

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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For Immediate Release
Tuesday, October 27, 2009

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Mayor, Superintendent announce major grants to expand arts and music in Boston schools

Wallace Foundation grant among the latest of investments being made to BPS arts programs

BOSTON – Mayor Thomas M. Menino and Boston Public Schools (BPS) Superintendent Carol R. Johnson today announced BPS has been awarded a \$750,000 grant from The Wallace Foundation, a New York City-based non-profit organization that enables educational organizations to expand learning opportunities. In this round of grants, Boston is the only city in the nation to be selected for a Wallace Foundation “Arts for Young People” planning grant. The planning funds will be used to develop a long-term sustainability plan for expanded arts in schools across the system, including best practices in school arts programs, professional development, improved coordination of schools and arts partners, communications and funding, and ongoing evaluation to assess progress.

“This grant is a wonderful example of how far we have come toward expanding arts programming throughout our entire school system,” said Mayor Menino. “The BPS Arts Expansion Initiative shows how arts programming can pull entire communities together - teachers and artists, non profit partners and private sponsors - to support student learning and provide children with valuable enrichment opportunities.”

Mayor Menino and Superintendent Johnson joined representatives from the Wallace Foundation other partners at an event at the Tobin K-8 School in Mission Hill today to announce the grant. The event featured student performances and displays of student artwork.

“We’re delighted to join our colleagues in supporting promising efforts in Boston dedicated to bringing the arts to every child in the public school system,” said Daniel Windham, Director of Arts at The Wallace Foundation. “This planning grant builds on our current support of efforts to

strengthen school leadership and out-of-school time services to surround children with more opportunities for learning and enrichment. Boston has a reputation as being a leader of innovation, and we look forward to working with the city as it develops systems to improve the lives of children.”

Dr. Johnson has made expansion of arts education one of the cornerstones of the Acceleration Agenda for BPS. In partnership with community organizations, Dr. Johnson has committed to giving students of all ages greater access to the arts – including music, dance, theater, visual arts, and more – during and after the school day.

“This grant from our friends at The Wallace Foundation will help us meet our goal of greater access to arts programs for all BPS students,” said Dr. Johnson. “We know that the arts are a vital piece of a well-rounded education. Despite the economic climate, we will continue to find ways to expand our arts offerings so that all students have the opportunity to showcase their talents.”

The grant from The Wallace Foundation builds upon the fundraising work already underway by the Boston-based EdVestors organization. EdVestors is leading the way on the BPS Arts Expansion Initiative, a three-year effort to expand arts education in the Boston Public Schools. To date, the organization has raised \$1.1 Million of its \$2.5 Million goal with support from the Barr Foundation, the Boston Foundation, Hunt Alternatives Fund, the Klarman and Linde Foundations along with other EdVestors donors.

“This new support from the Wallace Foundation adds to the momentum created through the BPS Arts Expansion Initiative, with thanks to the local funders who helped launch this effort in 2009, in partnership with Superintendent Johnson,” said Laura Perille, Executive Director of EdVestors, and Co-Chair of the Arts Working Committee behind the Initiative. “Already, the new BPS Arts Expansion Fund is distributing over \$575,000 in grants from local donors to help expand arts instruction to more students. The Wallace planning grant, on top of the \$2.5 million local initiative, will provide the additional resources to expand this collaborative effort involving teachers, school leaders, arts and cultural institutions and foundations to develop a long-term sustainable arts education plan for the Boston Public Schools.”

Dr. Johnson also announced today The VH1 Save The Music Foundation will expand its program that brings musical instruments and instruction to urban schools across the country to four more Boston public schools, bringing the total number of Boston public schools with the VH1 program to 36. Each investment made by the foundation at BPS schools is valued at \$60,000.

The BPS Art office has recently made significant progress in creating more opportunities for students with the creation of a city-wide marching band and high school choir, both funded by grants from the BPS Arts Expansion Fund at EdVestors.

Boston Public Schools serves more than 56,000 pre-kindergarten through grade 12 students in 135 schools, and in 2006 won the Broad Prize for Urban Education as the top city school district in the country. For more information, visit www.bostonpublicschools.org.

***The Wallace Foundation** is an independent, national foundation dedicated to supporting and sharing effective ideas and practices that expand learning and enrichment opportunities for all people. Its three current objectives are: strengthening education leadership to improve student achievement; improving out-of-school learning opportunities; and building appreciation and demand for the arts. More information and research on these and other related topics can be found at The Wallace Foundation Knowledge Center at www.wallacefoundation.org*