



The Fayerweather Street School

Head of School
Cambridge, MA
for July 2018

Fayerweather Street School (www.fayerweather.org), a PK-8 co-educational, independent school serving 195 students, is poised to celebrate its 50th anniversary next school year. Embracing the tenets of progressive education, Fayerweather reflects the founders' vision of a school that educates children in ways that are innovative and respectful of the individual and that recognizes the valuable role of families and community. Its vibrant, colorful and welcoming space encompasses a strong community committed deeply to diversity, inclusivity and social justice. Having recently completed a strategic plan, the school looks forward to welcoming a new Head of School in July 2018 who will partner with committed stakeholders to realize the plan and build upon the strong work of outgoing Head of School Ed Kuh, following his 13-year tenure.

The Mission:

Fayerweather is a private PreK, kindergarten, elementary and middle school. We engage each child's intellect, imagination and social responsibility. Our students are confident, resourceful and enthusiastic learners.

Fayerweather works to “ignite confidence” in its students through passionate teaching, joyful learning and discovery, awakening a sense of social responsibility, engaging each child's intellect and imagination, and truly knowing each child.

Fayerweather students experience an academically rigorous progressive education within a warm and supportive community.

Commitment to Diversity, Inclusivity, and Social Justice

Fayerweather celebrates and actively supports being a diverse community. 40% of Fayerweather students identify as people of color, as do 27% of faculty. The school is very welcoming to LGBTQ families, and Adult Affinity groups offer additional community support. Fayerweather's Diversity, Equity and Community Committee (DECC) provides resources and facilitates parent and community education. Since 2004, the Fayerweather community has participated in Boston's Pride Parade.

There is a strong commitment to diversity, social justice and anti-bias work at Fayerweather. Faculty are trained in multi-cultural and anti-bias curriculum, and beginning in the youngest grades, students explore issues of equity and bias in developmentally appropriate ways. Since 2009 Fayerweather and the Matènwa Community Learning Center in Haiti have been working

together as sister schools. Closer to home, in 2008, Fayerweather began the Boston Educators of Color (BEOC) group and twice a year, educators of color from the greater Boston area are invited to gather at Fayerweather to share their stories and support one another.

Diversity Commitment Statement

We are strongly committed to developing a sense of community in which every member feels valued. We work together to examine the roots and issues of racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism and other prejudices within and beyond our school. Within our community, we expect that individual beliefs and feelings will be shared and valued and conflicts will be acknowledged, explored and peacefully resolved.

Program and Structure

Walking in the entry of Fayerweather Street School, one can sense the school's warmth and energy. Upon entering the school, a reception area sits beside the school's heart—an open, architecturally interesting, and beautifully inviting library.

Fayerweather's staff is remarkably happy and positive about their work environment and community. They consistently cite strong collaboration, a very supportive community—including both colleagues and parents—and the opportunity to be innovative as reasons for their professional happiness. Fayerweather's professional culture is one that is accustomed to a sense of shared ownership and a horizontal, rather than a vertical, leadership style. It is a school where the Head does recess duty and subs in a classroom as needed. There are numerous faculty members with admirable extended tenures, and in many cases these are the individuals leading change and innovation. The current Head of School is a strong believer that great teachers make great schools and ensuring this has been a mainstay of his tenure. A new Head will inherit a very strong group of teachers and administrators with no imminent retirements on the near horizon.

The 2016-2017 school year saw a new leadership structure, which has been very well received. An Educational Leadership Team (ELT), consisting of the Head of School, Director of Curriculum & Instruction (a new position), School Counselor, and Director of Equity & Inclusion, has brought additional focus to supporting the academic program. In addition to these individuals, the school's Leadership Team includes the Directors of Development, Admissions, Finance & Operations and Facilities. The school uses a consultant for its information technology needs. A Next Schools Coordinator works with 8th grade students and their families as they search for the right high school program. Graduates go on to both public and independent schools.

The introduction to the recently adopted Strategic Plan articulates well how Fayerweather strives to meet its mission:

At Fayerweather Street School, we help young people develop the knowledge, skills and awareness needed to flourish in a complex, diverse and increasingly interdependent world. We believe that truly knowing each child is the heart of great education. We strive to engage each child's intellect, imagination, and awakening sense of social responsibility, and to help our

students become confident, resourceful, and enthusiastic learners. We are committed to building a diverse and welcoming community where compassion, humor, and respect are woven throughout the curriculum and spirit of the day.

Fayerweather uses a co-teacher model in all classrooms up to Grade 6. PreK serves children ages 3-4. Kindergarten is a single age cohort. All other classrooms are multi-age (1st/2nd, 3rd/4th, 5th/6th, 7th/8th) with two sections for each grouping. Through 4th grade, classrooms are self-contained. Students in Grades 5 and 6 have one teacher for Humanities (English and Social Studies) and other teachers for Math and Science. Grades 7 and 8, known as The Unit, have subject specialists and are in mixed-grade homeroom advisories. A team of Resource teachers works with students who are in need of additional academic support as well as offering faculty assistance with differentiating instruction. There are specialists for library, art, music, woodshop, Spanish, physical education and an After School Program faculty. Candidates are encouraged to thoroughly explore Fayerweather's website for a more in-depth synopsis of the curriculum.

Fayerweather believes that for children to thrive, a strong academic program must include care for students' emotional and social well-being. Social and emotional development is at the core of learning at Fayerweather. Recognizing that each child is a unique individual, there is an emphasis on pro-social behavior, respect for one another, negotiating and collaborating, and citizenship in a community. Children are taught to know themselves, and be confident, caring, respectful members of their local communities and the world. In the early grades, faculty support students' social-emotional growth in a myriad of ways through the classroom environment, which underscores respect for the individual and the community. Beginning in Grade 5, students meet regularly for a Growth Education class where they explore topics that address the physical, emotional, and social facets of this phase of their lives, helping students understand themselves and others as part of a larger human community.

Fayerweather provides a before-care program, and 50% of students participate in the afterschool programs, which include a wide array of enrichment opportunities and an interscholastic sports program for students in Grades 5-8.

Governance, Budget and Facilities

Fayerweather Street School's Board of Directors numbers 22 individuals and includes current parents, community and staff representatives, and the Head of School. The Board follows principles of good practice for school governance and has matured in recent years. A new Head of School can be confident in the strength of the Board and its recognition of appropriate governance practices.

Fayerweather's operating budget is \$6M. The school is fortunate to have a highly experienced CFO who is well supported by the Board's Finance Committee. Fayerweather has operated in the black for 11 consecutive years while keeping tuition increases below 4% and paying its staff competitive salaries. While still carrying a mortgage of \$1.6M, down from \$2.4M in 2004, the debt is favorably financed long term. The financial aid budget is \$920K, with over 30% of

students receiving financial assistance. Tuition supports approximately 85% of the budget with giving, investment and program income providing the balance. In 2015-2016, all fund raising efforts totaled over \$370,000 and parent participation was 93%. Fayerweather has a small endowment, restricted and unrestricted funds, totaling over \$660,000.

The school is situated in the busy, mixed-use section of Fresh Pond in Cambridge; its neighbors are primarily businesses. Across the street is the Fresh Pond Reservation, a large, public, nature area that the school utilizes as part of its science curriculum. Fayerweather moved from its original location (on Fayerweather Street) in 1999 and in 2006 expanded the building by an additional 8,000 square feet. The building includes all of the school's facilities—classrooms, office space, library, gymnasium, art and music rooms, a woodshop, and a multi purpose space. In 2014, improvements were made to the outdoor play spaces, including the addition of artificial turf. An intricate ramp connects Fayerweather's limited outdoor area to an expansive city park, Rafferty Park, which the school regularly utilizes. Space is tight but very well utilized at Fayerweather. The school's leadership, mindful of space limitations, has explored options to further expand the building and remains vigilant to potential opportunities nearby, but no firm plans for further development were committed to in the strategic planning process.

Fayerweather is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) and is accredited by the Association of Independent Schools in New England (AISNE). It completed its reaccreditation in 2015.

Opportunities

Led by the Board, the community recently engaged in a strategic planning process, *Our Way Forward* 2017-2022, that resulted in identifying the following over-arching priorities and commitments to living its mission:

- Progressive Education and Academic Rigor
- A Commitment to Faculty and Staff, supporting superior teaching
- Financial Stewardship
- Community Engagement, strengthening connections outside the school's walls

Efforts are underway to outline action steps and timelines to meet the goals of the plan. While the plan will guide the priorities for the new Head of School, there is certainly room within the identified priorities for the new Head to bring vision and energy to their realization. Embedded in the plan are numerous opportunities to continue to strengthen Fayerweather as it looks forward.

A new Head of School will have the opportunity to engage the community in a conversation to articulate progressive education and academic rigor as it is fulfilled in Fayerweather's classrooms. The community will welcome a leader who is contagiously passionate and knowledgeable about progressive education, who will embrace what has defined Fayerweather—its commitments to equity, social justice and developing leaders—and who can inspire stakeholders, ensure continued innovation, and articulate well the values of a

Fayerweather education in today's world. Fayerweather has the potential to be a model school and thought leader both for progressive education and as a school community that is successful in the realization of its commitment to diversity, inclusion and social justice. A new Head of School who is excited to help Fayerweather realize that potential will be welcomed.

Despite its almost 50-year history, ardent community, and strong appreciation for its graduates' preparation by secondary schools, Fayerweather Street School does not enjoy as widespread name recognition as it should. A new Head of School who is enthusiastic about serving as an inspirational ambassador and who will invest energy into raising the profile of the school will help ongoing marketing efforts. While enjoying a healthy enrollment and strong retention, a slight increase of 5+ students in total enrollment will have significant impact on this small school's financial position. Fayerweather strives to be viewed as a top-tier choice for all families considering an independent school in the Cambridge area.

Fayerweather has made very good strides in strengthening its development efforts. Strong participation from current parents in annual giving has set the foundation to take the school's development program to the next level, implementing a sustainable major gifts program. A new Head of School who can compellingly articulate for stakeholders opportunities to invest in Fayerweather will bring needed strength in this arena.

Like numerous independent schools, Fayerweather has seen an increase in students presenting with learning differences and challenges. Faculty will welcome a thoughtful dialogue on what student profiles can be well supported within this small school. On-going consideration of the resources needed to facilitate differentiated teaching practices will be welcomed to ensure strong support of students in need of advanced academic challenge as well as those with learning challenges. The recent addition of the Director of Curriculum & Instruction has brought new attention to this issue.

Perhaps Fayerweather's most significant strength is its very positive, supportive, and collegial culture. Faculty and staff listen with openness and respect to others' opinions, and there is a consistent willingness to try new approaches and enhance practices. The parent community is wonderfully diverse, highly educated, and talented—and parents feel very fortunate to be part of the Fayerweather Street School community that cares deeply for their children and has important, shared values. Respecting, nurturing and valuing this culture will be essential to maintaining Fayerweather's strength and for realizing the tenets of the *Our Way Forward* strategic plan.

Leadership Qualities

Fayerweather Street School seeks an experienced, knowledgeable and inspiring progressive educator with teaching and administrative experience who will enthusiastically embrace the mission and vision of the school. Along with being a visible and positive ambassador, the new Head of School will be a leader who:

- Is an energetic, warm, invested, hands-on, visible and accessible leader who values community and who enjoys being an integral part of the school community

- Possesses a deep personal commitment to issues of diversity, equity and social justice, has a successful track record of professional development in this arena and in recruitment of diverse staff, and is excited to lead a school community with an embedded commitment to this work
- Is adept at building partnerships and will coalesce, motivate and inspire the school community towards realization of the strategic plan
- Is a forward-thinking leader who is able to facilitate discussions that define expectations and implement strategic initiatives, effectively balancing listening, collaboration, and a culture of shared ownership with pro-active decision making and follow-through
- Has a working understanding of the external aspects of school leadership and will serve as an authentic and passionate advocate for Fayerweather, its mission and its programs
- Is confident and comfortable leading in a culture of shared ownership, modeling collaboration and collegiality while enjoying and juggling well the myriad of tasks and demands of heading a small school
- Along with possessing the knowledge of and interest in progressive curricula, has the ability to inspire a professional community of learners, respecting the tradition of faculty autonomy while ensuring both scope and sequence as Fayerweather remains true to its mission of curriculum innovation
- Genuinely enjoys people and has the communication and authentic personal skills to build trust and engender community
- Is a person of honesty, integrity and good humor who connects joyfully and respectfully with individuals of all ages

The ideal candidate will have had success teaching and leading in an independent, progressive school or equivalent relevant experience and will be perceptive, positive, a strong communicator, good listener and a relationship builder. The right next leader for Fayerweather will be an individual who is eager to become an integral member of a very strong school community, bringing inspirational energy to strengthen what exists and knowledgeable and joyfully approach the present and future challenges.

For Consideration

Please send electronically: Resume, Letter of Interest and Educational Philosophy or Personal Statement to:

Jane Armstrong or Bill Lyons, Managing Partners

Independent Thinking

it@independent-thinking.com

617-332-3131

All inquiries will be treated confidentially and review of candidate files will begin immediately.