

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Boston receives \$4 million grant to expand Arts education in Boston Public Schools**

*EdVestors and City of Boston partner on \$10 million, six-year Arts Expansion Initiative*

BOSTON – Mayor Thomas M. Menino and Boston Public Schools (BPS) Superintendent Carol R. Johnson today announced the BPS Arts Expansion Initiative has been awarded a \$4 million grant from The Wallace Foundation in New York to expand and sustain high-quality arts education in schools across the district.

The Arts Expansion Initiative (AEI) is a multi-year (2009-2015) effort developed by a collaboration of local funders, the schools, arts organizations, the school district, the Mayor’s Office, and coordinated by EdVestors, a Boston-based school change organization that will manage the grant. The new national grant adds to more than \$4 million contributed by local funders, toward the \$10 million goal to support the growth of arts programming in BPS.

At an event held at the Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School today, with representatives from the Wallace Foundation and local funders, Mayor Menino and Superintendent Johnson announced the Wallace grant and released new data showing dramatic growth in the number of students receiving arts instruction during the school day – an additional 14,000 BPS students with access to visual and performing arts instruction compared to three years ago.

“Expanding the arts in schools brings new energy to classrooms, increases engagement by students, and improves school choices for families,” said Mayor Menino. “The arts enrich our young people, our schools, and our neighborhoods.”

The Wallace grant announced today will build capacity in the school district to expand and sustain high-quality arts education for all BPS students through new approaches to arts instruction, curriculum, professional development, partnership coordination, and student and family engagement.

The Wallace Foundation aims to improve education and enrichment for disadvantaged children. The Foundation develops and tests promising ideas on the ground, studies the results, researches related issues – and shares what’s learned broadly to help improve children’s lives.

Will Miller, president of the Wallace Foundation, noted, “Arts learning opportunities have been diminishing over the last three generations of school children. The Wallace Foundation is looking forward to working with its partners in Boston who are testing new approaches to reverse this trend, and to learning with them about how to best strengthen arts learning in school districts.”

Local foundations and philanthropists have supported the work significantly with over \$4 million in funds through the BPS Arts Expansion Fund to grow direct arts instruction for students, with the goal of raising an additional \$1.5 million to match the new national funding.

Local funders of the Arts Expansion Initiative are led by the Barr Foundation, the Boston Foundation, the Klarman Family Foundation, and the Linde Foundation, along with the Catherine and Paul Bittenweiser Foundation, Hunt Alternatives Fund, the Carl and Ruth Shapiro Family Foundation, and others.

“The vision and commitment around arts education from the Mayor and the Superintendent are tremendous, and are matched only by the steadfastness of local and national funders, dozens of local arts and cultural institutions, and individual school communities across the city,” said Laura Perille, executive director of EdVestors, which spearheads the initiative in partnership with BPS. “Thousands of Boston students benefit every day from this exciting collaboration.”

The BPS Arts Expansion Initiative was launched three years ago this month.

“Organizers and funders of the BPS Arts Expansion Initiative, including the Boston Foundation, came together with BPS to conduct research, set ambitious but achievable goals, and measure our progress,” said Paul Grogan, president of the Boston Foundation and a member of the BPS Arts Advisory Board. “The results have been dramatic and important to the cultural lives of our schools and our children.”

Today, nine out of 10 elementary and middle school students in Boston are receiving weekly arts education, up from 67% three years ago. The number of high school students accessing arts education has doubled over the past three school years. The Initiative has set a goal of reaching 100% of students in grades PreK-8 with weekly year-long arts instruction, while dramatically expanding high school arts learning opportunities.

The private philanthropic dollars add to increased public funding for additional classroom arts teachers, as part of a coordinated effort to expand arts education across the school system. Since 2009, the annual amount spent on arts instruction by BPS has increased by \$2 million annually.

“In Boston, we have defined arts education as a part of a quality education for all students,” said Dr. Johnson. “Our focus on expanding high-quality, equitably distributed arts learning opportunities for our young people is a key piece of our agenda to transform our schools. The BPS and its partners are making this a reality.”

### **About the BPS Arts Expansion Initiative**

Launched in February 2009, the BPS Arts Expansion Initiative is a multi-year effort to expand arts education within BPS. Focused on providing equity and access to quality arts learning experiences to every BPS student, the Initiative seeks to expand arts instruction, build the capacity of the system to support school-based arts programs, and to enhance partnerships between schools and arts and cultural groups and higher educational institutions.

The BPS arts expansion effort is a key piece of Superintendent Carol Johnson’s Acceleration Agenda, a five-year strategic direction (2009-2014) that outlines goals and priorities for transforming the Boston Public Schools.

EdVestors, a local education nonprofit dedicated to driving change in urban schools through strategic philanthropic investment, serves as lead partner for the Initiative working in close collaboration with the donors and with the BPS. For more details on the BPS Arts Expansion Initiative, go to [www.edvestors.org](http://www.edvestors.org) or call 617-585-5740.

### **About the Wallace Foundation**

[The Wallace Foundation](http://www.wallacefoundation.org) is an independent, national foundation dedicated to supporting and sharing effective ideas and practices that expand learning and enrichment opportunities for children. The Foundation maintains an online library of lessons at [www.wallacefoundation.org](http://www.wallacefoundation.org) about what it has learned, including knowledge from its current efforts aimed at: strengthening educational leadership to improve student achievement; helping disadvantaged students gain more time for learning through summer learning and an extended school day and year; enhancing out-of-school time opportunities; and building appreciation and demand for the arts.

*The **Boston Public Schools**, the birthplace of public education in the United States, serves more than 56,000 pre-kindergarten through grade 12 students in 125 schools.*

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