

## Citizen Schools and the Edwards Middle School, Boston

[Citizen Schools (CS) link to: [www.citizenschools.org](http://www.citizenschools.org)] is a national non-profit organization that runs experiential education programs in 36 urban public middle schools in six states. Their model focuses on hands-on “apprenticeships” taught by community volunteers, where students have the opportunity to master 21<sup>st</sup> century skills like oral presentation and teamwork while learning about topics ranging from law and finance to double-dutch and cooking. Citizen Schools currently partners with three ELT schools: the Salemwood K-8 (Malden), the Umana Middle School Academy (Boston), and the Edwards (Boston). At the Edwards, CS serves the entire 6<sup>th</sup> grade (110 students) between 1:30 and 4:15 PM Monday-Thursday, and has modified their traditional after-school model to align with a school-wide focus on math.

### Content

- **Math League (~120 minutes weekly):** school-wide, daily math skill-building activities and competitions facilitated for 6<sup>th</sup> graders by CS. Curriculum created by CS staff member with lesson plan coaching by Edwards’ 6<sup>th</sup> grade Math teacher and Math Coach.
- **Apprenticeships (~180 minutes weekly):** 16 offered each semester, students select their top choices and do 2/semester (total of 4/year). All apprenticeships culminate with a final product, performance, or presentation. 2006 apprenticeships included stock market, bike repair, and tennis.
- **Math and ELA All-Stars (~90 minutes weekly):** On apprenticeship days, a select group of struggling ELA and Math students participate in a “training camp” aimed at helping focus their skills to boost MCAS scores. These students are either in ELA or Math, but not both, to ensure their capacity to participate in at least one apprenticeship each semester.
- **Team Time/2<sup>nd</sup> Step (~60 minutes weekly):** Second Step is a violence-prevention curriculum designed to reduce impulsive and aggressive behavior in children by increasing their social competency skills. The Second Step curriculum will relate to other school subjects and reinforce academic skills.
- **Explorations (~120 minutes monthly):** in place of Team Time/2<sup>nd</sup> Step, there are monthly field trips to museums, colleges, and performances.
- **Academic Support:** Homework help, grades conferences, teacher-staff communication, and school success curriculum to help with organization, note-taking, study skills, and test preparation.
- **Family engagement:** weekly phone calls home to all families, frequent family events and activities, and weekly bi-lingual newsletter with student contributions.
- **Senior Leadership Council:** 21 students were selected to participate in CS as 7<sup>th</sup> graders. These select students work hard to achieve high grades and meet high expectations in all their classes, and succeed in completing complex projects around civil

#### AT A GLANCE:

##### Edwards Middle School

**Principal:** Jeffrey Riley

**Grades served:** 6-8

**Number of students:** 380

#### School Schedule:

- M-TH, 7:20 AM - 4:15 PM
- Fridays, 7:20 AM - 11:40 AM

#### School Demographics:

% **Special Ed** – 27.6  
% **Limited English** – 17.4  
% **Low-Income** – 86.6

#### Other partners include:

Charlestown Lacrosse, Project:  
Think Different, Medicine Wheel

rights, the environment, world cultures and more to prepare them for life beyond middle school.

### **Conditions for Success**

- CS partnered with the Edwards as an after-school program for 2 years prior to becoming an ELT partner
- The Edwards engaged CS in the ELT planning process starting in Fall 2005
- CS's curriculum at the Edwards is tied to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks
- CS's Campus Director serves on leadership committees at the Edwards and is considered to be a school administrator

### **Staff**

- 12 staff members, including a Campus Director, all hired and trained by CS
- Some staff members (mixture of full and part time) are based at school throughout the morning hours. These individuals attend team meetings, lunches, and see students in action during their core subjects in an effort to fully understand how to work with the entire student body.
- Other staff members are based elsewhere in the morning, including at CS headquarters
- 30+ volunteer "Citizen Teachers" are recruited annually by CS to teach apprenticeships

### **Funding**

- Program funded by a mixture of the Edwards' ELT budget, CS's private fundraising, and a private, anonymous grant to the Edwards to support community partners working in Boston ELT schools
- Some CS staff members, called Teaching Fellows, are partially funded through AmeriCorps

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