



MISSION

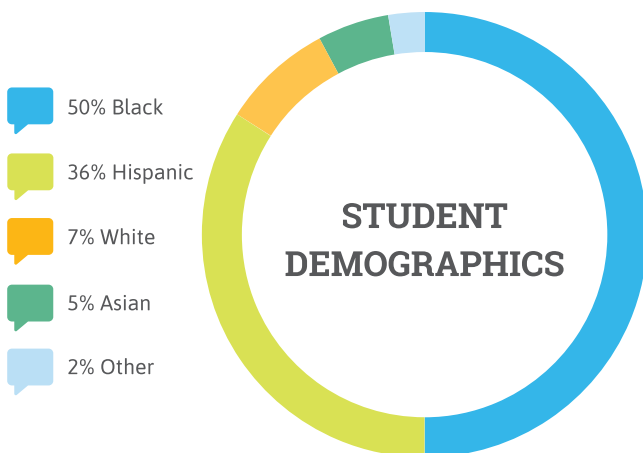
Integrate argumentation and competitive debate into Boston's public schools and develop critical thinkers ready for college, career, and engagement with the world.

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

—Brighton High School Alum, Class of 2015

5000 ENGAGED STUDENTS

Last year, the BDL engaged nearly 5,000 students, 350 teachers, 560 volunteers, and 41 middle and high schools across Boston.



THANK YOU TO OUR LEAD PARTNERS

Boston Public Schools, Suffolk University, State Street, The Philanthropic Initiative, and the Mabel Louise Riley Foundation!



HIGHER GRADUATION RATES

95% of seniors who regularly participate in debate graduate in four years, compared to the BPS average of 71%

COLLEGE READINESS

Debaters are 89% more likely to attend a four-year college or university and 80% more likely to graduate than non-debaters (Anderson and Mezuk, 2012)

Empowering the Next Generation of Critical Thinkers

Debate-Inspired Classrooms Partner Schools

Whole School 3-Year Initiative

Dr. William W. Henderson Inclusion School
Madison Park Technical Vocational School

Cohort Model

Boston Collaborative High School
Community Academy of Science and Health

Post-Partnership Alumni Model

Margarita Muñiz Academy
Jeremiah E. Burke High School

After School Debate Partner Schools

Boston Public Schools

Another Course to College
Boston Community Leadership Academy
Boston Green Academy
Boston International Newcomers Academy
Boston Latin Academy
Brighton High School
Jeremiah E. Burke High School
Charlestown High School
Henry Dearborn STEM Academy
East Boston High School
John Eliot K-8 School
EMK Academy for Health Careers
The English High School
Excel High School
Fenway High School
Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School
Dr. William W. Henderson Inclusion School
Higginson-Lewis K-8 School
Joseph Hurley K-8 School
Mary Lyon Middle & High School
Madison Park Technical Vocational High School
John W. McCormack Middle School
Mission Hill K-8 School
Margarita Muñiz Academy
New Mission High School
John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science
Josiah Quincy Upper School
James P. Timilty Middle School
Mario Umana Academy

Charter Schools

Boston Collegiate Charter School
Brooke Middle Schools
Brooke High School
Prospect Hill Academy

Chelsea Public Schools

Joseph A. Browne School

Somerville Public Schools

Benjamin G. Brown School
East Somerville Community School
Somerville High School

My Voice Matters: After-School Debate League

BDL's After-School Debate program serves over 800 middle and high school students annually to help them develop their academic, leadership, and 21st century skills. Each debate team is coached by teachers in the school, practices twice a week, and competes in six city-wide BDL tournaments per year. At tournaments, students work in teams of two to debate about a real-world policy question, facing opponents from other schools, and using college-level texts as evidence. Community members serve as volunteer tournament judges to determine the winner of each 90-minute debate round. To make debate accessible to students of all skill levels, the program offers three increasingly rigorous divisions and Spanish-language debates.

Student Voice at the Center of Learning: Debate-Inspired Classrooms

BDL's Debate-Inspired Classrooms program supports teachers and school communities to foster classroom learning environments across all subject areas rooted in student voice, evidence-based discourse, and collaboration. BDL partners with entire schools, or cohorts of teachers within schools, by offering one-on-one coaching, faculty professional development, resources, and support for teacher leaders. In debate-inspired classrooms, students question, support, and challenge one another, engage in rigorous thought, and collaborate to build strong arguments.

Ways to Get Involved



Invest in Student Work

Become an individual contributor and/or make a corporate contribution to make debate accessible inside and outside of every classroom.



Volunteer Your Time

We cannot accomplish our mission without the support of hundreds of volunteers each debate season. Join us to serve as a judge, tournament host, or lend your unique skills to move our mission forward.



Host an Event to Support BDL

Help spread the word about the impact of debate by hosting a house party, corporate debate demo or lunch & learn to inspire your network.

For more information on getting involved, please contact Jackney Joseph, Director of External Affairs

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