

*School Solutions*



# SEED FUND



PHOTO BY MICHAEL MANNING

Investments 2018

# ABOUT EDVESTORS

***EdVestors' mission is to increase the number of schools in Boston delivering dramatically improved educational outcomes for all students.***

EdVestors is a school improvement organization that combines strategic philanthropy, education expertise, and implementation support to help schools create the conditions for school change. We work at the classroom, school, and system levels to accelerate improvement in Boston's schools. Since launching in 2002, EdVestors has raised and invested more than \$26 million in school improvement efforts.

EdVestors works to strengthen school effectiveness so a quality education is available to every student

in Boston. To do this, we take a problem-solving approach to meeting challenges, and we tap the ingenuity already present in our city's schools, nonprofits, neighborhoods, and institutions. We borrow good ideas that are working elsewhere, generate new ideas where needed, and think creatively and strategically to put good ideas into practice. We invite a wide and diverse network of stakeholders to collaborate, and we share what we know and learn about how schools change, paving the way for more schools to make more progress.

## EDVESTORS GOVERNING BOARD

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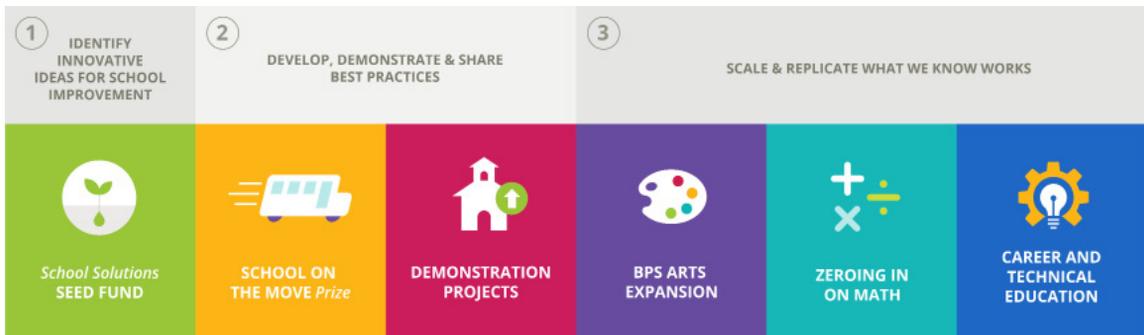
Melissa Watton, *Office Coordinator*

Yasmin Yousof, *Executive Assistant & Special Projects Coordinator*



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## EDVESTORS' APPROACH



## WHAT WE DO

**First, we are a seed funder for solution-seekers' best ideas in Boston's schools.** The School Solutions Seed Fund identifies and funds innovative school-based ideas for improvement.

**Second, we develop, demonstrate, and share best practices for school improvement.** Our annual \$100,000 School on the Move Prize and research highlight examples of significant school improvement.

**Third, we work at scale to achieve city-wide student impact, coordinating major public-private partnerships in targeted issue areas at the core of closing opportunity and achievement gaps.** EdVestors works at the classroom, school, and systems level in the areas of arts, middle-grades math, and career & technical education to dramatically increase school quality.

*“Partnering with teachers, leaders, school communities, districts, and networks, we must find a path forward to ensure ALL our students achieve their greatest potential.”*

**LAURA PERILLE, PRESIDENT & CEO**



PHOTO BY MICHAEL MANNING

# ABOUT THE SCHOOL SOLUTIONS SEED FUND

The Seed Fund pushes all of us to think beyond what we already know about how schools change, to be open to new ideas, and to find even more transformative ways to work on behalf of all students.

## FUNDING

The Seed Fund provides the opportunity for schools to move quickly to test, plan, or pilot innovative solutions or new ideas in response to identified needs in their schools. Each year, EdVestors makes initial Seed Fund investments of \$10,000 in up to ten promising ideas, with a smaller number of projects receiving larger expansion grants based on early success and the potential for impact.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

With flexible resources and tactical support from EdVestors around presentation preparation, outcomes measurement, and implementation, Seed Fund innovators are empowered to put their plans into action and increase impact in their schools.

## LEARNING

The Seed Fund innovators come together multiple times each spring, creating a cohort of like-minded educators to share and learn from one another's challenges and successes and reflect together on how to move their work forward. Together, they identify common issues and explore effective approaches to support teaching and learning.

## 2018 SEED FUND BY THE NUMBERS

EdVestors is seeding ten new school improvement ideas and supporting the expansion of four promising pilots from last year.



\$177,000

INVESTED THROUGH THE 2017-2018 SEED FUND

STUDENTS REACHED

3,340

64 SCHOOLS

247 EDUCATORS

## CELEBRATING INNOVATION, EQUITY, & IMPACT

# The Philip H. Gordon Legacy Award

Each year at the Urban Education Showcase, EdVestors presents the Philip H. Gordon Legacy Award to honor the contributions to urban education and philanthropy of our late co-founder, Philip H. Gordon. The Award is presented to a promising school improvement effort in the School Solutions Seed Fund that embodies Phil's values of innovation, equity, and impact. The Award funds support the expansion of the winning initiative during the following school year.

### PAST RECIPIENTS

- 2017** Do It Yourself Coaching
- 2016** ABCD at Dorchester Academy: Restorative Practices
- 2015** Patrick J. Kennedy Elementary School: English Language Learner Acceleration Clinic
- 2014** Boston Day & Evening Academy: Competency-Based Learning Model

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### EDUCATION REVIEW PANEL

Jennifer Aponte, *Teacher, Mildred Avenue K-8 School*

Sarah Burke, *Teacher, Phineas Bates Elementary School*

Damien Chaviano, *Principal, MARK Development LLC*

Jeffrey Cipriani, *Teacher, Orchard Gardens K-8 School*

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Artis Street, *Instructional Coach, Jeremiah E. Burke High School*

Julie Wright, *Teacher, Charlestown High School*

Amy Zwanziger, *Head of Digital Catalyst, Sanofi*

**ENGINEERING DESIGN IN LITERACY**

*John F. Kennedy STEM Innovation School*

*Jamaica Plain*

**The Challenge**

How do you develop elementary students’ skills as problem-solvers and complex thinkers?

**The Solution**

As more careers rely upon strong STEM skills (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), schools are providing experiences for students to problem solve in a wide variety of situations. At the John F. Kennedy STEM Innovation School, in partnership with Tufts University’s Novel Engineering program, students are designing and building functioning prototypes to address challenges faced by characters in fiction and non-fiction books. By integrating the Engineering Design process into the literacy curriculum, students are tackling real-world or imagined situations, and learning in the process how to solve problems.

**The Potential**

Students begin to see themselves as problem-solvers when they are given the opportunity to tackle open-ended challenges with multiple solutions. The creative use of the Engineering Design Process in literacy breaks down the silos of different curricular areas.



**SOCIAL ACTIVISM THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA**

*New Mission High School*

*Hyde Park*

**The Challenge**

How can young people harness the power of social media to explore the issues they care about most?

**The Solution**

Young people are great consumers of social media and online videos, yet often lack the knowledge and skills to use those same tools to explore or make sense of the issues they care about most. New Mission designed T.U.N.E. (Titan Urban Networking Experiences), named for the school’s mascot, to engage students in social justice issues and teach them how to create content that gives voice to their concerns. In bi-weekly Advisory classes, students and their advisors discuss current events, conduct research, and create content around their issues of interest.

**The Potential**

Creating opportunities for civic engagement that build upon young people’s innate creativity and curiosity about the world around them engages students in their own learning and prepares them to effectively advocate for issues that concern them.

**LINKED LEARNING CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION PATHWAY**

*Excel High School*

*South Boston*

**The Challenge**

How does a school ensure that English language learners and students with special needs have access to the opportunities that a career & technical pathway offer?

**The Solution**

Career and technical education (CTE) pathways within traditional high schools are gaining momentum across Massachusetts and nationally. Excel High School is one of three high schools in Boston rolling out the Linked Learning approach to CTE. Excel is creating on-ramps to Linked Learning for students with special needs and English learners who may not currently have access to all of Excel’s Business Technology pathway courses. Special education and English learner teachers are participating in “externships” at local businesses to learn first-hand the skills needed in work environments. Teachers then design curricular units and in-school learning opportunities that expose students to the necessary skills and tools of business technology.

**The Potential**

Career and technical education connects real-world applications to classroom learning, engaging students with relevant content while building important professional skills. Designing a program that all students can access will ensure that no students get left behind and is critical to deriving the greatest value from CTE programs.

**PROJECT BASED LEARNING IN MATH & SCIENCE**

*Donald McKay K-8 School with North Bennet Street School*

*East Boston*

**The Challenge**

How do teachers incorporate hands-on, project-based learning into their classroom instruction?

**The Solution**

Project-based learning allows students to wrestle with real-world challenges and devise their own solutions. While many schools have begun implementing project-based learning, teachers are seeking additional support in how to do it well. The Donald McKay K-8 School is partnering with the North Bennet Street School, a private, vocational school that provides hands-on training in traditional trades and crafts, to engage 6th graders and their teachers in weekly woodworking classes. Teachers then develop project-based learning units for middle-grades math and science classes, incorporating the problems encountered and approaches used in woodworking class.

**The Potential**

Real-life applications build interest and enthusiasm for STEM at an age when student interest in math and science tends to wane. At the same time, teachers learn how to bring project-based learning into their classrooms and develop students’ creative problem-solving skills.



**LGBTQ+ INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS**

*Another Course to College, Boston Green Academy, Boston International & Newcomers Academy, Charlestown High School, and New Mission High School with BPS Safe & Welcoming Schools*

*Citywide*

**The Challenge**

How can schools improve educational experiences and outcomes for LGBTQ+ students?

**The Solution**

Using a two-pronged approach, five schools, in collaboration with the BPS Office of Safe & Welcoming Schools will provide leadership training for students and professional development around LGBTQ+ advocacy and inclusive instruction for staff. Teachers are exploring ways to strengthen LGBTQ+ inclusive practices and developing LGBTQ+ content and narratives to incorporate in classroom curricula. Students benefit from opportunities to connect with peers, take on leadership roles within and across school communities, and see themselves reflected in classroom content.

**The Potential**

Creating safe and supportive learning communities for all students is critical to building inclusive schools. Valuing different perspectives and identities empowers all students to reach their full potential as contributors to our society.

**RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN THE CLASSROOM**

*City on a Hill – Circuit Street*

*Roxbury*

**The Challenge**

How does a school help students build vital conflict resolution skills through a positive and community-focused discipline approach?

**The Solution**

Traditional disciplinary suspensions and exclusions from class lead to students missing critical learning experiences and the potential for students to disengage as they fall further behind. The Restorative Practices approach, which has spread across Boston and nationally, focuses on building a sense of community and develops staff and students’ skills in resolving conflicts. At City on a Hill, all faculty and staff receive training in Restorative Practices (also known as Restorative Justice) to build their skills in proactively handling conflict and to develop a consistent, school-wide approach to addressing challenging situations and resolving conflicts.

**The Potential**

At a time when traditional disciplinary practices often disproportionately impact students of color, implementing alternative approaches that build relationships between adults and students, and among students themselves, is vital for thriving learning communities.



**HAITIAN DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM***Mattapan Early Elementary School**Mattapan***The Challenge**

How do we honor the language and culture of Boston's immigrant students, while building the fluency and literacy they need to be successful learners?

**The Solution**

Dual language programs support early literacy development in a child's native language, creating a foundation for later bi-literacy while building academic knowledge in both English and the student's native language. As a result, dual language programs are recognized for developing bilingualism and biliteracy more effectively than other English language learning approaches and inherently honor the language and culture of students and families as assets to the school community. With the launch of Boston's and the nation's first Haitian dual language program, the teachers and staff at the Mattapan Early Elementary School are tackling the challenges associated with developing a new curriculum and materials in the Haitian language.

**The Potential**

Boston Public Schools recognizes and values the diverse immigrant cultures and communities that exist in Boston. The launch of the Haitian dual language program will serve as a model for the curriculum, materials, staffing, and professional development needed to grow additional dual-language programs in other languages, an explicit goal of Boston Public Schools.

**BLENDED LEARNING IN INCLUSION CLASSROOMS***Warren-Prescott K-8 School**Charlestown***The Challenge**

How do we maximize the potential of blended learning in inclusion classrooms to create deeper learning experiences for all students?

**The Solution**

Blended learning combines teacher-facilitated classroom instruction with technology-based lessons creating an opportunity to personalize learning to meet student needs. The approach requires significant shifts for teachers in how they organize their classrooms, their instructional time, and how they work with students. In inclusion classrooms where students with a range of learning needs and styles learn together, blended learning can transform how students learn and teachers teach. Warren-Prescott teachers will visit "best practice" classrooms, both blended learning and inclusion, and develop a model of teaching and learning that combines the best of both approaches.

**The Potential**

The inclusion approach to educating students with special needs is becoming more common in Boston Public Schools, as is incorporating technology in blended learning. Ensuring teachers have the tools and knowledge to create opportunities that honor each child's learning style and needs and leverage the benefits of available technology will benefit all students.

**SUPPORT FROM WITHIN: TEACHERS SUPPORTING NEW TEACHERS**

*Jeremiah E. Burke High School*

*Dorchester*

**The Challenge**

How do we ensure that new teachers have the skills to build relationships with students and effectively manage a classroom, the first steps in delivering highly effective instruction?

**The Solution**

Education scholars agree that teacher quality is the most important school-based factor in driving student achievement. Experienced teachers at the Jeremiah E. Burke High School have created an eight-week course where newer teachers learn positive and proactive classroom management approaches from their more experienced colleagues, while also embedding the Burke’s values and approaches to teaching and learning. Newer teacher participants also receive in-classroom coaching from their veteran colleagues, building a network of support across the school with the goal to train and retain highly effective teachers.

**The Potential**

As schools onboard new teachers each year, effectively supporting new teachers and providing a network of support is critical. This initiative unites both the proven approach of supporting teachers through coaching and the value of establishing a consistent culture across classrooms within a school.

**PROMOTING WELL-BEING AMONG TEACHERS**

*The Home for Little Wanderers and the Martin Luther King Jr. K-8 School*

*Dorchester*

**The Challenge**

How do we support teachers’ own social-emotional needs so they can best serve students?

**The Solution**

Research shows that teachers are among the most highly stressed workers in our society, tied with nurses among all occupational groups. Teacher stress can lead to classroom environments that are less conducive to learning. Often the only adult in the room, early elementary teachers are always “on” with few breaks throughout the day. The King K-8 School is partnering with The Home for Little Wanderers to train “well-being champions” at the school who will provide resources and support to early elementary teachers to ensure teachers’ own personal, psychological, and health needs are being met.

**The Potential**

Teachers support both the academic learning and the social-emotional development of their students. Now more attention is being paid to the social-emotional needs of the teachers themselves. This model, which builds school capacity and includes tools and supports for teachers, may be replicable in other schools.



# SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

2017, 2018 (Gifts received as of March 2018)

We deeply appreciate our generous supporters, volunteers, and nonprofit partners for their invaluable contributions to improving our schools.

## \$100,000+

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## EDVESTORS' PROGRAMS



### SCHOOL SOLUTIONS SEED FUND

The School Solutions Seed Fund supports problem-solving, experimentation, and innovation in schools. Each year, EdVestors makes initial \$10,000 Seed Fund investments in up to 10 promising ideas, with a smaller number of projects receiving larger, longer-term expansion grants based on early success and the potential for impact.



### SCHOOL ON THE MOVE

EdVestors' School on the Move Prize is Boston's premier award for school improvement. The annual \$100,000 Prize and case study documenting the winning school's replicable strategies shine a light on the leaders and teachers who have made substantive, multi-year academic improvement for students.



### BPS ARTS EXPANSION

Boston Public Schools (BPS) Arts Expansion is a multi-year collaborative effort to expand arts education within BPS by providing equitable access to quality arts learning experiences for all students. After nine years of the initiative, 17,000 more BPS students receive in-school arts education annually and more than \$11 million in additional public funding has been invested annually in the arts, amounting to 130 more arts teachers in Boston schools.



### ZEROING IN ON MATH

A staggering two thirds of Boston's eighth graders are not proficient in math. Launched in 2015, Zeroing in on Math is a multi-year, citywide initiative that aims to dramatically improve student achievement in middle grades math. This year, Zeroing in on Math is reaching 4,000 students at 16 schools and seeing powerful results, with students mastering a year and a half's worth of math content in just one academic year.



### CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

EdVestors' third and most recent effort to achieve citywide student impact aims to expand Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways in Boston schools as a high school improvement strategy. EdVestors is working closely with East Boston High School to launch new career pathways, in addition to supporting career pathways at other high schools, while simultaneously partnering with the BPS central office to develop a cohesive district-wide CTE strategy.