

edvestors

School on the Move

Presenting the Thomas W. Payzant Prize

For Immediate Release

November 3, 2010

CONTACT:

Paul Jean

617-480-9441

pjean@denterleinworldwide.com

EDVESTORS PRESENTS \$100,000 *SCHOOL ON THE MOVE* PRIZE TO JOSEPH LEE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL in Dorchester

EdVestors releases report identifying common practices of 4 previous School on the Move winners that achieved sustained and replicable improvement in student achievement.

BOSTON – November 3, 2010 - EdVestors, a Boston nonprofit that seeks to drive change in urban schools through strategic private investment, announced today that the Joseph Lee Elementary School in Dorchester is the recipient of the 5th annual \$100,000 Thomas W. Payzant *School on the Move* Prize.

Combined with the announcement of the prize winner, which recognizes a school that has made marked and sustained improvement toward closing the achievement gaps for all students, EdVestors also released a new report, *Charting the Course - Four Years of the Thomas W. Payzant School on the Move Prize*, which identifies the common practices across all four previous School on the Move winners that drove improvement in student achievement.

“The success of the Joseph Lee Elementary school and the experience of the four previous *School on the Move* winners demonstrate that urban schools can make substantial improvements in test scores and student performance with or without big changes in their structure and governance,” stated Laura Perille, Executive Director of EdVestors.

While much of the current dialogue around urban school improvement focuses on school structure and organization, the report illuminates the concrete practices that teachers and school leaders collectively and consistently implement to accelerate student learning and achievement – practices that can be adopted more widely regardless of school structure.

This year’s winning school – as well as the four prior winners – all utilized a strikingly similar set of core practices that were central to their remarkable improvements in child learning:

- Strong and collaborative leadership from principals with active involvement and support from teachers

- Collecting hard student data beyond district requirements and using that data to drive changes in curriculum and instruction on a continuous basis
- Balancing high academic and behavioral expectations of students with high levels of support beyond the classroom to address students' academic, social and emotional needs

Above all, the report finds that what distinguished these schools was their ability to implement these practices consistently and sustain their focus on continuous improvement, leading to better outcomes for their students.

“The stories of the Lee Elementary school and the previous School on the Move winners speak to the power of collaboration of all stakeholders,” said Dr. Carol Johnson, Superintendent of Boston Public Schools, “from principals to teachers to parents to students, pulling in the same direction and dedicated to a single cause: the advancement of Boston Public School children.”

The Joseph Lee Elementary School was one of three school finalists – along with the Clarence R. Edwards Middle School in Charlestown and the Charles H. Taylor Elementary School in Mattapan – that were recognized at the School on the Move event for their improvements and successes in student achievement. The two other finalist schools each received a \$10,000 award at the event.

The 350-student Lee Elementary School has found success through a commitment to teacher collaboration and high expectations for all members of the school community, including teachers, students and parents. With a stable and experienced teaching corps, the Lee has demonstrated rapid and sustained growth in both English Language Arts (ELA) and math over the past four years. Between 2005 and 2009, the Lee achieved steady improvement on the ELA MCAS at a rate that was nine times greater than the district average improvement rate for elementary schools, and significant improvement in math (five times greater than the district average), climbing 30 points between 2005 and 2009.

The schools were congratulated this morning by Mayor Thomas M. Menino, Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester, and Superintendent Carol R. Johnson at an event hosted by the Bank of America.

Background on the 2010 School on the Move Prize:

In Spring 2010, EdVestors invited twelve schools to apply for the *School on the Move* Prize based on their demonstrated improvement in MCAS scores over the four-year Prize review period (2005-2009). A prize selection panel comprised of business and community leaders selected this year's recipient based on a rigorous quantitative and qualitative review conducted over the summer and early fall.

This year's panelists included Wendell Knox, formerly of Abt Associates; Thomas Birmingham, Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge; Stephen Director, Northeastern University; Tito Guerrero, formerly of Cambridge College; J. Keith Motley, University of

Massachusetts Boston; Mary Grassa O'Neill, Archdiocese of Boston; and Jim Stone, Plymouth Rock Assurance Corporation.

Past recipients include Boston Community Leadership Academy in Brighton (2009), Samuel W. Mason Elementary School in Roxbury (2008), Excel High School in South Boston (2007), and Sarah Greenwood K-8 School in Dorchester (2006).

Background on *Charting the Course* Report:

Each year as part of the Prize, case studies of the winning schools have been produced (in partnership with the Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy) to document replicable strategies for school leaders and educators serving urban students. This year, a four-year summative study was undertaken to identify common practices across all four winning schools between 2006 and 2009. The report, *Charting the Course - Four Years of the Thomas W. Payzant School on the Move Prize*, was released at the event and is available at www.edvestors.org.

Using interviews with school leaders, staff and students, the report identifies common themes across the winning schools that describe the structures and strategies put in place to better serve students, as well as some of the opportunities and barriers the schools have faced in sustaining their success since winning the award. The report also highlights key lessons the leaders of these four schools view as critical to implementing the strategies and practices outlined to support students and improve outcomes.

About EdVestors

EdVestors drives change in urban schools through smart, strategic private investment by identifying and shaping the most effective initiatives, partnering with donors to invest in these efforts, and supporting project leaders with hands-on expertise. Since its launch in 2002 by a group of philanthropists and business leaders, EdVestors has directed more than \$9 million to strategic school improvement efforts in Boston.

###