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Bank of America donates \$1M to DALI

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Citing the importance of arts education in public schools, Bank of America gave a \$1 million grant Monday to the Dallas Arts Learning Initiative.

The challenge grant is the first corporate gift to the initiative, known by its acronym, DALI. DALI hopes to raise additional grants from other corporate sponsors to help fund the initiative.

DALI is a partnership among the city of Dallas, Dallas Independent School District and area cultural organizations to boost arts programs in DISD schools and to coordinate arts programming in Dallas neighborhoods.

The Bank of America grant comes from the Bank of America Charitable Foundation and was announced during a luncheon Monday at the Dallas Museum of Art in which speaker Susan Sclafani, who recently retired as U.S. assistant secretary of education for vocational and adult education, said the United States must make dramatic changes and improvements to its public school system to prepare its children to compete in a global economy.

Laura Whitley, Dallas market president for Bank of America, said the bank believes arts education increases student engagement and improves literacy and critical thinking skills.

Gigi Antoni, executive director of **Big Thought**, the nonprofit in charge of implementing DALI, said the gift is "an investment in the future of this community."

Under the initiative, DISD elementary school students will receive 45 minutes of art and 45 minutes of music education each week taught by teachers hired specifically for the program. DISD has invested about \$4 million to hire 60 new arts teachers so far with the goal of 140 new positions in the next three years.

The project is being funded by a three-year, \$8 million grant from the New York City-based Wallace Foundation. Some \$9 million worth of private money will be raised, and public sources will provide \$22.8 million in the form of cash and resources, such as teacher salaries.

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