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**Positive Education Program Selects Habeebah R. Grimes as Successor  
to Retiring CEO Frank A. Fecser, Ph.D.**

CLEVELAND – May 11, 2018 – Positive Education Program (PEP), one of the region’s largest child-serving agencies, has named Habeebah R. Grimes to succeed Frank A. Fecser, PhD as its CEO. Dr. Fecser is retiring on June 30 after a four-decade career with PEP, 20 of those years spent as its CEO.

“During Frank’s tenure as CEO, PEP doubled in size and its reputation as a world-class provider of special education and mental health services for children continues to grow,” said Ken Outcalt, chair of PEP’s Board of Directors. “As our PEP Board set out to find his successor, we were determined to find a candidate capable of carrying the PEP torch forward with the same level of commitment, passion and empathy as Frank. It is testament to Frank’s legacy that after a thorough, national search, we have found that person internally in Habeebah Grimes.”

Fecser added “Habeebah has distinguished herself at PEP, having earned a reputation internally and externally as a mission-driven leader who has a deep appreciation for the role of frontline staff. She has a strong understanding of both mental health and education and has a unique ability to engage diverse voices. In Habeebah, the PEP Board has chosen someone who can be counted on to continue PEP’s legacy of doing whatever it takes to help kids learn and grow.”

Habeebah has traveled a unique path through her PEP career, beginning first as a one-on-one aide in 1999. After earning her Master’s degree in Clinical/Counseling Psychology and specialist degree in school psychology at Cleveland State University, she returned to PEP as a clinical supervisor at one of PEP’s Day Treatment Centers, eventually ascending through the ranks to become PEP’s chief clinical officer in 2015.

As chief clinical officer, she has proven herself to be a strategic and forward-thinking leader, having been the chief champion of PEP’s programmatic response to Behavioral Health (BH) Redesign and its embrace of and certification in evidence-based trauma-informed practices.

“It is a tremendous honor to take up the mantle of PEP’s founders and to be chosen to lead PEP in this time,” said Grimes. “It is my passion to be of service to our community’s most vulnerable youth and families and to do so in service to PEP’s mission has been my life’s work. I am certain that through continued collaboration with my dedicated colleagues, PEP’s amazing partners and other advocates, we will continue to help children achieve to their highest potential.”

She is a graduate of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Ladder to Leadership: Developing the Next Generation of Community Health Leaders program, having been chosen as a part of this select cohort in 2009. In 2015, *Crain’s Cleveland Business* recognized Habeebah in its *40 Under 40* feature. She will assume the role of CEO on July 1, 2018.

**About Positive Education Program ([www.pepcleve.org](http://www.pepcleve.org))**

As one of Ohio's largest non-profit agencies committed to children, Positive Education Program (PEP) positively impacts the lives of more than 2,500 children and their families each year. Founded in 1971, PEP provides services in the following areas: Integrated Special Education & Mental Health; Early Childhood; Autism; Community Support; and Consultation & Training. PEP operates many programs including seven Day Treatment Centers, Early Childhood Plus, PEP Assist and PEP Connections.

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