

## **Kate Johnston**

Kate Johnston conducts the Beginning Choirs and the auditioned Intermediate and Concert Choirs. In addition, she conducts the extra-curricular male a Capella ensemble, "Sounds of Sweetness". Johnston partners with Payton's drama team to produce a main stage musical theater production every other year.

Productions have included Sondheim's "Into the Woods" and Kander & Ebb's "Cabaret". She is a graduate of Seattle Pacific University (B.A.) and Boston University (M.Mus.) where she earned degrees in piano. Prior to coming to Payton, she was the founding music director at UIC College Prep High School where she created a program in which all students studied music all four years of their high school career. Prior to that, she was Director of Secondary Choirs at the American International School in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Her work at UICCP inspired a partnership with the Northwestern University Neuroscience Lab. The project involved a longitudinal study monitoring the cognitive development of teenagers who study music in school versus teenagers who do not. The results of the study are now published in *Frontiers Psychology* in an article titled "High School Music Classes Enhance the Neural Processing of Speech". Other recent posts have included the Music Institute of Chicago as Director of the Children's Choir and the Chicago Waldorf School where she taught 2nd - 12th grade music/choir and assisted with theatrical productions. Johnston has founded ongoing concert series and festivals in the U.S. and South America and continues to perform as pianist and singer. She is passionate about the difference that arts make on human development and is truly delighted to be in her 6th year at Payton.