



## PRESS RELEASE

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**CONTACT:** David Guarino

[dguarino@melwoodglobal.com](mailto:dguarino@melwoodglobal.com)

617-548-4981

### **EDUCATION LEADERS CELEBRATE LARGEST SUMMER LEARNING EFFORT, COMMIT TO REACHING MORE STUDENTS**

*Students expressed more social and emotional challenges coming out of the pandemic*

**BOSTON, Thursday, October 13, 2022** – Boston After School & Beyond (Boston Beyond) was joined by Superintendent Mary Skipper, Massachusetts Secretary of Education James Peyser, and more than 300 community leaders to share 2022 results from a citywide network of summer learning programs and to commit to reaching more students in 2023.

The Boston Beyond report, [\*Summer For All\*](#), showcased the experiences of a record-breaking 15,851 students engaged in 238 community and school-based programs – an 11% increase in students driven by the addition of 26 programs. The average student attendance rate was 87.9% percent, an all-time high.

"Our young people are the leaders that we need to invest in today," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "Programs like these, blending enrichment and education, are proven to boost student outcomes throughout the year and throughout students' lives. These programs are critical in ensuring that we meet our goal of making Boston the most family-friendly city in America."

"With all of the loss of academic and social-emotional development, summer programs are vital to the growth of our students," said Superintendent Mary Skipper. "But our work is not over at the end of the summer: we pledge to accelerate our programming for students and, most importantly, identify the most vulnerable students to ensure access to these invaluable resources. Students, especially those who have been traditionally marginalized, like our Black and Brown students, special education, or multilingual learners, are experiencing an increase in gaps in social and emotional challenges coming out of the pandemic. We are grateful to have deeply committed partners, like Boston After School & Beyond, join us in our efforts to provide our students with increased access to academic enrichment and learning opportunities.

Secretary Peyser announced a new \$1 million [state matching grant](#) for Boston Beyond and the summer of 2023 to build on the Boston Public Schools investment and to leverage philanthropic funds.

"We know that with time and the right supports, our students can achieve or exceed their previous successes. Many students who have experienced learning loss need more instruction time, whether it is in the form of tutoring, additional school days through acceleration academies, after school programs or summer learning," Peyser said. "Boston After School & Beyond's data-driven model has demonstrated the difference that engaging summer programs

can make for students, and I am pleased that we are able to provide funding that will allow them to reach more students next summer.”

RAND’s national longitudinal study on summer learning revealed that students with attendance rates of at least 80% over a five-week program outperformed their peers in academic, social, and emotional outcomes. Attendance was high in Boston’s summer learning community despite students expressing more challenges this summer than in previous ones.

A self-assessment taken by more than 400 students revealed that one in four youth experienced challenges in relationships, optimism, learning interest, and assertiveness at the beginning of the summer.

“The proof is in the pudding,” said Boston Beyond Executive Director Chris Smith. “When students are engaged, they attend at high rates, and we are encouraged that other cities across the Commonwealth are adopting this approach.”

The 238 programs in Boston Beyond’s summer network measure program effectiveness and student progress using instruments commissioned by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Evaluations completed by students and program staff showed that programs created well-structured, nurturing, and engaging learning environments.

Student surveys revealed that programs provide supportive, positively challenging environments, but need more opportunity for leadership and autonomy; teachers and program staff scored more than half of youth as having made substantial gains in skills such as critical thinking, perseverance, and communication.

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