

Leadership Line

District Leadership on Partnerships: Connect and Communicate

Effective communication is a key ingredient in the recipe for partnership program success. However, communicating important information to all appropriate recipients can be a daunting task for NNPS district-level leaders. District leaders for partnerships in NNPS shared ideas about successful communication strategies in the new edition of *Promising Partnership Practices 2007*.

Communicating with ATPs

In the ATP Connection, a monthly newsletter, Lorraine Landon and Deidra McCollum, School & Family Coordinators for **Pasco School District** in Pasco, Washington, communicate with over 230 ATP members in 16 schools and with more than 20 district and school board members. Each issue of ATP Connection – in English and Spanish – informs constituents of upcoming events at each school and NNPS news from the national level. Each issue also highlights a different school in the district for outstanding school-family-community partnership efforts and includes a “Top 10 List” of ideas on how to conduct effective partnership activities.

Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD) in Texas initiated its program with a first cohort of 10 partnership schools. To communicate with all ATPs about NNPS, Dave Guzman, Fort Worth’s Director of Parent Engagement, developed a series of short, clear partnership handbooks. One of them outlines information about the NNPS framework, research-based approaches, and benefits. The Epstein Model Training Guide aims to help new Fort Worth ATPs bring the NNPS model to life in practice. Other booklets help the schools organize volunteers and share best practices.

Communicating with Parents

Parents and other family members are important stakeholders in comprehensive school-family-community partnership programs. The **Virginia Beach City Public Schools** face an important challenge because a large number of families in the military move in and out of the area. Melissa McQuarrie, Director of Community Relations, designed a Military Welcome Packet to ease the transition for families who are new to the district. The packet includes a welcome letter from the superintendent, school registration information, curriculum details, military base locations, and medical and other resources. Many families have commented that the Military Welcome Packet alleviated some of the challenges associated with relocating and enrolling their children in a new school system.

Fort Worth Independent School District communicates with all parents through a quarterly newsletter. Written in English and Spanish, the newsletter contains a note from Mr. Guzman, the district’s leader for partnerships, along with dates of important district and school events, and other useful information such as Tips for Successful Parent-Teacher Conferences. To save on the costs of copying and mailing the newsletters to thousands of families, FWISD partners with 1st Hour Communication, an organization that assists large districts in distributing newsletters to parents.

Regardless of the size, location, and economic situation of a school district, all NNPS district Key Contacts must communicate with district colleagues, schools’ Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs), parents, and others to create awareness and share knowledge about the district’s work on school-

family-community partnerships. These examples are a few of many ideas from district leaders that may help others in NNPS strengthen their partnership programs.

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NOTES

See these and other district leadership activities to improve partnership programs in the annual collections of Promising Partnership Practices on the NNPS website, www.partnershipschools.org in the section Success Stories.

For more information about 1st Hour Communication, visit their website at www.1sthour.com

NNPS in Numbers

63.8%

Percent of schools reporting 75% - 100% of families attended Back to School Night or Open House Night in the 06-07 school year.

Source: 2007 School UPDATE
Survey 638 schools (to date)

260,623+

Number of families assisted by actions of district leaders who help their schools improve partnership programs.

Source: 2007 District UPDATE
Survey 63 district leaders (to date)