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## 50 Boston schools split \$825k in grants to expand arts education

Posted by Matt Rocheleau June 20, 2011 02:33 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

Arts and music programs will be added at 50 Boston schools this fall through \$825,000 in new grants.

The funding is part of a five-year, \$5.5-million fund-raising campaign. So far, the drive that runs through 2014 has raised \$4 million, including \$1.5 million announced last week, school officials said. The BPS Arts Expansion Initiative has resulted in 9,000 city students receiving regular arts and music experiences not offered two years ago.

The expansion will allow schools like the Adams Elementary in East Boston to offer weekly music classes to its 278 students, including many who have special needs, the district said in an announcement. Meanwhile 85 high school freshmen at the new Boston Green Academy in South Boston will learn dances from Latino cultures via youth nonprofit Hyde Square Task Force, officials said.

“The BPS Arts Expansion Initiative shows how we can pull entire communities together – teachers and nonprofit partners, schools and foundations – to provide enriching opportunities to our young people.” Mayor Thomas M. Menino said in the release.

The school department says around 80 percent of Boston elementary and middle school students receive weekly arts training, up from 67 percent in 2009. The initiative’s goal is for all PreK-8th grade students to receive weekly arts instruction during the school year, while also expanding high school arts education.

The arts initiative is part of the school system’s five-year plan to improve overall academics and extracurricular activities citywide, officials said.

“Arts education is a vital part of an engaging and effective learning environment for students,” said schools Superintendent Carol R. Johnson. “The district views arts expansion as a catalyst for renewed energy in schools, increased engagement by students, strategic leverage of partnerships, and improved school choices for families. Transformation can – and is – coming to our schools through the arts.”

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Local education nonprofit [EdVestors](#) is the arts initiative's lead partner working in close collaboration with donors and the school officials.

The effort's financial support includes: the Barr Foundation, the Boston Foundation, Hunt Alternatives Fund, the Klarman Family Foundation, the Linde Family Foundation, and other foundations and individual donors, the release said.

To see a breakdown of where and how the new grant funding will be used, [click here](#).



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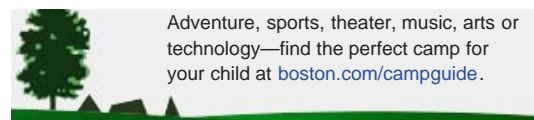
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