



Boston Public Schools and EdVestors Highlight the Importance of Continued Arts Education with over \$360,000 in Arts Expansion Grants

With uncertainty around the nature of next school year due to the pandemic, the grants aim to ensure students across Boston continue to receive high quality arts education

BOSTON (June 24, 2020) – Despite COVID-19 creating an unconventional end to the 2019-2020 school year and posing uncertainty to the structure of the upcoming 2020-2021 school year, the Boston Public Schools (BPS) Arts Expansion initiative continues its focus on a coherent, sustainable approach to quality arts education for all BPS students. Underscoring this commitment, EdVestors today announced more than \$360,000 in grants, which will support nearly 60 schools working with more than 30 arts partners across the city focused on ensuring that all BPS students – regardless of where they attend school – have access to a high quality arts education.

“For over a decade, the BPS Arts Expansion initiative has built an incredible legacy in our schools, and the latest round of grants will help support a variety of arts education programs that are essential to meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of students,” said Dr. Brenda Cassellius, Superintendent of the Boston Public Schools. “Arts education and student expression contribute to a student's sense of self and confidence, which is critical now more than ever during these extraordinary and challenging times. We are grateful for these grants and programs, which support our commitment to ensuring access to arts education programs for all students.”

The newly announced grants for the 2020-2021 school year highlight the importance of arts education, particularly in the current climate. Given the uncertainty and the challenges faced by families throughout Boston, students need arts education now more than ever, as it helps them creatively engage with their classmates and communities, combat isolation, process their feelings, and express themselves. Throughout the period of remote learning, the arts have thrived in the Boston Public Schools, with arts educators thinking outside the box with ways to ensure their students still have the ability to creatively express themselves.

“Arts education is an integral part of students’ social emotional well-being and engagement, whether schooling is in person or remote. The pandemic coupled with the heightened attention to racial injustice has been tremendously difficult for students, and arts education is a powerful and effective tool in helping them to process and share complex emotions,” said Marinell Rousmaniere, President & CEO of EdVestors. “Schools everywhere should be moving mountains to provide access to quality arts education, as so many BPS leaders, teachers, and arts partners have done in the last three months. We are proud to work with all our partners in keeping this commitment to ensure BPS students have access to high quality arts education.”

Despite school closures, arts programming continued through the spring with BPS arts teachers and partners providing theater, dance, visual art, and vocal and instrumental musical instruction virtually. In the last month, EdVestors, in partnership with Open Door Arts, an affiliate of Seven Hills Foundation; Boston Public Schools (BPS); Boston Centers for Youth & Families (BCYF) and the YMCA of Greater Boston secured and distributed thousands of art supply kits to Boston students in need so they had access to necessary supplies and tools to be creative that are otherwise unavailable to them during the shutdown.

“Over the years, we’ve been proud to collaborate with BPS, EdVestors and members of the arts community to develop and increase access to innovative arts programming” said Nicole Agois Hurel, Managing Director of Open Door Arts, an affiliate of Seven Hills Foundation that increases access, participation, and representation of people with disabilities in the arts. “Given the unprecedented challenges that students faced in adapting to online learning and the uncertainty concerning what the 2020-2021 school year will look like, the BPS Arts Expansion initiative plays an even more important role in bringing together members of the education and arts communities to ensure that our students have equal access to a wholesome arts education experience.”

Earlier this month, the BPS Citywide Arts Festival, which is usually held at the Boston Common, was moved to a virtual platform. Some of the recorded performances are available on the [BPS Arts Expansion Virtual Gallery](#). In addition, Boston Neighborhood Network (BNN) featured and uploaded the full virtual Arts Festival video at the following link: <http://guide.bnnv.org:8000/CablecastPublicSite/show/99597?channel=3>.

Over the last 11 years, BPS Arts Expansion has leveraged increased public funding for arts teaching positions in BPS schools, resulting in nearly 17,000 additional students receiving arts instruction during the school day. BPS arts educators working in partnership with community based teaching artists and organizations have made this work possible. The initiative continues to focus on expanding access to equitable arts education and deepening arts experiences, while building systems to sustain a high level of arts education long into the future.

Core donors include the **Barr Foundation**, the **Boston Foundation**, **The Klarman Family Foundation** and **Linde Family Foundation**. Notably, there has been a significant 5:1 return of increased public investment for every private dollar invested through BPS Arts Expansion. More information on the BPS Arts Expansion is available at <http://www.bpsarts.org>.

ABOUT EDVESTORS

EdVestors’ mission is to increase the number of schools in Boston delivering dramatically improved educational outcomes for all students. EdVestors is a school improvement organization that combines strategic philanthropy, education expertise, and implementation support to help schools create the conditions for school change. EdVestors seeds promising ideas through the [School Solutions Seed Fund](#), shines a spotlight on school improvement through the [School on the Move Prize](#), and scales efforts to close opportunity and achievement gaps through three strategic initiatives: [Boston Public Schools Arts Expansion](#), [Zeroing in on Math](#) and our newest effort to expand [Career Pathways](#). Learn more at www.edvestors.org.

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