

October X, 2017

Dear PA Families and Friends,

What does Peoria Academy mean to your family? I know when we walked into Peoria Academy two and a half years ago, we quickly realized it was the place for us.

We were immediately struck by the light, vibrant atmosphere, the wonderful diversity on many levels despite being a small school, and how in every classroom we entered, children were actively engaged in learning. In the STEM room, students were building Robe Goldberg machines; in English there was a debate going on; projects were alive and happening in every classroom we visited. Students and teachers were clearly enjoying learning and instilling a love of learning is important to us as parents.

The small class conducive to individualized instruction, was also a draw for us. With an average class of 13, and a broad faculty in special classes resulting in a student-teacher ratio of 8:1 we knew enrolling our girls in Peoria Academy was an easy decision for our family.

I work in Finance and understand that you cannot have an academically rigorous program, small class sizes *and* low tuition. We were surprised at the level of tuition and realized the school must be dependent on annual giving so when we received our letter for the Annual Fund we knew we needed to contribute. Peoria Academy was critical to our decision to move to this area, and we see it as a very strong asset to the Peoria community.

As I have become more involved with Peoria Academy over the last few years, I have gotten a much better understanding of the financials and importance of annual giving that I want to share with you all. We moved into the area the same year Cheryl Murzyn became head of school. I have worked with Cheryl over the past two years putting in place a Finance Committee to the Board. In partnership with Cheryl, and the rest of her team, we have a clear understanding of the costs of the school and we have been diligent to ensure every dollar is spent wisely.

As a result, cost per student at Peoria Academy is lower than the Illinois public school state average.

Peoria Academy SY17/18 operational costs per student = \$12,139

IL State Average 2015 (last reported year) operational costs per student = \$12,821

While tuition is higher than parochial, or other religious schools in the area, it is very low at about \$9k compared to other independent schools. Our benchmarking of similar size schools, in similar size cities, shows tuition levels consistently around \$14k. Larger schools, and similar size schools in larger cities average \$20k (and go up to \$40k).

Peoria Academy is a 501(c)3 not for profit. All donations that you make to the Annual Fund are tax deductible and help us maintain our low level of tuition relative to other independent schools. There are a variety of ways to give listed on the attached sheet. If you could consider a gift of \$100 / month, or a gift of 100 shares of stock, or any other gift, all donations are greatly appreciated and make an impact on our school.

Please think about what Peoria Academy means to you, your family, and this community and join me in generously supporting the Annual Fund drive.

Thank you in advance for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Beth Withers  
Peoria Academy Board Treasurer and Parent