

New Bedford Public Schools awarded \$100,000 state grant for summer programs and activities

NBPS collaborates with three local agencies to enhance students' summer learning and recreational activities.

New Bedford Public Schools has been awarded a Summer School Expansion & Engagement grant totaling \$100,000, the Baker-Polito Administration announced recently. Funding will make possible eight weeks of expanded access and enhanced summer programming provided by Youth Opportunities Unlimited, the Community Boating Center and the City of New Bedford Parks, Recreation and Beaches.

In a letter conveying the award, Governor Baker and Lieutenant Governor Polito thanked NBPS “for your commitment to supporting additional learning and enriching summer opportunities for students. Through this funding and your continued support, we are able to continue to provide high quality opportunities to children and youth across the Commonwealth.”

The competitive FC120 state grant required proactive application according to NBPS officials. “When the opportunity came up, we decided to write the grant to support our community partners. We thank Governor Baker and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for this funding award. We are utilizing it with three of our great community organizations to expand their summer programming to support more NBPS students,” stated Jennifer Ferland, NBPS Executive Director of Strategic Initiatives & Partnerships.

The district grant request noted, "Funding will enable NBPS the opportunity to expand summer learning programming and open up an additional 450 exciting opportunities for students. These partnerships align with NBPS summer programs to provide full day activities for families who may not otherwise have them. While New Bedford is surrounded by water, has an abundance of city parks and beaches, and is very bicycle friendly, we have found that students do not generally seek out these opportunities. This funding will give them that chance."

Youth Opportunities Unlimited is providing a total of 185 hours of summer programming and serving approximately 170 New Bedford youth between the ages of 9 and 14.

New Bedford Parks, Recreation and Beaches is providing "a variety of nature-based science programming supporting, literacy, social studies and math. Activities will help children develop strong social connections, increase creativity, foster self-esteem and a greater sense of environmental stewardship." For New Bedford children entering grades K-5 and their families, the program extends daily activities for students attending NBPS programs throughout the summer. This partnership grew as a way to provide full day programming for families who needed another option after the NBPS summer programming ended at noon. Students are able to leave their summer program and attend a local park for the remainder of the day."

The Community Boating Center will greatly expand offerings over last year, adding 158 spots to 512 total spots for student sailors. The funding will increase instruction in the Science and Sailing STEM education program as well as expand class capacity and Marine Trades skills building.