

Chan Zuckerberg Initiative Awards \$425,000 to Educators and Researchers in Boston Partnering on Cutting-Edge Research

Boston Debate League, Henderson Inclusion School, and Boston University Partner to Transform School Practices

February 18, 2020 – The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative (CZI) today announced \$425,000 in funding to support a partnership between the Boston Debate League (BDL), the Dr. William W. Henderson Inclusion School, and Boston University’s Wheelock College of Education & Human Development to build a framework for student-driven learning through classroom discourse. Specifically, it will be a framework for implementing and scaling a debate-inspired classroom program, where students lead their own thinking and conversations through evidence-based discourse.

“Research indicated that students learn better when they talk more -- and with each other -- in the classroom. Through Debate-Inspired Classrooms instructional coaching, teachers create environments where students are regularly practicing critical thinking, analysis, evaluation, and problem-solving,” said Mike Wasserman of Boston Debate League. “This funding will allow us to examine and refine our instructional coaching model and make data-driven improvements that evolve the approach’s focus on student outcomes.”

“Unlocking the power of advanced educational research depends on not only sharing with educators, but learning from, validating, and valuing their experiences and insights,” said Sandra Liu Huang, head of education at CZI. “We are excited to support these collaborations between educators and researchers to advance whole child-focused school practices and help improve student outcomes.”

This is one of nine grants, totaling \$5.45 million, announced today for teams of educators and researchers working together to improve school practices by applying the science of learning and development. The teams will be focused on school practices that help students develop self direction and curiosity. Each team, which includes educators, support organizations, and researchers, will participate in a multi-year collaboration designed to strengthen connections among educators, schools, and communities nationwide.

“We’re excited to support the work of these teams to expand the definition of student success beyond academics by translating the science of learning and development into exemplary, replicable practices,” said Brooke Stafford-Brizard, director of whole child development at CZI. “The Boston Debate League has demonstrated the potential to not only improve student outcomes locally, but to inform their peers and the broader education field.”

CZI launched its [Request for Applications for Effective School Practices to Support the Whole Child](#) in August 2019. Today’s announcement builds on CZI’s efforts to expand the definition of student success beyond academics to include the identity, physical, mental, cognitive, social and emotional development of individual students. Each project reflects elements of [Comprehensive Student Development](#) (CSD), a research-based framework designed to ensure that every young person enters adulthood with the knowledge, skills, habits, and agency to thrive in a changing world.

CZI is committed to ensuring every young person enters adulthood with the skills and abilities they need to reach their full potential -- and each teacher is equipped with the mindsets, tools and practices they need to support their students’ learning and development. Learn more about CZI’s education work at <https://chanzuckerberg.com/education/>.

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About Chan Zuckerberg Initiative

Founded by Dr. Priscilla Chan and Mark Zuckerberg in 2015, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative (CZI) is a new kind of philanthropy that’s leveraging technology to help solve some of the world’s toughest challenges—from eradicating disease, to improving education, to reforming the criminal justice system. Across three core Initiative focus areas of Science, Education, and Justice & Opportunity, we’re pairing engineering with grant-making, impact investing, and policy and advocacy work to help build an inclusive, just and healthy future for everyone. For more information, please visit www.chanzuckerberg.com.