



## **NEWS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**FROM:** Galvan Foundation, Berkshire Union Free School District, Questar III BOCES, and Bard College

### **GALVAN FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES \$250,000 GRANT TO SUPPORT DEVELOPING INNOVATIVE SECONDARY-POSTSECONDARY PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AMONG THE BERKSHIRE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT, QUESTAR III BOCES, AND BARD COLLEGE**

**HUDSON, NY May 8, 2015** – The Galvan Foundation, Berkshire Union Free School District (BUFSD), Questar III BOCES, and Bard College are partnering to create a Bard Program at the Warren Street Academy, a new 150 student high school located at 11 Warren Street, Hudson, NY. The new initiative, an integrated program running concurrently with BUFSD’s Alternative Transition Program (formerly known as The Bridge), will involve Bard’s Institute for Writing and Thinking and the Bard Master of Arts in Teaching Program and will leverage Bard’s expertise running innovating early college high school programs in partnership with public school systems. The Academy-based program will be accessible to students from the Questar III BOCES component school districts.

The Bridge opened in January 2014 after BUFSD led an initiative to establish the school in collaboration with the Hudson City School District, the Catskill Central School District, Questar III BOCES and the Galvan Foundation. Since opening, the program has succeeded in improving the academic outcomes of students who previously faced challenges in a traditional school setting. The percentage of students passing all of their classes has doubled when compared with their performance in former schools. As a result of this success, BUFSD approached the Galvan Foundation with the idea to expand the program so more students can benefit from this program model.

Bard’s Master of Arts in Teaching Program is a one-year, intensive graduate program leading to a master of arts in teaching degree and NYS Initial Teacher Certification (grades 7–12) in four subjects: biology, history, literature, or mathematics and has long-established partnerships with school districts throughout the region. Bard’s institute for Writing and Thinking has over a thirty-year track record of offering professional development opportunities to high school and college faculty. Focused on the critical role that writing plays in both teaching and learning, IWT brings together secondary and college teachers for innovative, intellectually stimulating, and practically useful workshops, conferences, and on-site consulting.

A key component of the partnership will be the embedding of Bard’s Master of Arts in Teaching Program and Bard’s Institute for Writing and Thinking professional development for teachers program at the school on Warren Street. This opportunity will enable students to benefit from the writing-centered practices at the core of Bard’s Early College curriculum and for faculty to have opportunities for incorporated professional development throughout the school day.

Bard College has long been an innovative voice in strengthening college readiness and achievement among high school students. In 2001, the College partnered with the New York City Department of Education to open Bard's first early college campus, the Bard High School Early College Manhattan, (BHSEC), located on the Lower East Side. BHSEC Manhattan initiated a transformative education model premised on the belief that intellectually curious high school-age students, regardless of background, would be better prepared for both college and life if they were given the opportunity to take college courses at an earlier age, not only to give them an academic jumpstart but also to make the most of their natural passion for learning. At the BHSEC schools, students complete their high school requirements and earn 60 college credits—resulting in a Bard College Associate in Arts degree—in the four years typically assigned to high school. Since BHSEC first opened in 2001, Bard Early Colleges have opened in Queens, New York (2008); Newark, New Jersey (2011); Cleveland, Ohio (2014); and this fall, Baltimore, Maryland (2015). Bard College was also approached to partner with the New Orleans Recovery School District in 2008, and more recently, by the Harlem Children's Zone in New York City, to improve college degree attainment by students attending its two Promise Academy charter schools. Completion of transferable college credits affords Bard Early College students with advanced standing at a four-year institution, making it more likely that students can complete a baccalaureate degree and giving them the tools they need to succeed in life. Transferred credits from BHSEC allow the possibility of graduating from a bachelor degree program in fewer than four years, thereby saving students and families thousands of dollars in tuition and eliminating the need for remediation.

The 2015-16 school year will be spent on planning and cultivation involving several programs of the College. Starting as early as Spring 2016, Bard College will provide college courses at the Warren Street Academy to high school seniors. Students enrolled in college courses will receive extensive individualized support and college guidance.

"This generous grant from the Galvin Foundation will help us to join with the Foundation, the Berkshire Union Free School District (BUFSD), and Questar III BOCES to create new education opportunities for the students of Hudson," said Bard College President Leon Botstein. "Our Institute for Writing and Thinking, Master of Arts in Teaching program, and Early College Programs bring new ideas and successful track records to bear on this important new initiative, and we look forward to working with our partners on this exciting project."

Questar III BOCES will work closely within the partnership to help maximize participation and support BOCES aid opportunities for each school district engaged in the Bard initiative. Andrew DeFeo, the Questar III BOCES Assistant Superintendent, described the plan saying, "The Bard program at Warren Street Academy will provide unique educational opportunities which cannot be found anywhere in the region. Questar III is pleased to support this initiative and encourage an additional avenue for educational excellence and innovation among our component school districts."

"This partnership is an example of creative approaches to engaging students at the high school level that are the future of education," said Timothy Giacchetta, president of the Berkshire Union Free School District Board and president and CEO of the Berkshire Farm Center and Services for Youth. "Providing

college work in a high school setting helps alleviate students' concern about their own ability to perform once in college. As a result, they are more likely to continue a college program after graduation."

Bruce Potter, the BUFSD Superintendent, stated, "Our students and faculty will undoubtedly benefit from this partnership with Bard College. The Institute for Writing and Thinking professional development program will help to enrich student learning in all Warren Street Academy classes."

T. Eric Galloway, Galvan Foundation President, spoke of Galvan's involvement, saying, "Improving educational outcomes in Hudson is one of Galvan's top priorities. We are grateful for the opportunity to support this creative new initiative through our grant making and real estate development programs."

**Galvan Foundation** is a private grant making and operating foundation which began operations in January 2012. The Foundation mission is to conserve and maintain buildings of architectural, historic and social significance in order to improve and enhance the quality of life for all Hudson residents, especially those most vulnerable or economically disadvantaged. For more information, contact [dkent@galvanfdn.org](mailto:dkent@galvanfdn.org).

Founded in 1860, **Bard College** is an independent four-year college of the liberal arts and sciences located in Annandale, NY. Bard College joined the early college movement in 1979, when Simon's Rock – the country's first private, residential early college – merged with Bard. Since establishing the first Bard High School Early College in 2001, Bard has built a record of success in developing tuition-free, public-private early college partnerships. The Bard Early Colleges - in operation in New York City, Newark, NJ, Cleveland, OH, New Orleans, LA and Baltimore, MD (Fall 2015) offer students a rigorous, credit-bearing college course of study in the liberal arts and sciences during the four years of high school at no cost to the student. For more information contact [primoff@bard.edu](mailto:primoff@bard.edu).

The mission of **Berkshire Union Free School District** is to provide a diversified and quality educational program, which will prepare each student to graduate from high school and return to the community as a contributing and successful member of society. Warren Street Academy, formerly known as The Bridge, opened its Day Services Special Education and Alternative Transition Program in February 2014. The program provides dual certified teachers, small class sizes, personalized attention, credit recovery, online learning, and project-based learning targeted to individualized needs. For more information, contact [bpotter@berkshirefarm.org](mailto:bpotter@berkshirefarm.org).

**Questar III**, a Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), is an educational service agency providing instructional and support services to 23 public school districts in Rensselaer, Columbia and Greene counties (and more than 640 school districts across the state). Questar III BOCES offers elementary, secondary and adult students choices and opportunities in education. Whether they are interested in exploring career and technical opportunities, seeking alternatives to the traditional classroom setting, or in need of support of physical, developmental or emotional disabilities, Questar III BOCES offers programs and services designed to help all students succeed. For more information, contact [adefeo@questar.org](mailto:adefeo@questar.org).