

BOLD TYPES

Tech entrepreneur Paul English gives \$1m to kick-start AI program in Boston Public Schools

Money to help fund summer classes for BPS teachers at UMass Boston.

By [Jon Chesto](#) Globe Staff, Updated March 30, 2026, [37 minutes ago](#)



Paul English, co-founder of Kayak and the entrepreneur behind the MLK project in Boston, is donating \$1 million for AI training for 25 Boston Public Schools teachers. JESSICA RINALDI/GLOBE STAFF

Tech entrepreneur Paul English knows that ponying up \$1 million will make just about anyone pay attention.

He saw it firsthand in 2017 when he proposed [kick-starting a Martin Luther King memorial](#) to then-mayor Marty Walsh. The end result: The Embrace, a memorial on the Boston Common honoring King and wife Coretta Scott King that was [finished in 2023](#).

Now, English is trying to work some of that million-dollar magic with a new mayor, Michelle Wu. And this time, it's to help Boston Public Schools. (English is a proud Boston Latin School alum.) On Thursday, English joined Wu, schools superintendent Mary Skipper, and UMass Boston chancellor [Marcelo Suárez-Orozco](#) at the Eliot K-8 Innovation Upper School to announce his latest venture: \$1 million to train 25 teachers, one at each BPS high school, this summer in AI. The teachers would share what they learned with students in their respective schools.

It started out with a seemingly innocuous question, [posed last year by Boston magazine](#) to 21 prominent local leaders: If you were mayor of Boston, what's the one thing you would do to improve the city?

For English, the answer was simple: ensure every kid who graduates BPS is proficient in AI. After the article was published, English said he heard from colleagues in the tech scene, from as far away as California, that he was on to something.

So he drafted a conceptual AI proficiency plan and reached out to Wu about it in January, agreeing to donate \$1 million to get it going.

The next step is drawing up the curriculum for the teachers who will attend the sessions at UMass Boston, [where English founded an AI center](#). Toward that end, English is working with [Ellen Rubin at Glasswings Ventures](#) to establish an advisory board of industry experts. Topics will include AI ethics, hallucinations, and using AI to improve the classroom experience.

Meanwhile, English said he's reaching out to OpenAI and to Anthropic to ask them to donate computing resources. "If I were them, it's a no brainer," English said. "Boston's the first [major] city in the country to do this. Why wouldn't they be on the ground floor."

It's the latest example of how English is trying to give back to the community where he grew up. He made most of his millions through [the sale of travel firm Kayak to Booking Holdings](#) in 2013, and is currently developing consumer apps [with his Boston Venture Studio](#).

A million-dollar pledge is a sign to be taken seriously. It helped open the doors with Walsh, and he believes it did so with Wu as well.

"It's not an extraordinary amount of money," English said. "But in the big picture, they pay attention."

This is an installment of our weekly Bold Types column about the movers and shakers on Boston's business scene.

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