BRIDGE BOSTON CHARTER SCHOOL

2015-2016

Our Mission

Bridge Boston Charter School students will thrive in a challenging, joyful, inclusive K1-8 public school community that values close partnerships with families and a focus on the whole child. Our students will develop the skills necessary to excel academically in rigorous high schools, reach their individual potentials, and view themselves as creators of their own futures. Through full-service programming, Bridge Boston Charter School will work to remove the health and social obstacles that hinder student learning.

Dear Friends,

At the conclusion of our fifth year, Bridge Boston has much to celebrate. In the 2015/2016 school year we educated 230 children, many of whom come from underserved neighborhoods and need the full service model we provide. These children experience a school life filled with rigorous academics, joy, caring adults, and rich programs in art, music, physical education, and social-emotional learning.

Since I joined Bridge Boston, people sometimes ask me, "How do you like working in a school?" I love telling them how Bridge is in a class all its own. We have students who start the year behind and end the year reading at grade level. We expose our students to stringed instruments; for many it is the first time they play an instrument and experience the joy of performing as an orchestra in front of hundreds. Every child has the opportunity for a dental cleaning and eye exam right in our school. We create deep connections with our families. An extended day and extended year allow us to accomplish all this and more.

But the real key to our success is in the people who bring the mission to life every day. Averaging over 90% staff retention has allowed us to grow a team of talented individuals who create the feeling of family that is so critical to our work. Many of the founding teachers, administrators, and volunteers are still with the school, keeping alive the same passion and ingenuity that characterized our first year in a small church.

Two of our most significant milestones this year could not have happened without your help. First, we were awarded our five-year charter renewal from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, which included praise for our model and results.

Second, we now own 435 Warren Street and are in the midst of renovating it to serve as our permanent schoolhouse. This has long been a critical need, especially for our students who have experienced homelessness. When I see parents at drop off, they encourage me with a big smile and, "Just one more year, Ms. Cha!" Setting our sights on opening at the new site by August 2017 could not have happened without your incredible support. Thank you for sharing our passion and believing in us!

Yully Cha Executive Director



Five Years of Learning

Our teachers set high expectations and work to create curricula that are both foundational and inspiring. We use extensive assessments to guide our students' progress and to help us refine our strategies. Our students continue to make strong academic gains in core subjects as well as in areas such as social emotional learning, art, music, and physical education.

Some examples of the work done by our students this year:

- Our third grade students wrote Identity Poems, expressing their values through the format of a poem.
- Our 1st grade students studied the rain forest and capped off their year with a play about the kapok tree. The play showcased their environmental awareness and involved elaborate costumes, an illustrated-by-all backdrop, and memorized lines.
- In science the 2nd graders studied whales and whaling. They researched and wrote reports, built whale fossils, and designed their own whaling ships. They also studied water preservation and built water filters.
- Instrumental music continues to be an integral part of our curriculum, helping build confidence, teamwork, self-reflection, and an appreciation for beauty. Daily lessons and a culture built around four annual performances mean that every student is deeply committed to mastery of a stringed instrument.

Ever since our founding, families have been integral members of each child's educational team. Each student has a faculty advisor who calls home every two weeks, in addition to our three yearly parent/teacher conferences. With 100% participation in conferences, we feel confident that our work is a true partnership between Bridge Boston and families.

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" Students begin daily independent reading in K2. By second grade, students are also reading independently each night and tracking their progress in reading logs. There's nothing like the feeling of greeting students and seeing them beam as they brag about their reading. Recently Osman said, "I read last night! And my mom signed my reading log!" Lixandra joined in with, "I love my new book. Look! I'm at chapter 8!" These moments make me realize that we truly are helping our students develop a lifelong love of reading and learning."

- Meryl Johnson, Director of English Language Learning (ELL)

I am the terrifying Skyshooter at Canobie Lake I am a peaceful waterfall I am the expression in gospel music I am the spirit of Harriet Tubman fighting for freedom I am the joy that my people create in me I am the wonderful smell of cachupa I am the wonderful smell of cachupa I am the delicious omlette at IHOP I am the delicious omlette at IHOP I am the wonderful colors in the sky I am the beautiful sounds of nature I am the airplane that soars I am the wind breezing up on my face when I run I am the beautiful name: Alia

Written by Alia, 4th Grade English

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Five Years of Full Service Support

Through our full service programming, Bridge Boston removes barriers to student learning and success. We provide uniforms, backpacks, meals, and dental and vision exams to our students. We also employ a full-time counselor and have strong partnerships with many agencies in order to provide individual play therapy, social skills groups, and parent-child therapy to our students and families. We advocate for our families to ensure access to housing, utilities, medical care and nutrition. We are confident that our focus on the whole child has increased our students' skill sets, allowed for more time spent on academic tasks in the classroom, and enabled us to recruit and retain some of the community's most at-risk children.

We emphasize that full service means developing a culture of asking, "What more can we do" to help our students thrive. This year we lived this value in the following situations and many others.

- A teacher learned that a student's father was hospitalized and in a coma. We reached out to the social worker and asked about logistics to ensure the student had transportation to school. We also sent a staff member to bring groceries, extra uniforms and toys to the student's grandmother who cared for the student during this turbulent time.
- A mother shared that she had lost her housing and needed to move into a shelter in another school district. We advocated with the housing department regarding our student's need for stability and continuity at our school where she receives individual counseling and small group reading instruction and has supportive relationships with teachers. We also offered to store all of the family's possessions in our basement to save them the cost of storage so they can save to re-establish housing in the future.
- A student confided that she had witnessed her father injure her mother during an argument. We immediately established contact with and then visited the mother to ensure her safety. We spoke with her about the need to involve the Department of Children and Families. We also secured in-home therapy for the whole family, individual counseling for each child, and connected the mother with known safe locations that had space for a parent with multiple children.
- A child stopped wearing his glasses. We contacted the family and learned that the child's mother was having difficulty getting the glasses repaired on her own. We sent a staff member to retrieve the broken glasses, had them repaired, and returned them promptly to the child.



"Cavities are the most common infectious disease of childhood. We know that kids who are in pain – and toothaches can be a common reason for pain in children – don't do well in school. And any parent knows that getting children to the dentist can be a logistical challenge. So for the kinds of services that can be provided in school - examination by a dentist, tooth cleaning, fluoride treatments, sealants - we think that a school-based program is very important. We need to build a healthier community by improving children's oral health care where they live and learn. The philosophy that Bridge has about providing wraparound services is absolutely right-on."

– Kerry Maguire, Program Director of ForsythKids

Five Years of Buildings

This year we achieved an enormous milestone: we purchased a permanent school property at 435 Warren Street in Roxbury and have begun renovating it. As the dream of a permanent home becomes real, we are increasingly focused on fine-tuning our vision for the space. Foremost in our minds is the idea that this building must be a second home for our students, families and staff. It must foster the strong, thriving community of our school while living comfortably in the broader Roxbury community around us. The Bridge Boston community's years of working side by side in a variety of spaces as we yearned for a permanent building of our own have brought us together in a way that few things could have. We are so grateful to all of the community members who walked with us in this journey and supported our dreams along the way.

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"I gave a lot of presentations to community groups about our desire to buy 435 Warren Street. They were always well-attended by neighboring groups and individuals, many of whom were not happy: more traffic, more charter schools, not here, no way. At our last community meeting the pressure was on as we could not afford any more delays in the zoning process. People started filing in, and I saw... big smiles and waves and friendly faces! Filling the room were our staff members and so many of our families. Amid the heated debate, our families shared what Bridge meant to them and their children. They gave voice to the vision we were all working so hard to nurture into reality - that we could build something beautiful for a community of which we wanted so deeply to be a part. It was an evening I will never forget."

- Yully Cha, Executive Director

"The early years of Bridge were something. When I look back and ask myself how the original 15 staff members were able to bond so intensely, I think about the twice-weekly tear down. Bridge was originally located in the great hall of a church in Jamaica Plain, one giant room divided by temporary walls into five classrooms. There was only one light switch. There was only one door. We got used to hearing crying or hysterical giggling or choral singing just on the other side of the six-foot wall. On Wednesdays and the weekends, the church needed the great hall back, so all 15 teachers and administrators would dive in. We folded up the walls, stacked the chairs, and whisked away the wooden oven, sand tables, games, and doll houses. It was a great noisy affair, with giant tables being dragged onto metal racks and rolling book shelves hurled into corners. Sometimes we laughed all the way through and other times we worked with silent determination. But we did it – buoyed by an ability to laugh and frequent trips to a nearby ice cream store. We felt we were in the business of creating something – something new and important. We were fearless and confident in our assessment that the educational landscape needed us, that the kids needed us.

"As we embark on our final year of occupying temporary housing, I am filled with that same hope we forged in that first church basement - hope born of the idea that small inconveniences should never be allowed to threaten something as sacred as our shared vision for Bridge Boston."

- Jennifer Daly, Principal



Five Years of Outreach

Bridge Boston works to address economic and social inequities in our society by serving students from low-income families, students who have learning or other special needs, students who do not speak English, and students who have experienced homelessness. Since the school's inception we have consistently worked to bring high-need students into our community.

Bridge Boston is a public charter school, and as such, is open to student through a lottery system. We do targeted outreach in our local community to ensure that our lottery includes a large number of children who need a full-service environment. Our teachers and administrators seek out families of young children at shelters, service agencies, and health centers around Dorchester and Roxbury. We connect with social service directors, clinicians, program coordinators, social workers, and family specialists, who then share information about Bridge Boston with their clients and contacts. Through this outreach we have developed strong ties with local organizations who help us realize our vision of improving outcomes for children in Boston's poorest neighborhoods.

To date, Bridge Boston has been successful in our effort to draw high-need children into our community. Our recruitment efforts have ensured that our demographics match and often exceed the percentage of underserved students that we support when compared with local urban schools. We strive to close the achievement gap and make sure that every child has the tools they need to be the creator of their own future.

Student Demographics

- 17% currently or recently homeless
- 40% English Language Learners
- 21% special learning needs
- 100% qualified for free or reduced lunch
- 99% students of color
- 22% have been supported by the Department of Children & Families
- 100% have unlimited potential

Five Years of Support

"It has truly been a community effort to bring Bridge Boston to its current level of maturity and success. I join the administrative leadership in extending my deep appreciation to everyone who has worked on behalf of our school and our students. Thank you!" - Beth Kressley Goldstein, Board President

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"We have a student who used to hide under his desk to avoid writing. Day by day the classroom Teaching Fellow, Coach and I worked with this student. First we met him under the desk and wrote his ideas down for him. Then we got him to come and sit in his chair while we continued to write for him. Next, we alternated writing sentences. This gradual release of responsibility continued for months. The steps were small and slow, but steady. During his final report card conference at the end of the year, I sat down with our student and his mother and showed her his biography report on Thomas Edison. His mother cried when she saw the report – she couldn't believe her son had written such a high quality piece. Her son beamed with pride. I hugged them both. Certainly test scores measure academic progress. But sometimes academic progress is also measured by a feeling, a shift in momentum, or a series of moments that aren't even recognized while they are happening. This is what makes teaching at Bridge Boston personal and rewarding." - Kate Enicks, 3rd Grade Teacher Dayaun Gar are a brilliant rader and writer, and you've got this ! ONIS.H. Ms. Wagner

Financials

As a public charter school, Bridge Boston works to ensure that we are building a financially sustainable school. Last year, over 90% of our operating costs were publicly funded. Our annual fund makes possible adequate preparations for growth until we reach full maturity in 2020, and piloting innovations and additional programming outside of the typical school year, such as our summer program.

Bridge Boston Charter School Income Statement for year ended June 30, 2016*

Revenues	
Per pupil Tuition	\$3,894,973
Public grants	\$452,726
Transportation (in-kind)	\$311,040
Pensions (in-kind)	\$302,414
Private Funding	\$582,041
Miscellaneous	\$68,857
Total	\$5,612,051
Expenses	
Expenses Personnel	\$2,820,462
	\$2,820,462 \$884,162
Personnel	
Personnel Program	\$884,162
Personnel Program Organizational	\$884,162 \$323,068
Personnel Program Organizational Facilities Depreciation	\$884,162 \$323,068 \$671,276 \$30,396
Personnel Program Organizational Facilities	\$884,162 \$323,068 \$671,276
Personnel Program Organizational Facilities Depreciation	\$884,162 \$323,068 \$671,276 \$30,396

Income statement is adjusted for items associated with our capital project.

Bridge Boston Charter School Bridge Boston Foundation

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To schedule a visit, please contact Yully Cha at 857-229-1601 or ycha@bridgebostoncs.org.

2015-2016 Staff Leaders

Yully Cha, Executive Director Jennifer Daly, Principal Joanna Rees Steffey,

Director of Students & Families



