

Boston Superintendent Carol Johnson receives national award for urban education leadership

By **Melanie Dostis**

The Boston Globe

October 18, 2012

An organization of the nation's largest urban public school systems honored Boston Superintendent Carol Johnson with its top award Thursday night.

She received the Richard R. Green Award in Indianapolis during the annual conference of the Council of the Great City Schools.

"Dr. Johnson never loses sight of why she is the leader of schools in the Great City of Boston," Michael Casserly, the council's executive director, said in a statement.

"Educating students to their highest levels is always foremost in her mind," Casserly said. "We are fortunate that she has also been a longtime leader of the council, sharing her knowledge to improve urban schools nationally."

As part of her award, Johnson received a \$10,000 college scholarship to be awarded to a high school senior of her choice in the Boston area.

The award is named in honor of the first African-American chancellor of the New York City school system.

Boston leaders praised Johnson's efforts to improve the city's schools and said she deserved the honor.

"Superintendent Johnson is clearly a rock star among urban superintendents," said the Rev. Gregory G. Groover, chairman of Boston School Committee. "She is highly regarded as a leader and a pioneer in urban schooling."

Groover, a member of the Green Award nomination committee credited Johnson for efforts to raise test scores and graduation rates in recent years.

"Carol Johnson is so well deserving of this," he said. "She really outranked her colleagues across the country. She fundamentally believes that if every child is equipped with the appropriate resources they can excel. She breathes that belief everyday; she walks that belief."

In a statement, Mayor Thomas M. Menino congratulated Johnson, superintendent of the 57,000-student district since August 2007.

“Superintendent Johnson is one of the most dedicated educational professionals in this country, and this award speaks volumes to her knowledge and expertise in transforming the education systems, not only here in Boston but across our nation,” Menino said in a statement.

The news of the award comes as Johnson has faced criticism on some of her decisions this year, especially her failure to discipline a headmaster who was charged with assaulting his wife. Johnson has said she regrets not taking action.

Despite calls for her ouster this summer from some parents, teachers, and at least one city councilor, Johnson enjoys strong support from the mayor.

“This distinguished award solidifies . . . her tireless work in changing the face of public school policies to benefit the learning opportunities for all of our children,” he said.

“I am proud she has been willing to stay in Boston and continue our great work in accelerating our progress,” said Menino.