

LOCAL NEWS

City announces \$14.5 million for early childhood music education



BOSTON, MA – December 19, 2022, Mayor Michelle Wu helps Jiana Warren play the violin at the Ellis Early Learning Center after a press conference to announce a \$14.5 million grant secured by New England Conservatory to expand music education for Boston students. (Staff Photo By Chris Christo/MediaNews Group/Boston Herald)

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December 19, 2022 at 8:13 p.m.

A new wave of young Boston students will have extensive music education at their fingertips, the city announced at the Ellis Early Learning gym Monday afternoon.



“Today we are excited to launch an incredible new partnership between (BPS) and the New England Conservatory to bring even more music learning opportunities to our students” said Mayor Michelle Wu. “The \$14.5 million grant NEC has secured will help us expand music programs for school communities across the city in order to provide robust music education and instruments at no cost to our students and their families.”

The partnership and anonymous donation will bring early childhood music education to more schools and expand access to NEC scholarships by 150%, said the conservatory’s president Andrea Kalyn.

NEC Preparatory School currently serves over 1,300 students participating in private lessons, ensembles and music classes on campus.

Music can be key in a child’s intellectual development, but also in their social and emotional development by helping their sense of identity and connection, Kalyn said.

“For me growing up in an immigrant family, music was our connection — my family’s connection to transcend the language barriers, cultural barriers, the ways in which communication could be a burden,” said Wu, who moved a piano into her City Hall office when elected. “Music was a way to unlock all of that and connect on a different level.”

Kalyn remarked on the transformational role of the instrument in her life too, noting that “music can lead you to places you never imagined — young pianist who became the first woman president of NEC or a young pianist who became the first woman elected mayor of the city of Boston.”

Speakers sat in the gym with kids, banging away at drums and a xylophone and occasionally causing a small violin to screech.

The NEC joins a long list of recent BPS partnerships focusing on arts education, including the organizations MGM Music Hall, Boston Symphony Orchestra and MassArt.

In the same way Bostonians connect their communal identity to sports franchises and landmark business and education, Wu said, she hopes to bring arts to the forefront of the city’s identity — “starting through partnerships with our own very own young people in the Boston Public Schools.”

