December 7, 2013

Dear Members of the Brearley Community,

We are writing to update you on the building component of our Strategic Planning process. To ensure that we continue to offer the outstanding educational experience that is the hallmark of Brearley, the School must secure additional teaching space. Planning for new space began several years ago and has extended longer than anticipated because of the leadership transitions at the School. This time has provided a chance to review earlier building plans in depth, and has also permitted us to draw additional expertise into the process. Chaired by real estate expert and Trustee Nick Bienstock, the Building Committee of the Board is moving forward actively to identify the optimal configuration of future facilities.

In pursuing these explorations, Brearley is in an enviable position. Thanks to the generosity and vision of our community, Brearley currently owns three substantial properties on the Upper East Side, all of which were purchased on favorable terms, without any debt, and all of which have been carefully managed with their long-term potential for the School in mind. These include:

• Our well-loved and now almost 85-year-old main building at 610 East 83rd;

• The Field House on East 87th Street, which was built in 1997 and which offers regulation-quality sports facilities for our students;

• The properties at 70-74 East End Avenue at 83rd Street, which were purchased in 2010 and provide an ideal site for constructing additional, modern space for the School and creating an excellent campus environment with a renovated 610.

Since last summer, the Building Committee has been working with architectural and other consultants to determine with further clarity Brearley’s space requirements and how effectively, and in what mix, our existing properties could serve to meet these needs.

At the same time, the committee has been listening carefully to the ongoing strategic planning conversations with parents, alumnae, faculty, students and staff. We have found that at virtually every community discussion about the future of the School, the same question has emerged: Should Brearley also consider the possibility of consolidating our facilities into one new building?

Responding to this feedback, the Board has decided to expand our options and consider the possible acquisition of other real estate, either in trade for one or more of our current buildings, or to be acquired with the proceeds of the sale of one or more of our buildings. To begin the necessary due diligence, we have just hired a real estate consultant, Studley, Inc., and an architectural, design and planning firm, Gensler, to help us assess real estate opportunities and analyze their strategic potential in relation to the properties we already own.

Throughout its history, Brearley has made farsighted decisions with respect to its mission, its program and its location. Big ideas are the best outcome of strategic planning, and it is energizing to engage the community’s creativity! It is also important to note that all options are on the table at this point. We will thoroughly study the
opportunities and challenges of every possibility—ranging from a three-building campus model that includes the renovation of 610 and a new building constructed on our property at 70-74 East End Avenue along with the existing Field House for athletics, to a model in which we consolidate all of Brearley’s facilities into one new building.

It is exciting to involve our community in this long-term planning for the School. We appreciate your feedback and look forward to sharing what we learn as the process continues.

With warm holiday wishes,

Ellen Jewett ’77
President, Board of Trustees

Jane Foley Fried
Head of School