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Skanska USA breaks ground on EF Education First's Headquarters

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EF Education First broke ground on a new, 300,000 s/f facility to serve as its expanded North American headquarters. The 55,000 s/f development parcel is located in the North Point area of the city, next to EF's existing, 250,000 s/f building, beneath the Leonard P. Zakim Bridge, and adjacent to North Point Park and the Charles River.

Governor Deval Patrick, Swedish architect Gert Wingardh and Skanska USA executive vice president and general manager Paul Hewins joined EF Education First founder Bertil Hult, EF North America CEO Alex Hult, EF president of Go Ahead Tours Eddie Hult and other members of the company's founding family to celebrate the milestone, which will result in the creation of 400 jobs during the next 18-months, as well as several hundred temporary construction jobs.

The 10-story building will feature 230,000 s/f of office and education space and a 65,000 s/f above-grade structured parking garage with 126 parking spaces and a dedicated bike room for EF employees.

It will also include 31,000 s/f of public space on the ground and mezzanine floors, including a 14,000 s/f restaurant with 440 seats and tiered outdoor seating wrapping around the entire building. The building design features a striking glass "waterfall" cascading down the facade, which reflects the facility's close proximity to the Charles River. Wingardh conceptualized the building to reflect the design aesthetic of surrounding landmarks including the Zakim Bridge and the turrets on the Museum of Science.

"25 years ago, our North American headquarters consisted of three people in a small office at One Memorial Dr. in Cambridge, and today we mark the beginning of a new North American headquarters campus which will host more than 1,200 employees," said Alex Hult. "Cambridge and the Commonwealth are true incubators for innovation in education and technology, and we look forward to continuing to grow and succeed here in Massachusetts for years to come."

"EF Education First has successfully used education and innovation to become a worldwide leader in international education," said governor Patrick. "I am pleased to celebrate with them as they expand and create quality jobs in the Commonwealth."

EF's expansion is driven in part by rapid growth in the education and travel industries across the global economy. The company has expanded by 20% each year during each of the past ten years. Today, EF Education First employs 34,000 globally in 400 offices and schools located in more than 50 countries. As the largest private education company in the world, EF was also recently tapped to serve as the official language supplier of the XXII Winter Games in Sochi, Russia. In addition to its academic, language, and travel programs, EF also owns and operates the Hult International Business School, the world's largest accredited and ranked MBA program and Englishtown, the world's largest online English language school.

"We couldn't be more excited about delivering a new, world-class headquarters to EF Education First, a flourishing company that believes, like we do, that exploring different cultures and learning from them is essential for effective education and lasting success," said Paul Hewins, executive vice president and general manager for the New England office of Skanska USA. "We look forward to providing EF's employees with an innovative, collaborative working environment where they can continue to thrive."

To thank EF employees and the community and public sector officials who helped make the building project a reality, company leaders hosted a unique groundbreaking ceremony to celebrate the start of construction. The event featured a variety of interesting elements including catering by prominent Boston and Cambridge food trucks, a performance by the Billboard 100 band Passion Pit, "Post Card" photo booths which allowed attendees to socialize photos of themselves in front of a building rendering or global landmarks, and a video montage of prominent public officials reflecting on EF's major expansion project.'s Paul Hewins and EF Education First founder Bertil Hult.

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