



CELEBRATING
55 YEARS

nerej

Final beam raised at Boston Arts Academy's new \$125 million facility on Ipswich St.

March 05, 2021 - Owners Developers & Managers

Boston, MA Mayor Martin Walsh, city and state officials, and members of the Boston Arts Academy Foundation, along with Boston Arts Academy (BAA) representatives, raised the final steel beam into place to complete the structure of the new, \$125 million BAA facility on Ipswich St., directly across the street from Fenway Park. The event marked an important milestone for BAA Foundation, which raises essential funds through philanthropic sources to bridge the gap between BAA's allocation from Boston Public Schools (BPS) and the true cost of a high-quality arts education.

At a time of great societal change for young people across the country, construction of this world-class building for the city's only public high school for the visual and performing arts serves as a bright, shining example of the ingenuity and innovation of the BPS' vision for the future. BAA students, faculty and the community at large will reap the benefits of the expanded space, which will soon open its doors to BAA's rapidly growing student population.

Led by mistress of ceremonies and BAA student body president, Anya Edwards, the topping-off ceremony marked a major milestone in the construction of the new building, transforming the school's previous facility. The building is expected to be completed by spring 2022, and will open for students for the 2022-2023 school year. The new school will accommodate more than 500 students, an increase of nearly 15% from the current student body.

Shown (from left) are: Sean Curran, Waterville Consulting principal and BAA Foundation board of directors secretary; Denella Clark, BAA Foundation president; Anne Clark, BAA head of school; Lee Pelton, Emerson College president and BAA Foundation board of directors chairman; and Jeff Rosica, Avid CEO and BAA Foundation board of directors marketing committee chair.

"This amazing school building will serve future generations of the most creative, artistic young minds from every neighborhood of our great city," said mayor Walsh. "This school is a shining example of what public education can look like, and is a powerful demonstration of the city of Boston's

commitment to providing every child with access to an excellent education and a supportive and affirming learning environment.”

The new building will expand BAA’s space from 121,000 s/f to 153,500 s/f, and it will feature a bold glass façade, theatre marquee, and rooftop green space. The new building will stand five stories tall – an expansion on the previous three – with new and greatly enhanced performance and rehearsal spaces, including a premier 500-seat theater featuring a proscenium stage, a black box theatre, dance studios, music practice rooms, and fashion technology studios and workspaces. These spaces will be outfitted with the latest technologies used by big-name artists and headlining entertainers, thanks to generous donations to the BAA Foundation made by prominent local companies like Avid Technology.

The facility will also include a gym and a health and wellness center for students.

“Boston Arts Academy has a long tradition of cultivating amazingly talented students and providing them with an enriching and welcoming school community where they can express their creativity and showcase their incredible art,” said BPS superintendent Brenda Cassellius. “All BPS students deserve beautiful state-of-the-art facilities like the new Dearborn STEM Academy and the Boston Arts Academy complex. This one-of-a-kind campus is an example of the facilities needed across our city so that all our children have the opportunity to thrive in joyful learning environments. I know the students and our dedicated staff are thrilled that we are one step closer to their new school opening!”

“This is an important milestone for the Boston Arts Academy and the entire City of Boston,” said state treasurer Deborah Goldberg, who oversees the Massachusetts School Building Authority. “BAA is the only public school in Boston that combines rigorous training in the visual and performance arts with a strong academic program, ensuring a path for success for its students in their chosen fields. The MSBA partners with Boston and local communities throughout the state, providing resources and support, so more students have the opportunity to learn in 21st century state-of-the-art facilities in order to realize their full potential.”

In the days prior to Tuesday’s topping-off ceremony, several BAA students had the opportunity to decorate the beam with their art and write messages on it offering words of promise and encouragement to the generations of future students who will learn under the new building’s roof. Many BAA teachers, administrators, school officials, caregivers, alumni, worksite labor force and community leaders also contributed notes, forever embedding their messages into the steelwork of the school itself.

“On behalf of the BAA and BPS communities, we are proud of this monumental step in the transformation of this one-of-a-kind school,” said Denella Clark, BAA Foundation president. “This building will give our students the chance to learn, explore and dream in a facility worthy of their talents and ambitions. We are grateful to mayor Walsh and the city, to treasurer Deborah Goldberg, the BPB, and to our generous supporters who make it possible to provide our students with greater opportunities to further their growth and development as artists, students, and citizens. This unique,

long-term investment further shows how important it is for all students in our city to have access to the best facilities that cater to each student's needs and help them thrive personally and academically."

Mayor Walsh's \$125 million investment in the facility at the time marked the largest individual school investment under the Walsh Administration. The investment includes \$48 million reimbursed by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). In the past several years mayor Walsh has strengthened the city's relationship with the MSBA, leveraging reimbursement to the city to support collaborative work with BPS and the Public Facilities Department.

Other BPS facilities projects in development include the new Carter School in the South End, which is currently in design, and the proposed \$193 million Josiah Quincy Upper School building in Chinatown, which is scheduled to begin construction this summer. In addition, the city has been approved for 27 repair projects, resulting in \$41 million in reimbursement from the MSBA at various BPS schools since 2015 to create more energy efficient buildings by replacing roofs, windows and boilers.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540