

Below is Ms. Ford's Annual State of the School Address with answers to specific questions as well.

## **School Vision**

- 1. I would love to see Ms. Ford outline her vision for the Peabody School, especially in light of the first year of K-5. How has this first year of being a K-5 school gone? What is your vision for the school as we move forward?*

(Taken from the 2013 – 2014 Peabody School Improvement Plan)

## **Mission Statement**

The Peabody School is a community of learners who share the responsibility of supporting the whole child through engaging and dynamic curriculum, by encouraging intellectual curiosity, and fostering creativity while respecting individual differences and learning styles.

## **Our Vision**

Our vision at the Peabody School is to teach children to:

Master reading, writing, mathematics and the sciences

Appreciate and engage in the arts

Cultivate respect for the diversity of our cultures

Make informed decisions and be responsible for choices

Develop a sense of pride and self respect as they define their role in society

The Peabody School is committed to developing and nurturing the whole child – academically, artistically, socially, and civically through a partnership of school faculty, staff, families, community members, and students.

The Peabody School is dedicated to all students achieving academic and personal excellence, exhibiting persistent effort and living as resourceful, inquiring and contributing global citizens.

We are dedicated to the idea that all members of our community should be valued and respected. We strive to nurture the acquisition of knowledge in a safe environment that respects the emotional and social development of each student in order to create lifelong learners who can successfully navigate within an ever-changing global community.

The Peabody School is committed to the Arts and the idea that the Arts deepen student engagement, helping to create a richer context for learning. We believe that

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a strong foundation in the Arts can improve motivation, concentration, confidence, critical thinking and teamwork.

At the Peabody school, students will learn to think critically, to challenge respectfully and become independent learners. They will show a great sense of pride, responsibility and caring for themselves, one another, the school, and the community.

We believe:

- Parents and community members are our partners in the educational process requiring frequent outreach and communication. They will help their children accept responsibility for themselves and show them how to take an active role in their own education.
- Our diverse community enriches the tapestry of our school culture
- In helping all students achieve success by doing their personal best
- That collaboration and continuous dialogue promotes high achievement and academic success for all
- Physical activity and healthy eating are a shared responsibility and important for a student's overall well-being
- Empowering all students to sustain regular life-long physical activity as a foundation for leading a healthy, productive and fulfilling life
- Preparing students to become active participants and citizens in a global society.

#### About Students

- All children can learn at high levels.
- Effort and strategic work are critical contributors to school success.
- Children are connected to the school community and recognized as individuals.
- Children develop and demonstrate respect, integrity, and citizenship with their school experiences.
- Children appreciate and engage in the arts.
- The school acknowledges the individual differences among learners as well as cultures.

#### About Teaching and Learning

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- Improving educators' knowledge and skill is essential to all students meeting their potential.
- Collaboration is essential to success; working together strengthens teaching and enhances student learning.
- Teachers will inspire children to excel, to take appropriate risks and to develop as independent learners.

#### About Parents

- Parents are children's first teachers and play a pivotal role in school.
- Parents are partners in their children's education.
- Parents are active participants in their children's educational experiences and are a welcome presence in the classroom and school.

#### **Academic Questions**

1. *A question I have for Ms. Ford is how much time the teachers are provided to collaborate and share ideas. What formal structure exists for the teachers and grade teams for planning and collaboration?*

- Each week we have a Professional Development opportunity during our weekly staff meeting for all faculty.
- We have grade level cluster meetings weekly
- Professional Development centered on ELA and Math
- Weekly Grade Level Planning meetings
- 3 Times a year there are exit meetings with team that gather to discuss children's needs, growth, upcoming plans either the next semester or next year. This year's final meeting will center on goals for student and teacher's goals for ELA and Math for next year.

2. *It would be nice to hear from Ms Ford on how she encourages teachers to stray away from just teaching to the test or following a scripted syllabus so they can focus on inspiring students to display their creativity and passion to learn new things. Is this more or less challenging in a diverse classroom that uses differentiated learning techniques?*

Teachers do not teach to test. They teach strategies as part of our workshop model. Part of this is to embrace creativity. We always work to cultivate the whole child. Every teacher in this school focuses on inspiring their students, each in their own way. This will look different in every classroom, every year.

3. *Would love to hear Ms. Ford address Peabody's identity as a school devoted to*

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*music. Does she think this aspect of the school might be even further strengthened? The middle school now has an annual musical, but are there ways in which the K-5's musical education might be deepened, say, with field trips to hear concerts, visits from musicians, etc? What kind of support do the music teachers get in developing their curriculum?*

The first thing you should know is that no Visual or Performing Arts teachers are hired by me. This is done at a District level, across the board.

Next year, I am highly committed to bringing back our renowned Early Bird Singers.

Our Music teachers receive Professional Development around The Kodaly Music Theory. Our K – 2 music teacher is a member of the Organization of American Kodaly Instructors and attends their conference and workshops each year. Both Music Educators collaborate on a constant basis.

Our 3 – 5 Music teacher is a member of the American Choral Director's Association. He also attends their conferences each year, while he continues to further his Kodaly education.

In our Special Start rooms, we have a Teacher/Musical Therapist that visits the classroom weekly. I am exploring the idea of asking him or someone similar to him to also work with our Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade students.

We have several Musical Workshops planned for the students next year. Right now we already have four planned. These will be performances from Berklee Students, All City Choir Performances and Discussions as well as some instructors and students from Longy School of Music visiting the school and working with our students.

I will encourage teachers to consider field trips that will continue our student's musical knowledge.

Each year, our 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students attend wither the Boston Ballet's Nutcracker or the Urban Nutcracker.

We have a meeting with our former Artist in Residence, Kyle to come back next year.

*4. How is technology integrated into the curriculum? What technology gets used and what are the goals for long-term infusion of that technology? What progress was made with the technology goals this year?*

Right now we have two laptop carts, as well as Smart Boards in all grade 1 – 5

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classrooms.

Thanks to Himadraya Ashir and our own Josh Wood, we were able to offer a computer/SCRATH Club that we hope will continue for next year.

Right now, we are slated to receive several I pads and CHROME Laptop Carts. We believe these will further enhance our current technology program and that all classrooms will have a tremendous amount of access to technology.

### **School Structure and Activities**

1. *We've had the family engagement survey two years in a row now and I was wondering what has been learned from it (aggregate results)? What do families think the school is doing well at, where do families think the school can be improved, and what changes, if any, will be implemented due to the survey results? What role does the family engagement team play within the school structure?*

- The Peabody School created a Family Engagement Survey. Below is some of the information that was gathered.
- Out of 238 families, we received 123 respondents. The survey was distributed online and by paper. Every responder was given the opportunity to remain anonymous.
- The majority of caregivers visit the Peabody School two or more times a week.
- The preferred form of Communication from our Community is email, which is exactly how we connect with our Community. In fact, at this time over 90% of our community receives email communication from the school. For those who do not have email access, paper copies are distributed to students.
- The Peabody also has a very successful Facebook page that is accessed by more than half of our population.
- One extremely high note, the school's newsletter, The Peabody Planet is eagerly awaited by the community each week.
- 90% of caregivers, who responded, feel very comfortable approaching their child's teacher regarding their child's progress and feel respected.

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- Caregivers would prefer that more information be given to them from their classroom teacher directly. The majority seemed to lean towards a desire for weekly updates or newsletters. They want to know what their child is learning and what is happening in the classroom.
- Caregivers would also like more detail on report cards and comments. The majority feel that student performance information is not easily accessible.
- Caregivers feel that they are well informed about volunteer opportunities but would prefer to be able to volunteer within their child's classroom more often.
- Caregivers feel that the Principal is extremely accessible and are happy that she allows them to call her on her cell phone.
- Caregivers would like the school to offer more workshops on general parenting, homework help and computer usage. The most requested workshops relate to offering academic support and advice and be able to prepare their children for more advanced work.

### **Miscellaneous**

1. *Lockdown drill follow up – how did the lockdown drill go?*

It went seamless. It was over and done with in less than 4 minutes, with nothing remarkable to report.

2. *I have heard a rumor that the school day will begin earlier next year for Peabody. Is this true?*

No

**I would like to share what changes as well as events we had this year that we consider to be quite successful.**

Below is a list of Family Engagement Activities based around Student Achievement with links to learning.

Welcome Potluck – Opportunity to boost school climate with new parents. Introduce children and caregivers to faculty and classrooms.

Kindergarten Orientation – Students and families will learn about what to anticipate from the individual classrooms as well as the school.

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Parent Coffees - Principal takes this time to discuss vision for best learning and best teaching practices.

Welcome Back Open House – All families learn from administrators and other stakeholders about the year ahead; visit grade level classrooms for syllabi and class expectations.

Grade Level Potlucks – Introduce Families to each other in a casual setting so they better know and understand their peers and educators.

Monthly All School Shares – At these events, each grade presents what they have been learning in class during the previous month. Families are invited. This goes beyond the classroom level presentations to include Phys Ed., Music, Art and Clubs.

Turkey Trot – This day engages students and families in a fun based event that offers physical and health education.

Teddy Bear Tea/Read With Me: An opportunity for families to share breakfast and a story with their children. Children read to adults, children read to children and Adults read to children.

Trivia Day – Children are asked to find a trivia question (with the help of their families). They are then encouraged to bring the question to school and ask different adults and children throughout the building.

Are You Smarter Than A Peabody School 5<sup>th</sup> Grader? – 5<sup>th</sup> Graders prep for a contest with local dignitaries. Families are involved by assisting their children in study prep and supporting them that evening.

Lunar New Year Parade -

BOKS

Parent Workshop Series – continuing Next year (all over City)

Clubs

Facebook Page

Retained our integrity as the Peabody while collaborating with the Rindge Avenue Upper School as and when appropriate.

Seamless Lockdown Drill

Informational letter and meetings regarding the first Lockdown Drill

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Recently, because our music program is so renowned, I was asked to speak at a National Symposium regarding what we do here, how we do it as well as its benefits and outcomes.

We recently had our biggest Kindergarten Open House. We had 90% attendance. This year we were among the top three schools that were requested for incoming families first choice.

This afternoon and next week, you will receive a summer math calendar for your children as well as a summer reading list.