



# PSI Net

## 2007-08 PSI Highlights and Review

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Dear Friends,



As we approach the end of the academic year, PSI is excited to share the creative ways in which we've realized our mission of convening public school educators to share effective practices that make a difference in the lives of a growing number of children. This year PSI brought together nearly 400 educators through our peer learning networks and distributed over 500 teacher authored guidebooks to educators across the country. We had the great pleasure of working with several of you on the Keeping the Promise project; we look forward to continuing this work next year and to further sharing the success of high performing schools with district and charter schools across the state.

In this issue of PSI Net we also share notable news from our network schools, announce staffing changes at PSI, and preview some of our exciting work for 2008-09. Whether it's to present or participate, we hope to work with many of you in the year ahead, and we welcome your contributions to strengthening PSI's expanding network of effective educators, all dedicated to "transforming education by sharing success." Here's to a rejuvenating summer and energizing fall!

- Ruth

**Support Network for Innovative Principals**

PSI's Support Network for Innovative Principals (SNIP) continued in its 7th year with a cohort based in Malden, and an alumni cohort of past participants based in Boston. Principals met monthly to share challenges and success through participant case



stories and guided reflection, in order to hone their personal and professional leadership skills. In April 2008 participants from past and present cohorts joined us in Boston for an alumni gathering to celebrate the success of SNIP - since 2001 over 60 school leaders in Greater Boston have participated in SNIP, and we look forward to growing the network in the years ahead! To learn more about PSI's SNIP program, please click [here](#). If you would like to recommend an excellent school leader to the SNIP program, please email [Ruth Feldman](mailto:Ruth.Feldman).

## PSI Collaborations

### Keeping the Promise

PSI continued as a key collaborator for the second year of Keeping the Promise - a three year Federal grant to disseminate the work of five high-performing MA charter schools to struggling district and charter schools in high-need communities across the state. Working with the MA Center for Charter Public School Excellence, Community Partners Initiative in Lawrence, and Harvard University, PSI has guided the five high performing schools to identify their strengths, and trained teachers to present on those strengths and serve as peer coaches. In April 2008, teams from 15 charter schools in need of improvement visited one of the high performing charters, participated in detailed workshops on elements of that school's success, and created action plans for replicating an observed practice in their own buildings. PSI looks forward to supporting the partnering charters as they implement the new practices in the year ahead, and to broadening the project's scope to include district schools for study



tours, dissemination, and additional support.

### **At Risk Youth**

PSI continued to work with four charter public high schools that specifically serve students at high risk for dropping out in order to develop socio-emotional predictors of high school success. Along with Professor Mike Nakkula of Harvard University we gathered a second year of data using a student questionnaire that gauges how nontraditional schools impact student development of skills essential to academic and life success, yet unmeasured by traditional assessments. School leaders continued to present on this research to educators across Massachusetts, and in spring 2008 PSI collaborated with the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to strengthen a statewide alternative school network by facilitating regional sessions for teachers and administrators in Greater Boston and Greater Springfield. To view and utilize some of our developed tools please click [here](#).

### **Education of Black Male Youth**

PSI collaborated with ATLAS Learning Communities and Wheelock College to document a lecture series entitled *The Education of Black Male Youth: Understanding the Social, Emotional, and Learning Lives of Black Male Students*. These lectures featured leading experts on public education from across the United States, and PSI looks forward to further highlighting this critical topic through our work with the national network of Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color. For more details, please visit our [website](#).

## **Dissemination**

### **Learning Exchange**

PSI held our 2nd Annual Learning Exchange Conference on February 9th. This event brought together 70 educators from 24 district schools, charter schools, and other education programs across Massachusetts to



share effective practices and new ideas. Nine teacher teams from seven PSI Model Schools presented on topics ranging from inclusion to at-risk education to community schools to cross-curricular literacy. Many thanks to all who participated, and please stay tuned for our next Learning Exchange date TBA.

### **By Teachers For Teachers #14**

PSI published BTFT 14 - *Supporting Students to Reach High Standards* - based on effective practices at the Academy of the Pacific Rim Public Charter School. At APR, Eastern values such as *gambatte* (persistence) and *kaizen* (continual improvement of the community) blend with Western practices to build a "culture of achievement" that emphasizes hard work and respect. This book resulted from facilitated discussions between PSI and APR faculty members in 2006, and explores the specific practices and systems that give each student the support he or she needs to strive for and reach rigorous academic goals. This and other PSI publications are available through our [website](#).



### **News from Our Network**

*As the year draws to a close, we are honored to share some notable news from schools in PSI's network. These schools are PSI Model Schools - recognized across New England for their exceptional performance serving high need communities, and for their willingness to share practices with their colleagues for the benefit of all public schools.*

**Boston Day and Evening Academy** - BDEA Head of School Meg Maccini was one of the 25 individuals named a 2008 MetLife Foundation Ambassador in Education, honoring her work in community engagement activities in support of students. This summer Meg will "graduate" after 11 years at BDEA to begin her doctorate in Anthropology and Education at the University of Massachusetts, where she will continue to participate in the national dialogue around alternative education.

**City on a Hill** - COAH will launch its full time tutor corps program next fall, hiring 25 college graduates for intensive 2-on-1 work with eight COAH students each day. More details [here](#). In addition, COAH will open its 7,100 square foot facilities expansion in January, 2009, and in May, 2008 COAH's annual gala honored Nicholas Negroponte, founder of One Laptop Per Child.

**Patrick O'Hearn** - O'Hearn teachers collaborated with students from the Harvard Graduate School of Education to create a guide to text readers within fully inclusive classrooms. The Kurzweil text reader is an accommodation that allows O'Hearn students with coding difficulties to listen to digital text, and interact with the text as a study aid. For more information, please see "Introducing Text Readers in the Classrooms" on the Ohearn's [website](#).

**Boston Collegiate Charter School** -Boston Collegiate is excited to be celebrating its tenth year of operation. For the fifth year in a row 100% of BCCS seniors were accepted to college, earning over \$4 million in merit scholarships in the past five years.

**Robert L. Ford School** - The Ford School, a NASA Explorer School, was one of the three schools nationwide that helped celebrate NASA's 50th anniversary, and was a recent recipient of the Anti-Defamation League's Lenny Zakim Humanitarian Award for its partnership with Cohen Hillel Academy. The Ford School would also like to recognize three students who were recently accepted to the Pingree School, and alumnus Ngosi Nwaogu who received a full four year scholarship to attend Harvard University.

**Roxbury Preparatory Charter School** - RPCS is excited to begin a facilities expansion this summer as they increase their enrollment from 200 to 250 students over the next three years. In addition, RPCS Co-Director Josh Phillips will step down at the end of this year to join Uncommon Schools as its Chief Operating Officer. Will Austin, currently the RPCS Enrichment Coordinator, Summer School Director, and 6th Grade Math Problem Solving Teacher, will join Dana Lehman to lead RPCS as Co-Director.

**Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School** - LMACS would like to recognize teacher David Daniel, whose ninth novel, Reunion, was published this May. David teaches English at LMACS and is also an adjunct professor at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell,

where he has served as the Jack Kerouac Visiting Writer in Residence.

### **A Look to 2008-09**

In 2008-09 PSI will continue as a key partner in **Keeping the Promise** by leveraging our facilitation and action-planning skills to support 15+ public schools as they implement key practices from five high performing charter schools. In addition, we will offer fall study tours for district schools looking to learn from their high performing charter colleagues; we invite you to find out more and apply at [www.mccpse.org](http://www.mccpse.org).

Another exciting collaboration we hope to pursue will be with the **Boston Public Schools Triumph Collaborative (DELTAS)** to develop more effective full-service community schools in Boston. PSI has already begun to work with the Agassiz School in Jamaica Plain, and we look forward to working with additional schools in the year ahead to help them build organizational capacity, identify student outcomes, and coordinate services with community partners. Through PSI's expertise in facilitation and sharing best practices, we hope to support these schools in engaging the "whole child" and preparing students academically and emotionally to be active citizens in the 21st Century.

**Staff Changes:** PSI is bidding a fond goodbye to two of our stellar staff members. Priya Chandrasekaran, who has worked with PSI in various capacities since 2005, will begin her doctoral studies in Anthropology as a Chancellor's Fellow at CUNY this fall. Matthew Wilka, PSI's Education Writer & Communications Coordinator since 2006, is leaving this July to pursue a Fulbright Fellowship in Ecuador researching education policy and best practices. We wish both of them luck, perseverance, and success.