

District Record

Goal-Oriented Leadership Builds Goal-Oriented Partnership Programs

On September 25, 2002, the Rio Grande Cluster of Albuquerque Public Schools held its first “blender” meal where new and veteran members of Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) transformed from individual constituents to cohesive teams. Together, mini-groups of veterans and “newbies” prepared appetizers, the entrée, side dishes, desserts, and drinks. The participants blended their knowledge of family and community involvement while they blended food ingredients to prepare their part of the meal. At the end of the meal, cluster facilitators asked the mini-groups to share what they had learned. Valle Vista Elementary School presented tips and resources on Type 1-Parenting and Type 2-Communicating. The blender meal kicked off a yearlong series of leadership meetings held by cluster facilitators to provide ongoing support to ATPs in Rio Grande schools. A growing number of districts in the National Network of Partnership Schools is instituting purposeful, regularly scheduled leadership meetings to help ATP leaders guide their teams to set and achieve goals and to sustain effective partnership programs.

Leadership Meetings With Vision
Successful leadership meetings help produce a results-oriented plan for the school year. Facilitators, often with input from ATP leaders, principals, and district administrators, design a series of leadership meetings around a mission. Orleans Parish Public Schools in Louisiana designed its monthly leader-

ship meetings for the ATP chairpersons and principals of twenty-one high-priority schools. Their mission was to enable these leaders to collaborate, strategize, and network in an effort to build partnership programs linked to school improvement plans. In Holy Family Catholic Regional Division No. 37 in Alberta, Canada, the district facilitator designed a series of meetings to strengthen the leadership skills of all ATP chairpersons. There the vision focused on the belief that strong leaders would create strong teams. Whether the focus is on leadership skills, program implementation, or promising partnership practices, the critical factor is for the series of meetings to have a clear purpose that will help participants reach their team goals.

Responsive Meeting Schedules

A second ingredient for successful leadership meetings is responsiveness. How often should the meetings take place? For how long? Where? The answers to these questions depend on knowing the target group of participants. The twenty-one schools in Orleans Parish were new to the partnership model so the district facilitators coordinated monthly leadership meetings of about two to three hours each. Castle Complex Schools in Hawaii convened their Parent Leader Group meetings quarterly in the evenings to accommodate leaders' schedules. The facilitators in both sites maintained consistent, enthusiastic participation from

attendees by following a set schedule of meetings that accounted for factors such as busy schedules, driving distances, and other obligations.

Ongoing goal-oriented leadership meetings are an effective strategy for proactive district facilitators to support school ATPs to reach their goals. For more information on leadership meetings, visit www.partnershipschools.org and click on “In the Spotlight” and “Promising Partnership Practices—2002.”

*By Natalie Rodriguez Jansorn
State and District Facilitator*

Improve Student Test Scores

(Continued from page 4)

tions can help tutor students to increase their achievement on tests; and coursework can be structured so that family members help students practice and discuss important academic skills. Comprehensive school, family, and community partnership programs can help schools meet the challenge of improving students' scores on standardized tests.

¹ Read more about these and other examples in NNPS' *Promising Partnership Practices—2002*.

² Research paper. Sheldon, S. B. & Epstein, J. L. (2002) *Involvement Counts: Family and Community Partnerships and Math Achievement*. Baltimore: Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At-Risk. Submitted for publication.

³ Research paper. Sheldon, S. B. (2002). *Linking School-Family-Community Partnerships in Urban Elementary Schools to Student Achievement on State Tests*. Baltimore: Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At-Risk. Submitted for publication.

Just released by NNPS: *Promising Partnership Practices—2002*
All editions of *Promising Partnership Practices* may be downloaded from
www.partnershipschools.org. Click on “In the Spotlight.”