

### Superintendents are Super Important for Superior Partnership Programs

In NNPS, district leaders for partnerships can assist all schools' Action Teams for Partnerships to conduct goal-linked programs of family and community involvement if they have strong support from their superintendent and other district leaders. Here are a few ways they build this support.

**Shared leadership.** District leaders do not work in "silos" or keep their work secret, but communicate their plans and progress on partnerships to their supervisor, superintendent, other district leaders, and school board. Some district leaders form a District Action Team with leaders from various departments who meet periodically to share their own work on partnerships. Others write a full District Leadership Action Plan that includes all of the district's activities on partnerships and the offices and people responsible.

**Policy development.** District leaders make sure that their work on partnerships is aligned with the district's policies and goals. If a written policy on family and community involvement does not exist, district leaders for partnerships may spearhead a committee to develop a short, clear policy for board approval, with input from educators, parent organizations, parents, and other partners.

**Professional development.** District leaders for partnerships may *obtain professional development* on partnerships. Some come with a new superintendent to NNPS's conferences in Baltimore to learn about the research-base for NNPS approaches and to meet other district leaders. Others arrange for NNPS to provide on-site professional development workshops for all district leaders and for school teams to increase knowledge and strengthen programs.

District leaders for partnerships

also must *provide professional development* on partnerships to their district leaders, colleagues, school Action Teams, and other audiences. They may use NNPS materials for workshops (e.g., see the CD in *Your Handbook for Action, Third Edition* for PowerPoint presentations).

**Communication.** Many district leaders for partnerships in NNPS issue periodic newsletters, faxes, and e-briefs to share information with school teams, superintendent, other district colleagues, and community contacts. Successful leaders ask for time on the superintendent's agenda at monthly principal meetings to keep partnership work on the front burner and to demonstrate superintendents' support for schools' programs.

**Public support.** Many district leaders for partnerships ask the superintendent to show support for schools' work on partnerships by giving greetings at team training workshops, special events, end-of-year celebrations, community forums to discuss school issues, and by signing certificates of appreciation for district and school ATP members and volunteers.

**Funding.** NNPS studies indicate that district and school partnership programs improve from year to year when there is adequate funding for planned activities. Leaders for partnerships need to know the district's budget cycle to request funds for district-level partnership activities and to help schools conduct practices that involve families in ways that contribute to student success. Some leaders work with colleagues in other departments to share funding and strengthen partnership programs. Others make sure that Title I "set aside" funds for parental involvement are allocated for school-based programs, as required.

**Superintendents' Support.** All 2009 NNPS Partnership District Award winners are conducting some or all of the activities outlined above. In addition to other actions to ensure the superintendent's support, **Frances Howell School District** formed a district-level Advisory Group that, last year, heard from the superintendent, CAO, and CFO about their support for the schools' work on partnerships. **Naperville School District's** long-standing Core Team organizes and conducts activities through the year, always with the superintendent's support, to advance school and district partnership programs. **Hampton City Schools'** district leader for partnerships connects her NNPS work with district policies and Title I requirements. **Middletown Public Schools** leader submitted a funding request to the superintendent to activate a program to involve parents in reading readiness with young children. **Virginia Beach City Public Schools** garnered the support of the superintendent and Title I office to link improvements to family and community involvement to the long-term strategic plan, *Compass to 2015*.

When these kinds of actions are conducted, the superintendent's support is clear. For example, **Pasco School District's** partnership leaders note that the superintendent has made family and community involvement an expected part of school and district life – inherent to district policy. There is no doubt that these districts are award winners, in part, because they have super support from their superintendents.

See these and other examples of district award winners' leadership activities at [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org) in the section Success Stories.

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