voices having the opportunity to be heard and considered. We will keep an open

dialogue with, and seek input from, all of our constituents. We invite you to join us, school administrators, and WFS Board members at our first series of school community meetings in our Library Learning Commons on the middle/upper school campus, where we will answer your immediate questions as best we can:

October 23 at 7pm: Lower School Parent Meeting

October 26 at 11am: Homecoming: WFS Open Constituent Meeting

October 29 at 7pm: All Parent Meeting

November 5 at 7pm: Alapocas Neighborhood Association Meeting

If you are unable to attend these meetings, you also can send questions and/or feedback to progress@wilmingtonfriends.org. Please also refer to our [Q&A](#) for additional information.

We will provide you with regular and timely updates. To give you a better idea of our journey ahead, we offer this preliminary timetable and "roadmap":

October 2019 to August 2023

Lower School Remains at Current Location

October 2019 to June 2021

Approval Process and Building Design

As early as 2021

Sale Closing on Lower School Property

June 2021 to June 2023

Construction

August 2023

New Building Opening

Throughout this process, our lower school students, families, faculty, and staff will always have a home at our current lower school building. We will continue to learn, play, and grow in our current facility, with a commitment to maintain its quality, until the new building is up and ready. One portion of the lower school campus that will be inaccessible beginning in June of 2021 is the ASP building and playground area. We will carefully plan for alternatives for this play space, the After School Program, and Summer Camp.

This next phase of Wilmington Friends School is a return on the investment made by everyone who has cared for Friends School. Past stewards of the School considered and seized opportunities to develop and reimagine the School. It took vision and courage to move from 4th & West to Alapocas in the 1930s and to acquire the current lower school property in the 1970s. Now, as we approach our 275th anniversary, it is our responsibility to keep moving forward, knowing that the soul of our institution is not dictated by our physical structures, but enhanced by them. We look forward to going on this journey with all of you.

In friendship,

Susan Kelley
Clerk, Board of Trustees

Ken Aldridge
Head of School