

Leadership Line

District Leaders Help Schools Improve their Partnership Programs



The double arrow, above, is a simple outline for district leaders' work on partnerships. The top half recognizes that district Leaders for Partnerships conduct some family and community involvement activities that benefit all stakeholders in the district. The bottom half shows that Leaders for Partnerships must guide each school's Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) to organize its own, school-based program of family and community involvement. This balanced approach ensures that districts have leaders who become experts on partnership program development and each school has a permanent structure—the ATP—to plan, implement, and evaluate practices that engage all families in

ways that support students' success in school. Following are a few ways that winners of 2011 Partnership District Awards are guiding their schools' ATPs to increase the quality of their partnership programs.

Keep Improving Teamwork

In **Hampton City Schools** in Virginia, the district Leader for Partnerships works with Parent Involvement Facilitators who chair the Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) in many Title I schools. They guide their ATPs to continually improve their partnership programs and link activities to goals for student success in reading, math, and other subjects and school behaviors. This year, district leaders conducted professional development for the school-based facilitators in *Enhancing the Effectiveness of Teams*. At the workshop ATP members discussed how to clarify team goals, improve participation, share responsibilities, address ATP challenges, and conduct good meetings. Teams reflected on each topic and wrote a Team Effectiveness Plan.

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2011 Partnership District Award Winners

Calcasieu Parish School System, Lake Charles, LA



Kennewick School District, Kennewick, WA



Hampton City Schools, Hampton, VA



Pasco School District, Pasco, WA



Read summaries of these programs at www.partnershipschoools.org in Success Stories.

MetLife Foundation Grant

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publications such as the annual books of *Promising Partnership Practices*, semi-annual *Type 2* newsletters, monthly E-briefs, professional development conferences, and projects such as annual Partnership Awards to recognize excellent leadership and programs across the country.

New Products

The new grant will support the development of a new set of interactive homework materials—TIPS-Math in the Middle Grades for grades 6, 7, and 8. NNPS is working this year with the collaborating district—Calcasieu Parish School Board in Lake Charles, Louisiana—to develop and test the new math materials, which will be in sync with future Common Core Math Standards. Then, the new TIPS-Math in the Middle Grades will be distributed nationally to interested districts and middle schools.

Among other new products, NNPS will continue its series of *Samplers*, which provide school and district leaders with short research summaries and 10 feasible family and community involvement activities. This year, the first set of *Samplers* will focus on family and community involvement to improve students' Attendance, Behavior, College and Career Planning and to develop stronger partnership programs in Pre-schools and Middle, and High Schools. Next year, six more topics will be added by the end of 2012.

NNPS acknowledges MetLife Foundation as an important partner in improving goal-linked programs of family and community involvement.

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Similarly, in **Mesa (Arizona) Unified School District**, the Title I Department helped about 40 schools' ATPs write action plans to engage families in purpose-driven activities linked to goals in their school improvement plans. District leaders met monthly with schools' PEEPS—Parent Educators Empowering Parents in Schools. They shared ways to improve teamwork, reach out to parents, collaborate with teachers, and produce results for students. They reviewed the six types of involvement, learned to design web pages and news feeds on parental involvement, and disseminated summer reading lists for students. Like many districts in NNPS, Mesa compiled a book of schools' best partnership practices to share throughout the district.

Support ATPs Efforts

In 2011, the Leader for Partnerships in **Kennewick School District** emphasized three types of training and technical assistance for schools' ATPs: (1) assist ATP chairpersons to plan and conduct effective team meetings; (2) attend many ATP events to celebrate successes and identify ways to improve future activities; and (3) guide each ATP to complete its next One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships. The Leader for Partnerships attended over 30 activities in various schools last year. This showed principals and ATPs that she wanted to support their work on family and community involvement, and that she will help them improve their programs, evaluate progress, and engage more and different families in better ways from one year to the next.

Integrate Family and Community Involvement

Pasco School District #1 in Washington wants every school to engage

all parents in ways that support student learning and development. This year, the district Leaders for Partnerships gave special attention to integrating the schools' efforts to involve families with work done by the schools' PEAK business partners (Partners in Educating All Kids). Luncheons in August and February brought together PEAK businesses, school principals, district leaders for public affairs, and the Co-Chairs of the schools' Action Teams for Partnerships—along with their One-Year Action Plans for Partnerships. All partners discussed the goals for students and how the schools, families, and community partners could work together to contribute to positive results for the schools and for the students.

Include All Teachers

The Leader for Partnerships in **Calcasieu Parish School Board** in Lake Charles, Louisiana wanted all teachers to know that, even if they were not members of the ATP, their connections to their own students' families were important for their school's partnership program. She conducted professional development sessions for over 50 elementary school teachers to help them use the framework of six types of involvement with their students' families. Sessions on *Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision Making, and Collaborating with the Community* included activities for teachers to use each type of involvement for their own grade level, subject(s), students, and families. Attendees received "engagement rings" to note their new knowledge on engaging families in their children's education. The PowerPoint presentation and materials were added to the Calcasieu website to remind teachers of the concepts and content of the workshops.

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