

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

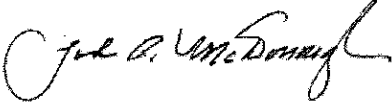


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OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chairperson and Members
Boston School Committee

FROM: John McDonough
Superintendent 

DATE: May 20, 2015

SUBJECT: International Travel Request – Department of Global Education: Community
Academy of Science and Health- Malawi

Attached please find an international travel request from the Department of Global Education for twelve students from Community Academy of Science and Health (CASH) to travel to Malawi with the organization buildOn. In Malawi, our BPS team will begin the construction of a school alongside local Malawians and live with host families. The trip takes place from July 7-July 19th.

Thanks to the generosity of our local funders, buildOn has expanded its US Programs for the first time in ten years to the Boston Public Schools. We now have a Youth Engagement Zone located at Community Academy of Science and Health. With the support and leadership of full-time buildOn staff at CASH, local service opportunities are offered to CASH students every day of the week including weekends. Students at CASH have completed 4,000 hours of service in Boston this year! These students are excited to take this same spirit and dedication to Malawi this July.

We recommend that you approve this request at the May 27th School Committee meeting. Thank you for your consideration.

Attachments

cc: Tanya Freeman Wisdom

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



DIRECTOR OF GLOBAL EDUCATION

May 18, 2015

Dear Boston School Committee,

This year we are excited to share that the Community Academy of Science and Health will participate in a trek to Malawi.

Thanks to the continued generosity of our local funders, the Boston Public Schools now has a Youth Engagement Zone at CASH. BuildOn's Youth Engagement Zone provides two dedicated buildOn staff members, 5 days per week, to work closely with administration, teachers and students to maintain a successful Service and Education program engaging a goal of 150 students per week through activities such as daily service including weekends and holidays, mentoring, school-wide service days and leadership workshops. This has been a successful first year as CASH students have committed over 4,000 hours of service here in Boston! They are excited to take this same dedication to serving others to Malawi this July.

We are proud of our expanded partnership with buildOn to include its Youth Engagement Zone and look forward to its continued growth at CASH and other Boston Public Schools.

Thank you for your review of our request and we look forward to your support.

Sincerely,

Tanya Freeman Wisdom, Headmaster Community Academy of Science and Health

Bethany Wood, Director of Global Education, Boston Public Schools

International Trip Narrative

BPS-buildOn to Malawi

Educational Goals

What is the purpose of this trip?

Thanks to the generosity of our local funders, buildOn has expanded its US Programs for the first time in ten years to the Boston Public Schools. BuildOn now has a Youth Engagement Zone located at Community Academy of Science and Health.

For the **Youth Engagement Zone**, buildOn provides 2 dedicated staff members, 5 days per week, to work closely with administration, teachers and students to maintain a successful Service and Education program engaging a goal of 150 students per week through the following activities:

- Weekly Afterschool Program Meeting (service, education and sponsorship)
- Ongoing Weekend and Holiday Service Opportunities
- Ongoing Afterschool service opportunities (ex: tutoring, senior centers, garden, etc)
- Peer to peer mentoring program
- 3 school wide service days
- Service Learning Curriculum for integration into class time
- Summer service & leadership program for 30 students (July 2014)
- Trek for Knowledge for 12 students/teachers each year (2 weeks in an international project country)

This "Trek for Knowledge" to Malawi is one culminating service activity for a school year that has been dedicated to service in the Boston Community.

The purpose of this trip is for Boston Public School students and teachers to travel on a buildOn "Trek for Knowledge" to Malawi to begin the construction of a school. BuildOn's "Trek for Knowledge" is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for buildOn students and teachers to travel abroad to a rural community in one of buildOn's project countries. Trek participants leave the familiar in order to experience life in a developing country and to help community members start the construction of a school.

Through this intensive cultural immersion program, trek participants live in a village and work alongside the local community to build a new school. Students also participate in daily art and cultural workshops hosted by the village members, lead group workshops on key issues surrounding global citizenship, and participate in the daily life of the village community. The opportunities for growth are enormous, as students not only learn the value of sweat equity, but experience local language, customs, and culture throughout their exchange. Upon return, each trek participant shares their experience with other students through in-class and community presentations.

What are the educational goals of your program?

The educational purpose of the trek is to provide an opportunity for both students and teachers to:

1. Participate in the construction of a buildOn schoolhouse in Malawi
2. Be immersed in, and learn about a new and different culture by living with and working alongside the local community
3. Bring buildOn and the Trek service learning experience to their classrooms and communities.

How does this program connect to your classes or school's curriculum or mission?

The Boston Public Schools is committed to providing students with opportunities to experience other countries and cultures first-hand. We believe these opportunities are life-changing as they challenge and expand one's world view, promote mutual understanding, teach the importance of global advocacy and citizenship, and show one possibilities that one may never have thought possible. BuildOn provides this platform for our students to experience the world beyond Boston through service. The service component is key as it empowers our students to see themselves as agents of change.

Trip Planning/Logistics:

What is the student selection process?

buildOn Students apply for the Trek process through an application. The students then undergo an interview process with a buildOn staff member and Advisors in the school. The students are selected based on their involvement in buildOn, the application, the interview, as well as their ability to stay involved with buildOn upon return to the US.

Who are the chaperones and what are the roles in the school community?

1. Aled Hollingworth, buildOn Trek Leader and Youth Engagement Zone Manager
2. Isaia Tselengidis, CASH teacher

Who are the students traveling and what grades are they in?

1. Kettia Aristide- 10th grade
2. Kyriah Adams-Monroe- 10th grade
3. Michaela Rivers- 10th grade
4. Raven Guerra- 11th Grade
5. Satura King- 11th Grade
6. Christopher Gilbert- 10th grade
7. Nerlie Derius- 11th Grade
8. Thomas Thermidor- 10th grade
9. Rephane Beauciquo- 11th Grade
10. Herby Milien- 10th grade
11. Tessyia Roper- 11th Grade
12. Aldair Francois- 11th Grade

Malawi Trek Itinerary

During the Pre-Trek Workshops, buildOn-BPS chaperones and buildOn staff person, Aled Hollingworth, and all Trek participants will discuss the daily schedule in more detail, including the work responsibilities and leisure activities, as well as the home-stay with local families. Below is an overview of the Trek Itinerary.

Days 1 and 2

- Depart USA and arrive in Lilongwe
- Overnight in Lilongwe

Day 3

- Travel to buildOn Region by van
- Welcome & Orientation
- Overnight in Kasungu

Day 4

- Travel to village
- Welcome Ceremony
- Groundbreaking
- Spend first night with host families

Days 5 – 10

- Work on the construction of the school
- Live with host families
- Daily Culture & Education workshops
- Daily group reflection, journaling and reflection activities

Day 11

- Leave village
- Travel to Lilongwe
- Overnight in Lilongwe
- Trek Debrief Activities

Day 12

- Flight Home
- Arrive back in USA

Trek Itinerary Narrative **(buildOn Notes to BPS Students and Staff)**

A Typical Day on a buildOn Trek

On Trek, the day starts with the sunrise. By 5:30 am the compounds are bustling with activity, the women are carrying water and preparing food for breakfast, while the children are busy with morning chores. Depending on the season, they may be very busy with their work in the fields. The villagers are almost exclusively subsistence farmers. After the morning rituals and breakfast, half the group will head to the worksite to begin work on the school and the other half of the group will assemble for a Cultural Education Workshop.

Worksite: The work consists of digging, picking, sifting, mixing concrete, making bricks, carrying water, and tying rebar. It is physically hard work. Everything is done by hand and you will surely have blisters and sore muscles.

Cultural Education: The workshops will consist of conversations and/or activities with the village leaders, the midwife, the chief of the women, the schoolteacher, a visit to the local market, a trip to the fields, listening to local music, or attending a local cultural event. The workshops are different in each village based on the resources of the community and interest of the group.

Free Time: There is lots of time spent enjoying your host family when you're not at a scheduled activity. You will get a chance to prepare food, play games with the children, do laundry, carry water, and learn the local language. After dinner, the favorite pastimes may include checkers or cards and everyone will crowd around to watch the fun. No matter what the activity or the time of day, many hours will be spent repeating simple local words and teaching basic English.

6:00 am Breakfast

8:00 – 12:00 pm Work (Group A)

10:30 – 12:00 pm Cultural Education &
Water Pumping

12:00 pm Lunch

1:00 pm Group Reflection

2:00 – 5:00 pm Work (Group B)

2:00 – 3:30 pm Cultural Education & Water Pumping

5:00 pm Dinner

6:00 pm Return to host families

9:00 pm Go to bed

On the Worksite: Each day we will spend four hours contributing labor to the construction of the school. This is inevitably the most challenging aspect of the Trek for most participants. Physical labor is foreign to most of us so we need to prepare ourselves in advance for this challenge. Physical training between now and Trek is highly recommended. Any activity, which builds strength or endurance, will make your time on the worksite easier and more enjoyable. However, physical strength is not the only important quality to have on the worksite. Manual labor requires a lot of mental strength as well. A positive attitude and a commitment to the construction of the school are essential.

Possible jobs may include: digging the foundation, digging piers, digging the latrine, mixing cement, making bricks, clearing land, sifting sand, carrying rocks, sorting rocks, carrying

water, watering bricks, turning bricks, tying rebar, cutting rebar, transporting materials, painting beams, and leveling the interior floor of the school.

Interacting with Community Members: The worksite is a meeting place, as many villagers will participate to help build the school and to interact with the team. We encourage you to work in partnership with members of the village. This is a great opportunity to practice your language and to connect through some non-verbal communication. Take advantage of this opportunity!

Safety on the Worksite: The worksite can be a wonderful place to interact with the community, but it can also be the place with the greatest safety risks. It's important to remain alert at all times. There will be many people working at the same time, so be aware of what's going on around you. You don't want to be surprised by a swinging tool. There will also be deep holes for the foundation and the latrine; watch your step. Lastly, be sure not to overestimate your abilities. The villagers on the worksite are used to physical work, so don't try to match their strength. The villagers will be more impressed by your ability to work hard throughout the entire shift, than they will if you exhaust or hurt yourself before the shift is out. Make sure to drink plenty of water!

Leave a Good Impression: As a result of stereotypes, and the nature of being a guest, community members will not always expect our team to work continuously and do the grueling tasks. Defy expectations! Even if you are not as strong, or not as experienced, a positive attitude and a desire to assist will go a long way. We want to leave the village with the impression that our team is hard-working and committed to the school building process. Not only will this help inspire the community to complete the school when we depart, but it will also leave a lasting impression on the work ethic necessary for the children who attend the completed school to succeed.

Things that are encouraged on the worksite:

- Working hard
- Talking while working with community members
- Singing!
- Practicing the local language
- Smiling
- Drinking lots of water
- Having fun!

International Field Trip Request Form

(This form along with all accompanying documents listed in this circular must be submitted to your Principal/Headmaster as well as to the Office of the Superintendent at least three months prior to the trip.)

Trip Information

School/District Department: **Community Academy of Science and Health (CASH)**

Field Trip Category (See CAO-22 for trip category types): **Service Learning**

Destination of Trip: **Malawi**

Dates of Trip: **July 7-19, 2015**

Supervision (Maximum ratio 10:1)

Number of Chaperones: **2**

Number of Students: **12**

Lead Chaperone: **Isaia Tselengidis**

Lead Chaperone's Telephone: (prior to the trip) **(617) 635-8950 (CASH)**

Lead Chaperone's Telephone: (during the trip) (BPS will provide an international phone for emergency use. Number will be assigned prior to the trip.)

Lead Chaperone's Email Address: **itselengidis@bostonpublicschools.org**

Funding

A criterion for participation, may not be the student and his/her family's ability to pay.

(Note: 100 school funds may not be used for international trips)

Cost Per Person: **\$2,100 /\$4,200 (includes school building materials)**

Total Cost: **\$58,800**

Funding Source:

The Boston buildOn Chapter is a group of people that came together to formally support buildOn through fundraising, advocacy, and community outreach to sponsor the construction of schools in buildOn program countries and to sponsor Boston Public School students and teachers to travel to build these schools alongside local villagers and live with host families. The Boston Chapter is raising funds through the John Hancock Non-Profit Program for the 2015 Boston Marathon and a buildOn fundraiser dinner in June.

In addition to the travel costs for the BPS team, the Boston buildOn Chapter has raised money for the construction costs of the schools our BPS team will travel to build.

Lastly, our Boston buildOn Chapter is funding a Youth Engagement Zone at Community Academy of Science and Health this year. This program has two full-time buildOn staff at CASH to support daily service projects in Boston with 150 students per week.

We believe that it is important to thank all of the supporters who have been so generous by making this experience possible.

Grant/Grant Number (if applicable): **NA**

BEDF Account Code/Description (if applicable): **NA**

Airline Transportation to International Destination

PLEASE NOTE: OUR FLIGHTS HAVE NOT BEEN PURCHASED. AS SOON AS OUR FLIGHTS HAVE BEEN PURCHASED, DETAILED FLIGHT INFORMATION WILL BE SENT TO STUDENTS, FAMILIES, HEADMASTERS, AND THE DISTRICT.)

Departure Information

Departure Date: 7/7/2015 Time: _____

Departure Location: Boston Logan Airport

Arrival Location: Lilongwe, Malawi

Return Information

Return Date: 7/19/2015 Time: _____

Return Location: Lilongwe, Malawi

Arrival Location: Boston Logan Airport

Transportation to International Destination (other than airplane): **NA**

NA

Additional Transportation in the US (i.e. to and from airport):

Students' families will drop off and pick up their children from the airport. For departure, students will meet their chaperones at a designated time and in a designated area at Boston Logan Airport. Upon return, chaperones will wait with students until all children are picked up by their families.

Transportation in Foreign Country

All modes of transportation arranged within the foreign country: **Transportation is organized by buildOn and includes public and private buses and vans. We may also ride in taxis and private vehicles driven by buildOn staff.**

Country/Site Information

Country(s) to be visited:

Malawi

Is this country(s) listed on the United States Department of State Travel Warning List?

YES _____ NO X

In-Country/Site Contact Person and Title/Role:

Chad Zibelman, Trek Director

Mon-Thurs. 610.787.1233

Fri. 415.399.2823

Chad.zibelman@buildon.org

Brooke Ahles, Trek Specialist

T: 269-873-1045

Brooke.ahles@buildon.org

Chris Heck, Trek Safety & Risk Manager

(312) 623-3833

chris.heck@buildon.org

Native language of in-country/site contact person: **English**

Can the in-country/site contact person speak English? **Yes**

Primary Lodging

Contact information if students will be staying in a hotel or hostel: (Itinerary should provide detailed information regarding lodging each night.) **We will receive our host village contact information prior to departure.**

If students are staying with host families, how were families chosen? (Please note: the vetting process must be completed in consultation with DGE.) **Currently, buildOn's Trek Coordinator in Malawi is working with several villages and their leaders to identify potential host families. Our buildOn Trek Leaders will arrive one week earlier than the group to visit each potential family for an interview. Our trek leaders have led several treks and have experience vetting host families. Once families are chosen, they receive training on the health and wellness. Students stay in pairs while living with host families and all chaperones stay in close proximity in the village as well. During**

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the first nights of the trip and as needed thereafter, the chaperones visit the students in the evening to ensure they are adjusting to life with their new families.

Travel Logistics

Have you held or will you hold prior to departure at least two pre-departure student meeting to prepare the student team for the responsibilities of participating in an international trip as outlined in CAO-25?

YES NO _____

(Some information provided at our first parent meeting; the rest of the information will be provided at our pre-departure meeting)

Meeting Dates: **May 9, 2015 and May 23, 2015**

Have you held or will you hold prior to departure at least one chaperone meeting to prepare the adult team for the responsibilities of leading students on an international trip as outlined in CAO-25?

YES NO _____

Meeting Date/s: **April 17, 2015** _____

Have you conducted or will you conduct prior to departure at least one parent meeting to review required topics outlined in CAO-25?

YES NO _____

Meeting Date/s: **April 1, 2015** _____

Do you have trip cancellation insurance?

YES _____ NO **(buildOn)**

If this trip does not have trip cancellation insurance, be sure that the school, families, and funders are aware of this.

Please describe the contingency plan should your departure and/or return travel be delayed:
Our trek leaders, in coordination with buildOn's Country Director, will organize our return. Our BPS chaperones will communicate with families and the district should departure or return travel be delayed.

Travel Safety

Have all travelers received (or will they all receive prior to departure) all travel immunizations, vaccinations, and relevant medications recommended by the CDC and their primary care doctors?

YES NO _____

Comments: **In order to attend this trek, BuildOn requires its medical forms be signed by students' and chaperones' physicians. The doctor's signature indicates that his/her patient is physically and emotionally able to travel to a developing country and live with host families in a rural village in basic living conditions.**

Does each traveler have health insurance coverage abroad, including medical and political evacuation coverage? (BPS has this insurance for ALL BPS students and BPS chaperones.)

YES Frontier Medex NO _____

Have the lead chaperone and other chaperones reviewed the BPS Frontier Medex policy online?

YES _____ NO _____

Have the lead chaperone and other chaperones reviewed the BPS Code of Conduct?

YES _____ NO _____

Has the lead chaperone attended (or will they have attended prior to departure) BPS Emergency Preparedness Training?

YES _____ NO _____

Training Date: **November 8, 2014** _____

Does at least one chaperone hold **valid** (duration of the trip) CPR and First Aid certification?

YES _____ Name of Chaperone/s: **Isaia Tselengidis & Aled Hollingworth**

Have you completed the Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for the country you are visiting?

YES _____ NO _____

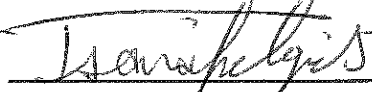
Additional Safety Information: Safety is a priority for buildOn and all Trek Leaders have Wilderness First Responder certification (extensive training to respond to medical emergencies in remote locations). In addition, the following safety precautions are in place: we will have an extensive medical kit, emergency vehicle and driver in the village at all times, emergency evacuation insurance purchased for all participants, Katadyn water filtration system for drinking water, host family training on safe food preparation, SAT phone and/or cell phone for communication, and local buildOn staff familiar with the area who will be traveling with the team.

If there is only one chaperone on your trip, what is the contingency plan should the chaperone need additional adult support while abroad? **NA**

All CAO-25 "Checklists" **MUST** be followed by the lead chaperones, other chaperones, and Principal/Headmaster or District Department sponsoring the trip before, during, and after the trip. Will you complete all "Checklists" before, during, and after the trip with the consult of your Principal/Headmaster?

YES _____ NO _____

School/District Department Approval



Lead Chaperone

5/1/15
Date



Headmaster/Principal or Sponsoring Department

5/4/15
Date

(Signatures above indicate approval for the trip and attest that the CAO-25 checklist will be completed before, during, and after the trip.)

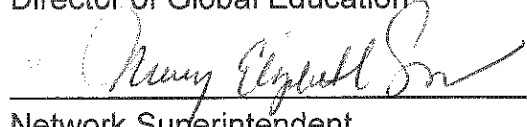
District Approvals

International field trips also require District and School Committee approval.




Director of Global Education

5/18/15
Date



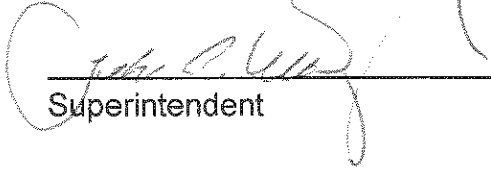
Network Superintendent

5/20/15
Date



Chief Financial Officer

5/20/15
Date



Superintendent

5/18/15
Date

School Committee

Date