

THE NEW YORK
POPS

A DIFFERENT KIND OF ORCHESTRA

EDUCATION REPORT FY26

POPS 
LEARNING TO SCALE

Summary

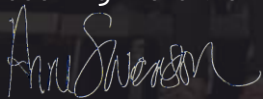
Our mission is to bring the joy of popular music and live orchestral performance to all five boroughs of New York City — from concert halls to classrooms—that inspire today's audiences and nurture tomorrow's musicians, which could not be possible without your generous support.

In the 2025–2026 school year, PopsEd continued to provide life-changing musical experiences for over 3,400 students across all five boroughs of New York City through our free programs: ***Kids in the Balcony***, ***Kids on Stage***, and **PopsEd Residencies**.

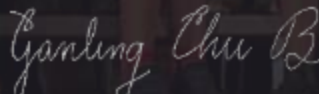
***Kids in the Balcony* (KIB)** welcomed over 1,400 students to experience The New York Pops live at Carnegie Hall.

***Kids on Stage* (KOS)** offered 22 middle school students the unique opportunity to perform alongside The New York Pops musicians on the Carnegie Hall stage, honoring acclaimed composer and lyricist Stephen Schwartz (*Wicked*, *Godspell*, *Pippin*). The **Conducting Apprenticeship**, a program part of *Kids on Stage*, gave four high school students hands-on training in the art of conducting with a variety of professional conductors including Maestro Steven Reineke and Brian Worsdale.

PopsEd Residencies brought music, song, and dance instruction directly into classrooms across the five boroughs, reaching more than 2,000 students.



Anne Swanson,
President and Executive Director



Ganling Chu,
Education Operations Coordinator

KIDS IN THE BALCONY

Kids in the Balcony is a program that provides **FREE** tickets to The New York Pops concerts at Carnegie Hall to New York City students and their families.



**This year we served more than
1,400 students and their families.**

77%

of participants are from
underserved communities

13%

of participants are
English language learners

17%

of participants are
students with disabilities

59%

of participants are from
low-income households

Students were provided with **pre-concert curriculum** to prepare them for the concert-going experience. Booklets included information about the instruments of the orchestra and fun facts about guest artists.



This season, we also held two **in-person workshops** at Carnegie Hall facilitated by teaching artists. Each session welcomed students to that evening's concert program, giving them insight into the creation of musical arrangements for a 78-member Pops orchestra. Maestro Steven Reineke and musicians participated in a Q&A session sharing the story of their music careers and why they love performing in the orchestra.



KIDS IN THE BALCONY TESTIMONIALS

"The vocalists were sensational... I also loved the mix of classical and R&B with a full orchestra and modern band... I was impressed by just the sheer grandeur of the performance..."

– Student from Queens



"Such an inspiration!! It was an honor and a privilege to be around such talent. Our daughter is playing percussion and the night really inspired her.

Once thank you so much for the amazing night!!!"

– Parent from Brooklyn

"My students... felt so honored to be included. It is a spectacular program and students benefit so much from all parts... from the artists to the concerts. Some had never before been to a concert hall. It was amazing."

– Laura Kavourias, P.S. 171 principal



KIDS IN THE BALCONY PARTNER SCHOOLS

BROOKLYN	BRONX	MANHATTAN	QUEENS	
P.S. 24	P.S. 134	M.S. 167	P.S. 171	J.H.S. 189
P.S. 116*		The East Harlem School	Forest Hills H.S.	P.S./M.S. 219
I.S. 318	STATEN ISLAND	La Guardia H.S	J.H.S. 157	M.S. 74
I.S. 239	I.S. 75	Isaac Newton M.S.*	P.S. 144	P.S. 303
		Stuyvesant H.S.	M.S. 158	Francis Lewis H.S.*
		P.S. 212*	M.S. 172	

* denotes new schools this year

KIDS ON STAGE

Kids on Stage is a **FREE** comprehensive program that provides middle and high school students access to the professional performance process from the first audition to the final note.

104

NYC students applied to *Kids on Stage* and the Conducting Apprenticeship



102

Students invited to audition or interview

Jury included members of The New York Pops orchestra and PopsEd Teaching Artists.

22

Middle school instrumentalists were chosen

4

High school conducting apprentices were selected



Brian Worsdale (Director, *Kids on Stage*) led the *Kids on Stage* rehearsals with the experience culminating onstage at Carnegie Hall alongside The New York Pops musicians at our annual Birthday Gala.

Teaching artists, which included members of the orchestra, led sectionals (small group rehearsals) and provided feedback in the side-by-side orchestra rehearsals.



Kids on Stage students were also offered **26 full scholarships** through our partnership with the French Woods Festival of Performing Arts.

One of the highlights of the summer camp was the side-by-side concert with TNYP orchestra musicians. The performance featured over 100 players on stage—including the professional musicians, campers, and *Kids on Stage* students and alumni—with vocal numbers by guest artist Jessica Vosk and soloists from the camp's theater program.

KIDS ON STAGE:

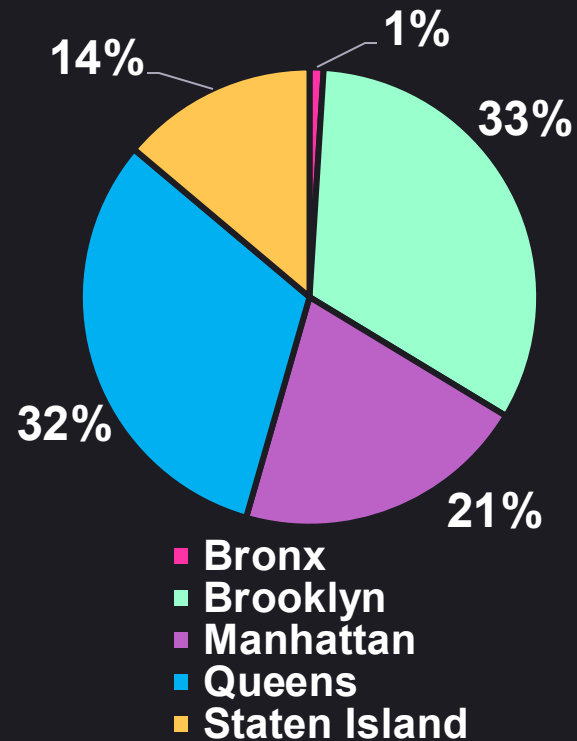
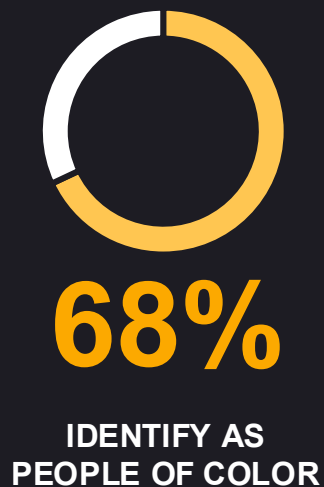
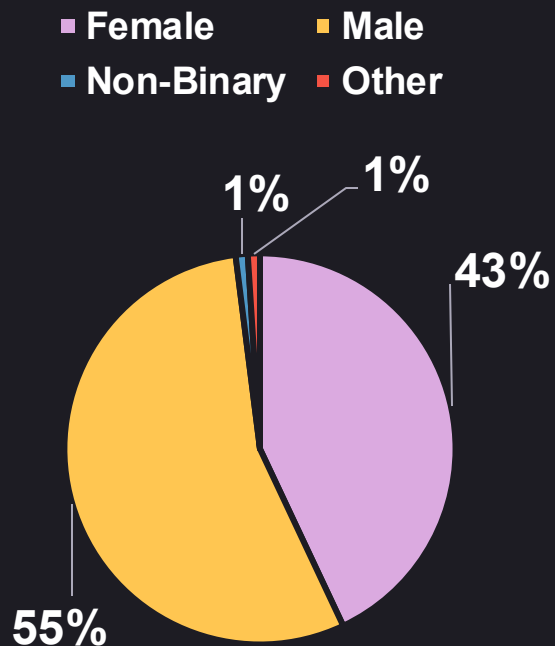
CONDUCTING APPRENTICESHIP



The *KOS* Conducting Apprenticeship program gives four high school junior and senior music students the chance to study the many facets of conducting. Students received instruction from Brian Worsdale.

Students also participated in a conducting masterclass with Steven Reineke and had opportunities to attend and score study during TNYP orchestra rehearsals.





KIDS ON STAGE TESTIMONIALS



"World class musicians + Prestigious world-renowned Carnegie Hall + Stephen Schwartz...+ THE Maestro, Steven Reineke himself at front and center = the ultimate learning experience and dream come true for an aspiring 7th grade trumpet player!"

- Louis, student from Staten Island



"Thank you so much for everything you do for KOS. These past few weeks have been truly a dream come true for Madeleine. She's a quiet one, but she has been taking it all in."

- Parent from Manhattan

"Kids on Stage opened my eyes to what music can be. Seeing Carnegie Hall packed and performing with stars, along with forming unforgettable relationships, is something I know will be one of the best experiences of my life!"

- Lia, KOS 2024 alumnus

RESIDENCIES

PopsEd Residencies offer musical theater, choral, and instrumental music instruction to students in NYC public schools across the 5 boroughs.

PopsEd Teaching Artists provide music education to students who otherwise might not have exposure to the arts. They also offer their skills and expertise to support and enhance existing music programs.

Curriculum is tailor-made to a school's needs while integrating *National Core Arts Standards* and *New York State Learning Standards for Music* designed to bolster children's confidence, self-expression, and artistic literacy.



19 SITES

26 Teaching Artists

SERVING + 2,000 STUDENTS



79%

of participants are from underserved communities

12%

of participants are English Language Learners

22%

of participants are students with disabilities

68%

of participants are from low-income households

OUR RESIDENCY PARTNERS

BROOKLYN	BRONX	MANHATTAN	QUEENS	STATEN ISLAND
I.S. 318	M.S. 244	M.S. 167	P.S. 171	Susan Wagner H.S.
All City Marching Band	M.S. 180	The East Harlem School	P.S. 303	Hellenic Charter Classical School
Salute to Music Brooklyn Band	Salute to Music Bronx Band	Salute to Music Manhattan Band	High School For Construction Trades, Engineering & Architecture	
Salute to Music Brooklyn Orchestra			M.S. 158*	
P.S. 177			M.S. 172*	
			Salute to Music Queens Orchestra	

* denotes new schools this year

HIGHLIGHT: *Musical Mentors*

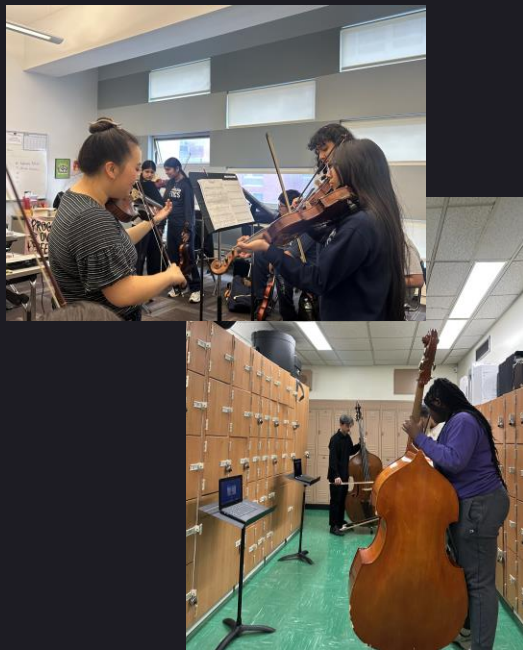
The ***Musical Mentors*** program was first introduced in 2012 to enhance existing public school music programs by supporting music educators while providing middle school students, most of whom cannot afford private lessons, with personalized, small-group instrument instruction.

In the 2025–2026 school year, a grant from the National Endowment of Arts enabled the launch of pilot programs at M.S. 158 and M.S. 172 middle schools located in Queens. This expansion marked a major milestone, bringing the *Musical Mentors* program to all five New York City boroughs.

The funding also enhanced programming at M.S. 244 in The Bronx by increasing Teaching Artists visits for winds and brass instruction and introducing specialized instrument masterclasses.



TESTIMONIALS



"It was great to meet the students, play for them and give them some information about what it would be like to play the trombone. It is always fun to have a group of students 'buzzing' while learning how to produce sound on a brass instrument."

- Deborah, Teaching Artist about the "Trombone Day"

"Mr. Kevin is AMAZING! Our students learn so much and are always excited to work hard for Mr. Kevin. The residency is [an] amazing, creative, fun-filled, [and] student-centered experience."

- Rosanna Sferrazza, Principal from P.S. 303

"One of the kids who participated [in the PopsEd residency] this year became more outspoken and engaged. He said that he wished that he could do high school all over again so that he could start in theater as a Freshman instead of just beginning as a Junior."

-Neeya, Facilitator at High School of Construction, Trade, Engineering, and Architecture

THANK YOU TO OUR **POPS**ED SPONSORS



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McNichols Family Foundation
Providing educational enrichment to communities in need



Kids on Stage and *Kids in the Balcony* are supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

PopsEd Residencies are, in part, made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

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