

Maryland Partnership Program Development - A Collaborative Venture! Parents as Essential Partners (PEP) and NNPS

Maryland's Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC) is Parents as Essential Partners (PEP), part of the Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium in Bethesda, Maryland.¹ With a new five-year federal grant, PEP will collaborate with NNPS at Johns Hopkins University to strengthen district-level and school-based programs of family and community involvement that will increase student success in school.

PEP plans to conduct a four part program:

- **Early Childhood Component.** PEP works in partnership with Friends of the Family and the Judy Centers to engage parents of preschool children, strengthen parenting skills, and build parents' confidence and leadership.

- **School-Focused Component.** PEP and NNPS will work together to help districts and schools in Maryland strengthen their leadership and programs of partnerships. NNPS's research-based approaches ensure that family and community involvement is linked to school improvement goals for student success. The resulting programs fulfill the state's recommendations, each districts' policies, and NCLB's requirements for family and community involvement.²

- **Parent-Focused Component.** PEP selected *Tellin' Stories*, developed by Teaching for Change, to encourage family engagement in education and develop parents' leadership skills. This project will enrich comprehensive partnership programs in participating schools.

- **Statewide Component.** PEP will sponsor four regional conferences for parents, organize an infor-

mation system for parents and the community, and support a bilingual, English-Spanish website.

Districts and Their Schools

PEP's first year of work focuses on initiating all four components with four school systems: Baltimore City, Prince George's County, Washington County, and Wicomico County. More districts and schools will be added over the five-year grant period. NNPS will enhance the PIRCs investment by extending attention to any or all districts in Maryland that want to develop the School-Focused Component. This will help sustain work on partnership programs started by NNPS with the prior PIRC, The Family Works.

With support from PEP and NNPS, Brenda G. Thomas, Director of Maryland's Partnership Program Development for the School-Focused component, will offer professional development on partnerships to district leaders and new Action Teams for Partnerships throughout the state.

The PEP grant will pay for district leadership training and workshops for new schools' action teams for partnership. This includes support for substitute teachers so that teachers can attend the one-day professional development workshop, which results in a draft One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships linked to goals in their school improvement plans.

In Maryland, 16 districts and 196 schools have started to build their school-based programs for student success, and others are scheduled to begin this systematic

work. Some other states' PIRCs have joined NNPS to take similar steps.³

The collaborative work by PEP in Maryland and NNPS is showing that district leaders and their schools can organize plans and practices that meet NCLB requirements for involvement at the district and school levels and engage parents in ways that support student achievement, attendance, behavior and other improvement goals.♦

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¹ For more information on PEP, Maryland's PIRC, visit www.maec.org.

² For a brochure outlining the PEP and NNPS collaborative, see www.partnershipschools.org and click on Professional Development and the Maryland program.

³ PIRCs interested in joining NNPS to develop similar strategies may contact bthomas@csos.jhu.edu.

What is PPP?

PPP is NNPS's nickname for *Promising Partnership Practices* – the annual collection of good ideas FROM members FOR members.

Return the questionnaire for the 2007 edition. OR, submit your best practice online at www.partnershipschools.org. Click on Success Stories, then, *Promising Partnership Practices* and Submit a Practice. Find the right form for your school, district, state, or organization.

MAY 15, 2007 is the deadline for review for the 2007 collection.