

## Leadership Line

### District Support Increases the Effectiveness of Volunteer Programs

Volunteers can add that extra ingredient to spice up a partnership program while positively impacting student achievement. In order to ensure that volunteer programs have desired effects, schools often need guidance and support. Districts are in a unique position to provide leadership to facilitate excellent volunteer programs.

#### Make It a Priority

The leaders of **Anoka-Hennepin Independent School District 11** in Minnesota have made family and community involvement a district priority with the support of Superintendent Roger Giroux. The Parent Involvement Team includes Parent Involvement Coordinator Linda Rogers, Volunteer Services Supervisor Sue Archbold, and their staff.

#### Create Opportunities

One successful practice in this district, the Kindergarten Data Collection by Volunteers Project, trained parents and others from the community to record the reading levels of

2,800 kindergarteners. This activity provided important data on students' phonemic awareness and letter identification and saved teachers valuable class time. A graduate student from the University of Minnesota aided the project, providing objective analysis and quality control. In another reading-related activity, Volunteer Services is training volunteers to facilitate Literature Circles (book clubs) to increase students' critical thinking skills.

Anoka-Hennepin offers a wide variety of volunteer opportunities for parents, grandparents, and members of the community, knowing that volunteers are an important asset to the school district. For the 2004-05 school year, parents and community members contributed over 177,245 volunteer hours in 43 schools. According to Independent Sector's value of volunteer hours in 2005, Anoka-Henne-

pin's volunteers contributed over \$3 million to the schools and district.

#### Provide Resources

The Anoka-Hennepin parent involvement website supplies resources for volunteers and other information on developing a good partnership program. The district leaders developed a volunteer handbook to provide volunteers with general guidelines and procedures. Visit <http://www.anoka.k12.mn.us/volunteeropportunities> and click on "District Volunteer Handbook" to view it.

"Anoka-Hennepin adults volunteer in public education out of their own graciousness to support their children and their neighbors' children. Every school opens its doors to this resource through the Volunteer Services program."

Many districts and schools throughout NNPS are designing and implementing excellent volunteer programs and realizing the benefits of these services. The dual focus of district leadership and facilitation can make volunteer programs linked to student success a well-established school improve-

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### Workshop to Increase Partnerships with Families in the Military

NNPS conducted a new workshop, "Ensuring Successful Transitions for Highly Mobile Students and Families," with district leaders and school teams in the **Davis County School District** in Utah (which serves families from the Hillside Air Force Base) and the **Virginia Beach City Public Schools** (which serves families from the Navy's Oceana, Norfolk, and other bases). The workshop, part of the Technical Assistance component of the Military Child Initiative (MCI) project at NNPS, is designed to help schools' Action Teams for

Partnerships (ATPs) welcome highly mobile families and involve them in ways that contribute to student success.

Developed by Cecelia Martin and presented by Darcy Hutchins, the 2½ hour workshop aimed to help ATPs understand the challenges of military and mobile families and students, and use the framework of Six Types of Involvement to include all families in their children's education. The ATPs that already had One-Year Action Plans for Partnerships were guided to add activities to ease the transitions of mobile students

and families. In Utah, new ATPs that just joined NNPS received a full-day team training workshop, with attention to welcoming mobile families as part of their partnership programs.

Other districts in NNPS that have schools serving large numbers of children from military families or other mobile populations may request full team training or advanced workshops on improving family involvement at times of transitions. For more information, contact NNPS facilitators at (410) 516-8800 or [cmartin@csos.jhu.edu](mailto:cmartin@csos.jhu.edu). ♦

## Research Brief

### Latino Students Take Different Paths in Learning Math from Kindergarten to Grade 3

The U.S. is experiencing rapid growth of its Hispanic population, with an overrepresentation of families living in poverty. Many Hispanic students are at a high risk of failure in school, with skills that often lag behind those of other racial and ethnic groups. These problematic gaps in learning have been associated with later social and economic inequalities.

Dr. Claudia Galindo, a postdoctoral research scientist with NNPS, used a national database (Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten or ECLS-K) to study Hispanic students' math learning between kindergarten and third grade. Her study explored math achievement differences among Hispanic subgroups with family backgrounds from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, South America, and Central America. She analyzed the effects of socioeconomic status (SES) and English language ability on math learning for 11,623 students, including 2,321 Latino students.

#### Patterns of Math Learning

Galindo found that Hispanic students entered kindergarten with lower math skills than did White and Black students. Patterns of math learning between kindergarten and third grade clustered in two groups. One group of students, whose families came from Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Central America, began kindergarten with significantly lower math scores than White students and their math disadvantages persisted through third grade. A second group, with Cuban and South American backgrounds, was more similar to White students in math learning over time.

#### Influence of SES and English Ability

English language ability and SES were strongly related to Hispanic students' math learning. Students with better English skills and higher SES had better math skills than did students who did not possess these qualities. English ability had a greater effect on math learning than did SES for some Hispanic groups of students. SES had a strong effect in the early grades but became less important by grade 3.

#### Implications for Partnerships

Galindo's study has important implications for programs of school, family, and community partnerships. First, using a national sample, the study identified Hispanic groups who are particularly at risk of failure in school and who would benefit from immediate and responsive attention to math learning. Second, it suggests that schools that serve Hispanic students should communicate and work with parents to better understand the challenges students face in learning math and to guide parents in how to support and encourage math learning. Third, the results suggest that well-planned, math-related family and community involvement activities, along with excellent math teaching, may help reduce the expected relationship of SES and math achievement, particularly if the interventions and activities take into consideration the diversity of Hispanic groups. ♦

From: Galindo, C. L. (2005). *Latino students' math learning trajectories in the early school years: The role of English ability and socioeconomic status*. Doctoral Dissertation. Pennsylvania State University, State College.

Available online at: <http://etda.libraries.psu.edu/theses/approved/WorldWideIndex/ETD-1143/index.html>

## Sustainable Programs

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**Percentage of schools' Action Teams for Partnerships that wrote (or were writing) their NEXT One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships BEFORE the end of the school year**

*From: 2005 School UPDATE*

### District Volunteer Programs

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ment strategy. Assistant to the Superintendent Dennis Carlson describes the volunteer program as "a wonderful example of community partnership!" He noted that, "Anoka-Hennepin adults volunteer in public education out of their own graciousness to support their children and their neighbors' children. Every school opens its doors to this resource through the Volunteer Services program." This commitment and focus is one of many actions that made Anoka-Hennepin a 2005 Partnership District Award winner with special recognition for exceptional quality and sustained progress. ♦

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