



What Makes BPS-AE Successful?

Clear and measurable goals that were a compass point for all BPS-AE’s activities: 100 percent of all Boston public elementary and middle school children receive at least once weekly arts instruction, and all high school students having exposure to an arts experience during the school year.

Rigorous data collection to assess the “state of arts education” before developing strategies and to serve as a baseline for tracking progress over time.

Close collaboration with the Boston Public School system—with individual schools and multiple players in the district’s central office.

Incentive-based grantmaking to lift up promising school-based arts education programs and demonstrate their alignment with BPS-AE’s goals and outcome measures.

A superintendent who was deeply committed to integrating high-quality arts instruction as an essential part of a well-rounded education for all students and who made reaching this goal a priority.

A multi-tiered leadership structure through which specially appointed committees were charged with specific responsibilities and activities.

An advisory board of influential civic, philanthropic, business, and nonprofit leaders able to attract support for BPS-AE because of their stature, networks, and visibility.

A combination of local and national funding and clear designations as to how each would be used: local for support of specific arts programs and national for system-level change that leveraged additional public funds.

An objective and highly regarded intermediary with deep education experience, strategic leadership, and highly skilled staff **to be the initiative’s lead partner.**

An iterative, participatory, and skillfully facilitated planning process that authentically engaged the people most directly involved in arts education—teachers, community arts organizations, and school leaders—in designing a thoughtful plan focused on sustainable change, rather than short-term fixes.

Strategic communications that attracted press attention to BPS-AE’s progress and activities, helping to convey that “something big was happening.”

Ongoing monitoring, documentation, and dissemination of information regarding progress and activities to keep existing participants engaged, attract new partners, encourage public buy-in and ownership, and contribute to a larger learning community that included leaders of similar initiatives in other cities.