SCHOOL ON THE MOVE
Prize

PHOTO BY MICHAEL MANNING
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2018 Prize Celebration
EdVestors’ mission is to increase the number of schools in Boston delivering dramatically improved educational outcomes for all children.

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 $29 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.

PREVIOUS SCHOOL ON THE MOVE
PRIZE WINNERS
2017 Mildred Avenue K-8 School
2016 Phineas Bates Elementary School
2015 Jeremiah E. Burke High School
2014 William Monroe Trotter Innovation School
2013 George H. Conley Elementary School
2012 New Mission High School
2011 Clarence Edwards Middle School
2010 Joseph Lee Elementary School
2009 Boston Community Leadership Academy
2008 Samuel W. Mason Elementary School
2007 Excel High School
2006 Sarah Greenwood K-8 School

SCHOOL ON THE MOVE PRIZE SELECTION PANEL
Jim Stone, PhD, Selection Panel Chair
Chairman & CEO, Plymouth Rock Assurance Corporation
Pam Eddinger, PhD
President, Bunker Hill Community College
Yvonne Garcia
Senior Vice President, State Street Corporation
Richard Holbrook
Chairman Emeritus, Eastern Bank
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Dean of the Faculty of Education and Saris Professor of Education & Economics, Harvard Graduate School of Education
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Jack Lynch, Jr.
Chief Executive Officer, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

“IT IS BOTH INTELLECTUALLY AND EMOTIONALLY POWERFUL TO SEE FIRST-HAND HOW MUCH THESE SCHOOLS ARE IMPROVING.”
JIM STONE, SCHOOL ON THE MOVE PRIZE SELECTION PANEL CHAIR
Each fall, the Thomas W. Payzant School on the Move Prize recognizes one of the most improving Boston Public Schools. Acknowledging the tremendous amount of work needed to ensure every student in Boston receives a world-class education, we seek to shine a light on the schools, leaders, and teachers who are getting it right and have significantly improved outcomes for students. By sharing the stories of how schools are able to improve, we hope to help more schools make significant progress for their students. The School on the Move Prize comes with a $100,000 award from EdVestors, public recognition, and the opportunity for the winning school to document and share replicable strategies. Two runners-up each receive a $10,000 award.

**PRIZE SELECTION CRITERIA**

This year, 9 Boston Public Schools were eligible for the School on the Move Prize based on demonstrated improvement over a four-year period (2013-2017). EdVestors conducts a quantitative data screen of school performance and student demographics using publicly available data to identify schools where:

- There has been a substantial positive change on statewide assessments in one or both core subjects (English language arts and math) compared to schools serving similar grades over the most recent five years.
- At least 25% of students are in the top two scoring categories (Proficient/Meeting Expectations or higher) on state assessments in both core subject areas.
- Fewer than 25% of students are in the lowest scoring category (Not Meeting Expectations or Failing) in both core subject areas.
- At least 50% of students are classified as high needs.
- For high schools, a four-year cohort graduation rate of at least 60%, or a five-year cohort graduation rate of at least 70%.

Invited schools prepare a written application detailing the strategies and approaches behind their dramatic improvement. The Prize Selection Panel reviews all written applications and visits three finalist schools before choosing the winner.

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**SCHOOL ON THE MOVE**

***About the Prize***

At the 800-student Donald McKay K-8 School in East Boston, a focus on the engagement of students, teachers, and families drives the culture of “voice and choice.” The McKay credits its improvement to empowering teachers as leaders and experts; a focus on building trust among teachers, students, and families; and meeting the academic and social-emotional needs of its English learners who make up a majority of the school’s population.

**KEY STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- Collaborative professional culture led by teachers where learning, experimentation, and reflection are encouraged and supported.
- Commitment to the social-emotional needs of families and students to create a safe and welcoming school community for all.
- Strategic leveraging of time, space, and enrollment to maximize resources.

*Improvement is measured in the change in standard deviations from the mean (SD units) between 2013 and 2017, compared to schools with similar grade levels.

**Donald McKay K-8 School**

“By consistently focusing on collaboration, commitment, and collective responsibility for the success of every student and teacher, we have created a recipe that can be replicated anywhere.”

JORDAN WEYMER, PRINCIPAL

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*Previous Prize winners are not eligible for reconsideration for five years. Schools that are finalists for two consecutive years are not eligible for one year.*
At the Oliver Hazard Perry K-8 School in South Boston, a sense of shared ownership and commitment to continuous improvement sets the tone for a positive, supportive, and accountable culture. As a small school serving 250 students, the Perry credits its improvement to strategically using its key resources of people, time, and culture to drive improvement; meeting students where they are by providing targeted small-group support; and creating ample opportunities for teachers to collaborate and learn from their peers.

**KEY STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- Commitment to teaching that is culturally-responsive and focused on equity, grounded in research on how the brain works
- Assets-based approach and student-centered mindset that leads to effective differentiation
- Understanding the instructional needs of a focused group of students in each classroom that drives the learning for all students

“It’s the formal structures and schedules that have led to lots of informal collaboration among teachers, where educators talk about instruction throughout the day.”

GEOFF ROSE, PRINCIPAL

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The 500-student Muriel S. Snowden International High School, located across three buildings in the Back Bay, engages students in a rigorous and global-minded learning experience. Snowden High School credits its improvement to creating multi-dimensional systems of support for students; empowering teacher leaders to experiment and learn together; and building a strong school community and culture.

**KEY STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

- Student-centered and cognitively demanding instructional vision and practices aligned to the International Baccalaureate curriculum
- Focusing significant academic, social-emotional, and family supports for 9th grade students to increase their success and sense of connection
- Strategic use of partners aligned with school priorities to deepen student engagement and learning

“We give our students the skills and knowledge to engage and compete in a diverse global society; we want to open doors to the world.”

GENE ROUNDTREE, HEADMASTER

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EDVESTORS’ APPROACH

**WHAT WE DO**

First, we **seed** solution-seekers’ best ideas in Boston schools. Through our School Solutions Seed Fund, we identify and fund innovative school-based ideas for improvement.

Second, we **shine** a light on best practices for school improvement. Our annual $100,000 School on the Move Prize highlights examples of dramatic school improvement. We publish annual research and case studies to share stories of improvement and disseminate knowledge throughout the broader field.

Third, we **scale** promising ideas to achieve citywide student impact, coordinating major public-private partnerships in targeted issues areas.

EdVestors largest effort to date, **BPS Arts Expansion**, has resulted in 17,000 more pre-K through 8th grade students receiving weekly arts instruction in school, bolstering student engagement and school climate. Our second strategic initiative launched in 2015, **Zeroing in on Math**, takes a similar citywide approach to increase math proficiency in the middle grades as a critical gateway for post-secondary, career, and life success. In 2016, EdVestors began work to develop effective Career and Technical Education pathways for high school students as a strategy for improving Boston’s high schools, connecting more students to post-secondary opportunities, and bolstering Boston’s workforce.

**CURRENT PROGRAMS**

**SCHOOL SOLUTIONS SEED FUND**

Through the School Solutions Seed Fund, EdVestors seeks to identify promising solutions that address current challenges facing classrooms and schools. Seed Fund grants provide resources for schools to move quickly to test, plan, or pilot solutions and support for problem-solving, experimentation, and innovation.

Investing in on-the-ground solutions is an essential part of EdVestors’ approach to strategic philanthropy. The Seed Fund pushes 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.

**SCHOOL ON THE MOVE**

EdVestors’ School on the Move Prize is Boston’s premier award for school improvement and is a coveted honor among teachers and school leaders across our city. The Prize shines a light on those schools, leaders, and teachers who have driven substantive, multi-year academic improvement for students. The Prize comes with a $100,000 award from EdVestors, public recognition, and a case study to document the school’s replicable strategies. Two runners-up also receive a $10,000 award each.

**ZEROING IN ON MATH**

Two out of three Boston eighth graders are not proficient in math. This is a quiet crisis in Boston schools that requires urgent attention. In 2015 we set out to dramatically improve student achievement in middle grades math by launching Zeroing in on Math, a multi-year, citywide initiative. Three strategies guide our work:

- Improve student math proficiency in grades 3-8 by closing student knowledge and skill gaps
- Deepen effective math instruction by strengthening teacher math knowledge and pedagogy
- Build a citywide community of math advocates

In Year 3 of the initiative, students averaged gains in math knowledge and skills of an additional ½ of a year of growth. Now in Year 4, we’re providing intensive supports at 19 schools serving 4,000 students and working closely with teachers to tackle math instruction’s most persistent challenges.

**CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

In 2016 EdVestors’ launched its third effort to achieve citywide student impact by expanding Career and Technical Education pathways as a strategy for improving Boston high schools. Expanded, high-quality CTE pathways can result in deeper student academic engagement and increased access to post-secondary and employment opportunities for Boston students. This year we are supporting schools to plan and to implement quality pathways. We are also working with the district and other key stakeholders to develop a framework for implementing CTE pathways across Boston high schools.

**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. This public-private partnership involves a large and coordinated network of partners, including schools, arts institutions, teaching artists, and funders, among others.

Now in Phase 4 of the initiative, 17,000 more BPS students are receiving in-school arts education annually. To date, BPS Arts Expansion has:

- Raised the percentage of pre-K-8 students receiving weekly arts from 67% to 96% and twice-weekly arts instruction from less than 10% to 65%
- More than doubled the percentage of high school students receiving arts — up from just 26% to 63%
- Secured an additional $11 million in public funding annually for the arts, supporting 130 more arts teachers in schools

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