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# FOCUS on the Boston Schools

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

## ***What is the FOCUS program?***

FOCUS aims to introduce children in kindergarten from underrepresented Boston communities to the general 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. FOCUS is not an instrumental program, but rather an introduction to music class.

## ***Who is eligible?***

Students from communities traditionally underrepresented in the world of classical music (i.e. Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino) that are currently enrolled in Kindergarten (students in K1 are not eligible until they enter K2) in Boston and surrounding areas' public, private, home school, charter, and parochial schools and in the METCO program can apply for admission to FOCUS.

## ***What is FOCUS?***

FOCUS is a 12-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 ('Eurhythmics'). Additionally, there will occasionally be guest performers who will demonstrate various musical instruments including strings, woodwinds, brass and piano, among others. FOCUS is not an instrumental program, but rather an introduction to music class.

## ***What are the primary responsibilities of FOCUS students and families?***

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

## ***What is the cost?***

FOCUS 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, instruction and materials are provided for the students

***What happens at the end of FOCUS?***

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 continue their musical study and/or begin a musical instrument at a variety of different Boston-area music schools. A selection of students will be invited to **FOCUS II**, a 6-week summer session of group violin or cello lessons. There is a \$35 registration fee for FOCUS II and classes, instruments and materials are provided for each selected 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 six weeks of group violin or cello lessons three times a week. A selection of students from FOCUS will be selected for FOCUS II. The selection criteria are based primarily on the child's talent, ability to focus and teacher recommendation. Enthusiasm, attendance, and dedication as well as parent participation during FOCUS are also key factors.

Students who complete FOCUS II and who are interested in continuing the study of a string instrument will be given contact information for Boston-area music schools. A few students will be invited to join the core Project STEP program to continue their string 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 and Latino 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 our partner 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](mailto:info@projectstep.org).

