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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

American Student Assistance Awards Nearly \$600,000 for Middle School Career Exploration Programs in Massachusetts

National nonprofit funds programs designed to foster student understanding of career and education pathways

BOSTON, July 21, 2020 – American Student Assistance® ([ASA](http://asa.org)), the national nonprofit dedicated to helping students make informed choices about their education and career goals, has awarded grants totaling \$598,639 to six Massachusetts school districts to fund career exploration programs for middle school students. This is the second year that ASA® will provide a round of grants in the Commonwealth. The school communities will receive three-year grants and will implement the programs beginning in the 2020-2021 school year.

“ASA wants to expand opportunities for young people to explore a range of courses and career options, regardless of interruptions in the learning environment,” said **Jean Eddy, President and CEO**. “We are thrilled to support Massachusetts schools and educators as they energize and inspire middle schoolers and help them chart paths for their futures.”

The selected schools will implement curriculum and programs to help students make connections between their schoolwork and possible career interests. Examples of initiatives include enhancing and expanding STEM/STEAM classes, developing partnerships with area businesses and chambers of commerce, and implementing hands-on learning experiences in fields such as automation, robotics, app creation, flight and space, and energy and the environment.

Following are the 2020 ASA Massachusetts grant recipients:

- Stacy Middle School, Milford
- Frederick W. Hartnett Middle School, Blackstone
- G.W. Mitchell Middle School & East Bridgewater Junior/Senior High, East Bridgewater
- KIPP Academy Lynn Public Charter School & KIPP Academy Boston Public Charter School
- Whitin Intermediate School, Uxbridge
- Morton Middle School, Talbot Middle School, Matthew Middle School, Fall River

“Stacy Middle School intends to provide all students with equitable opportunities to explore their interests, talents, and different career pathways by providing experiential learning opportunities throughout their middle school career. Middle School career exploration is essential for Stacy Middle School's students because each student needs to be positioned for success as they transition into their secondary career and beyond, and develop 21st-century skills to compete globally. Partnership and funding from American Student Assistance (ASA) will allow Stacy Middle School to implement a comprehensive career exploration approach.” – **Tahon Ross, principal, Stacy Middle School, Milford Public Schools**

"Middle school career exploration is important for students because career discussions at this level help them better navigate their future to learn about lesser known careers, courses that are needed, and the outlook of the amount of jobs in a particular career by the time they graduate high school or college. This grant is allowing us to bring this career exploration opportunity to our students much sooner than we planned and has helped us to ensure it is robust." – **Tonya Curt-Hoard, principal, Frederick W. Hartnett Middle School, Blackstone School District**

"Everyone needs to work and hopefully fulfill their dream to have a career that they love! Being awarded this grant will allow us to develop a comprehensive program so that our students can experiment and experience vocations and choose the right career path for their future." – **Elizabeth Legault, superintendent, East Bridgewater Public Schools**

"This grant will allow us to create a more rigorous and engaging STEM program that will authentically connect students to the careers of the future. Through teacher preparation, engineering curriculum supplies, and connections with industry professionals, this grant will provide further opportunities for our students to develop their critical consciousness and lead impactful, fulfilling lives." – **Rhonda "Nikki" Barnes, executive director, KIPP Academy Lynn Public Charter School and KIPP Academy Boston Public Charter School**

"Creating connections between all our schools while giving students authentic learning experiences is at the core of our strategic plan, and we realize the concurrent benefit for our community and our schools as a whole. We are grateful that these funds will enhance learning for our students and professionals and put industry-standard tools into their hands during these critical middle school years, and the aspiration and inspiration that will follow will no doubt support our students and families well beyond their time in Uxbridge Public Schools." – **Dr. Frank Tiano, superintendent, Uxbridge Public Schools**

"Middle School career exploration is essential to the engagement of our students - it creates relevance to the academic coursework they are working on and helps them set goals for the future. It can be a game changer. Funding from ASA is a critical next step in helping develop a comprehensive career exploration program at the middle school level while also helping each student begin an individual MyCAP (My Career and Academic Plan) through the Naviance platform." – **Drew Woodward, director of school counseling, Fall River Public Schools**

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About American Student Assistance® (ASA)

American Student Assistance® (ASA) is a national nonprofit committed to helping kids know themselves, know their options, and make informed choices to achieve their education and career goals. ASA® has a 60-year legacy of working directly with students to increase their access to higher education through loans and financial education. ASA has turned its experience into impactful solutions for kids in middle, high school, and beyond to help them pursue their dreams. To learn more about ASA, visit <https://www.asa.org/about-us/>.

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