
FOCUS on the Boston Schools

An Educational Program offered by Project STEP, Inc.
(String Training and Educational Program)

What is the FOCUS program?

FOCUS aims to introduce children in kindergarten from underrepresented Boston communities to the study of music at an early age. The program provides high-quality beginning music instruction combined with demonstrations of many types of music and instruments. For all students, FOCUS enriches the music program in their schools. For many students, this head-start training will hopefully encourage them to pursue the study of a musical instrument.

Who is eligible?

Students from communities traditionally underrepresented in the world of classical music (i.e. African American, Latino, Native American) that are currently enrolled in Kindergarten (or K2, if applicable) in Boston and surrounding areas' public and parochial schools and in the METCO program can apply for admission to FOCUS.

What is FOCUS I?

FOCUS I is a 15-week introductory course on the fundamentals of music that takes place on Saturdays at the New England Conservatory of Music. Students take weekly hour-long classes in the elements of music and movement ('Eurythmics'). Additionally, there will occasionally be guest performers who will demonstrate various musical instruments including strings, woodwinds, brass and piano, among others.

What are the primary responsibilities of FOCUS I students and families?

Students are expected to be on time and attend each class. Also, students must practice their assignments everyday at home.

What is the cost?

FOCUS I is offered by Project STEP at no cost to the participants with the exception of a **\$35 registration fee**. Project STEP is a non-profit organization funded by generous corporate, foundation, government and individual contributions from throughout the country. All Focus classes, instruments and materials are provided for the students.

What happens at the end of FOCUS I?

All students will perform for family and friends at a recital in May. After successfully completing the course, students will also be given referral information to begin studying a musical instrument at a variety of different Boston-area music schools. A small number of students interested in playing classical stringed instruments will be invited to **FOCUS II**, a seven-week summer session of group violin lessons. There is a \$35 registration fee for Focus II and classes, instruments and materials are provided for each invited student.

What is FOCUS II?

FOCUS II is designed to provide early instrumental training for children interested in playing classical stringed instruments (violin, viola, cello and bass). The course consists of seven weeks of twice-weekly group violin lessons. Approximately twenty students from FOCUS I will be selected for FOCUS II. The selection criteria are based primarily on the child's talent and ability to focus. Enthusiasm, attendance, and dedication as well as parent participation during FOCUS I are also key factors.

Students who complete FOCUS II and who are interested in continuing to study a stringed instrument will be given contact information for Boston-area music schools. A few students may be invited to apply for admission to the Project STEP program to continue stringed instrument training.

What is Project STEP?

Project STEP is a non-profit organization devoted to preparing exceptionally talented students of color for careers as string players in the classical music profession. The program was developed to address the historic lack of representation of people of color, especially African-American, Latino and Native American musicians in classical music.

Why does Project STEP offer the FOCUS program?

We believe that the study of music can be an enjoyable and meaningful activity in a child's life. The FOCUS program strives to provide early access to musical training, allowing students to be exposed to different types of music and instruments. The FOCUS program aims to be a link between students and Boston-area music schools, enabling those who are interested to more easily pursue musical study.

If you have questions about the FOCUS program or Project STEP, please feel free to contact the STEP office: info@projectstep.org.

