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BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS PILOT “ADVENTURE EDUCATION” FOR STUDENTS

Program Introduces “Surprising” Curriculum, and “New Way of Doing”; Four-Year Project Led By Education Pioneer Project Adventure

Beverly, Mass. (May 13, 2005) – Project Adventure, Inc. (PA), a pioneer in Adventure-based learning, today announced a \$200,000 grant from one of Boston’s largest foundations to help launch a four-year research project designed to address the needs of students in four schools in the Boston Public School System. The program kicks off this June with Lewenberg Middle School in Mattapan, Timilty Middle School in Roxbury, Wilson Middle School in Dorchester, and Middle School Academy in Boston. The project is designed to impact student behavior and academic achievement. Research will focus on physical education curricula models and related work to develop norms for behaviors for students and teachers in classrooms and whole schools.

Through an intensive Adventure-based curriculum, students will be challenged to learn and achieve in entirely new ways, often leading students to the brink of both success and failure, and finding that both are equally instructive. Techniques will include both physical and mental problem solving, challenges that require individuals to work together as a group, goal setting activities, and experiences that will help students develop social and emotional skills.

Jane Panicucci, PA’s COO says, “Adventure-education is not about actual physical risk, but emotional risk where participants see the natural consequences of their actions. Adventure is not something you do, it’s a way of doing. A class becomes an adventure for students if an element of surprise exists, with activities that compel them into doing things they never imagined possible.”

The curriculum creates a space where students can speak their minds and push themselves to new limits. The result is a renewed sense of self and possibility for the student, reducing discipline problems and propelling students to new heights.

Project Overview

The leading research question of the study is, does a strong physical education social-emotional curricula allow a school to gain progress in important social and achievement metrics. The project will evaluate the effectiveness of key elements of PA’s physical education curricula, recently rewritten to align with K-12 national and state standards. Students in all four schools will participate in an intensive PE training each year in Project Adventure experiential curricula. The school staff will also gain skills in the use of PA cornerstone concepts that will be practiced in academic classrooms. With a successful evaluation of this project design, Project Adventure, as the international leader of facilities based integrated experiential/Adventure education, can gain

current evaluation data that meets increasingly strict federal guidelines requiring evidence-based research results.

Project Outcomes

- Students improve social skills and their sense of “self-efficacy”
- Student discipline issues are reduced and reduction in negative discipline
- School climate improves affecting student achievement scores
- Classroom and school culture embraces a culture of respect and intellectual curiosity
- School system staff gain competencies in best practice experiential methodologies

The mission of Project Adventure, an innovative teaching organization, is to provide leadership in the expansion of Adventure-based experiential programming. Project Adventure seeks to develop responsible individuals, productive organizations and sustainable communities. For more information, please visit Project Adventure at <http://www.pa.org>.

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