

Crucial Work by District Leaders: Conduct Basic and Advanced Team Training

District-level leaders are integral to schools' success in developing and sustaining comprehensive school, family, and community partnership programs. NNPS guides district leaders for partnerships to take two distinct and essential roles in improving programs of family and community involvement. The dual responsibilities are to (1) conduct district-level leadership and (2) to provide direct facilitation of schools' Action Teams for Partnerships to help them develop their school-based partnerships with all students' families.

One-Day Team Training

One crucial direct facilitation responsibility is to provide schools' Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) with a basic, one-day workshop. The NNPS workshop, outlined in the *Handbook for Action*, helps new teams learn to use the framework of six types of involvement, meet challenges to reach all families, select involvement activities to boost student results, and use the action team approach. Teams leave the workshop with a draft One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships – a detailed schedule of activities that will involve families and the community to help more students succeed in school.

On the 2007 School UPDATE surveys, about 35.9% of 669 schools reported that their ATP received no formal training in partnership program development. Others reported that the chair, a few members, or the whole ATP received training. This statistic was matched on the 2007 District UPDATE, where 36.4% of 102 district leaders reported they had not conducted team training for their schools.

There were some legitimate reasons for the lack of training this year. Some districts and schools joined NNPS recently and had not organized a training schedule in 2007,

but 25.3% of district leaders noted that they planned to train teams in the next school year.

It is noteworthy that more than 60% of the district leaders in NNPS met the challenge of providing initial and advanced training to schools' ATPs in 06-07. For example, **Fort Worth Independent School District** (FWISD) joined NNPS in January 2007 and, soon after, the district

District leaders must provide ATPs with initial team-training and advanced or "refresher" workshops to continually improve the quality of schools' partnership programs.

facilitator trained his first cohort of ten schools' ATPs. Ten months later, he added and trained 20 more ATPs. Now, FWISD hired more partnership program facilitators, and the district can continue to "grow" its network of partnership schools.

Ongoing and Advanced Training

In addition to initial team training, advanced-training and "refresher" workshops may be needed to help schools sustain and continually improve the quality of their programs and the results of family and community involvement. At the start of the 05-06 school year, **Naperville School District 203** held a half-day training for roughly 70 leaders from each school's Home and School Association (parent organization) and School Family Community Partnership (SFCP) teams. The Fall Kick-Off Parent Leadership Training enabled the leaders of both groups to discuss how they would collaborate to improve their schools and increase student achievement through partnerships. Following the meeting, all participants had lunch at the District Superintendent's home.

The meeting "refreshed" the

spirit of collaboration and strengthened work on partnerships in all schools. Indeed, Naperville's leaders for partnerships "refresh" new team members from all schools every fall.

One way that the **Pasco School District**, located in Pasco, Washington, motivates its teams and sustains its partnership program is by holding specialized trainings for ATP members. One topic for the 06-07 school year was cultural diversity. A day-long workshop, Reach Out to Families: Cultural Competency Building, was conducted on a Professional Development Day in October. Another workshop, Latino Family Literacy, was held on a Saturday in April. Pasco's district leaders also conduct quarterly cluster meetings with ATP co-chairs to help them continue to learn new skills to strengthen their programs of school, family, and community partnerships.

Leaders Must Facilitate Schools

District-level leaders for partnerships have the important task of providing training and support to their school's ATPs. The initial training and ongoing workshops help build parents' and teachers' capacities to conduct effective partnership program initiatives.

NNPS's annual collections of *Promising Partnership Practices* describe these and other examples of how district leaders prepare and support their schools (at www.partnershipschools.org in the section Success Stories). Also, NNPS's District Leadership Institute each spring, Web Conferences, and Leadership Development Conference each fall help district leaders succeed in the dual roles of conducting district level partnerships and facilitating school teams to improve their partnership programs.



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