



2016-2017

ANNUAL  
REPORT



BOSTON DEBATE LEAGUE

## DEAR FRIENDS,

The strength, belief, and commitment of every individual in our Boston Debate League community enabled us to grow over the last decade into the organization we are today. You continue to fuel the work we do, and will continue to be a source of strength for BDL as we look to the future. Thanks to you, we reached over 4,600 students last year, after-school and in the classroom, and anticipate reaching over 5,000 students during the 2017-2018 school year.

We are at a key inflection point, not just in our organization, but in our society where discourse, evidence-based fact, and respect for humankind are at risk. Our work fosters profound and lasting benefits that allow students to break down national, economic, cultural, and racial boundaries. Through debate and argumentation, students learn not just how to research, but how to critically analyze and use evidence. Students don't just memorize academic content, but understand and can apply it at a deep level. Debate offers students new tools to better understand not only the world around them, but also their own identities. Young people learn to use their voices and become advocates, not just for a claim or potential policy, but for themselves and their communities.

As the Executive Director and new Board Chair of the Boston Debate League, we thank you for believing in Boston's students and teachers, amplifying youth voice in our community, and for supporting BDL as donors, volunteers, and partners. We are excited for the organization's future as we look forward to our ambitious goal to offer debate teams to every middle and high school student in Boston's public schools, while tripling the use of Evidence-Based Argumentation among teachers across the city. As we grow, we seek to use our strong belief in students and the power of language to create an inclusive and informed Boston, led by youth voice. We invite you to join us.

## WITH GRATITUDE,

**MIKE WASSERMAN**  
Executive Director

**KEVIN O'LAUGHLIN**  
Board Chair



## MISSION

To integrate argumentation and competitive debate into Boston's public schools to develop critical thinkers ready for college, career, and engagement with the world around them.

## VISION

An informed and inclusive Boston, led by youth voice.



High School Debater

**DAVIAN**

"This activity and this league are meant to uplift youth thinking and youth voice. At the end of the day, debaters are walking away with a better understanding of what is going on in the world and a better understanding of how they can express themselves, using their voices."

—Davian, Boston Latin Academy, Class of 2017

"In 7th grade, my English teacher told me I talked too much and I should join the debate team. And that's how it started," Davian says with a shrug and a quiet laugh. BDL hadn't started our middle school division yet, so even though he was only in 7th grade at the time, Davian debated - and won - against high school juniors and seniors.

Davian moved to Boston from Jamaica 7 years ago, and he's debated for 6 of those 7 years. He grew from the middle schooler beating high school seniors to become a captain of his debate team, mentoring younger students in debate. BDL offered him "a space to think about important issues that students my age usually wouldn't have been thinking about." He says his debate career served as a gateway to new mindsets and opinions that helped him learn more about the world. "Every day, I use the critical thinking and open-mindedness I learned in debate." Davian continues to draw on those skills while studying computer science as a freshman at the Wentworth Institute of Technology.

Alumni Spotlight:

**LORENA**

"If you want to help youth in Boston, then advocate for debate and get students to join because it makes a difference."

—Lorena, Brighton High School, Class of 2015

As a freshman at Bridgewater State University last year, Lorena was involved in the college's Center for Multicultural Affairs, La Sociedad Latinx, and the 14th annual Latinx Student Leadership Conference. Lorena says debate helped her prepare for these leadership roles, but that she didn't always do as well in school. "I went through a lot from elementary school to high school." Her 9th grade history teacher encouraged Lorena to try debate. "She told me I was capable of doing so much with debate," Lorena remembers. Through debate, Lorena learned to think more critically and started to believe in herself. "I went from struggling in school to being the student who had something to say, to being recognized by my teachers and other students as a debater."

When she talks about current BDL debaters, her smile radiates and her eyes shine in excitement: "Boston youth are portrayed so negatively, and seeing students of color debating such complex topics inspires me! It's so amazing to see the process and how smart and incredible they are. These students are making a difference right now." She sees herself in current BDL students and wants to build her career working with young people, creating a positive cycle of support and mentoring. "I want to be part of their process of figuring this world out. Someone who has gone through it too, and can remind them that they need to do things for themselves and not only for others. To remind them that they matter."

ONE SCHOOL AT A TIME:

## MILDRED AVENUE

“EBA has become a major force in revitalizing our collective instructional practice at the Mildred Avenue... students have taken on great ownership in their learning, and teachers have phased out lectures and independent work in favor of becoming true facilitators of learning, exploration and discussion. Debate, student discourse and written argumentation have become daily tenets of instruction.”

—Andrew Rollins, Principal, Mildred Avenue K–8 School

Three years ago, when the Mildred Avenue K–8 School was put in turnaround status, Principal Andrew Rollins sought out a few key partners to help the school better serve its teachers and students moving forward. The Boston Debate League became one of those key partners. Mildred Avenue established an After-School Debate League team and signed on as an Evidence-Based Argumentation partner school. EBA provided teachers at Mildred Avenue with professional development and targeted support that helped them put student voice at the center of their classrooms, keeping students engaged and excited to learn with and from each other.

This work at the Mildred Avenue was made possible by the generosity and partnership of Jane Hyman, a passionate philanthropist who values youth and education. Jane invests in EBA at middle schools, offering young people a new way to take an active role in their education at a critical time in their development. The Mildred Avenue K–8 School is an amazing story of creating a shared vision with the right partners to ensure that all youth have the opportunity to be at the center of their own learning.

ALIGNING PASSION  
AND IMPACT:

## THE LYNCH FOUNDATION

For over 25 years, The Lynch Foundation has believed in the power of public education. They were inspired by our work and our goal to grow a once volunteer-based organization into a robust nonprofit offering debate to young people across the city. The Lynch Foundation supports our Strategic Plan to offer every middle and high school student in Boston Public Schools the opportunity to debate, while teachers regularly use argumentation as a learning tool in their classes. The Foundation’s investment in BDL’s future provided the time and resources for us to develop our organizational capacity and build a solid foundation necessary to grow responsibly. Thanks to The Lynch Foundation, we are in a stronger position to turn our ambitious goals for growth and deeper impact into a reality.

CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION:

## CORPORATIONS WHO GET DEBATE

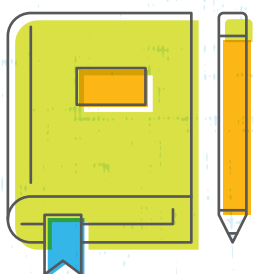
We are proud to have the support of State Street Corporation, Wellington Management Company, Liberty Mutual, and John Hancock, some of the most philanthropic corporations in Boston. As long-time partners, State Street and Wellington Management Company both set the stage for our After-School Debate League to grow from serving only 100 students at 10 schools in 2010, to over 800 students at 36 schools last year. Liberty Mutual recently invested in our Debates en Español, the first Spanish-speaking policy debate division in the nation. John Hancock has sponsored debate tournaments and helped us raise funds by donating four charity bibs for the 2017 Boston Marathon.

We cannot do this work without the partnership and investment of these and other generous local corporations. The combined impact of their philanthropy makes the positive impact of debate and argumentation accessible to more students across the city. Thanks to these leading investors, and to all our supporters, young people in Boston can use their voices, develop their academic and 21st century skills, and become more engaged citizens of our shared community through debate.



# OUR IMPACT

## AFTER-SCHOOL DEBATE LEAGUE:



**100% OF COACHES**

report that students on their debate teams improve their literacy & communication skills.

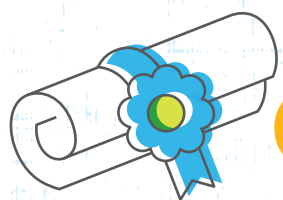
**813 STUDENTS**

debated in at least one tournament.



**589 STUDENTS**

debated in at least three tournaments and/or Junior Varsity or higher.



**95%**

of seniors who debate during multiple school years graduate on time, compared to the BPS average of 71%.

**717 VOLUNTEERS**

dedicated over **4,100 HOURS** of their time to judge at BDL tournaments.



**36 MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOLS**

across **ALL 5** of the neighborhoods in Boston participated in the league.



Last year, the Boston Debate League served

**4,655 STUDENTS**

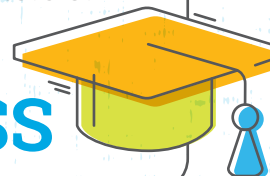


BDL has raised

**\$2.2 MILLION DOLLARS**

BDL participants show significantly **HIGHER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE** on many standard indicators of

**COLLEGE READINESS**



## EVIDENCE-BASED ARGUMENTATION:



**94% OF TEACHERS**

agree that when they use EBA, learning is student-centered, students stay engaged, & demonstrate

**RIGOROUS THOUGHT**



Students showed a

**38% INCREASE**

in argumentative writing skills.

**350 TEACHERS**

received support and professional development.



# THANK YOU

## TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS

You helped offer a platform where students can learn, grow, and thrive through debate and argumentation.

### FOUNDATION, PUBLIC, AND CORPORATE SUPPORTERS

#### \$100,000+

Boston Public Schools  
Barr Foundation  
Wellington Management Foundation  
State Street Foundation, Inc.  
The Lynch Foundation  
Boston Cradle to Career Initiative

#### \$50,000-\$99,999

Liberty Mutual Foundation  
The Hestia Fund  
The Klarman Family Foundation  
Mabel Louise Riley Foundation  
Shippy Foundation  
The Harold Whitworth Pierce Charitable Trust

#### \$25,000-\$49,999

Amelia Peabody Foundation  
Cabot Family Charitable Trust  
The Carl and Ruth Shapiro Family Foundation  
Van Otterloo Family Foundation  
Santander Bank, N.A.

#### \$10,000-\$24,999

John Hancock  
Curriculum Associates, LLC  
Perpetual Trust For Charitable Giving  
Bank of America, N.A., Trustee  
Arthur N. Rupe Foundation  
George H. and Jane A. Mifflin Memorial Fund

Bushrod H. Campbell & Adah F. Hall Charity Fund  
The Rands Foundation

#### \$1,000-\$9,999

Lawrence J. and Anne Rubenstein Charitable Foundation  
Carlson Family Foundation  
Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation  
Eaton Vance Investment Council  
Seyfarth Shaw, LLP  
Anna B. Stearns Charitable Foundation  
Delta Dental of Massachusetts  
Moses Kimball Fund  
Isaacson, Miller  
MathWorks, Inc.

### INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS

#### \$50,000-\$100,000

Robert Kraft

#### \$25,000-\$49,999

Jane Hyman  
Laura Sjoborg

#### \$10,000-\$24,999

John Isaacson  
Christopher Walker

#### \$5,000-\$9,999

Milind Godbole  
Kevin O'Laughlin  
Alan Halfenger  
Gail Zunz

Matthew Schnall & Jessie Steigerwald  
Gabriel & Meredith Fried

#### \$2,000-\$4,999

Elbert Hardeman  
Alison Eggers  
Larry & Atsuko Fish  
Kristin Blount  
Ron & Beth Nix  
Amelie Ratliff  
Frank Ferguson

#### \$1,000-\$1,999

Carol Bahr  
Frannie Moyer  
Andrew Brokos

Haley Freeman & Stephanie Cave  
Barbara Boger  
Beth and Michael Stonebraker  
Claudia Freeman  
Erica Carroll  
Josh Alwitt  
Matthew Hamilton  
Robin Ruthazer

#### \$500-\$999

Jacqueline Delbasty  
Mike Wasserman  
Rosalie Suescun  
Elizabeth Ybarra & Gerald Crean  
James Dillon & Stone Wiske  
Jan Cooper  
Jay Jason



Nancy Adams  
Richard Weintraub  
Sean Curran  
Tarae Howell  
Ted Lapres  
Tom Nakayama

#### \$250-\$499

Tristan Zucker  
Denise Bylaska  
Saskia Fabricant  
Andrew Brown  
Christian Chessman  
Mary Dibinga  
Christopher Lyons  
Daniel Salera  
Kayla Tabela  
Kelley Shaw-Wade  
Kelly McCoy  
Kirk & Nancy Smith  
Rick Bankhead  
Robert Carroll  
Robert McEneaney  
Sarah Kim

#### \$100-\$249

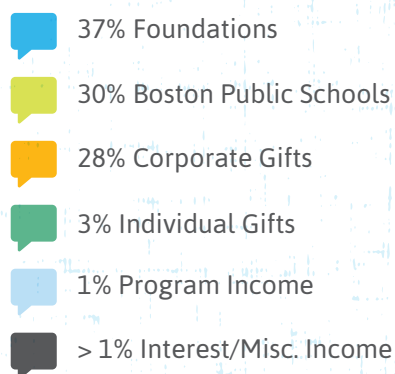
Carrie Alexander  
Abhi Bhakta  
Cheryl Rosenberg  
Jennifer Herman  
Jorg Amsler  
Marisa Suescun  
Robert Ullmann  
Sandra Stonebraker  
Steve MacLellan  
Sunder Singhani  
Amanda Hahnel  
Beth Ann & Andy Ghio  
Brescia Beckner

Christina Miller  
David Ferreira  
David Rutledge  
David Wolfish  
Joseph Otto  
Katherine Moskop  
Ling-Se Helene Chesnakas  
Musiri Abdal-Khallaq  
Nancy Hammett  
Pierre Julien  
Rachelle Exume  
W. Gilson  
Erich Mueller  
Alicia Adamson  
Alex Minier  
Alison Silveira  
Amanda Northrop  
Angela Bassa  
Anna Kordan  
Anne Bledsoe  
Anthony Campagna  
Anthony Pangaro  
Anthony Sheets  
Avram Leftoff-Salzman  
Bill Allen  
Bill Berkowitz  
Byna Elliott  
Caleb Schillinger  
Comer Allen  
Craig Cunningham  
Darryl Craig  
Donna Lucente  
Elizabeth Swanson  
Emily Sy  
Gary Koeppel  
Gaurav Nakhare  
Helene Norton-Russell  
Jaime Pullen  
James Armstrong

James Rich  
Jean Whitney  
Jennifer (Juliano) Smetana  
Joan March  
Joan Wasserman  
Jodi & Mike Detjen  
John Skelton  
Josh Lynn  
Kelly Connolly  
Kimberly Bartlett-Ra  
Leroy Sims  
Lester Esser  
Linda Bonstein  
Lori Seuch  
Lynn Weisel  
Lynne Reznick  
Marion Lee  
Mark Hill  
Matt Grimes  
Melissa Jagodzinski  
Michael & Lori Akashian  
Michael Berlinski  
Monroe "Bud" Moseley  
Nathan Meyvis  
Otis Sheard  
Paul Madden  
Rebecca Chasen  
Roger Anderson  
Ruben Miranda  
Rusty Stieff  
Sandra Stuppard  
Sheryl Obrien  
Stephanie Ketterl  
Theresa Fitzgerald  
Thomas & Paula Revekant  
Tracey Britton  
Mike Wilkinson  
Viola & Richard Morse  
Wayne Young



# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS



## ASSETS

Current Assets	
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$510,215
Contributions Receivable	\$479,500
Prepaid Expense & Other Assets	\$72,797
Security Deposit	\$16,000
Total Current Assets	\$1,078,512
Long Term Pledge	\$86,437
Fixed Assets	\$6,788
Total Other Assets	\$93,225

**TOTAL ASSETS** **\$1,171,737**

## LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Total Liabilities	\$81,246
Net Assets	
Temporarily Restricted Assets	\$933,779
Unrestricted Assets	\$933,779
Total Net Assets	\$1,090,491

**TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS** **\$1,171,737**



## SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Grants and Contributions	\$2,182,012
Program Income	\$24,890
Interest/ Misc. Income	\$7,862
In-Kind Donation	\$44,710

**TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE** **\$2,259,474**

## EXPENSES

Program Services	
After-School Debate League	\$1,187,469
Evidence-Based Argumentation	\$462,963
Total Program Services	\$1,650,432
Supporting Services	
Management and General	\$422,735
Fundraising	\$283,203
Total Supporting Services	\$750,983

**TOTAL EXPENSES** **\$2,356,370**

Change in Net Assets	\$96,896
Net Assets, Beginning of the Year	\$1,187,387
Net Assets End of Year	\$1,090,491

\*Boston Debate League FY16 financials are highlighted above (July 1-June 30th). BDL will release audited FY17 financials Dec 31, 2017.





## Thank You to Our Board Members:

**KEVIN O'LAUGHLIN**  
Board Chair; Retired, KPMG

**JOHN ISAACSON**  
Founding Board Chair Emeritus;  
Isaacson, Miller

**MATTHEW SCHNALL**  
Board Secretary; WilmerHale

**ELBERT HARDEMAN**  
Board Treasurer; Federal Reserve  
Bank of Boston

**CAROL BAHR**  
State Street Corporation

**MARY DIBINGA**  
Boston Latin Academy

**ALISON EGGERS**  
Seyfarth Shaw, LLP

**MILIND GODBOLE**  
Sapient Consulting

**MARISA KELLY**  
Suffolk University

**EVA MITCHELL**  
Boston Public Schools

**STONE WISKE**  
Education Lecturer  
and Author

## Thank You to Our Staff:

**MIKE WASSERMAN**  
Executive Director

**ALICIA ADAMSON**  
Director of Philanthropy  
& External Affairs

**RANE BALDWIN**  
ASDL Program Manager

**KIMBERLY BARTLETT-RA**  
Director of Operations

**KRISTEN BONSTEIN**  
Director of After-School Programs

**JOSÉ COLÓ**  
ASDL Program Manager

**AGOSTINHA DEPINA**  
Development Coordinator

**RANNER FAUGAS**  
ASDL Program Manager

**SARAH MAYPER**  
EBA Instructional Coach

**ROGER NIX**  
Senior ASDL Program Manager

**ALEXANDRA PAPAGNO**  
Volunteer Manager

**KIMBERLY PERRELLA**  
Development Manager,  
Foundation Relations

**MARISA SUESCUN**  
Director of EBA

**VERNÉE WILKINSON**  
Director of Communication  
and Community Programs

**KIMBERLY WILLINGHAM**  
EBA Instructional Coach





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