

edvestors

School on the Move

Presenting the Thomas W. Payzant Prize

For Immediate Release

November 7, 2011

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**EDVESTORS PRESENTS \$100,000 SCHOOL ON THE MOVE PRIZE TO
CLARENCE R. EDWARDS MIDDLE SCHOOL in Charlestown**

EdVestors releases report identifying best practices of last year's School on the Move winner, Joseph Lee Elementary School in Dorchester, which achieved sustained and replicable improvement in student achievement.

BOSTON – November 7, 2011 - EdVestors, a dynamic, Boston based school change organization focused on sustaining improvement in urban schools, announced today that the Clarence R. Edwards Middle School in Charlestown is the recipient of the 6th annual \$100,000 Thomas W. Payzant *School on the Move* Prize.

One of four Extended Learning Time schools in the Boston Public Schools, the Edwards Middle School has effectively used its longer school day to provide targeted academic interventions as well as a variety of arts and enrichment activities to all students. As a previous finalist for the 2010 *School on the Move* Prize, and the first middle school to qualify for the Prize, the Edwards has experienced consistent improvement during the review period: From 2006 to 2010, improvement was more than 5 times greater than the district average in English language arts and double the district average improvement in math compared to all district middle schools.

Combined with the announcement of the prize winner, which recognizes an urban school that has made marked and sustained improvement toward closing the achievement gap for all students, EdVestors also released a new report, *Joseph Lee Elementary School - Raising the Bar of Achievement*, which identifies the best practices employed by last year's *School on the Move* Prize winner that drove improvement in overall student achievement. Funding for the study was generously provided by the Barr Foundation.

“The success of the Clarence R. Edwards Middle School and the experience of the five previous *School on the Move* winners demonstrate that urban schools can make substantial improvements in test scores and student performance with or without significant changes in their governance and structure,” 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 five prior winners – all utilized a 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 detailed student data beyond district requirements and using that data to develop 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 from others 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.”

This year’s winner, Clarence R. Edwards Middle School was one of three school finalists – along with New Mission High School in Roxbury and Urban Science Academy in West Roxbury – 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 2011 *School on the Move* finalist schools were recognized and congratulated this morning by Mayor Thomas M. Menino, Board of Education Chair Maura Banta, and Boston Superintendent Carol R. Johnson at an event hosted by Bank of America.

Background on the 2011 *School on the Move* Prize:

In Spring 2011, EdVestors invited seven 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 (2006-2010). A prize selection panel comprised of business, education 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 Jim Stone of Plymouth Rock Assurance Corporation; Thomas Birmingham, Edwards Wildman Palmer LLP; J. Keith Motley, Chancellor, University of Massachusetts, Boston; Anne Lovett, Lovett Woodsum Foundation; Hardin Coleman, Dean, Boston University School of Education; Larry Fish, Chairman of Citizens Financial Group (former)Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Company; and Ann Sagan, Chair, MATCH School.

Past School on the Move winners include Joseph Lee Elementary School in Dorchester (2010), 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).

About EdVestors

EdVestors is a dynamic school change organization focused on accelerating sustainable improvement in urban schools. Since its launch in 2002 by a group of philanthropists and business leaders, EdVestors has directed more than \$12 million to strategic school improvement efforts in Boston. Targeted primarily in Boston, funded initiatives are carefully monitored for results and the most effective are distinguished for expansion and replication.

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