

# Branson

Dear Neighbors,

Branson is fortunate to call the Town of Ross its home. For almost 100 years, thousands of our graduates have left the school to go on to lives of purpose and meaning, working to make positive contributions to their communities and the world. As a school community, we feel deeply-rooted within Ross and hope to remain here for 100 more years to come.

In planning our future, the school must face challenges. For many years, Branson leadership has struggled with the limitations of our enrollment cap of 320 students. While other local independent schools have periodically grown their enrollment, Branson's student cap has remained the same since 1978. The Town of Ross Municipal Code governing conditional use permits, adopted by the voters in 1978, provides that any increase to our current enrollment cap must go to the voters in Ross via a ballot measure, before it can be presented to the Town Council for consideration. And while many different options have been explored over the years, including a potential school relocation to Strawberry in 2014, our desire is to stay at our Ross campus to ensure the longevity of our historic institution.

To assess our needs, we undertook an 18-month strategic planning process to identify different ways that Branson needs to grow and innovate to remain a premier independent secondary school in the Bay Area. In January, we launched a five-year Strategic Plan and began the implementation phase of the plan this spring.

Now we are initiating the first critical step toward a sustainable future. That step is to ask our community for a phased increase to our enrollment. We hope to put a ballot measure to the people of Ross in the March, 2020 municipal election. If the ballot measure were to pass, it would permit Branson the ability to seek permission from the Ross Town Council to increase enrollment up to 400 students over a defined period of time. The actual application for any increase would come later, and would be managed by the Ross Town Council as part of a subsequent public approval process.

Over the last two years, we have talked to our surrounding neighbors about this proposal in order to garner their feedback. We have listened carefully, particularly around the issues of traffic and safety. This input led us to conduct additional traffic studies over the past year and to then work hard on a robust traffic management plan that would keep our traffic net neutral were we to add additional students incrementally over a four-year period.

In the coming months, we will hold many community meetings to share why the increase to our student body is so vital to Branson's long-term health and sustainability, and how we plan to manage this growth with minimal impact. These meetings will be an opportunity for you to ask questions, raise any issues you may want addressed, and to learn about how you can get involved. In the event the ballot measure passes, there will be further study and hearings conducted by the Town of Ross in connection with amending the school's conditional use permit, offering further opportunity for you to participate in the process.

We look forward to continued dialogue with you. And we thank you in advance for your ongoing support as we move forward to ensure that Branson will be in Ross for 100 more years.

Sincerely,



Christina Mazzola  
Head of School



Claudia Lewis  
President, Board of Trustees

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