

# type 2

Communicating to improve partnerships for student success



NATIONAL NETWORK OF  
Partnership Schools  
JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

NOTE: This is a printer-friendly version of *Type 2*, downloadable from the National Network of Partnership Schools web site ([www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org)). Some for-matting has been changed from the original newsletter (e.g., graphics/photos may not appear). For hard copies of *Type 2*, please e-mail the Network staff at [nnps@csos.jhu.edu](mailto:nnps@csos.jhu.edu) or call 410-516-8800.

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## New National Network Fees Link to Participation, Progress, and Networking

The National Network of Partnership Schools has grown steadily for five years to include over 1500 schools, 150 school districts, 19 state departments of education, and 60 organization/university partners. More and more, educators understand the importance of family and community involvement for helping students reach school improvement goals.

NNPS is committed to helping schools, districts, and states improve their programs of school, family, and community partnerships to increase student success. To continue to meet the needs of the large, diverse, and growing membership of the network, NNPS will initiate membership and workshop fees beginning January 2002.

**New Member Fees.** Schools, districts, states, and organizations that join NNPS *after January 1, 2002* will be required to pay a processing fee of \$100 per school or \$200 per district, state, or organization. Schools, districts, states, and organizations that presently are NNPS members will not be required to pay a processing fee.

**Renewing Membership.** All NNPS members may renew membership for the next school year (a) by *returning UPDATE by June 30 each year*, thereby waiving payment of an annual fee OR (b) by *paying an annual membership fee* of \$100 per school or

\$200 per district, state, and organization.

Annual *UPDATE* data are essential to NNPS to provide its members with the best new research and research-based tools and materials. As Joyce Epstein, Director of NNPS, noted, "Good networking should be rewarded every year. NNPS will waive the annual fees and renew membership for all schools, districts, states, and organizations that return *UPDATE* by June 30

(Continued on page 3)

## Partnership Awards in 2001 Recognize Excellent Programs

The National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University presented Partnership Awards for the 2000-2001 school year to 8 schools, 3 districts, 1 organization, and 1 state department of education. The sites located in California, Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, Ohio, Utah, and Wisconsin are recognized for excellence in developing and sustaining comprehensive programs of school, family, and community partnerships.

Winners received school banners or plaques and were cited in *Education Week* (9-12-01). The following states, districts, and schools received Partnership Awards for 2001:

- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, *Jane Grinde and Ruth Anne Landsverk, Coordinators*

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# Issues and Insights

Joyce L. Epstein  
Director

## Leadership Through Partnerships in Times of Crisis

Since the September 11th tragedy, schools, families, and communities have been tested on how to help students cope with fear, uncertainty, anger, and grief, and how to generate patriotism, understanding, and tolerance. There is no tougher set of circumstances or more important results for students than these.

Much has been written about what teachers may do to address tragic events, and what parents may do to help their children feel safe and cared for. NNPS adds another view. Action Teams for Partnerships may organize a variety of activities that demonstrate the partnership approach to dealing with crises.

### Help Others

Action Teams may lead activities to raise funds for organizations that provide relief to victims' families. For example, Magnet Middle School in Stamford, CT conducted a successful carwash with students, families, and the community to raise money for the families affected by the attack in New York. Other schools have raised funds for the American Red Cross, written encouraging notes, and helped in other ways.

### Ensure Students' Safety

Children most want to know if they and others they know are safe. Several schools already conduct partnership activities to increase school safety. For example, the Greeters at Washington Junior High School in Naperville, IL welcome and assist people who enter the school, and deter those who do not belong. Some schools have organized parents, grandparents, and other volunteers to be on patrol as students go to and from school, are on school playgrounds, in hallways and other locations to increase a sense of security.

### Increase Tolerance/Prevent Prejudice

At times of international conflict, a common goal is to increase students' apprecia-

tion of and respect for the diverse cultures in their schools and communities. Many NNPS schools have worked to increase goodwill and understanding among diverse groups. Public School #45 in Buffalo, NY conducted an International Festival for students, teachers, parents who speak 29 languages, business partners, and others in the community. They enjoyed presentations, songs, dances, and foods that demonstrated positive contributions from many nations. Middle and high schools may sponsor interfaith panel discussions, including Muslim leaders, to deepen students' and families' understanding of the complex issues underlying current events and to prevent prejudice.

### Celebrate Freedom

Some NNPS schools have invited families to join students and educators in patriotic assemblies and special writing and art projects to celebrate the American spirit. By bringing families and the community to share in these events, schools increase feelings of togetherness and resolve.

### Strengthen a Sense of Community

Every NNPS school's One-Year Action Plan for partnerships for the 2001-2002 school year includes family and community involvement activities that help create a welcoming school environment. The best way to strengthen a sense of community is by having a strong action team, a good action plan, and by implementing activities that involve all families in their children's education at school and at home.

Students, teachers, and parents have asked: "What should I say? What can I do?" to respond to the horror of terrorism. Action Teams for Partnerships should meet to discuss whether to add activities for all partners in education to conduct together that will help others, celebrate freedom, increase tolerance, and build a strong sense of community.

## Partnership Award Winners for 2000-01 School Year

(Continued from page 1)

### Partnership District and Organization Awards

- Local School District B, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), *Charlotte Castagnola, Facilitator; Parent Activities; Judy I. Burton, Local Superintendent; with Families In Schools (Partnership Organization Award), Ruth M. Yoon, Executive Director*
- Local School District F, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), *Richard Alonzo, Local Superintendent*
- Naperville Community Unit School District 203, Naperville, IL, *Mary Ann Bobosky, Director of Planning and Community Relations; Donald E. Weber, Superintendent*

### Partnership School Awards

- Baltimore City Detention Center School #370, Baltimore, MD, *Arthur Harris, Action Team Chair; Dawn Downing, Principal (Baltimore City Public Schools)*
- Colerain High School, Cincinnati, OH, *Maureen Heintz, Principal (Northwest School District)*
- Cottonwood Elementary School, Cincinnati, OH, *Laura Barrett and Betsy Tenbosch, Co-chairs; Gregg Tracy, Principal (Finneytown School District)*
- Highlands Elementary School, Naperville, IL, *Jane Wernette, Action Team Chair; Susan Stuckey, Principal (Naperville Community Unit School District 203)*
- Kennedy Junior High School, Naperville, IL, *Maureen Dvorak, Action Team Chair; Don Perry,*

*Principal (Naperville Community Unit School District 203)*

- Magnet Middle School, Stamford, CT, *Linda Fine, Action Team Chair; Howard Jennings, Principal (Stamford School District)*
- Mount Logan Middle School, Logan UT, *Dan N. Johnson, Principal (Logan School District)*
- Westlake Elementary School, New Carlisle, OH, *William H. Gruber, II, Action Team Chair; Jeff Broyles, Liaison to Building Leadership Team; Denny Dyer, Principal (Tecumseh School District)*

### Criteria for Awards

Each recipient submitted an application that was reviewed by five readers for the strength of evidence of the following essential elements of excellent programs of school, family, and community partnerships: teamwork, leadership, plans for action, implementation, evaluation, internal and external support, and networking.

Joyce Epstein, NNPS director, noted, "The award winners are sustaining and improving partnership programs over time, even when there has been a change in principals, district or state superintendents, and other leaders."

The NNPS Partnership Award criteria and application process should guide other schools, districts, and states in planning and conducting their partnership programs over time. Visit [www.partnershipschoools.org](http://www.partnershipschoools.org) and link to In the Spotlight and Partnership Award Criteria. Meet the award winners on pages 6-7 of this issue of *Type 2*, and read about their work on the NNPS website by following the links to Partnership Award Winners. Applications for the 2002 awards will be issued in February.

## New NNPS Fees

(Continued from page 1)

each year." The policy reinforces NNPS' belief that researchers and educators must work together to produce effective research-based approaches for improving school, family, and community partnerships.

**Workshop Fees.** Beginning with the March 8-9, 2002 Leadership Development Workshop in Baltimore, NNPS will charge a registration fee. The rate for NNPS members will be \$100 per person per day.

NNPS is expanding its services so that new *and* on-going members may attend the spring and/or fall Leadership Development Workshops. The newly-designed workshops will include introductory sessions for members starting to develop their programs, *and* advanced topics for experienced members working to improve the quality and results of their partnership programs.

NNPS sought input from long-standing district and state members on appropriate fees. All agreed that the fees will support useful services and help all schools, districts, states, and organizations work

## New NNPS Video

NNPS state, district, and school leaders explain in this 17-minute video why family and community involvement programs are important and how they organize their work. NNPS staff members discuss the Network's research-based framework, tools, and services for improving programs of school, family, and community partnerships. *National Network of Partnership Schools: Working Together for Student Success* may be ordered for \$20 (includes shipping and handling). Contact Diane Diggs at 410-516-8808.

# Meeting the Challenge

*Steven B. Sheldon*  
*Postdoctoral Research*  
*Scientist*

## Help Students and Families Make Successful Transitions to Middle and High School

Moving to a new school often produces a mix of fear and excitement in students and in families. Research suggests that students' success in school is determined not only by academic skills, but also by students' social and emotional well-being, including the successful adjustment to a new school environment. Indeed, poor adjustment in school is associated with students' lower sense of self worth, lower academic achievement, and dropping out.

Increasing numbers of schools are preparing students and families to understand the demands and opportunities they will meet at their new schools. Action Teams for Partnerships may help students and families navigate the transition into middle or high school with well-designed activities that occur before the transition is made. Several schools in the National Network of Partnership Schools have implemented practices to increase students' successful transitions.

### From Elementary to Middle School

To help their students and families transition into middle school more smoothly, Monica Leary Elementary School in Rush, NY arranges for sixth graders to return to speak to the fifth grade class about what to expect the following year. In addition, parents of former graduates talk with parents whose children will soon move into middle school, share their experiences, and explain what to expect from their children and from the middle school staff.

Altoona Middle School in Altoona, WI arranges for current fourth graders to walk through the middle school's fifth grade classrooms and meet the teachers. Before the school year begins, parents and students are given class schedules, invited to try new locker combinations, and see where their classes will be located. Families also are given information about how to help their children succeed in middle

school. At the fall conferences, parents and students are surveyed about their experiences of transitioning into middle school so that the school can improve the process for the next class of fifth graders.

### From Middle to High School

Colerain High School in Cincinnati, OH conducts several activities to ease families' transitions to high school. Prospective families and students are invited to tour the high school in the spring and meet with administrators, and are mailed the high school's newsletter to help them learn about its programs and opportunities. When new students enroll, their families receive a packet of information on summer camps and school activities such as athletics, music and band, and clubs. Parents coming from a private or parochial school receive a personal phone call from a high school parent whose children previously attended a private or parochial grade school to welcome them, answer questions, and ease anxiety.

### Make Successful Transitions a Goal

This fall is the right time for Action Teams for Partnerships to review their One-Year Action Plans for the 2001-2002 school year, and add activities that will help graduating students and families learn about what lies ahead in the new schools they will attend. Action plans also may include activities for incoming students and their families. The most effective transition activities result from a good partnership between feeder schools and receiver schools.

The National Network of Partnership Schools provides additional information on family and community involvement activities for students' successful transitions. Visit [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org), and click on the Middle and High School section for goal-oriented activities linked to successful transitions.



## Middle and High School Report

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### Student-Led Conferences Get Students and Parents Talking Academics

Many middle schools across the country face the dilemma of low attendance at parent-teacher conferences. In response, a growing number of middle schools are instituting student-led conferences and are experiencing conference participation rates of up to 95-100 percent.

Student-led conferences enable students to take responsibility for their academic progress, provide an opportunity for student self-evaluation, and promote proactive discussions about academics among students, parents, and teachers.

Typically, the student-led process includes three phases: preparation, conference, and evaluation. A team of seventh grade teachers at West Carrollton Middle School in West Carrollton, OH follows this process by organizing 3 student-led conferences per year around student portfolios.

#### Preparing

Preparing throughout the school year, West Carrollton students collect samples of work from all five core classes and from other classes such as art, computer science, and music. They also include awards and other artifacts in their portfolios. Students and teachers complete reflection sheets for each class to rate their current performance, comment on their progress, and set goals for the next quarter.

To enhance this strategy, the West Carrollton teachers included electronic portfolios. The team

received a grant to purchase *Portfolio Builder*, a set of PowerPoint templates, for students to hone their technological skills as they build their electronic portfolios. (Contact Visions Technology in Education at 1-800-877-0858 for information on this software.)

#### Conferencing

After developing portfolios, students prepare their oral presentations. Teachers may use a few class sessions for role-playing to strengthen students' confidence and verbal skills to lead the conference from introductions to closing remarks.

Student-led conferences with parents may take several forms. At some schools, teachers sit in on each student-led conference in its entirety. In other schools, teachers circulate among as many as eight conferences scheduled simultaneously.

The team at West Carrollton Middle School implemented two strategies in an effort to reach its goal of 100% student and parent participation. First, some students choose to lead two of the three conferences at home, thereby allowing flexibility for families who cannot attend a student-led conference at the school. Second, the team paired students who had little demonstrated home support with secretaries, counselors, administrators, and non-team teachers who volunteered to conference with these students. The school increased student participation in conferences to approximately 88% (up from 27.8%

in prior years), and continues to work towards its goal of 100% participation.

#### Evaluating

Evaluation is the third phase of the student-led conference process. West Carrollton analyzed post-conference surveys completed by parents and students. Parents reported that they enjoyed watching their children take leadership in conducting their conference. Parents noted that the conference helped their children self-evaluate their progress and increased their responsibility. One parent commented, "As the parents of a good student, we don't always request teacher conferences, but I am glad that you put this program in place to show us what we've been missing." Despite students' initial hesitation to communicate with their parents about their progress, seventy percent of students said they would enjoy participating again in student-led conferences.

Student-led conferences are one way for students to play a major role in building academically focused partnerships between the school and the family. Students feel proud of their role as mediator, and emerge from the conference empowered and focused on future goals.

For more information about student-led conferences and developing your partnership program, contact Natalie Rodriguez Jansorn, Middle and High School Facilitator, at 410-516-8893 or [njansorn@csos.jhu.edu](mailto:njansorn@csos.jhu.edu). Also, visit the Network's website, [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org), and click on Middle and High Schools.

**Just released by NNPS: *Promising Partnership Practices 2001***  
**All editions of *Promising Partnership Practices* may be downloaded from**  
**[www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org). Click on In the Spotlight.**

**Photos of Partnership Award winners appeared on pp. 6-7 of *Type 2*. To view pictures online, visit [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org), click on In the Spotlight and follow links to Partnership Awards.**

**Or, request a copy of *Type 2*, issue 11, at [nnps@csos.jhu.edu](mailto:nnps@csos.jhu.edu) or by calling 410-516-8818.**

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## Elementary School Report

### Neighborhood Representative Program Improves Communication and Attendance

Park Avenue Elementary School in Danbury, CT developed the Neighborhood Representative Program to encourage families to communicate with one another and share information about school-wide events. The Action Team sent a memo to all families requesting volunteers willing to call neighbors to share school news. The team members also brainstormed names of people they might recruit as neighborhood representatives.

The next step involved dividing the master student list into street addresses and assigning each street to the Neighborhood Reps. The team also linked one member of the school staff to three or four Neighborhood Reps to support them with any questions or concerns.

At a kick-off party, school staff introduced themselves to their Neighborhood Reps and gave them an information packet with the list of neighborhood parents to call, phone numbers, their school contact's phone number, and the first month's phone script of information on school activities. Each month, Neighborhood Reps received information on upcoming events to share in their neighborhoods. At the end of the school year, the Action Team celebrated with all Neighborhood Reps at a luncheon for volunteers.

The program faced a major communication challenge. The Neighborhood Reps read from English-only phone scripts and, therefore, were not able to communicate with families who spoke a language other than English. To remedy this situation, the program will recruit Park Avenue families that speak and read English, Spanish, and Portuguese to

effectively communicate with *all* families.

Another challenge was to ensure that all Neighborhood Reps had complete and accurate phone lists. To resolve this, the Action Team will send the Neighborhood Reps an updated phone list twice a year.

The program required approximately \$250 per year to mail the monthly phone scripts to all Neighborhood Reps and to host the kick-off party. To reduce costs, the team will send the monthly scripts home with the students' of the volunteers and will use a pot-luck approach for the kick-off party.

Park Avenue Elementary School has found the Neighborhood Representative Program to be a positive experience for its families, students, community members, and school staff. The program has improved communication and increased family attendance at school events.

Adapted from: *Promising Partnership Practices—2001*, National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University.

### New Textbook on Partnerships

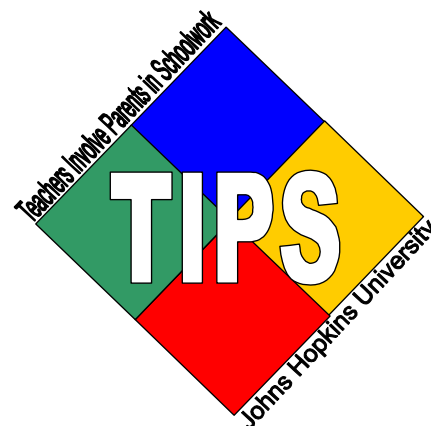
*School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Preparing Educators and Improving Schools*, by Joyce L. Epstein, is a text for courses in teacher education, education administration, sociology of education, school psychology, and related subjects. Available from Westview Press, [westviewpress.com](http://westviewpress.com) and other book-sites (e.g., [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)). 620 pages, \$35.

### Members Submit TOP TIPS Activities

TOP TIPS 2001 is the first annual collection of Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) Interactive Homework activities submitted by members of the National Network of Partnership Schools. TIPS assignments require students to talk with a family partner about their work and ideas. The collection includes 25 homework activities for language arts in the elementary grades, and math and science in the middle grades. The contributors to TOP TIPS 2001 are:

Barbara McCue (Cleveland Municipal School District, OH)  
Beverly Burgess and Kay Creamer (Chester Middle School, SC)  
Barbara Bostic (Long Jr. High School, SC)  
Cindy Gibson (Lakeview Middle School, SC)  
Wilma Keitt (Schroeder Middle School, SC)  
Jean Norman (University of South Carolina)  
Chris McChesney, Natalie Dewberry-Moore, Julie Homung, Chris McGuinness, and Leah Blind (Pikesville Middle School, MD)

The TOP TIPS collection and all TIPS resources from NNPS are available online at [www.partnershipschoools.org](http://www.partnershipschoools.org). Click on TIPS-Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork. Members of the National Network may submit TOP TIPS activities year-round. Contact Frances Van Voorhis at (410) 516-8061 or [francesv@csos.jhu.edu](mailto:francesv@csos.jhu.edu) for more information on TIPS training workshops and materials.





## District Record

### School Site Visits Help Improve Program Development in Los Angeles

To continually strengthen all schools' partnership programs, district facilitators in Los Angeles Unified School District, Local District F, conducted school site visits during the school year. The visits included interviews with focus groups of teachers, parents, students, members of the Action Team for Partnerships, Action Team chairs, the principal, support staff, and parent center staff. The district leaders reported findings to each school's Action Team for Partnerships, and followed up the discussion with a written report on the strengths and needs of each school's program.

The site visits helped the district leadership team identify each school's progress and needs for the

upcoming year. The core findings of the site visits included:

- Action Teams for Partnerships need more training. Each school will bring two teachers, two parents, an administrator, and a community representative to Action Team training sessions.
- Action Team training should focus on helping each school develop an action plan for partnerships. The actions plan should include space for the levels and sources of funds for each activity.
- More teacher training on partnerships should be offered. All teachers in a school need information and guidelines on home-school communication, home

visits, student-led conferences, interactive homework, parent involvement at the secondary level, and organizing parent workshops, and other strategies.

- Partnership training should include special topics for school and district administrators and Title I and bilingual coordinators.

The time spent at each school site yielded important information to guide district leaders in how to help schools strengthen their programs of school, family, and community partnerships.

Adapted from: *Promising Partnership Practices—2001*, National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University.

## Research Brief

### Partnership Activities Help Improve Schools' Math Proficiency Test Scores

Schools in the United States continue to improve their math curricula, instruction, and students' math skills. This NNPS Focus on Results study extends previous research by delving into schools' math programs to identify which family and community involvement activities may help improve student achievement in math.

Longitudinal school-level math achievement data were collected from 18 elementary and secondary schools to examine whether the implementation of specific activities to involve families and the community in math helped predict gains in students' math achievement. Measures included school characteristics, family and community involvement practices, rates of math homework completion and report card grades, and two years of school-level math

achievement test results.

Analyses found that, after controlling for the schools' prior levels of math achievement, some activities for family involvement in math at home and at school predicted higher student performance on standardized math tests.

#### Encourage Learning at Home

Two practices that encouraged parent-student interactions at home were strongly related to gains in the percentage of students scoring at satisfactory or higher proficiency levels in math:

- Assign math homework that involves families, and
- Offer lending libraries with math-related materials for families and students to use at home.

#### Other Connections with Families about Math

Several practices that increased teacher-parent communications about math and the involvement of families in math activities at school were related to gains in the percentage of students scoring satisfactory or higher proficiency levels in math:

- Communicate with parents about how to contact the math teacher; conduct parent-teacher conferences; and provide information to parents about students' math progress between report cards;
- Conduct workshops on math skills and school expectations; and
- Invite parents to assemblies to

(Continued on page 12)

# Our Growing Network

New Members in NNPS since February 2001

**SCHOOLS (129 new members)** ★ A.J. Bell Junior High School (New Orleans, LA) ★ Aberdeen Middle School (Aberdeen, MD) ★ Acadian Middle School (Scott, LA) ★ Adams City High School (Commerce City, CO) ★ Adams City Middle School (Commerce City, CO) ★ Alexander Graham Bell Elementary (Cleveland, OH) ★ Alexander Pierre Tureaud Elementary School (New Orleans, LA) ★ Allen Elementary School (Canton, OH) ★ Almira Elementary School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Alsup Elementary School (Commerce City, CO) ★ Andrew J. Bickoff (Cleveland, OH) ★ Apollo Middle School (Rochester, NY) ★ Arthur Logan Holmes Elementary (Detroit, MI) ★ Avalon Principal Administrative Unit (Carson, CA) ★ Bel Air Elementary School (Bel Air, MD) ★ Bel Air Middle School (Bel Air, MD) ★ Belden Elementary School (Canton, OH) ★ Belle Stone Elementary (Canton, OH) ★ Benjamin Franklin High School (Philadelphia, PA) ★ Benjamin Franklin School of Tomorrow (Cleveland, OH) ★ Bennett Elementary (Detroit, MI) ★ Blue Hills School (Independence, MO) ★ Boynton PreK-8 Learning (Detroit, MI) ★ Canton McKinley Senior High School (Canton, OH) ★ Carencro Middle School (Carencro, LA) ★ Central Elementary (Commerce City, CO) ★ Charles W. Elliott Middle School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Coleman Accelerated School (St. Joseph, MO) ★ Congress Middle School (Kansas City, MO) ★ Conn-West Elementary School (Grandview, MO) ★ Crenshaw Middle School (Canton, OH) ★ Dueber Elementary School (Canton, OH) ★ E.H. Phillips Middle School (New Orleans, LA) ★ Early Childhood Kindergarten Center (Canton, OH) ★ Easton Area Middle School (Easton, PA) ★ Edison Elementary School (Appleton, WI) ★ Emerson/Bandini Elementary School (San Diego, CA) ★ Fannie Richards Elementary School (Detroit, MI) ★ Fifth Ward Elementary School (Reserve, LA) ★ Floyd Winslow Elementary School (Henrietta, NY) ★ Franklin Elementary School (Wausau, WI) ★ Fred D. Wish Elementary (Hartford, CT) ★ Frederic Elementary School (Frederic, WI) ★ G.W. Carver Middle School (New Orleans, LA) ★ Gibbs Elementary School (Canton, OH) ★ Gove Elementary School (Belle Glade, FL) ★ Grand Marsh Elementary (Grand Marsh, WI) ★ Gulfstream Elementary School (Miami, FL) ★ Harry E. Davis Middle School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Hart Ford Middle School (Canton, OH) ★ Harter Elementary School (Canton, OH) ★ Health Career Center High School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Helen S. Edwards Elementary School (New Orleans, LA) ★ Hinketown Mennonite School (Ephrata, PA) ★ I. Augustine Middle (New Orleans, LA) ★ Iowa Maple Elementary School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Jackson Preparatory Magnet School (St. Paul, MN) ★ James Lewis Elementary (New Orleans, LA) ★ Jamieson Elementary School (Detroit, MI) ★ Jamison Computech Center (Cleveland, OH) ★ John A. Shaw Elementary (New Orleans, LA) ★ John F. Kennedy Elementary School (Windsor, CT) ★ John Peter Tetard Middle School 143 (Bronx, NY) ★ John W. Hoffman Elementary School (New Orleans, LA) ★ John W. Raper Elementary (Cleveland, OH) ★ Kemp Elementary School (Commerce City, CO) ★ Lafayette Middle School (Lafayette, LA) ★ Lake Park Elementary (Lake Park, FL) ★ Lake Superior Elementary School (Superior, WI) ★ Lakeview Elementary School (South Milwaukee, WI) ★ Lathrop Elementary (Canton, OH) ★ Lawrence D. Crocker Elementary School (New Orleans, LA) ★ Lehman Middle School (Canton, OH) ★ Lester R. Arnold High School (Commerce City, CO) ★ Louis Armstrong Elementary School (New Orleans, LA) ★ Louisa May Alcott Elementary School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Madge Youtz Elementary (Canton, OH) ★ Mark Twain Elementary School (Detroit, MI) ★ Mary McLeod Bethune School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Mast Academy (Miami, FL) ★ McDonogh 42 Elementary (New Orleans, LA) ★ McGregor Elementary School (Canton, OH) ★ Medard H. Nelson Elementary School (New Orleans, LA) ★ Melrose Elementary School (Miami, FL) ★ Miles Afrocentric Multicultural Elementary School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Morris Park Community School (Minneapolis, MN) ★ Moses Cleaveland Elementary School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Mount Auburn Elementary (Cleveland, OH) ★ Myrtle Place Elementary (Lafayette, LA) ★ Newburgh Free Academy (Newburgh, NY) ★ North Junior High School (Newburgh, NY) ★ Northboro Elementary Montessori School (West Palm Beach, FL) ★ P.S. 340 (Bronx, NY) ★ P.S. 360 (Bronx, NY) ★ P.S. 76 Queens William Hallet School (Long Island City, NY) ★ Palmetto Middle School (Miami, FL) ★ Pillsbury Math Science Technology School (Minneapolis, MN) ★ Public School 86 (Bronx, NY) ★ Putnam Heights Elementary School (Eau Claire, WI) ★ Ray Abrams Elementary (New Orleans, LA) ★ Riverside Elementary School (Joppa, MD) ★ Rose Hill Elementary (Commerce City, CO) ★ Royal Orchard Public School (Thornhill, Ontario) ★ S.F. Williams Elementary (New Orleans, LA) ★ Six to Six Interdistrict Magnet (Bridgeport, CT) ★ Snyder-Girotti Elementary School (Bristol, PA) ★ South Dade Adult and Community Education Center (Homestead, FL) ★ South Lake Elementary School (Gaithersburg, MD) ★ Sover Middle School (Canton, OH) ★ Ste Bierbaum Accelerated School (St. Louis, MO) ★ Summit Elementary (Canton, OH) ★ The In-Tech Academy MS/HS 368 (Riverdale, NY) ★ Thomas Alva Edison High School/John C. Farera Skills Center (Philadelphia, PA) ★ Thomas Jefferson Middle School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Thony Lafon Elementary School (New Orleans, LA) ★ Union Elementary School (Ponca City, OK) ★ Valhalla Middle School (Valhalla, NY) ★ Vorce J. Waters Elementary School (New Orleans, LA) ★ W. M. Anderson Primary School (Kingstree, SC) ★ Wade Park Elementary School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Webster Elementary School (Webster, WI) ★ Wellford Elementary School (Wellford, SC) ★ West Middle Elementary School (Hartford, CT) ★ Wilde Lake Middle School (Columbia, MD) ★ William H. Hall High School (West Hartford, CT) ★ William J. Fischer Elementary (New Orleans, LA) ★ Woodward Elementary (Detroit, MI) ★ Wynnebrook Elementary School (West Palm Beach, FL) ★ Yorkhill Elementary School (Thornhill, Ontario) ★

**DISTRICTS (10 new members)** ★ Adams County School District 14 (CO) ★ Cleveland Municipal School District (OH) ★ Columbus Public Schools (OH) ★ Fresno Unified School District (CA) ★ Harford County Public School (MD) ★ Miami-Dade County Public Schools (FL) ★ River-view School (WI) ★ San Diego City Schools (CA) ★ St. Landry Parish School Board-Title I Parent Involvement (LA) ★ Wuerzburg District Schools Bavaria Germany (Department of Defense Schools) ★

**STATES (1 new member)** ★ South Carolina Department of Education ★

**ORGANIZATION/UNIVERSITY PARTNERS (11 new members)** ★ Baltimore Reads, Inc. (MD) ★ Families FORWARD (OH) ★ Family Forward, INC. (TX) ★ Family Resource Center for Eau Claire County (WI) ★ Girl Scouts, Connecticut Trails Council ★ Parent Information Center (NH) ★ Riverside County Office of Education (CA) ★ Southern Education Resource Services (MS) ★ Statewide Parent Advocacy Network of New Jersey ★ TN Parents First Information and Resource Center ★ University of Louisiana at Monroe ★

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Current Membership in the National Network of Partnership Schools as of September 1, 2001

**Schools: 1539   Districts: 153   States: 19   Organizations: 68**

## State Line

### Parent Advisory Council Asks State Leaders To Explain Academic Standards to Families

Members of the Wisconsin State Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council expressed concern that schools were not informing parents adequately about *what* and *how* their children were learning. Specifically, parents did not understand the new Wisconsin Academic Standards and how teaching, learning, and assessment would change as a result of the standards.

In the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI), the School-Family-Community Partnership Team (SFCP), Student Assessment, and Equity staffs worked together to produce a brochure, *A Parent's Guide to Standards and Assessment*. The brochure explains the connections of curriculum, standards, and student testing. It offers parents ideas about how to help their children succeed in school. More than 250,000 brochures, printed in English, Spanish, and Hmong, have been distributed free to families statewide.

The SFCP Team also produced and distributed the *Guide to Developing Grade-Level Brochures for Parents* to help parents understand *what* their children are learning. Because each local school board determines its schools' curriculum, DPI created a template for districts and schools to develop their own grade-level brochures. DPI included easily reproducible developmental characteristics of children and other parent-friendly topics. The template for districts and the parent brochure on state standards described above, are

downloadable from [www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlcl/bbfcsp/bbhghlts.html](http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlcl/bbfcsp/bbhghlts.html).

DPI's Parent Advisory Council is working to strengthen the parent-voice in important legislative fiscal decisions affecting schools. DPI sponsored a State Parent Forum in February 2001 for parents to react to the Governor's education budget early in the legislative process. About 100 parents from communities statewide attended the day-long forum with legislators, and agreed on the top four education priorities the state budget should address:

- Eliminate the state-imposed revenue caps on schools;
- Stabilize funding for the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) program for school improvement;
- Meet the learning needs of all students; and
- Continue family-school-community partnerships.

Copies of the final forum report were distributed to all participants, school district administrators, and legislators.

The State Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council has raised important issues, resulting in better information *to* and *from* parents as part of Wisconsin's state leadership on school, family, and community partnerships.

Adapted from: *Promising Partnership Practices—2001*, National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University.

## Research Brief

### Does Neighborhood Matter for Math Achievement?

A new study investigated whether the characteristics of neighborhoods and their schools influence the academic success of middle school students. The researchers, Sophia Catsambis\* and Andrew Beveridge, combined data from parent and student surveys and mathematics achievement tests in the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 with data on students' residential locations from the U.S. Census. They conducted simultaneous analysis of the effects of families, schools, and neighborhoods on student math achievement.

#### High Risk Neighborhoods and Low Math Achievement

Neighborhoods were categorized by characteristics that may pose behavioral and educational risks for students, such as the percent of people living below the poverty level, dropped out of high school, unemployed, in female-headed households, and the median family income. They found that living in "high-risk" neighborhoods and attending high-poverty schools are both directly related to lower levels of students' mathematics achievement. These relationships persist even after accounting for the social background characteristics of individual students.

#### Less Parental Involvement

Living in "high-risk" neighborhoods also influences parents' behaviors. Parents who live in such neighborhoods tend to have lower educational expectations for their children, provide fewer out-of-school learning op-

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**Visit NNPS' new bulletin board at  
[www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org)  
to discuss questions and ideas with other members.**



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## Focus on Results: Math

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celebrate math achievements. The study suggests that elementary and secondary schools that involve families in students' math learning in a variety of ways are likely to produce higher student performance on standardized math tests.

From: Sheldon, S. B. & Epstein, J. L. (2001). *Focus on math achievement: Effects of family and community involvement*. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 2001 annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Anaheim, CA.

## Partnership Calendar

### 2001

**November:** Invitation to members to join the cross-site study, Focus on Results 2001-02: School, Family, and Community Partnerships to Improve Math Achievement. Initial data collection.

### 2002

**January:** Invitation to school, district, and state members to contribute to the Network's collection of *Promising Partnership Practices 2002*.

**February:** Invitation to school, district, and state members to apply for the Network's *Partnership Awards 2001-02* for excellence and permanence in their programs of partnership.

**March:** Spring issue of *Type 2*.

**March 8-9:** Leadership Training Workshop at Johns Hopkins University for new school, district, state, and organization members who want initial training to prepare for the 2002-03 school year, and for experienced members on advanced topics for leadership and program development.

**April 1:** Members will receive 2002 *UPDATE* in the mail. Due June 30 to renew Network membership for the 2002-03 school year.

**May 17:** Promising partnership practices from members due for the 2002 collection.

**June 30:** 2002 *UPDATE* must be returned to the National Network to renew membership for the 2002-03 school year. NNPS will waive annual membership fees for all members who return *UPDATE*.

**June 30:** Applications due for *Partnership School Awards*, *Partnership District Awards*, and *Partnership State Awards* for 2001-02.

## Does Neighborhood Matter for Math Achievement?

(Continued from page 11)

portunities for them, and participate less in parent-teacher organizations than do similar parents who live in "low risk" neighborhoods.

### Surmounting Disadvantages

The data suggest that, to some degree, parents may overcome neighborhood disadvantages associated with student achievement by frequently communicating with their children, closely monitoring their activities, and providing them with extra learning opportunities. Although more research is

needed to fine-tune these analyses, this study points to the importance of including neighborhood characteristics in educational research and in school programs that aim to improve the academic success of disadvantaged students.

From: Catsambis, S. & Beveridge, A. A. (2001). Does Neighborhood Matter? Family, Neighborhood and School Influences on Eighth-Grade Mathematics Achievement" *Sociological Focus*, 34 (4): 435-457.

\*Dr. Catsambis is currently a Visiting Scholar at the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University.