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Educational Engagement in Boston's Vietnamese Community: Asian American Studies Program student-faculty-alumni engagement with teachers, students, and families of the Mather School (BPS) in Dorchester

Asian American Studies Program, University of Massachusetts Boston

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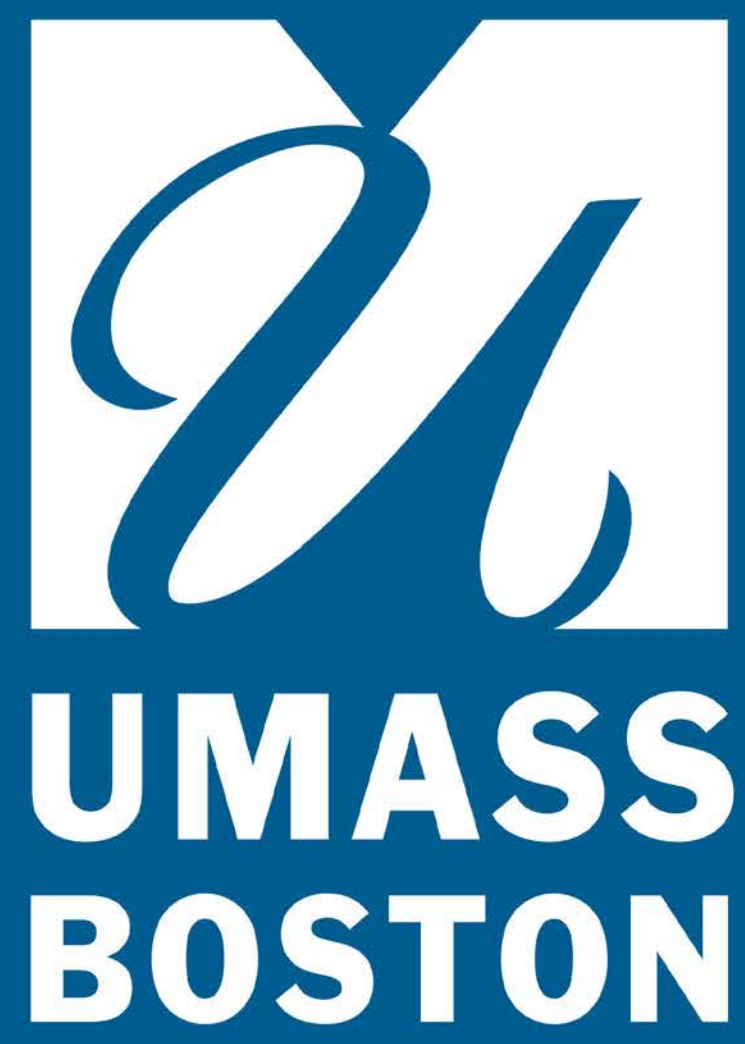
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Educational Engagement in Boston's Vietnamese Community

Asian American Studies Program student-faculty-alumni engagement with teachers, students, and families of the Mather School (BPS) in Dorchester

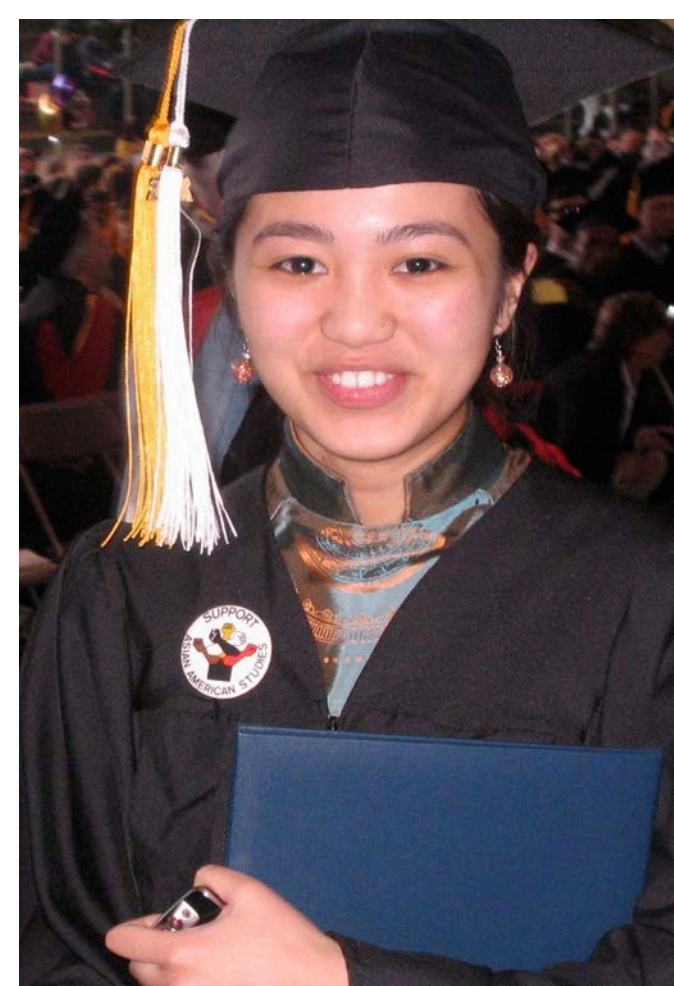
Summary

Founded in 1639, the Mather Elementary School in Dorchester is the oldest public elementary school in the US. In 2012, nearly 40% of Mather students were Vietnamese American from immigrant households. The Mather School's Vietnamese Structured English Immersion (SEI) program is the largest in Boston.

In 1993, Ngoc-lan (Loni) Nguyen, a Vietnamese refugee student in education and Asian American Studies at UMass Boston, was hired as a 4th grade bilingual teacher. Many of Lan's students later attended UMass Boston where they reconnected educationally with the importance of Vietnamese American identity, community, and empowerment in AsAmSt courses. In 2007, Lan visited an AsAmSt class with three former 4th-graders present.

In 2010, UMass Boston AsAmSt alumna, Songkhla (Kha) Nguyen began teaching 2nd grade SEI at the Mather, and in 2012, Tuyet Dinh, a founder of AsAmSt's Coalition for Asian Pacific American Youth (CAPAY) was hired to teach Kindergarten SEI.

Goals and Objectives



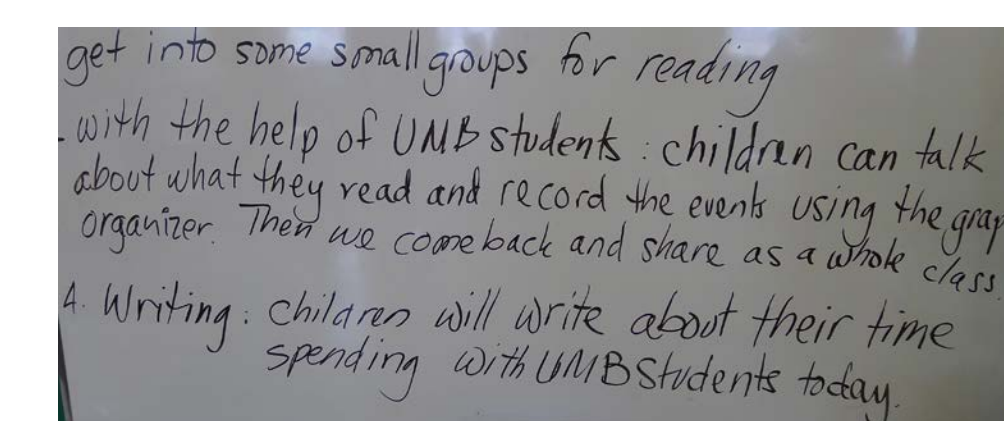
Results/Impacts



Approaches and Methods

Community-engaged courses in AsAmSt integrate activities that:

- Enhance tutoring and mentoring for students;
- Facilitate bilingual communication and support for families;
- Produce student- and community-centered curriculum resources for teachers and their classrooms;
- Develop collaborative research on critical issues for Vietnamese American children, families, and communities.



Conclusion/Next Steps

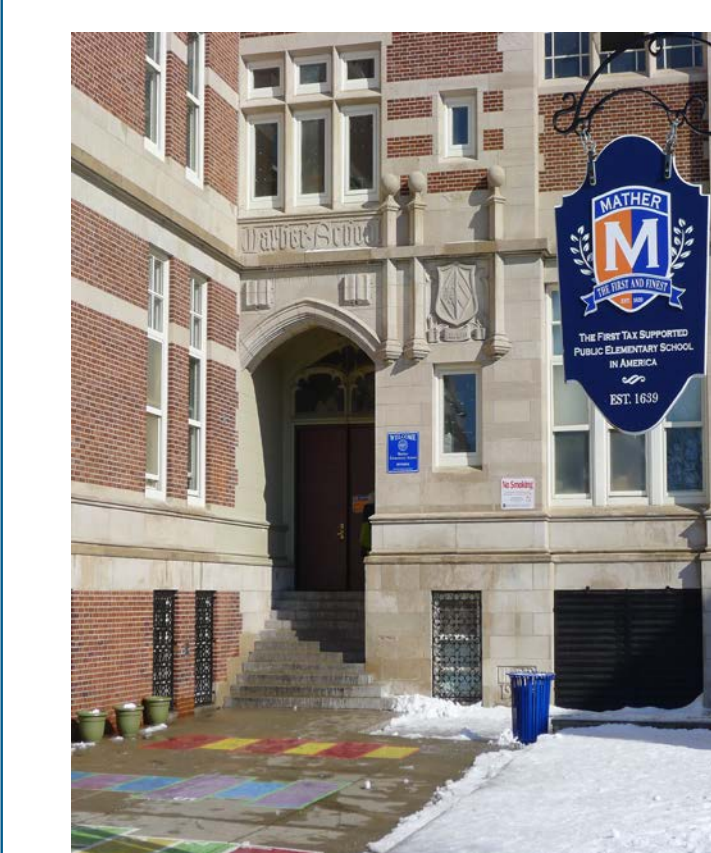
We envision long-term connections with Mather Vietnamese American teachers and their SEI classrooms which serve as both educational and community sites for reciprocal learning and development with UMass Boston AsAmSt students, staff, faculty, and alumni.



References and Resources



Additional Information and Contacts



UMass Boston Asian American Studies Program
Wheatley Building, 2nd floor, Room 97
www.umb.edu/asamst

Civic Engagement Scholars Initiative,
Cohort 2 Participant

Mather Elementary School
1 Parish Street, Dorchester, MA 02122
<http://www.matherelementary.org/>

text and photos: Peter Kiang, 2013

