

## Blue School Announces Expansion to Middle School, Deepens Commitment to Downtown NYC

Written by Australian Business

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( [PRLEAP.COM](http://PRLEAP.COM) ) March 28, 2014 - BLUE SCHOOL announces the expansion to middle school, (grades 6, 7, 8), starting in the fall of 2015. One grade will be added per year, beginning with 6th grade in fall of 2015, 7th grade in 2016 and 8th grade in 2017. This expansion is a realization of one of BLUE SCHOOL's founding goals to create a more complete, balanced and exuberant approach to education, and extend this leading-edge approach from early childhood through the middle school years.

To accommodate the first phase of expansion, BLUE SCHOOL has secured 233 Water Street, the building immediately south and adjacent to its flagship location at 241 Water Street. Renovations will include classrooms, science and arts spaces, as well as a rooftop garden and play space. BLUE SCHOOL is proud to be a part of the growth and revitalization of the South Street Seaport neighborhood, as well as to meet the educational needs of the larger Downtown Manhattan community.

Building on the successes of the pre-primary and primary program, which have been highlighted in The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal, the middle school program model will be integrated and rigorous, based on the most current research about adolescent development as well as best practices and benchmarks for middle school learning. Students will take part in a dynamic course of study including literature, history, science, mathematics, world language, the arts, and physical education. True to the BLUE SCHOOL approach, learners will be focused on applications of the STEAM disciplines in which they will seek to respond authentically and creatively to real world problems in the domains of science, math, arts, technology and engineering.

"For too long, Middle School has been framed as something to 'endure'," says Allison Gaines Pell, Head of School. "Given that the middle school years are a time of rapid growth in the brain, Blue School chooses to build a program that challenges students to fully engage their new capacities – building, creating and asking difficult and powerful questions about the world around us. Last year our second- graders researched, developed and built a museum and a documentary film to celebrate and advocate for South Street Seaport's rich history. Our local Community Board was blown away by the sophistication and sensitivity of their work. If Blue School students can do that at seven, we can't wait to see what they can accomplish at thirteen!"

BLUE SCHOOL Advisory Board members, including educators and thought leaders John Maeda, Sir Ken Robinson, Dr. Dan Siegel, Sam Chaltain, Pam Clarke, Larry Cohen, Steve Nelson, Jeff Walker, and Austin Hearst, among others, see the expansion as a fulfillment of the BLUE SCHOOL promise to provide a more complete, balanced and exuberant approach to education.

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Sir Ken Robinson sees BLUE SCHOOL as "the alternative to a lopsided education system - a place that stimulates and nurtures children's natural creativity within the context of a rich and balanced education. Blue School believes in the deep capabilities of all children and it draws on the best research and strategies to make sure they develop them."

Dr. Dan Siegel, author of *The Whole Brain Child* and the new *Brainstorm*, raves, "Blue School's expansion is an innovative initiative to embrace the actual realities of how the adolescent brain changes. Envision a school culture that cultivates the innate drive for collaboration so that adolescents compete not against each other, but against the world's most pressing problems...If we give adolescents the respect and support they truly deserve, their courage, creativity, and curiosity will be cultivated, not discouraged, and their development, our family lives, and even the world of the future can benefit."

Terri Decker, from Smart City Kids says, "I grow more impressed with Blue School on each visit: the amazing facilities, the passionate teachers, engaged students and cohesive trajectory of learning. Expanding that experience through middle school will ensure that Blue School is another 'go-to' option for NYC parents seeking a fresh outlook on primary education and beyond to lifelong learning."

BLUE SCHOOL will begin accepting applications from qualified middle school applicants in fall 2014 and currently accepts applications for 2-year-olds through 5th grade. Interested parents can contact Dawn Williams at [dawn@blueschool.org](mailto:dawn@blueschool.org) or 212-228-6341 x110. Requirements for application to middle school will be posted to [www.blueschool.org](http://www.blueschool.org) in August.

Media interested in knowing more about the BLUE SCHOOL expansion may contact Laura Camien at [press@blueschool.org](mailto:press@blueschool.org) or 917-689-3688.

**About Blue School** BLUE SCHOOL is an independent pre-primary, primary and middle school in Downtown New York City, designed to continuously reimagine a more complete, balanced and exuberant approach to education by integrating best practices from educational research, child development and neuroscience. The school currently enrolls 215 children age 2 through 5th grade, with 6th grade beginning in 2015.

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The three original members of Blue Man Group, Matt Goldman, Chris Wink, and Phil Stanton founded BLUE SCHOOL in 2006 with Renee Rolleri, Jen Wink, and Jennifer Stanton. In September 2011, BLUE SCHOOL moved to its permanent home at 241 Water Street in Lower Manhattan. Allison Gaines Pell, Head of School, joins founders, faculty, families and an esteemed Advisory Board, including leaders from the fields of education, psychology, design, and neuroscience such as Sam Chaltain, Pam Clarke, Larry Cohen, John Maeda, Steve Nelson, Sir Ken Robinson, David Rockwell, and Dr. Dan Siegel, to turn its vision into reality.