

Initially Delivered At Our Annual Back To School Event

Good Evening and Welcome!

I am thrilled to be opening my 23rd year as a public school educator at the Arthur D. Healey School. As you can imagine, there have been quite a few shifts in education since I began and even more shifts since I sat where the Healey children sit today. My educational journey has many stops beginning as a middle school teacher and Assistant Principal in Boston and Chelsea, followed by seven years as the very proud principal of the Horace Mann Elementary School in Melrose. I have had the privilege of teaching young adults in the graduate school of education at both Emmanuel College and UMASS Boston and the gift of leading professional development in rural Nicaragua. In short, my story has evolved and changed with each experience and I have no doubt that my time at the Healey alongside this exceptional group of educators will only make me better.

While the experiences have been vastly different, the why and the vision for my teaching and leadership has never changed. I believe in my heart of hearts that when people feel welcome, safe and happy they will learn and it is my responsibility to do everything in my power to ensure this happens. While my “why” for my work has never changed, the “how” I fulfill this mission requires constant reflection and adaption. This said, my call to each of you is to assist me in fulfilling my mission; to ensure that the Healey School is a safe and secure learning environment. An environment rooted in standards, driven by best instructional practice and supported by community agencies and families- at any cost. Equally important, I need the people in this room to share our story with the greater community, to highlight the work of our children and to hold one another accountable when, not if, someone attempts to contribute to negative stereotypes and hearsay about our children and our neighborhood. When someone casts a negative shadow on this school, be prepared to counter with a positive response about a teacher’s dedication and our commitment to creativity, excellence and joy.

We have a great deal to accomplish here and each one of us has a part in this. As your principal I bear the burden of state and district accountability and this is a responsibility I take very seriously. While I do not feel one assessment predicts the future success of an individual, I would be negligent if I did not recognize that our students have historically scored lower than their district and state peers overall. This needs to change and we have the best and brightest teachers at the table working on it.

Before I turn to Mr. Glynn for a few minutes, will you please join me in thanking the incredible teachers who love and support your children daily. It is their tireless commitment to professional development and their understanding of children that makes any of our work possible. Thank you for being a part of our valued community, it is going to be a great year.

Dr. Cobbs