



CONTACT:

Stephanie Germeraad

(202) 293-1217, x. 354

sgermeraad@edtrust.org

Four Schools To Be Honored With Fifth Annual Education Trust *Dispelling the Myth* Awards

WASHINGTON (November 5, 2007) – On Thursday, November 8 in Washington, D.C., The Education Trust will present the fifth annual *Dispelling the Myth* awards to four schools from throughout the U.S. that have achieved exceptional success in educating low-income students and students of color to high academic levels.

This year's recipients are:

- P.S./M.S. 124 Osmond A. Church School in Queens, N.Y.;
- Lockhart Junior High School in Lockhart, Tex.;
- North Star Academy Charter School in Newark, N.J.; and
- Keith L. Ware Elementary School in Fort Riley, Kan.

The *Dispelling the Myth* awards were created by The Education Trust to honor high-performing and gap-closing schools from around the nation that serve large populations of low-income students or students of color. Schools are recognized for making significant strides in narrowing gaps in academic achievement among student groups, posting achievement that significantly exceeds state averages, or improving student performance at a rapid pace.

Featuring remarks by Roger Wilkins, the Clarence J. Robinson Professor of History and American Culture at George Mason University and former Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial writer for *The Washington Post*, the awards ceremony will be held during the 18th Education Trust National Conference, the leading annual symposium on closing the achievement gaps that persist in our nation's schools. Participants at this year's conference, themed "Courageous Choices: Tackling the Tough Issues to Raise Student Achievement and Close Gaps," will examine proven strategies and practices that produce higher achievement levels, from pre-kindergarten all the way through college.

While there is no "silver bullet" strategy employed by successful schools, several common themes emerge from the practices of the 2007 *Dispelling the Myth* award recipients. Among them are having high expectations for all students, improving instruction, analyzing data to track student progress and individual student needs, providing a rich curriculum that is aligned to state standards, and using purposeful professional development to improve teachers' skills.

"Through high expectations, hard work, and smarter ways of working, *Dispelling the Myth* schools are helping to dispel the devastating myth that poor and minority children cannot learn to high academic levels," said Kati Haycock, President of The Education Trust. "These schools know they still have work to do, but they challenge the conventional wisdom that gaps are inevitable and remind us that we can't turn back the clock on our commitment to fulfill the true promise of American education for every single one of our nation's students."

[About the 2007 Dispelling the Myth award recipients](#)

P.S./M.S. 124 Osmond A. Church School in Queens, N.Y., serves a mix of African American, Latino, and Asian (mostly new immigrants from India and Pakistan) students, all of whom are low-income. The school has used a rich, coherent curriculum to achieve some of the highest proficiency rates not only in New York City but also in New York State. Osmond Church started as an elementary campus and, at the demand of parents, has now extended to serve its students through the middle school grades.

Lockhart Junior High School pulls students from a 250-square mile area of ranching country surrounding the town of Lockhart, Tex. Over half of the school's 1,000+ students are low-income, half are Latino, and about 10 percent are African American. The school has implemented a careful system to identify and catch any student who enters behind or falls behind during the year. Lockhart has improved significantly over the past five years—a time during which the state raised the bar for what it takes to be considered proficient in reading and math. The school now posts proficiency rates for all groups of students that are much higher than the state's.

North Star Academy Charter School in Newark, N.J., serves students from some of the toughest neighborhoods in one of the toughest cities in the country. Students enter on-par or even behind their peers district-wide, but quickly make great improvement. The school's structured program focuses on making sure that students know exactly what's expected of them and then providing the supports necessary for all students to meet those high expectations. North Star has dedicated itself to making sure that students not just meet state standards, but go on to college.

Keith L. Ware Elementary School is a traditional public school located on the Fort Riley U.S. Army Infantry Base in Fort Riley, Kan. Many of the students' parents are deployed in Iraq or Afghanistan, and trauma and disruption is a way of life for the families. The student body is 80 percent low-income and reflects the racial/ethnic diversity of the U.S. military. In 1999, Ware was one of the first schools in the state to be put on the 'in need of improvement' list for low test scores. In 2007, Ware became the only elementary school in the state to be awarded certificates of merit for meeting or exceeding reading and mathematics standards in grades 3-5.

###