

POSITION STATEMENT

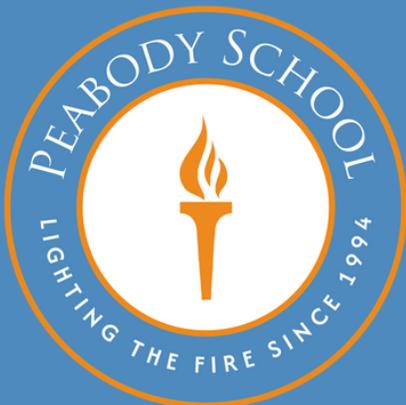
Peabody School

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA



HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

START DATE: JULY 1, 2026





OVERVIEW

Imagine leading a school where students show up eager to learn and where teachers love the challenge of adapting their curricula to match student interests and aptitudes. This is Peabody School in Charlottesville, VA, a leader in the education of gifted and academically advanced PreK-8 students for over 30 years. Peabody is seeking a new Head of School to begin July 1, 2026.

The curriculum at Peabody is innovative, differentiated, and responsive. A classical humanities education paired with 21st century readiness skills are the core of what Peabody offers to its students, along with advanced classes, French, Spanish, engineering, fine and performing arts, and an emphasis on service learning. Children at Peabody are well-known and are supported by a diverse, caring, and compassionate community.

Academically and financially thriving, Peabody is looking for a committed leader to build on its core strengths and achievements. Formal training and experience in the education of gifted learners is not required. However, the successful candidate will need to be able to live and breathe the benefits of bringing advanced learners together during their elementary school years—and will need to be passionate about building on Peabody’s strong foundation.

Current Head of School, Rob Orlando, has announced his intention to leave Peabody, after a decade of leadership work, at the conclusion of the 2025–26 academic year. The next Head will continue to build on the excellent work he has done furthering the mission of this extraordinary school. Candidates will be expected to demonstrate that they possess the expertise, empathy, and energy to ensure that Peabody School remains a special place for many years to come.

HISTORY, MISSION, AND CORE VALUES

Peabody School began with a vision for education that was unlike anything else that existed in Charlottesville or the surrounding area -- An environment for children who truly loved to learn... a school for kids with an insatiable appetite for discovery...a place that valued questions as much as – and sometimes more than – answers.

Since its founding in 1994 with just 13 students, Peabody School has grown to more than 230 students in grades PreK-8, and provides a critical resource to Central Virginia, serving the needs of academically advanced children of all backgrounds by promoting cognitive, social, and emotional development for each child at a rate commensurate with their ability.

The School's mission is: *Nurturing a love of learning - Through academic challenge and exploration - In a supportive and caring community - To help children light their own path toward a life of impact.*

Peabody's vision is based on research demonstrating that the education of academically advanced students is best accomplished in a full-time program with their academic peers.

The School cultivates a community of diverse learners, united through dynamic educational opportunities with mutual respect and value for the views of others. At Peabody, individual uniqueness is affirmed, while connections across differences are fostered. In 2025, there continues to be a shared belief at Peabody that expanding diversity within the school community inspires creativity and original thinking, encourages the development of new understandings, and nurtures leaders who serve with courage and compassion.



LOCATION AND FACILITIES

Peabody School is located just minutes from downtown Charlottesville, VA, about two-and-a half hours southwest of Washington, DC. Home to the University of Virginia, Charlottesville is a beautiful and dynamic college town with rich, year-round cultural and recreational resources.

The Peabody campus sits on more than five acres, providing outdoor areas for sports fields, two playgrounds, an outdoor classroom, and a much-beloved large boulder that serves as a “home base” for many climbing games. The land borders a creek that provides great adventures and a natural science lab for students who are studying watersheds and biology.

The buildings on campus include a two-story LEED-certified structure, which houses the Lower School. This building provides top-notch academic space for students, including an art studio, environmental science laboratory, and a well-stocked library.

In 2014, Peabody School completed the Batten Building, a state-of-the-art home for its Middle School, featuring a gymnasium, performing arts space, and science lab for Chemistry, Physics, and Biology classes. In the fall of 2020, Peabody opened the North Wing – the final phase of a 25-year vision for the school. This building houses the Early Learning Center, a spacious and light-filled Music Studio, and a state-of-the-art Technology Lab and Maker Space.

Facilities at Peabody are not designed to be “fancy,” but they are safe, appealing, and serve the School’s program exceptionally well.

PROGRAM

The “Peabody Way” is to embrace students for who they are as individuals, while recognizing that each child is unique. Instead of comparing them to each other or expecting a certain timeline of learning, the curriculum at Peabody focuses on facilitating the success of each student and celebrating their personal achievements. The program at Peabody is designed to create opportunities for students to engage in deep, meaningful learning experiences, while nurturing their social-emotional development.

Peabody teachers support students’ development of academic, technical, and creative skills; provide opportunities for autonomy and leadership; and foster an environment of kindness and respect. Peabody equips students with study habits, writing skills, knowledge, and proficiency with technology that prepares them well for high school and beyond. Students at Peabody successfully meet challenges, take personal responsibility for learning, and become active, innovative, and thoughtful participants in creating change alongside peers who share their enthusiasm and curiosity for learning. Graduates are well prepared for high school and attend area public and independent schools as well as boarding schools.

For a more detailed description of Peabody’s PreK-8 program, go to <https://peabodyschool.org/academics/>

THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Equity and Inclusion

Peabody cultivates and supports an inclusive community that honors and celebrates differences. The school community incorporates an increasingly diverse student body, currently with 33% students of color from a variety of nationalities.

Socioeconomically, 28% of the student body is supported by need-based financial aid, and the School is committed to ensuring that all students who are qualified have the financial support needed for them to enroll.

Faculty and Staff

The Peabody faculty is distinguished by its intellect, depth of knowledge, innovative teaching, and commitment to students. When asked about “the best thing about Peabody,” students respond enthusiastically and unanimously: “Our teachers! They care about us as students and people.”



Peabody looks for and attracts educators who can model its core values, live by its mission, deliver its curriculum in collaboration with colleagues, challenge students academically, draw out the joy, creativity, and social development of each child, while balancing autonomy and the School's clearly articulated teaching standards.

Administration

The Head of School works with a senior leadership team that includes an Assistant Head of School, a Business and Operations Manager, and Directors of Teaching and Learning, Admission and Marketing, Information Technology, and Advancement. They work well together in service of the students, faculty, and families.

Families

At Peabody School, there is a shared belief that authentic home-and-school partnerships are the surest path to maximizing each child's potential. Furthermore, parents actively support the faculty and staff through coordinating volunteer opportunities, planning events for the school community, and participating in the Annual Fund.

Board of Trustees

Peabody is governed by a Board of Trustees that works in close partnership with its Head to ensure the financial viability of the School and to set overall policies. A passionate, dedicated, and hard-working group, the Peabody Board does not involve itself in day-to-day operations.



STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Peabody is a school with many strengths. Since its founding, the School has thrived as a dynamic and nurturing community, staying true to its mission and core values. Today, Peabody is a school that benefits from:

- A strong and dedicated faculty and staff.
- An appealing campus that fully supports its academic and extracurricular programs.
- Predictably full annual enrollment in most grades.
- Excellent financial management – a balanced annual budget, modest endowment, operating reserves, and maintenance reserves.

Over the past ten years, Peabody School has grown – in its enrollment, in the implementation of strong policies and procedures, and in the establishment of a very positive school culture for both students and faculty/staff. The next Head of School will have the opportunity to build upon a solid foundation. Of particular importance, as Peabody anticipates this leadership transition, there is an overriding desire to preserve and maintain a school culture based on warmth, caring, trust, and support.

Key strategic challenges and opportunities that the next Head will work with the Board of Trustees to address are the following:

- Ensuring that the School can continue to attract and retain outstanding teachers, including an examination of current recruitment strategies, salaries, and benefits.
- Continuing to emphasize the importance of sustaining a school community that is welcoming and supportive to a diverse range of students, employees, and families.
- Developing a multi-year financial plan that will fully support the School's mission, program, and operations.
- Examining the School's current administrative structure to determine how best to support both educational and operational priorities.
- Facilitating an examination of how evolving technology can/should impact Peabody students' learning and character development.
- Working with the Board to increase fundraising in support of Peabody's highest priority initiatives, while not abandoning the School's egalitarian values.





THE POSITION

The next Head of Peabody School will have the opportunity to lead a healthy and thriving independent school to a next level of educational excellence. The Head of School at Peabody oversees the School's ongoing operations, hires and supports its employees, and manages its annual budget.

The next Head's initial annual base salary will be commensurate with the compensation offered by similar mid-Atlantic Pre-K to 8 independent schools.

The successful candidate will be a mission and values-driven leader who embodies and demonstrates many of the following skills, qualities, characteristics, and experiences:

- Communicates effectively, building strong connections with diverse groups both within and outside the Peabody School community.
- Inspires confidence as a visionary leader with a strategic mindset, driving the school toward future growth and development.

- Demonstrates knowledge and conviction around the education of gifted and advanced learners.
- Brings a passion for early childhood and elementary education, grounded in prior teaching experience and a profound respect for faculty and their work.
- Exhibits the capacity for providing strong financial and fundraising leadership.
- Maintains calm under pressure, skillfully navigating difficult conversations and demonstrating the ability to inspire confidence in a crisis.
- Lives out the School's core values, leading with confidence, warmth, and enthusiasm as a role model for others.
- Demonstrates a strong understanding of independent school governance and the ability to partner with the Board to implement the School's mission.
- Maintains a growth mindset, valuing professional development and ongoing improvement for both self and others.
- Prioritizes accountability, ensures consistent follow-through, and delegates strategically to empower and maximize the strengths of others.
- Embraces the joys of being an engaged presence on campus—warm, empathetic, approachable, and available to students, faculty, staff, and parents.
- Leads with humility, resilience, and humor.



APPLICATION PROCESS

Peabody School has retained Resource Group 175 (RG175) to support the search for its next Head of School. To apply, interested candidates should prepare a cover letter, a current resume, and a personal statement. Candidates are requested to submit these materials online at: <https://rg175.com/candidate/signup>

For an initial confidential inquiry or to nominate a potential candidate for this exciting leadership position, please contact RG175 consultants:

Tony Featherston tfeatherston@rg175.com and

Jerry Katz jkatz@rg175.com

Application Deadline: October 25, 2025

Start Date: July 1, 2026