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Book Release: *Supporting At-Risk Students: A Step-By-Step Guide for Helping At-Risk Students Succeed Academically and Emotionally*

Do you believe students labeled “at risk” can still succeed? At Lowell Middlesex Academy, teachers not only believe this, they make it happen. Now they’ve written a book about their most effective practices—*Supporting At-Risk Students* is available from the Project for School Innovation for a promotional price of \$14.95.

Students at Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School (LMACS) have all dropped out of high school. Yet once at LMACS, these students post remarkable academic gains—surpassing state averages on the high-stakes Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) exam for three of the last four years. This continued success has earned LMACS designation as a Vanguard School—a statewide model of excellence—and the prestigious Edgerly School Leadership Award.

Working with the Project for School Innovation (PSI) in a year-long effort to research the school’s effective student-support practices, LMACS faculty developed the book and video, *Supporting At-Risk Students*. With its user-friendly format of step-by-step instructions, tips, ideas, and stories, this is an invaluable resource for all teachers and administrators working with at-risk students.

Jay Smink, Executive Director of the National Dropout Prevention Center, calls *Supporting At-Risk Students* “an excellent source of ideas and tips—a must read for teachers, counselors, and school leaders working with high-risk students. The book presents an array of effective interventions and proven practices useful at all school levels for youth in at-risk situations. It is a wonderful guide for school and community leaders to use as a tool for staff development, and it contains new ideas to enhance dropout prevention programs.”

“*Supporting At-Risk Students* is a formula for success!” says Anthony Dallman-Jones, Director of the National At-Risk Education Network (NAREN), “A lot can be learned from this model. They personalize their program in a small-group setting. They hold students to high standards of accountability. They help students see that a healthy internal locus of control is the epitome of success in life. And the students are mentored by a group of strong, caring and persistent adults.”

Cecilia Cunningham, Director of the Middle College National Consortium, suggests that “All students, not just at-risk students need the kinds of support described in the very clear and helpful *Supporting At-Risk Students*. This guidebook is an excellent resource for all new schools, especially new early colleges.”

Supporting At-Risk Students is the ninth book in PSI's *By Teachers for Teachers* series. It will soon be joined by a 15-minute instructional video of the same title. Each book in this series is full of step-by-step instructions, tips, and ideas teachers can follow to replicate proven practices that are working in successful public schools—each book is developed by teachers who are making those schools succeed every day. To preview or order copies of *Supporting At-Risk Students*, visit <http://www.psinnovation.org/PSI/BTFT/book9direct.html>. To preview or order other *By Teachers for Teachers* titles, visit www.btft.org and click "How-to Books."

PSI was founded in 2000 with support from the Massachusetts and US Departments of Education. The organization's mission is to build a grass-roots network of educators committed to sharing their successes, addressing their challenges, and driving school change. Says program co-founder Kevin Andrews, "Four years ago, we looked around and said, 'What is going on? Everyone seems to think they can come in and fix urban schools, but not enough people are asking the people who are at the heart of great education: the teachers.' So we created a unique program to help teachers identify, share, and replicate the truly effective things they are already doing in successful urban schools."

Stefan Lanfer, Project Director of the *By Teachers For Teachers* series explains that, "Too often, education reform starts outside schools and forces its way in. Teachers get the message, 'You don't know what you're doing and you are failing.' In the *By Teachers for Teachers* series, reform starts inside schools and breaks out. We find great teachers in successful schools and tell them, 'You know exactly what you're doing, and you are succeeding.' By recognizing teachers as the real experts in education, the *By Teachers For Teachers* series is giving more students access to the proven expertise of great teachers like those at Lowell Middlesex Academy—real practices that are already helping children succeed in real classrooms, in real urban schools."

PSI began its work in 2000 with funding from the Massachusetts Department of Education and five schools interested in sharing what works. Since then, PSI has collaborated with 28 schools, including ten that are sharing their schools' effective practices through the *By Teachers for Teachers* series. Now in its fourth school year, PSI has raised over \$1 million to support its work with more than 400 teachers to share practices that have reached more than 1000 students, and to contribute to teaching skills that have had an impact on more than 3000.

The Project for School Innovation is a non-profit organization, founded by the Neighborhood House Charter School. PSI's offices are located at 197A Centre Street in Dorchester, Massachusetts. For more information, contact Stefan Lanfer by phone at 617-825-0703 x264, by fax at 617-474-1103, by email at slanfer@psinnovation.org, or visit PSI's website at www.psinnovation.org.

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