

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2020



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OUR SUPPORTERS

GOING BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD

Dear Friends,

At the end of FY19, we predicted that FY20 was going to be a year of transformation. Little did we realize how prescient that prediction would become. Some of the changes were foreseen; we spent the fall finding and securing our new office space, and building new relationships to expand our reach in the Boston Public Schools.

Like the rest of the world, however, we were not expecting a global pandemic, one that has called for quick pivots in almost every aspect of our work, from raising funds to supporting students. In every way that

mattered, we needed to go back to the drawing board and reimagine what Boston Partners in Education could be.

For most of our 54 years, we have been proud of our in-person approach to academic support. Meeting students where they are, both literally in the classroom and figuratively addressing their academic needs, has long been a signature component of our work. When COVID-19 shut down our city's schools, however, it became clear that we needed to completely rethink our mechanism of support without losing the results it offered.

We knew that everything changing meant that students were going to need more support than ever, so we worked as a team to quickly find a new way of doing things. And as we saw how remote school was rolled out in the spring, it became clear that we needed more than one solution for the changing needs of our students. For many of our partner schools and students, a simple tweak was all that was needed; to put our mentors

into online classrooms rather than physical ones. They could meet with students in breakout rooms and support their day to day in-class needs, just as they did in person.

For other schools and students, however, a new approach was needed. As a result, we've created a new branch of our programming – Independent Learning Support. More information on this new offering can be found in this report.

Our approach to this year's Annual Report is also a bit different, in fact. Usually, along with the information about our financial health and supporters, we tell stories about each of our programs – the triumphs and successes of our students and mentors in the classroom. This year, with our programs having been cut short, we want to focus instead on the ways we needed to reimagine and reshape our work. You'll find stories about how we and our partners went back to the drawing board in FY20, and what we are making a reality in FY21. From the Gala, to




our new office space, our programs to our new brand and values, everything about our work needed to evolve, while keeping the focus on equity and closing opportunity gaps that lie at the heart of our mission.

We know that while FY20 has drawn to a close, the shifts we need to make haven't ended with it. We already have some plans for FY21 that we can't wait to share with you. The pandemic and 2020 have strengthened our need to be dynamic, resourceful, and flexible. Thank you for being our partners in that work.

A handwritten signature in white ink, reading "Erin M. McGrath".

Erin M. McGrath, Executive Director



A young person with dark hair, wearing a grey t-shirt and large black headphones, is focused on a laptop screen. They are sitting at a desk in a home environment, with a wooden chair and shelves in the background. The lighting is soft and natural, coming from a window out of frame.

Though the ways in which students learn may have shifted this year, our mission remains unchanged.

No matter where school takes place, Boston Partners in Education is committed to enhancing the academic achievement and nurturing the personal growth of Boston's public school students.

Our mentors meet students where they are, providing them with the focused, individualized support they need to succeed – during class time or outside of it. In school or online, wherever classrooms are, we'll be there. Thank you for being there, too.

NEW CLASSROOM, SAME MISSION

LAUNCHING ONLINE MENTORING

VIRTUAL IN-CLASS MENTORING

Summer of fiscal year 2020 proved to be a season of preparation. Our staff worked hard to build the infrastructure needed to transition our in-person mentoring opportunities into online programs. For the very first time, we are proud to offer student support remotely – in two different models.

Our virtual in-class model most closely resembles our typical in-person mentoring programs. Teachers are able to nominate students in need of additional support, and mentors join

those students in their virtual classrooms during the school day each week. By meeting students directly in online classrooms, mentors can support teachers' lessons by reinforcing concepts in real time. In many cases, mentors and students work in breakout rooms to provide students with more individualized attention.

INDEPENDENT LEARNING SUPPORT

As the challenges of remote learning grew clear, we began to understand that students also needed someone to help guide independent learning time – the time their teachers were not

readily available. We knew we needed to create a way for families and students to ask for our support directly, and to provide it outside of typical school-led spaces and times.

So, we worked to create a new branch of programs that will bring our core mentoring programs outside the "classroom" for the first time – Independent Learning Support (ILS).

In the ILS model, mentors connect with Boston Public Schools students who have been identified by their families as benefiting from extra support. In this model,

our academic mentors can truly meet students wherever they are needed most, whether it's in a Zoom classroom or online after class or on weekends. Silent proctors help ensure the safety of all parties by monitoring all ILS mentoring sessions.

While we made this shift to better meet the quickly evolving needs of our students during this crucial time, we will spend FY21 reflecting on its impact and figuring out how to make it a permanent part of our offerings, so that we can continue to offer the academic and social support that BPS students need to thrive in school.





THE CYCLE OF SUPPORT

"I want the public to know that there are future teachers in our classrooms right now."

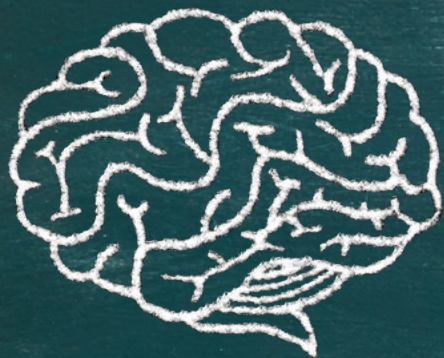
During Spring 2020, Boston Partners was proud to partner with Teacher Cadets to launch a pilot program for online mentoring. Teacher Cadets is a BPS initiative that identifies middle and high school students who have the potential to become future teachers and provides them with education mentors to support their journey.

One important distinction of our pilot program with Teacher Cadets was the ability for students to select a mentor, allowing them to have more autonomy over their experience. Students were able to meet with a variety of volunteer mentors remotely and determine which match worked best for them. While some students chose to rotate their meetings with multiple mentors, others decided to permanently work with one mentor.

The pilot program's success has helped guide Boston Partners' full transition to online mentoring in the 2020-21 school year. This year, we're excited to be partnering with Teacher Cadets and their students once again.

FULL STORY

CHALK IT UP TO MENTORING



In school year 2019-2020, **93%** of students in BPIE programs reported that their mentor helped them improve in school.



In school year 2019-2020, **90%** of students reported that their mentor made them feel like they could succeed in school.



Prior to Boston Public Schools building closures in March 2020, students received **8,598** hours of support from academic mentors.



By March 2020, over **2,400** students in **52** Boston Public Schools were being supported by **515** volunteer mentors from the community.

All program numbers reflect matches that started before 3/13/20, the date that Boston Partners officially halted services due to COVID-19 concerns. Data reflects students receiving at least 10+ hours of mentoring support. Data does not include any virtual matches.

Before the pandemic struck, we were excited to get to know Jailiany, a 6th-grade student attending the Hennigan K-8 School. She told us her favorite subject was math — but that wasn't always the case.

Her teacher, Ms. Von den Benken, could tell Jailiany was capable, she just needed more individual attention. “I thought her having a mentor could maybe boost her confidence in math and really try to pull out what was already there,” said Von den Benken. Ms. Von den Benken turned to BPiE, and soon Jailiany was matched with a mentor, Mr. Olive.

Since she began working with Mr. Olive, Jailiany has learned how to ask for help when she needs it. Check out the full story from anchor/reporter Paula Ebben and WBZ | CBS Boston!

EYE ON EDUCATION

FULL STORY



LEARNING TO TEACH FROM HOME

In the corner of Jenn DiSarcina's home lies an ordinary wooden dresser. Adorned with packets of math lessons and boxes of markers, the dresser now functions as a modern teacher's desk. A laptop running Zoom sits on its right corner. This is Ms. DiSarcina's new classroom.

When Governor Baker officially closed school buildings for the remainder of the year in April, Boston Public Schools teachers braced for their more permanent realities. Many – like Ms. DiSarcina – had to learn to

navigate new methods of reaching their students, while serving as full-time parents to their own children who are also at home.

In between Zoom sessions with her class, Ms. DiSarcina provides guidance to her third-grade son, Sebastian. Their shared workspace allows him to easily ask for help when he needs it, but it also mimics the feeling of being back in a physical classroom. It's another reminder of how the line between teacher and parent blurs for educators in the midst of the pandemic.

While the landscape is vastly different in an online setting, teachers have been working their hardest to provide students with a familiar structure to their school day – even offering extra support with individual students “after school.”

It can be difficult – nearly impossible – to find a substitute for the intangible benefits of teaching in a classroom. “I can't see shoulders tense when a problem is too hard,” says Ms. DiSarcina. “I can't see a sigh, or a pencil drop. I'm confident in what I can communicate to kids because of our relationship – I just worry that I'm missing so much because I can't read their body language.” But teachers like Ms. DiSarcina are doing whatever they can to get creative.

Instead of catching students in the hallways, she tracks them down virtually – sending a direct message on Remind, calling and

texting parents, and sometimes enlisting the help of classmates who provide intel on their digital whereabouts.

Ms. DiSarcina does all this from that wooden dresser in the corner of her home. While the setting may have changed, teachers' dedication to educating their students certainly hasn't. “There's so much to do and it's so much harder to do it from a distance, but I want our kids to know that they can do this,” says Ms. DiSarcina. “They can do the hard things. I want them to feel like we did the best job we could through all of this as a class.”

Read more about what goes into remote learning as Ms. DiSarcina takes us “behind the scenes” of a virtual school day.

FULL STORY





EQUITY BEGINS WITH ACCESS

“It was nice to see so many students walking away with brand new books.”

This fall, we were proud to partner with the Boston Teachers Union, alongside First Book and the American Federation of Teachers, to distribute backpacks and school supplies to Boston Public Schools students. Thanks to the generous Boston Partners community, we were able to contribute over \$7,000 in supplies for BPS students through our Education As An Equalizer campaign.

These contributions supported the BTU's annual book fair, which donated over 40,000 books in total to BPS families this year. Members of the Boston Partners staff joined community volunteers in September to organize supplies and hand out new backpacks to excited students. BPS teachers were also given a \$30 voucher to collect materials for their classrooms.

FULL STORY

EDUCATION

AS AN

EQUALIZER

Between a global pandemic and a sweeping response to racial injustice in America, this past year has laid bare the inequities that children of color face in all aspects of their lives. Many of these inequities are highlighted in our public schools. Over 85% of the Boston Public Schools student body are children of color. Every day, these students are forced to confront an opportunity gap that's resulted from centuries of systemic racism in our

country – a reality that has only been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We may not be able to predict a global pandemic or senseless acts of racial violence, but we CAN be ready to respond. Boston Partners in Education is committed to leveling the playing field for students of color disproportionately affected by this pandemic and the trauma of racial injustice. It's crucial that we prove to our

youth that we are in this fight together — by nurturing caring, inclusive relationships that demonstrate to them: you are heard, you are valued, you are loved.

With help from the generous Boston community, we were proud to launch Education As An Equalizer – a campaign dedicated to ensuring that students most impacted by educational inequity have access to the resources they need,

regardless of their race, neighborhood, or home life. Together, we were able to pledge over \$16,000 in school supplies and student support services for BPS to begin the 2020-21 school year.

We know the fight for true change is only just beginning. Our role may be small, but it's an important one. Thank you for standing with us and our city's students when they need you the most.

Kelsey Welsh logged into her Zoom account this summer to see someone trying to join the standing appointment she had been using to meet with her mentees. Though the school year had ended, she was greeted by a message from Anson, one of her mentees: “Can we keep learning?”

As the summer rolled on, Anson would regularly try to connect with Kelsey. She reached out to Anson’s teacher, got permission from his parents, and soon began meeting with him for summer school, too. “When Anson was logging on this summer, sometimes I wouldn’t even get a word in,” says Kelsey. “He was so excited to talk about stuff. And that’s why I kept doing it – I just kept the time blocked on my calendar in case he called in.”

With an increased focus on socio-emotional support, Kelsey and Anson’s summer journey represents a story that’s very familiar for thousands of students right now: sometimes they just want someone else to talk with.

STRENGTHENED CONNECTIONS

FULL STORY



FINANCIAL REPORT

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	\$453,471
Accounts receivable	\$9,000
Promises to give, current portion	<u>\$125,103</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>\$587,574</u>

NONCURRENT ASSETS

Promises to give, net of current portion	\$49,058
Security deposit	<u>\$10,227</u>
Total Noncurrent Assets	<u>\$59,285</u>

FIXED ASSETS

Equipment	\$69,760
Less: accumulated depreciation	<u>(\$39,647)</u>
Net Fixed Assets	<u>\$30,113</u>

INTANGIBLE ASSETS

Website	\$88,330
Less: accumulated amortization	<u>(\$88,330)</u>
Net Intangible Assets	<u>—</u>

Total Assets \$676,972

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

CURRENT LIABILITIES AND TOTAL LIABILITIES

Payroll withholdings	<u>\$929</u>
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LONG TERM LIABILITIES

Accrued rent	<u>\$15,006</u>
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Total Liabilities \$15,935

NET ASSETS

Without donor restrictions	\$508,829
With donor restrictions	<u>\$152,208</u>

Total Net Assets \$661,037

Total Liabilities and Net Assets \$676,972





CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS	WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS	TOTAL
SUPPORT AND REVENUE			
Grants and contributions	\$426,151	\$3,150	\$429,301
In-kind operating support	\$37,071	-	\$37,071
Program fees	\$54,000	-	\$54,000
Gala contributions and revenue	\$564,563	-	\$564,563
Less: cost of direct benefits to donors	(\$27,543)	-	(\$27,543)
Contributions and net revenue from gala	\$537,020	-	\$537,020
Other income	\$2,148	-	\$2,148
Interest	\$372	-	\$372
Net assets released from restrictions	\$101,832	(\$101,832)	-
Total Support and Revenue	\$1,158,594	(\$98,682)	\$1,059,912
EXPENSES			
Accelerate	\$275,145	-	\$275,145
Aim High	\$256,172	-	\$256,172
The Big Cheese Reads	\$42,389	-	\$42,389
Motivate	\$116,623	-	\$116,623
Power Lunch	\$89,172	-	\$89,172
Total Program Services	\$779,501	-	\$779,501
Management and general	\$126,060	-	\$126,060
Gala	\$85,064	-	\$85,064
General fundraising	\$179,832	-	\$179,832
Total Supporting Services	\$390,956	-	\$390,956
Total Expenses	\$1,170,457	-	\$1,170,457
Change in Net Assets	(\$11,863)	(\$98,682)	(\$110,545)
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$520,692	\$250,890	\$771,582
Net Assets End of Year	\$508,829	\$152,208	\$661,037



MARTIN J. WALSH
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Boston Public Schools



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BOSTON CITY COUNCILOR
District 4



KEITH LOCKHART
CONDUCTOR
Boston Pops Orchestra

BOSTON UPLIFT OUR YOUTH

"During a crisis like this, it's too easy to think just about the present – we have to look ahead."

When the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic began to sink in back in April, we wanted to remind Boston Public Schools students that they weren't facing the challenges of the extended school break alone. It was important to us that students knew there was an entire Boston community thinking about and believing in them.

With the help of prominent Boston leaders (or "Big Cheeses," as we often call them), we launched the Boston Uplift Our Youth (BUOY) campaign – a citywide movement to provide messages of hope and encouragement to BPS students.

The campaign's launch video premiered at the Virtual Big Cheese Reads Gala in May, and was highlighted by messages of support from Mayor Marty Walsh, BPS Superintendent Dr. Brenda Cassellius, and Attorney General Maura Healey, among many others. To us, the BUOY campaign was proof that even in isolation, we can always find ways to forge connections between students and the city they call home.

WATCH HERE

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Traction on Demand

\$10,000 – \$19,999

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Ned Dubilo & Grace Zimmerman
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Fenway High School
Beth Gragg
Haynes Early Education Center
Hennigan K-8 School
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Kenny Elementary School
M&T Bank
Madison Park Technical Vocational High School
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McKinley Elementary School
McKinley Middle School
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POETRY

refer to the structural elements of poems and drama when writing about a text

Ask: Students read and analyzed the story, *Wangari's Trees in Motion*, and were asked to retell the story in the form of a poem.

From Prose to Poetry



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