

BALTIMORE SCHOOL
for the ARTS

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Media Contact: Stephanie Jayakanthan

Baltimore School for the Arts

sjayakanthan@bsfa.org

(c) 520.233.3947

Baltimore School for the Arts Students Travel to Puerto Rico

Students to Explore the Arts and Culture of the Region as Part of a Yearlong Project

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND – Eighteen students and three staff members from the Baltimore School for the Arts (BSA) will travel to Puerto Rico from March 9-15, 2019, to explore Puerto Rican arts and culture as part of the school’s year-long focus on Latinx culture, Carnaval de la Cultura Hispana.

The student-artists will work with similarly-aged Puerto Rican students and professional artists in dance, music, and the visual arts. They will learn about mosaics; salsa, merengue, danza, plena, bomba, and cha-cha; and Afro percussion drumming. They will also visit the El Yunque Rainforest, the only tropical rainforest in the U.S. National Forest System; San Juan’s Santurce Neighborhood, home to street and graffiti art that addresses local social issues; a local Puerto Rican public school; and the Bioluminescent Bay along the Southern coastline. They will participate in a service project in the La Perla neighborhood of San Juan helping with a school vegetable garden that provides fresh vegetables to the local school students, as well as help making the space more beautiful by helping to create a colorful mural!

“We’ve been taking a comprehensive look into Latinx culture, from our arts classes to our academics, at the Baltimore School for the Arts this year,” said Tom Askey, BSA’s assistant principal for academics who is overseeing the trip. “We wanted to help our students better understand a culture whose presence is growing in Baltimore and we also are always seeking ways to give our students a global perspective.”

The 18 students were selected from an applicant pool of 50—almost one-quarter of the student population—last spring. Applicants wrote an essay and also interviewed with staff. BSA chose students who showed strength in comprehending both their individual potential for growing

artistically and academically through the experience, as well as a vision for how they might share their experience with the whole school community.

“We believe the ability to learn from and understand other cultures is a critical skill for success in the 21st century,” said Chris Ford, BSA director. “We also think this trip and our yearlong study of Latinx culture will help our students be more empathetic members of our school, city, and international community.”

There are representatives from each of the BSA’s five art tracks—dance, theatre, music, film, and the visual arts—on the trip. The students will document their journey in photos and video along the way, using equipment from the BSA’s Center for Collaboration and Technology (C-CAT). Upon their return to the school, the students will work with their peers on projects that will be presented during an interdisciplinary festival, Carnaval de la Cultura Hispana, which will be presented March 28-30, 2019.

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The Baltimore School for the Arts is a nationally recognized public arts high school that provides its students with intensive pre-professional training in the arts in conjunction with a rigorous academic curriculum. BSA graduates go on to the most selective arts and university programs nationwide and achieve prominence in theater, film, music, dance, and the visual arts. Additionally, the BSA's highly acclaimed TWIGS program offers free after-school arts instruction to 700 city elementary and middle school children from schools across Baltimore, as well as other outreach initiatives to thousands more. Founded in 1979, the school is an integral and vibrant part of Baltimore's educational and cultural communities. www.bsfa.org

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