



# **BRAVO! is the D97 performing arts program at Brooks.**

*Changing lives through the transformative power of musical theater and storytelling.*

*As the largest extracurricular program, touching over 30% of the Brooks student body in '17-'18, BRAVO provides access to the performing arts for everyone, through engagement with students, parents, and the community. We are proud to create a safe environment and sense of belonging.*



## How many events/productions does your group offer to the children annually?

- 3 school year musical productions  
28 total shows plus community performances
  - 7/8<sup>th</sup> grade only show (Fall) – 6 shows
  - 6<sup>th</sup> grade only show (Winter) – 3 shows
  - All school show (Spring) – 8 shows
- 3 summer shows for 4-8<sup>th</sup> graders
  - Jr. Bravo Academy (JBA) 4-6<sup>th</sup> grade production – 3 shows
  - Bravo Academy (BA) 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade productions – 8 shows
- Yearlong programs
  - Crew club
  - Dance
  - Guitar
- InSPiRED workshop for students of all abilities
- Junior Theater Festival
- Elementary school outreach
  - Junior BRAVO one-day workshop
  - BRAVO Abroad
- Arts-related field trips
- Workshops & assemblies
- Community performances (OP Arms, Illinois State Capitol, Magnificent Mile Lights Festival)



## How many children participate in your offerings annually?

### 643 student experiences

310 unique GBMS students  
 229 Female identified (74%)  
 81 Male identified (26%)

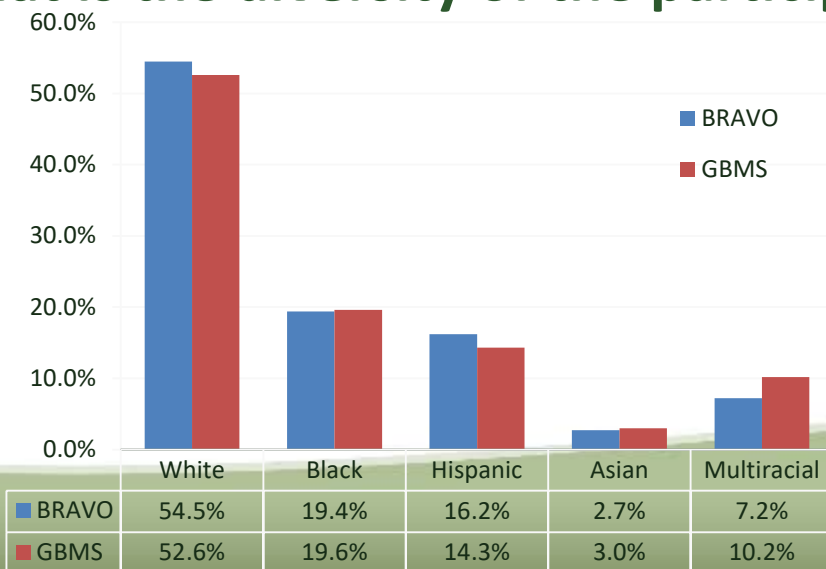
#### Cast & Crew

All School Spring Show 112  
 Fall 7/8<sup>th</sup> Grade Show 87  
 Winter 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Show 54

Summer Participants 185  
 Junior Theatre Festival 54

InSPirED Workshop 17  
 Special Needs Actors 5  
 Dance 40  
 Guitar Club 18

## What is the diversity of the participants?



GBMS = Gwendolyn Brooks Middle School

## What is the practice/meeting schedule for the students?

- **Show rehearsals** - 3:30-6p Monday to Friday and select Saturdays - amount each child attends varies by role
  - Amount of rehearsal also depends on the show - 6th graders rehearse less
  - Total number of rehearsal hours ranges from 125 to 200 per show
  - Rehearsal process for each show is ~8 weeks
- **Stage crew** – starts ~3-4 weeks before show performances
- **Dance Studio, Crew Club and Guitar Club** - run throughout the year after school, with occasional performances
  - Dance Studio – one or two days a week, students choice, 3:30-4:30p
  - Guitar - one day a week, 3:30 – 5:00p
  - Crew Club – twice a month, 3:30-5:30p





## How do the students get involved in the group?

**Just. Show. Up. No cuts!**

### LEARN about BRAVO programs

Digital backpack	School-wide email blasts to Brooks families & staff	In person at lunch/classes
Posters	Student announcements	Before auditions and start of clubs
Social media	Word of mouth	Curriculum night
		At 6 <sup>th</sup> grade info night

### ATTEND

- Audition clinics (free) - gain insight and confidence, and help prepare
- Orientation at beginning of year and/or beginning of each show
- Shows!

## What efforts are made by the organization to be inclusive and recruit children who may not initiate joining the activity on their own?

- Reach out to the student community by **visiting classrooms** and the Commons **lunchroom** to encourage them to participate and ask questions
- Work with teachers, social workers, assistant principals to identify students who could benefit from BRAVO activities & community-building
- Continue to provide **no-audition opportunities**
- **Recruit** students recommended by other students one-on-one



## How do Special Education children become involved?

- Special Education (SPED) children are welcome to perform in any BRAVO production, at any time, with no audition; rehearsals are kept to a minimum
- BRAVO reaches out to SPED staff several times a year and have direct contact with GBMS Multi-Needs Teacher Lynne Beauprez and SPED teachers
- BRAVO holds a full-day annual InSPiRED workshop specifically for children of all abilities and ages districtwide to enjoy musical and experience musical theater

*The BRAVO program **supports students with social emotional, intellectual, behavioral, and physical disabilities** by working with special education teachers and teacher assistants to find the best way for all students to be involved. The InSPiRED workshop that BRAVO sponsors gives our students with significant disabilities an outlet to express the joys of singing, dancing and entertaining with peers. The BRAVO staff has a "can-do" attitude while working with special education teaching staff to ensure the successful participation of all students with a desire to perform.*

*-Lynn Beauprez, GBMS Multi-Needs Teacher*



## Please share an overview of students impacted by both quantity and quality of the experience.

Belonging is everything to kids - we are proud to be a safe and supportive learning environment for all at GBMS

- **Socially** – Sense of family, lifelong friendships – supportive, encouraging environment, accepting of differences. For many students, this is the place where kids feel welcome, accepted and loved unconditionally.
- **Emotionally** – BRAVO staff support the students and their families through schedule-juggling, academic support, and social issues like friend dynamics, anxiety and gender identity; work closely with GBMS social workers; alumni return to mentor, assist and continue to grow
- **Academically** – Downtime - work on homework along with peers; GBMS graduates assist at Homework Help tables and to tutor during extended weeks
- **Time Management** - students learn to balance commitments to schoolwork, family, BRAVO, and other activities - a lifelong skill
- **It's Not About the Role, It's About the Goal**
  - BRAVO performances are TEAM sports – no small parts, each student plays a part in making the show amazing
  - Show requires that everyone works together – cast, dance corp., ensemble, crew, staff, volunteers, audience
  - End result is Broadway-caliber, quality production and experience that the students are always very proud of

Click the links to play







## Please share an overview of students impacted by both quantity and quality of the experience.

K-5 Students - BRAVO touches nearly every K-5 student in the four schools that feed to GBMS (Whittier, Holmes, Hatch, Lincoln) and many others:

- BRAVO Abroad takes **mini versions of BRAVO shows with a talkback** to GBMS feeder schools, at no cost, for arts enrichment
- For each BRAVO show, we call the schools to **invite classrooms to attend free of charge**
- Junior BRAVO workshop in December is an opportunity for D97 grades 1 to 5 to experience that power of musical theater by learning and putting on a real show in just 6 hours!
  - BRAVO **students are the teachers** and leaders for the day!

BRAVO Academy and Junior BRAVO Academy summer camps are open to all grades 4-8

- Students participate from all D97 as well as the surrounding areas such as Chicago, River Forest, Forest Park, Berwyn, etc.
- Majority of the counselors are BRAVO alumni
- Community preschools and camps are invited to attend summer performances

Access INCLUSION Confidence  
Leadership Resilience Growth Friendship

# Please share an overview of students impacted by both quantity and quality of the experience.

## Expectation of Excellence

- Set the bar high and push to achieve it - - teaches perseverance, teamwork, and resilience
- 11 years in a row - - Outstanding Performance at Junior Theater Festival
- BRAVO inspires the global theater community because it is a public school program that demonstrates consistent excellence, professionalism, and inspiration
- Year after year and show after show....kids tell us how proud they are to be part of BRAVO and how much they have learned, and how much they love their BRAVO friends and experiences
- BRAVO alumni return as directors, choreographers, counselors

I like that you work with kids of different dancing and singing abilities and help them all shine.

- Sharon Wolf Newton, Brooks parent

It was wonderful and it seemed like there was opportunity for a lot of students to participate.....

- Kari Harris, parent

I always appreciate the level of performance and talent for the age of the children. **The choreography, singing, acting and overall energy were wonderful.** I've seen professional kids theater in the city that isn't as good as BRAVO performances. They are truly wonderful.

- Anne Leroux, parent

The kids were so talented, **the show was truly inclusive**, and the **production value was impressive** and so great for price of the tickets.

- Ariane Panter, parent

I really **loved the diversity in the cast!**

Also, Bravo shows are always such a great way to fulfill my daughters' (6 and 4) love for theater in an affordable and entertaining way!

-Angie Kuna, parent

BRAVO is astonishing! BRAVO is the world's best middle school musical theater program! **It is an honor working with these young ambassadors as they are inspiring young people and musical theater worldwide!**

-Tim McDonald, iTheatrics Founder & CEO



## **Do your personnel have duties in D97 (e.g., teaching any classes or doing any additional work?)**

The BRAVO program operates within Brooks with two core staff members who work full time on the BRAVO program, wearing countless hats, including:

- Program Director
- Administration
- Finance – budgeting, payroll, accounting, ticket sales
- Student Services – schedules, emotional/social, behavioral
- Logistics
- Technology
- Audio/Visual – including equipment maintenance, repairs, sound and lighting maintenance, as well as support for any event in the auditorium for Brooks, District, outside groups
- Maintenance for BRAVO offices, investment, preservation and maintenance of auditorium equipment and facilities
- Human Resources – hiring, scheduling, management of musical director, choreography, carpentry/set designers, stage manager, costumers, volunteers
- Communications Director
- Public Relations
- Social Media and Advertising
- Merchandising



## Strategic

## Operational

### Annual/ Semi-Annual

- Ensure alignment with D97 policies
- Plan budget goals
- Determine how and where to engage advisory board for support
- Consider budget for the year and adjust as needed

- Hire staff to run dance and guitar
- Consider staffing needs for year
- Examine need for capital purchases, costumes and props
- Create plan for shows all year
- Google calendar for year

### Monthly / Quarterly

- Communicate with advisory board, D97 board, Brooks admin
- Plan operations for each show, classes, special events (Monster Mash Bash, InSPiRED workshop, Jr. Bravo workshop, JTF, Magnificent Mile Lights Festival)
- Finance/Budgeting

- Libretto Review for next show
- Licensing and contracting relating to shows
- Hire next show's staff: musical director, choreography, carpentry/sets, stage manager, costumers for each show, negotiate contracts
- Plan set design, costume design, stage design
- Parent meetings
- Permission forms
- Run audition clinics
- Maintain sign-ups, hold auditions, cast shows
- Design posters and advertising for show
- Communicate with school re: building schedule

### Daily / Weekly

- Rehearsal schedule
- Communication with families
- Communications with school
- Promoting shows
- Budgeting
- Payroll
- Accounting
- Address daily needs to give all an opportunity for success

- Prepare for & run rehearsals
- Weekly emails with due dates and notes
- Manage volunteers, concessions and sign-ups
- Communicating with individual parents regarding schedules and conflicts
- Revtrak for:
  - payments, tshirt and ad orders, ticket sales
- Fulfill ticket orders
- Updating Website/social media
- Create artwork & order scripts
- Manage behaviors – engage with social workers
- Manage Friday pizza lunches



# Final thoughts you would like to share



*BRAVO is aligned with D97's vision and goals:*

## *Equitable*

- Participation in all BRAVO programs is provided for little to no cost
  - Request a one-time production fee of \$25 to \$50 - waived based on need
  - Scholarships – all requests honored
- Reach out to identify students who could benefit from participation – identified by staff members
- Equity Lens: Libretto review committee pilot

## *Positive Learning Environment*

*At BRAVO! all participants are engaged in hands-on, real-world experiences and feel safe, empowered, supported, and valued.*

## *Inclusive*

- BRAVO shows are no-cut. Every child that shows up to audition will be cast
- Larger roles are double cast to provide more opportunities to more kids
- No-audition roles available for those who want less of a commitment
- Crew club, dance team and guitar – free, after school, join any time
- Special Ed children participate as available + interested
- Access: Advisory Board developing initiatives re: transportation, snacks, scholarship, family mentors

## *Focused on Whole Child*

- Aligned with social workers and understand who needs what
- Artistic Director makes personal contact with teachers and parents when students are struggling academically
- BRAVO hires/coordinates to have BRAVO alum return as mentors and oversee homework help table during longer rehearsals
- Older children are trained to be mentor/leaders and work with the younger kids
  - Dance captains
  - Crew club
  - Junior BRAVO workshop
  - InSPiRED workshop
- Partner with D97 teachers to provide historical or social context where necessary

# Goals and Dreams

- Working with CAST on collaboration and cross-overs
- Additional after-school programs: filmmaking, improv, spoken word
- Increased diversity of Bravo Advisory Board (BAB)
- Student focus groups to understand other programming that may be of interest
- Expanded scholarship programs
- BAB Family support: FAQs and mentoring, carpool and emergency contact support, snacks, summer lunches
- Robust discussions with cast members, parents and audience talkbacks
- Talking points and lessons in Playbills
- Direct collaboration with licensing houses on equity issues in show materials



Thank you!

*BRAVO fosters a culture that respects diversity, provides accessibility and establishes a climate of inclusion and equity for all Brooks students and families.*

