

## District Record

### Parent Centers Move Libraries to the Curb

Local School District B\* (a mini-district in the Los Angeles Unified School District—LAUSD) established libraries in all parent centers in the district to help improve student reading achievement. Previously, families may have looked for information, but often did not know what resources were available or how to access them.

The Parent Libraries helped the district support families by making available accurate and relevant parenting information and children's literature. Materials included books, leaflets, audiotapes, videos, and other resources for parents in both English and Spanish to check out on a daily basis.

#### Curbside Libraries

In order to increase the number of parents using the library services, the parent centers displayed an assortment of books on rolling carts twice a week at the front gate or curb, where parents could easily make their selections. Borrowed books were returned inside the parent centers to ensure that new parents discovered the centers and services.

When parents checked out materials, they received flyers listing upcoming workshops on how to share books with their children, and other events sponsored by the centers. Parent center leaders were trained to conduct a variety of bilingual workshops on family reading, high frequency words, Latino family literacy, and other topics.

#### Results Documented

Records were kept of the number of parents using the curbside libraries, the number of workshop series presented, and how many parents attended. In addition, Los Angeles Compact on Evaluation studied a group

of comparison schools to measure the effects of the district's parent involvement efforts on student achievement. Data for the 1998-1999 school year showed a 5.7% increase in students' reading scores and a 4.7% increase in students' language scores for the schools in the program.

As a member of the National Network of Partnership Schools, Local School District B in LAUSD demonstrates strong leadership, quality planning, innovative practices, and continuous improvement in its school, family, and community partnership program. This mini-district received a Partnership District Award for excellence in and commitment to improving partnerships for student success.

\*Local School District B was formerly the Francis Polytechnic/North Hollywood Cluster.

Adapted from: *Promising Partnership Practices—2000*, National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University.

### TIPS Video for 2001

Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) Interactive Homework is featured in a new video from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). *How to Make Homework More Meaningful by Involving Parents* will be released in January 2001. It features science teachers from Pikesville (MD) Middle School who worked with NNPS to develop interactive homework assignments that match the school's science units in grades 6-8. For information on the video, visit [www.ascd.org](http://www.ascd.org) and follow the links to the Online Store, or call 1-800-933-ASCD. For information on the Network's TIPS manuals and prototype homework assignments, contact Frances Van Voorhis, TIPS Coordinator, at 410-516-8061.

### Partnerships in Portugal

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Extensive evaluations were conducted of 20 of the 25 schools that completed two years of program development.

#### Results for Parents, Teachers, and Students Over Time

The schools improved the quantity and quality of partnerships. Villas-Boas reports that parent and teacher relations improved, the number of parent-teacher meetings increased, parents become more involved at school and at home, and more "hard-to-reach" parents became involved. With the help of on-site facilitators and training in partnerships, teachers improved their attitudes toward parents, carefully prepared for meetings with parents, and designed "interactive homework" (akin to the Network's TIPS approach). The teachers observed positive effects in student achievement due to parental involvement, and fourth graders' achievement test scores improved.

#### Key Support Structures

Villas-Boas concludes, "It is possible to modify schools and improve the quality of teaching and learning by developing a culture of partnerships. This helps the students, families, teachers, and the community." She sees a key role for facilitators, a need to provide teachers with professional development on partnerships, and the need for schools to work over time to plan and sustain good partnerships. She also notes that "enforcing legislation" may be needed to encourage reluctant educators to develop strong programs of home-school partnerships.

The successful application in Portugal of the research and approaches of the National Network is particularly exciting.

From: Adelina Villas-Boas (2000). A prospective overview on the school/family/community relationship: A three-year study. University of Lisbon, Portugal.