
NATIONAL AWARD RECIPIENT

Project ALERTA is a recipient of the prestigious 2010 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award (formerly called the Coming Up Taller Award) from the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. The award, which includes a \$10,000 grant, recognizes outstanding community arts and humanities programs that celebrate the creativity of America's young people. Chosen from among 458 nominations nationwide, Project ALERTA was one of a select group of 15 recipients honored at a White House ceremony hosted by First Lady Michelle Obama.

To learn more about the award, visit <http://www.pcah.gov/cut.htm>.



PROJECT ALERTA PLEDGE

At ALERTA, we try our best,

In reading, math, and all the rest!

We never say, "I can't do that!"

We help each other, and that's a fact!

We respect ourselves and our friends too.

We shine like stars in all we do!



CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information about Project ALERTA, please visit our website at: www.umb.edu/alerta.

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Project ALERTA

Helping put Latino and ELL
students on a path to success



REACHING FOR THE STARS: Project ALERTA

Project ALERTA was launched in 1988 at UMass Boston as an enrichment program for struggling Latino students and English-language learners in the Boston Public Schools (BPS). With middle school dropout rates for Latinos in Boston—and the nation—approaching over 50 percent, founder Lucia Mayerson-David had an idea that seemed radical at the time: For these students to get to and through high school and into universities, they needed to start developing their academic talents early. Thus, Project ALERTA sought to accomplish two broad goals: 1) reduce the dropout rate among Latino students in Boston Public Schools and 2) increase the number of Latino students enrolled in Boston's three select academic high schools, referred to as the "exam schools" (Boston Latin Academy, Boston Latin School, and John D. O'Bryant School of Math and Science).

More than 20 years later, Project ALERTA, along with its sister program Talented and Gifted (TAG), has proven that reaching students early does make a difference. Targeting BPS students in grades 3 through 5, the program implements a project-based, thematic curriculum that creatively weaves together core academic subjects with activities such as theater, drawing and painting, technology, scientific experiments, creative writing, dance, and more.



“There is no such thing as ‘I can’t’ at Project ALERTA. It’s always ‘I can.’ That’s what we try to instill in these children.”

Lucia Mayerson-David,
Project ALERTA founder



“Coming to a college campus for me is a big privilege, because I feel like I’m so grown up.”

Manuela Patiño Sánchez,
Project ALERTA participant

To date, Project ALERTA has served more than 3,000 students in the Boston area. All of our alumni have successfully graduated from Boston Public high schools, including numerous graduates from the three exam schools. Our alumni have moved on to college and become exemplary members of our community in politics, business, education, and many more fields. Our current students report that participating in the program has helped them apply themselves to their studies, improve their grades, work more effectively as part of a team, and think more clearly about their career plans. Teachers in the program report that virtually all of their students who are English-language learners demonstrate increased proficiency in reading and writing English.

HOW ALERTA WORKS A Three-Part Structure

Project ALERTA consists of three components:

- ▶ An after-school program held at Boston Public Schools during the academic year
- ▶ An April Vacation Week Academy at UMass Boston
- ▶ A four-week intensive summer program at UMass Boston

Promoting Student Achievement

Project ALERTA creates an environment where education is highly valued by:

- ▶ Instilling the confidence, drive, and academic skills students need to succeed—from elementary school through college
- ▶ Helping students gain admission into the best middle and high schools in Boston, including competitive exam schools
- ▶ Working with highly trained BPS teachers, many of whom have been with the program from the beginning
- ▶ Hosting parent workshops at all schools, an important parental-engagement component of the program
- ▶ Placing students in a higher education setting, where they can envision themselves as university students
- ▶ Helping students develop positive self-identities, leadership skills, and problem-solving techniques

Mixing Academics with the Arts

Project ALERTA students:

- ▶ Complete hands-on projects and experiments
- ▶ Go on field trips to museums, theaters, and other venues
- ▶ Sharpen their academic skills through a variety of fun and creative activities
- ▶ Become knowledgeable on subjects as wide-ranging as Ancient Egypt, immigration, and nutrition

