

## Leadership Line

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### Seattle School District Uses Evaluation to Strengthen Partnership Programs

Seattle Public Schools' Family Partnerships (FP) Office worked with evaluation specialists to develop several tools to evaluate the progress of its school and district programs to create quality partnerships with parents and the community. "For the first time, we have been able to show hard data about the Family Partnerships Project as required by Seattle Public Schools and the City of Seattle," explained Adie Simmons, Project Manager.

The FP Office focused its evaluation on measuring how well it has increased the capacity of schools to enhance partnerships. They measured:

- Improvement of each school's Action Team for Partnerships' work plan over three years;
- Number of quality family events held by the schools, which use the Six Types of Involvement; and
- Number of schools that implemented outreach strategies for uninvolved parents.

To measure each school's improvement in work plans, the FP Office created a rubric that assesses the quality and alignment of the projected parent involvement activities. To measure the quality of school events and outreach efforts to uninvolved parents, the FP Office developed an activity log form, which the schools were required to complete and submit for each partnership activity. The information collected by the evaluation tools was entered into a database so that district leaders could produce collective and individual school progress reports. Additionally, the FP Office designed a narrative evaluation tool to assess and share progress during mid-year review meetings held with each principal and the Action Team for Partnerships.

Twenty-two elementary and secondary schools in their third project year reported data through May 2004. These schools held 262 partnership events, of which 89 were ongoing activities such as English as a Second Language classes for parents. Approx-

imately 18,500 family members were served by the 173 single-time events. Thirty-four percent of these events targeted bilingual families specifically, while the majority of events targeted all families. The data showed frequent use of translation and interpretation services to ensure family attendance at events. Almost 80% of events were linked to schools' academic goals. From the data, the district could distinguish strong efforts to link partnership activities to academic goals and multiple efforts to include all families in these activities.

The collection of quantitative and qualitative data has served as the basis for program planning. According to Simmons, the program evaluation results "enable us to refine and define the project better." The data have substantiated beliefs that the Seattle Family Partnerships Project is a worthwhile investment.

This article is adapted from the 2004 Partnership District Award application submitted by Seattle Public Schools to NNPS.

### California Builds Partnerships to Offer Trainings to Schools and Districts

California Department of Education (CDE), through its Title I Policy and Partnerships Office, has collaborated with multiple partners to offer training on school, family, and community partnerships to LEAs, schools, and other organizations. CDE contracted with the California Parent Center, a Parent Information Resource Center, to create a curriculum based on the NNPS approach to partnerships and to pilot the curriculum in a series of trainings. "Using Parent Involvement to Increase Student Success and Academic Achievement" is a two-day training that presents the NNPS

model with grade specific information.

Over 200 people, including parents, teachers, paraprofessionals, principals, LEA administrators, and organization representatives, have participated in the four pilot trainings since April 2004. Currently, ten trainings are planned for 2004-05, in addition to the eleven regional trainings the CDE Title I Office intends to sponsor throughout the state.

The series of trainings, conducted by the California Parent Center, represent a collaborative partnership among the Center, the CDE, the California State PTA, the Southern California Comprehensive Assis-

tance Center, and various directors from the Regional System of District and School Support. Presenters have included practitioners currently employed at LEAs or schools. "Each of the partners by and of itself did not have the necessary resources to produce the trainings," explained Carol Dickson, the California State Key Contact to NNPS. "This series of trainings in school, family, and community partnerships is a testimonial to the strong linkages and teamwork of the partners involved."

This article is adapted from the 2004 Partnership State Award application submitted by the California Department of Education to NNPS.