

type 2

Communicating to improve partnerships for student success



NATIONAL NETWORK OF
Partnership Schools
JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

Please make copies of Type 2
for all members of your
Action Team, Leadership Team,
Improvement Team, and
other interested partners!

Spring, 2003 No. 14

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NNPS Members Gain Ideas for *No Child Left Behind* Act Requirements

School, district, and state leaders at the National Network of Partnership Schools' (NNPS) fall Leadership Development Conference met to learn about the parent involvement requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLBA).

NCLBA requires schools, districts, and states to involve families in programs and activities to increase student achievement and success in school. The legislation also requires educators to provide parents with annual information on their child's achievement, teachers' qualifications, school quality, options to transfer from a failing school, and choices for supplementary services for qualifying students. Further, NCLBA requires annual school, district, and state "report cards" to inform parents and the public about the quality and progress of all schools.

The NCLBA requirements present important opportunities to improve partnership programs, increase communications with parents, and provide parents with important choices for their child's education. Because NNPS members are striving to achieve these qualities, it is not surprising that members had many ideas about how they could meet—and even exceed—the NCLBA requirements for parent involvement programs and special reports.

Focus on Student Success

NCLBA's requirements for school-based

partnership programs are consistent with the basic goals, tools, guidelines, and activities of NNPS. Indeed, NCLBA states that schools and districts may *adopt and implement model approaches to improving parental involvement*. NNPS fits that bill by helping members to establish, evaluate, and sustain research-based programs of school, family, and community partnerships focused on student achievement and success. NNPS also helps district and state leaders to facilitate

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Review! Reflect! Evaluate! NNPS Calls for Your Good Ideas

At the end of each school year, NNPS members have three opportunities to review their work, share ideas, and plan ahead.

Excellent Programs: Awards

Apply for a Partnership Award if your school, district, state, or organization has been a member of NNPS for two or more years and can demonstrate excellence in partnership program development. Partnership Awards applications were sent to all members. The applications outline NNPS' research-based expectations for evidence of progress on the essential elements of teamwork, leadership, action plans, implementation, support, and evaluation. **Deadline: July 11, 2003.**

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Joyce L. Epstein
Director

Why Do Schools Need NNPS and Their PTA?

Many schools, districts, and states in the National Network of Partnership Schools also have PTAs, PTOs, Home-School Associations, or other parent organizations. NNPS often is asked, “Why does our school need NNPS if we already have a PTA or PTO?” The answer is rather simple. Students benefit from the complementary roles of NNPS and a PTA or PTO. Together, NNPS and parent organizations help teachers, families, community members, and others increase and strengthen their relationships so that all stakeholders work together for student success.

Focus on Student Achievement

Often, PTAs or PTOs are parent groups that “reach into the school” to advocate for children. NNPS shares the same goals for children, however its members “reach out from within the school” to involve families and community members to support student achievement. NNPS guides school members to “reach out” by using an Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) consisting of teachers, parents, administrators, and community partners. As the basic structure for organizing a school partnership program, the ATP serves as the “action arm” of the school council or school improvement team to plan and implement activities that involve all families and the community.

Because schools are increasingly being held accountable for high student achievement, NNPS emphasizes involving families and the community in curriculum-linked activities that affect teaching and student learning. For example, the ATP may work to improve parent-teacher conferences, designs for homework, information provided to families on tests and assessments, family support of learning at home, postsecondary planning, and other academically-related involvement activities. NNPS helps schools add curriculum-linked involvement activities to their partnership programs along with other important PTA or PTO activities.

Link to School Goals

The PTA, PTO, or other parent groups

develop parent leaders and increase all parents’ voices in school discussions and decisions. In addition, PTAs or PTOs often support activities that contribute to a positive climate within the school. Sometimes these activities are the result of parents’ ideas, other times teachers’ requests. In many cases however, the chosen activities are not part of a comprehensive partnership plan linked to school improvement goals.

NNPS members use the researched-based framework of six types of involvement to write a One-Year Action Plan that documents *how* and *when* the school will inform, engage, and involve families and the community in activities to help students improve reading, math, or other skills, attendance, behavior, or other school goals. NNPS encourages schools to have *one* school improvement plan, usually developed by the school council or school improvement team. From that base, schools establish *one* partnership program to support and advance student success. This requires *one* annual Action Plan for Partnerships to organize all of the family involvement activities that will be conducted by the ATP and the PTA or PTO. In this way, everyone’s work on family and community involvement is accounted for and celebrated, and the school’s partnership program will continue to grow and improve.

Conduct Research

NNPS and the PTA share a similar emphasis on building family and community partnership programs using Epstein’s researched-based framework of family and community involvement. NNPS extends the use of research by collecting annual data from its members so that we can work together to build new knowledge for research-based training, tools, guidelines, and other services. NNPS also offers members opportunities to participate in studies of the effects of school, family, and community partnerships on student achievement.

The bottom line is that when teachers, administrators, parents, community

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NNPS Members and *No Child Left Behind* Act Requirements

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their schools' work on partnerships, as required by *NCLBA*. Members at the fall conference noted that NNPS' basic structures of an Action Team for Partnerships, One-Year Action Plan, end-of-year evaluations, and annual *UPDATE* reports on progress help them meet the requirements in Section 1118 of *NCLBA* for plans and programs for parent involvement.

Provide Reports

NNPS members at the fall conference had many ideas about how their schools, districts, and states could meet the new requirements in *NCLBA* for annual reports to parents on their child's achievement and to the public on all schools' progress. The specific ideas for each required notice or report are on the NNPS website at www.partnershipschools.org click on the alert button for *NCLBA*. For all reports, NNPS members suggested:

- Include a parent response form so that parents can ask questions and offer input to improve the format or content of each report.
- Conduct different kinds of meetings to encourage discussions of Adequate Yearly Progress, state tests, the meaning of students' scores, options and reasons for supplementary services, and other *NCLBA* requirements. These may include schoolwide or grade-level meetings, public forums and "town meetings," school fairs, Extra-Services Nights, individual parent conferences with counselors and teachers, and selective home visits.
- Use different formats and locations for notices and reports. Send notices, reports, brochures, and flyers home with students or by mail; put articles in school and district newsletters, community

papers, popular community locations, and on district or school websites; and use oral methods such as classroom-level telephone trees, neighborhood reps, radio, local or cable TV, and video or audio tapes in families' languages.

- Make sure that vocabulary, graphs and tables, and comparisons of schools' quality and subgroups of students' scores are easy to understand and are in languages that all families can understand. Use bilingual volunteers and other translators as needed.
- Have district and state leaders systematize information so that schools in the same district provide similar reports to the parents of their students. To do this, districts and states should gather input from their schools and parents about the content and format of reports.
- Help parents decide whether to leave a school that is not making Adequate Yearly Progress or to remain at the school. Provide information on school plans for improvement and how parents, business partners, and community members can become involved to help their children and to improve their schools.

NNPS members showed that they can, indeed, "lead the way" among schools, districts, and states to develop excellent partnership programs with responsive activities for the new reporting requirements of *NCLBA*. NNPS will continue to conduct sessions on requirements for parent and community involvement in the *No Child Left Behind Act* at Leadership Development Conferences and will report ideas and examples on the NNPS website.

Share Your Good Ideas

(Continued from page 1)

Excellent Activities: Best Practices
Submit one of your school, district, state, or organization's best practices for NNPS' annual collection, *Promising Partnership Practices-2003*. The book is distributed to all members in August and disseminated nationally on the NNPS website. Share an activity that increased the involvement of families who are typically "hard to reach;" involved families in middle and high schools; connected families with students to improve achievement or other school goals; improved district and state assistance to many schools; or that advanced your program this year in other ways. The call for *Promising Partnership Practices-2003* is included with this issue of *Type 2* for all members. **Deadline: May 16, 2003.**

Annual Progress: *UPDATE* Surveys
UPDATE surveys for the 2002-03 school year will be mailed to all NNPS members in early April. ***UPDATE* surveys are required to renew membership in NNPS for the 2003-04 school year at no cost.** The free renewal is a unique feature that ensures that NNPS and its members work together to build new knowledge for research-based training, tools, guidelines, and other services. Complete *UPDATE* with your school Action Team for Partnerships or district, state, or organization colleagues, and use these reflections and assessments to improve partnership plans for next year. **Deadline: June 30, 2003.**

To download another copy of a Partnership Award application or the call for *Promising Partnership Practices*, go to www.partnershipschools.org and click on "In the Spotlight." For *UPDATE*, click on the alert button on the homepage (after April 1) to download another copy.

Meeting the Challenge

Steven B. Sheldon
Associate Research
Scientist

Reach Out to Families of Diverse Cultures with Responsive Partnership Practices

American schools and educators are serving a more diverse population of students and families than ever before. On average, schools in the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) have four languages other than English spoken by students' families. In some cases, this number is above 30. Because of these language differences, minority family members may feel intimidated talking to educators. They may not contact school officials, giving the impression that they do not care about their children's education. Research studies solidly reject this and show that *all* parents want to help their children succeed.

Schools, school districts, and states must plan partnership programs that include all families, recognize cultural diversity, and reach results for all students. Many schools in NNPS post signs in several languages welcoming family members, and host family events that celebrate the diversity of cultures in the school community. Here are a few more ideas that can help your school connect with *all* families.

Get to Know Families

Embracing multiculturalism in school, family, and community partnerships can begin by gathering information. The school districts of Seattle and Minneapolis have translated their parent surveys into Spanish, Vietnamese, Somali, and Chinese. Translating the surveys enables more families to voice their opinions, and establishes two-way communications between schools and family members.

Take Stock

A next step is to think about how your partnership program reaches out to families from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. NNPS suggests reviewing each section of your Action Plan for Partnerships to make sure the needs of diverse families and students are met. For example,

1. Does your Action Plan include practices that link to school goals for different subgroups of students?
2. Are modifications needed in the activities so that they address the needs, strengths, and interests of family members from diverse backgrounds?
3. Do the dates of your partnership activities consider religious or cultural holidays?
4. Are people identified who can help serve as a liaison to families from different racial and ethnic backgrounds?

Answering these questions can help your team begin to assess the strengths and weaknesses of your partnership program and plan truly inclusive family and community involvement practices.

Collaborate with the Community

Establishing supportive school-home relationships can be facilitated with the help of community members. Albuquerque Public Schools teamed with several community partners, including Wells Fargo, Bank of America, and PNM, to create a video for families in Spanish with English subtitles. Hosted by an Univision TV newscaster, the video features school district personnel and others sharing ideas on the many ways parents can support their children's success in elementary, middle, and high school. In order to reach a large number of families, the video was broadcast on Univision during the local news.

Nearly all schools across the United States serve diverse populations of students. Partnership programs that embrace cultural diversity can provide enriching experiences for all students and families. Achieving this requires two-way communication in families' spoken languages; partnership plans that are responsive to existing diversity; and collaboration with community partners to facilitate connections with families.

National PTA Recognizes Excellence

By Shirley Igo, National PTA President

As a voice for children, a resource for parents, and a strong advocate for public education, National PTA has, throughout its history, championed the importance of parent involvement in helping all children succeed.

National PTA has developed an important program to assist every school in this nation to evaluate and increase parent involvement. The Parent Involvement Schools of Excellence Certification Program offers guidance and recognition to schools committed to offering students a key element to success: meaningful parent involvement.

Schools Conduct Self-Assessments

Becoming a School of Excellence is attainable for all schools. First, a school forms a team of teachers, principals, parents, community members, and others to conduct a self-assessment of current parent involvement practices. The self-assessment is based on National PTA's Standards of Parent/Family Involvement Programs—communicating, parenting, student learning, volunteering, school decision-making and advocacy, and collaborating with community. These standards were developed using Dr. Joyce Epstein's research-based framework—also used by the National Network of Partnership Schools—as well as other relevant research on parent involvement.

Schools Apply for Distinction

Second, the team submits an application to National PTA along with the

self-assessment and supporting documentation. Schools have the opportunity to earn one of two distinctions. A Certification of Excellence is presented to schools that have outstanding parent involvement programs in place. The Recognition of Commitment is presented to schools that are on their way to becoming a School of Excellence. National PTA provides information and resources to help schools achieve excellence in parent involvement at www.pta.org. The National Network of Partnership Schools also is a resource to help all schools develop excellent programs of school, family, and community partnerships for student success.

National PTA developed its certification program because we believe that excellent schools don't just happen—they are created. The program provides every school in the nation with the tools, benchmarks, and best practice ideas for increasing parent involvement in education. And with the National Network of Partnership Schools, we share a common goal of increasing parent involvement so that every child has the opportunity to be successful.

NNPS and PTAs and PTOs

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partners, and students work together, they develop well-planned, inclusive, and ever-improving partnership programs. There are plenty of ways to support children, and NNPS and PTAs or PTOs are important partners working to accomplish goals for students.

NNPS in the News

PTO Today (January and February 2003 issues) featured NNPS research and the good work of NNPS members.

State Line

Florida Awards Practices Linked to School Goals

Things are heating up in Florida as districts work feverishly to select two school nominations to submit for the Florida Department of Education's Parent Involvement Award. The award, co-sponsored by the state PTA, is one component of Florida's state-level leadership program to promote innovative school-based partnership practices that can be replicated by other schools in the state.

The Florida Department of Education has given this award to school-based programs for the past seven years. Office of Family and Community Involvement Director, Linda Thompson and her team of program specialists have supported this award, which guides schools to link family involvement to student achievement and other school goals.

Recognize Excellent Partnerships

Each district may submit one elementary and one middle or high school nomination. Nominations are evaluated on the following criteria: impact on family involvement; ability to be replicated; relationship to school goals and objectives; impact on school improvement; participation of families in planning and implementation; uniqueness and innovation; numbers of parents participating versus program capacity; cost; and collaborative efforts. In addition, schools are required to identify which of the six types of involvement the practices address.

Statewide, a total of ten schools are selected as regional winners for the Parent Involvement Award. Winning schools designate a parent representative to accept a plaque and to

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Our Growing Network

New Members in NNPS since September 2002

SCHOOLS (75 new members) ★ 21st Century Preparatory School (Racine, WI) ★ Alamosa Elementary School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ Algoma Elementary School (Algoma, WI) ★ Algoma High School (Algoma, WI) ★ Armijo Elementary School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ Assawompset School (Lakeville, MA) ★ Atrisco Elementary School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ Barcelona Elementary School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ Barringer High School (Newark, NJ) ★ Beck Academy (Greenville, SC) ★ Benjamin E. Mays Magnet School (St. Paul, MN) ★ Blue Springs South (Blue Springs, MO) ★ Brennemann Elementary School (Chicago, IL) ★ Carlos Rey Elementary School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ Caruthersville Accelerated Middle School (Caruthersville, MO) ★ Chelsea Heights School (St. Paul, MN) ★ Cormier School and Early Learning Center (Green Bay, WI) ★ Dewey L. Carter Elementary School (Effingham, SC) ★ Duranes Elementary School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ East San Jose Elementary School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ Emerson Elementary School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ Ernie Pyle Middle School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ Eubank Elementary School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ Eugene Field Elementary (Albuquerque, NM) ★ F. L. Skaith Accelerated Elementary School (St. Joseph, MO) ★ Garfield Middle School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ Halfmoon Bay Elementary Community School (Halfmoon Bay, BC) ★ Harrisburg Elementary (Harrisburg, OH) ★ Harrison Middle School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ Henry Wilson Elementary School (Manchester, NH) ★ Humboldt Junior High (St. Paul, MN) ★ IMPACT (Vineland, NJ) ★ Jimmie Carter Middle School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ John Flynn Elementary (Eau Claire, WI) ★ Kit Carson Elementary School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ La Luz Elementary School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ La Mesa Elementary School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ Lady's Island Elementary School (Beaufort, SC) ★ Larimore Elementary School (St. Louis, MO) ★ Lavaland Elementary School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ Lincoln Elementary School (Wausau, WI) ★ Lincoln Elementary School (Oshkosh, WI) ★ Los Padillas Elementary School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ Lowell Elementary School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ Lutie R-VI Accelerated School (Theodosia, MO) ★ MA Binford Elementary School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ Mission Ave Elementary School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ Mound City R-2 Elementary (Mound City, MO) ★ Myrtle Beach High School (Myrtle Beach, SC) ★ North Hamilton County Elementary (Sale Creek, TN) ★ North Vista Elementary School (Florence, SC) ★ Nowlin Accelerated Middle School (Independence, MO) ★ Oakland Junior High School (Columbia, MD) ★ Oklahoma Road Middle School (Sykesville, MD) ★ Our Lady Queen of Heaven Rc School (West Sussex, England) ★ Pocomoke Middle School (Pocomoke, MD) ★ Polk Middle School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ Poplar Grove School (Franklin, TN) ★ Reginald Chavez Elementary School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ Rio Grande High School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ Roche-A-Cri School (Arkdale, WI) ★ Shell Point Elementary School (Beaufort, SC) ★ Sherman Elementary (Eau Claire, WI) ★ The New School for Enterprise and Development Public Charter School (Washington, DC) ★ Truman Middle School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ Valle Vista Elementary School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ Van Buren Middle School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ Warren E. Hearn Elementary School & Charleston Kdg. Center (Charleston, MO) ★ Washington Middle School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ West Michigan Academy of Environmental Science (Grand Rapids, MI) ★ Whale Branch Elementary (Seabrook, SC) ★ White Knoll Middle School (W. Columbia, SC) ★ Whittier Elementary School (Albuquerque, NM) ★ Willard East Elementary (Willard, MO) ★ Zielanis/Meeme Elementary School (Kiel, WI) ★

DISTRICTS (7 new members) ★ Clinton County R-III School District (Plattsburg, MO) ★ Fond du Lac School District (Fond du Lac, WI) ★ Hays Consolidated Independent School District (Kyle, TX) ★ School District #35 (Langley, B.C.) ★ School District of Mishicot (Mishicot, WI) ★ Title I Program-Madison Metropolitan School District (Madison, WI) ★ West Contra Costa Unified School District (San Pablo, CA) ★

ORGANIZATION/UNIVERSITY PARTNERS (6 new members) ★ CT Parents Plus/United Way of Connecticut (Rocky Hill, CT) ★ Eastern Shore of Maryland Educational Consortium (Centerville, MD) ★ EPI Center (Pittsburgh, PA) ★ Lambda Xi Omega/Thomas University GEAR UP Partnership Program (Thomasville, GA) ★ N.E. Florida Institute of Math, Science & Computer Education (Jacksonville, FL) ★ Youthnet of Greater Kansas City (Kansas City, MO) ★

Current Active Membership in the National Network of Partnership Schools as of February 5, 2003

Schools: 939 Districts: 100 States: 17 Organizations: 62

Florida's Partnership Awards

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present their practice during the Florida PTA Leadership Conference in July 2003. All travel expenses related to the conference are reimbursed for the parent representative.

The state's Office of Family and Community Involvement promotes the award-winning schools' promising partnership practices in a publication titled *Sparkplugs*. This publication features summaries of each winning program, and is made available at no cost to all schools throughout the state and is accessible on the Florida Department of Education's website.

Support Program Development

To assist all Florida schools to implement effective partnership practices, the Office of Family and Community Involvement provides resources, training, and technical assistance throughout the year. In particular, the office collaborated with the Florida Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, the state's federally funded PIRC, to conduct five regional one-day partnership trainings based on the NNPS model. Representatives of approximately 125 schools attended these trainings in September 2002 to learn about the essential elements of comprehensive partnership programs.

The Florida Office of Family and Community Involvement has integrated its Parent Involvement Award into its strategic plan that inspires, informs, and instructs schools to develop high-quality partnership programs linked to school improvement goals. For more information about the award and other Florida state leadership activities, visit their website at www.firn.edu/doe/family/home0077.htm.

Special thanks to Joe Davis, Family Involvement Program Specialist, Florida Department of Education, for his contributions to this article.

Elementary School Report

Students Benefit as School Connects with Families

Colvin Elementary School in Wichita, KS is a high poverty, diverse community with families that speak many languages and who are not necessarily comfortable navigating the school system. This NNPS school uses a variety of strategies to make a diverse group of families feel welcomed and needed.

Communicate with Families

Colvin's staff uses different communication practices to reach its families. The staff walks through the neighborhood and knocks on doors to meet families. They serve coffee every Friday morning on the driveway before school starts so they can greet parents as they bring their children to school. Parent handbooks have been presented in video format in five different languages, and translators are always on site to assist parents.

Utilize a Parent Room

A parent room is open each day for networking, parent education, and adult education. A nursery and meals are provided so that parents can attend parent room activities. Some days, four or five moms use the parent room to complete volunteer work for teachers. Other days, forty to fifty parents might attend a workshop. Three to four hundred parents may visit the parent room to receive learning materials that are distributed as part of parent-teacher conference day.

Support Families

Colvin also reaches out to families by helping them to meet their basic needs. The Family Support Team works with families in crisis by making home visits every Monday. The team

focuses first on improving student attendance, providing resources and referrals for health needs, and improving student behavior through family support. On-site facilities for health care and WIC services are established. Team members work with families to teach them the hidden rules of school success, especially those regarding attendance and behavior.

See the Results

Colvin Elementary School's efforts to reach out to all its families have been productive. Student achievement and attendance have increased dramatically. Fifteen percent of students were reading on or above grade level in 1997; now 75% of students are on or above grade level. Attendance has increased from 90% to 95%. Suspensions have dropped from 113 per year to thirteen. Parent involvement has increased dramatically with parent-teacher conference attendance rates now at 99%. Parents frequently visit the parent room, prepare all classroom instructional materials, and represent the school before the Board of Education and the Assistant Superintendent. Silvia Fleming, Parent Involvement Worker, says, "I could go on and on about how this school makes sure we have student success."

As your Action Team for Partnerships writes its One-Year Action Plan this spring, you might consider adopting or adapting some of Colvin's strategies for reaching out to *all* families.

Adapted from *Promising Partnership Practices—2002*, National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University.

District Record

Canton City Sustains All Schools' Connections to the National Network

Several studies from researchers at the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University have confirmed that "schools that have been in the National Network of Partnership Schools longer reported higher quality partnership programs." District leaders can play a major role in whether or not schools remain active in the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) and to what extent schools develop their partnership programs over time.

One Ohio school district, Canton City Schools, has actively supported all of its schools to sustain connections with the National Network of Partnership Schools and is beginning to see results for students and families. "There is no doubt that student achievement has increased as parents have been encouraged to get more involved," stated James Irvin, Director of Government Programs for Canton City Schools.

Canton City Schools' approach to develop excellent and permanent partnership programs in all 25 elementary, middle, and high schools can be summarized in three words: knowledge, leadership, and resources.

Knowledge

Prior to each school year, new employees of the district have the opportunity to attend two staff development sessions: one on the six types of involvement and one on Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) interactive homework. The district's Title I Family Involvement Coordinator, Suzanne Katusin, has distributed to all school leaders and staff a Home/School Partnership folder that con-

tains the district policy on family involvement that used NNPS research as a guide, copies of NNPS research studies, and the framework of six types of involvement. To spread the word districtwide, the local cable network broadcast a segment featuring Katusin and Irvin discussing the six types of involvement. This segment integrated clips from the NNPS video throughout the discussion.

Leadership

With broad-based awareness, the district has focused on building sustainable leadership on partnerships. A district-level Home/School Partnership Action Team was formed in 2001. A teacher, parent, administrator, or community representative from each school serves on this district leadership team to plan, implement, and evaluate partnership activities. The team's monthly meetings help team members develop a greater understanding of the six types of involvement, learn about TIPS interactive homework, and develop action plans for partnerships linked to student outcomes. According to Katusin, this district leadership team has "developed a cohesive program and improved the quality of practices throughout the district."

Resources

Canton City Schools has consistently linked its partnership program to the research-based resources available from NNPS. Each school Action Team for Partnerships writes a one-year goal-oriented action plan (Form G in the Network's *Handbook*) linked to the school's Continuous Improvement Plan. In addition, school action teams are required to submit a copy of the annual NNPS *UPDATE* survey and the End-of-Year Evaluation to the district office, which analyzes the surveys for evidence of change.

The district has also sent a team of leaders to the NNPS Leadership Development Conference in Baltimore. The team consisted of two district office leaders, an elementary school principal, a middle school principal, and a high school representative. Empowered by the conference, two of the principals returned to their Action Teams for Partnerships to create a transition program between their schools.

Canton City Schools strives to attain high levels of excellence for its students. By sustaining connections with all of its schools and the National Network of Partnership Schools, the district provides an important layer of support for student success.



Canton City Schools District Leaders for Partnerships
Row 1: Darleen Moss, and Nadine McIlwain. Row 2: James Irvin, Dianne Talarico (Superintendent), Suzanne Katusin (NNPS Key Contact), Deidre K. Stokes-Davis, Patricia Milam, Alice Sloneker, and Cindy Mayle.

Middle and High School Report

NNPS Award-Winning Middle School Shares Its Expertise on Partnerships

The experience of a veteran can make a difference to a rookie trying to understand new concepts and skills. Madison Junior High School in Naperville, IL is a NNPS 2002 Partnership School Award winner and can provide a voice of experience to NNPS middle and high schools developing comprehensive partnership programs. Madison's former Action Team Chair, and current high school parent, Catherine Redford and Principal Erin Anderson talked with Kate Gerne, NNPS Middle and High School Facilitator about the school's excellent partnership program.

NNPS: What do you think makes this partnership program so successful?

Catherine Redford: The enthusiasm of the parents, the welcoming attitude of the teachers, the appreciation of what parents do, and the principal's openness all make a difference to the partnership program. Parents are encouraged to bring in ideas and put them into action, so it is truly a program of partnerships between school and home.

NNPS: What are the Action Team for Partnerships' greatest challenges?

Catherine Redford: It is a challenge to remain relevant and not just do the same things each year. Also, the team does not want to be seen as exclusive or a clique.

Erin Anderson: The biggest challenge is continuing to build the team's skills and the school's capacity to get more people involved. We have very supportive parents and community members. Yet many parents have trouble coming out to the school. We have incentives and try to increase the number of parents who attend many activities, but

it's going to take time to get the word out to increase parent participation.

NNPS: What advice would you give a new middle or high school just starting to design its partnership program?

Catherine Redford: Do your research. Find out what it actually means to have the six types of involvement in place. Set reasonable goals each year; conduct honest assessments of your family and community involvement activities that will really benefit students. Invite administrators and teachers to give their input. Make sure your Action Team is strong.

Erin Anderson: My advice would be to start small and do a few involvement activities really well. I keep reminding myself to be patient, because I can see that our program is growing better over time.

NNPS: Do you think any school, including those starting with just a few active parents, can build an excellent partnership program?

Catherine Redford: Yes, I do think it is possible. It only takes a few people to start a program and to build on it. There are some really good guidelines from NNPS in place, so a new school doesn't have to start from scratch.

Erin Anderson: Absolutely. I think that there are a lot of things that any school can do that don't have a high price tag to them. Start small; build the enthusiasm, which then becomes contagious; and acknowledge what you have—all schools can acknowledge the available resources and not worry about what they don't have.

Catherine Redford and Erin Anderson's comments provide useful information for all middle and high

school Action Teams for Partnerships. For example, use the research-based NNPS guidelines to build your program; set goals and plan activities that reach all families and all students; implement activities with the help of lots of families; and evaluate your partnership practices and program. Start small and build on your success to improve each year. As Catherine Redford says, "People like to join successful things!" Madison Junior High School's success can be every school's success.

NNPS Offers Site-Based Training Services

The National Network of Partnership Schools offers site-based training services to districts, states, and organizations. A skilled NNPS facilitator will conduct a one-day workshop at your site that prepares many school Action Teams for Partnerships to develop and sustain effective partnership programs. Customized presentations and other training services are also available. Contact the Network at nnps@csos.jhu.edu or (410) 516-8800 for more information and fees.

Q Are you receiving E-Brief—NNPS' monthly communication with all members?

A If not and you would like to, please e-mail nnps@csos.jhu.edu with your name and your school, district, state, or organization's name.

Research Briefs

Instructional Aides' Have Varied Relationships with Teachers and Parents

While some instructional aides have excellent relationships with the teachers they assist, others feel misunderstood and unappreciated. Are instructional aides colleagues of teachers, bridges to the school community, both, or neither? Research addressed this question by studying instructional aides' relationships with teachers and parents. The results suggest policies that would create stronger bonds among these partners in education.

Participants included instructional aides in five elementary schools in three Midwestern school districts. The sample consisted of sixteen females and one male, with ten African Americans and seven European Americans. When the initial interviews were conducted, the participants had worked as instructional aides from two and one-half years to twenty-four years.

Relationships with Teachers

Although this sample of instructional aides had generally positive relationships with the teachers, their experiences and histories suggested this is not always the case. Some instructional aides believed that their super-

vising teachers did not recognize the aides' talents and skills, and were not supervising well. The perceptions and experiences of the instructional aides reinforced the need for professional development to help teachers more knowledgeably and effectively supervise and work with instructional aides. This study points to the need for training to help teachers learn to listen to and respect aides' ideas and efforts, and to learn if, how, and when to offer aides new responsibilities to assist students and parents.

Relationships with Parents

The instructional aides in this study gave mixed messages about their relationships with students' parents and families. Some instructional aides had close relationships with parents and often served as babysitters for their students. Other instructional aides placed the blame for students' problems on their families. Aides rarely recognized the institutional factors that influenced students' academic success and made stereotypical comments about the negative impact of single parent households on the students. These instructional aides were concerned about their students,

but were not always able to cultivate positive attitudes about or relationships with the parents.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The results suggest the need to:

- Revise prior descriptions and expectations about instructional aides as cultural bridges or brokers.
- Revise the ways that teachers and instructional aides work together.
- Clarify the concept of "team" to maximize the effectiveness of the work that teachers, aides, and parents do together to help children succeed in school.
- Improve plans for practices to increase parental involvement in children's education.

The voices of instructional aides revealed topics and issues that could be addressed directly with thoughtful basic policies in schools and school districts.

From: Lewis, K.C. (2002). *Colleagues or cultural brokers? Instructional aides' relationships with teachers and parents*. Baltimore: Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR), Johns Hopkins University. (Submitted for publication)

Research Synthesis Shows Positive Impact of Partnerships on Achievement

The National Center for Family & Community Connections with Schools at the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) released a new report: *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement* (2002).

This research synthesis examines the impact of a variety of family and community connections with schools on student achievement.

Authors Anne T. Henderson and Karen L. Mapp reviewed more than 50 research studies published since 1995. Nine of the studies were conducted by NNPS researchers or others supported by the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University. The reviewers concluded that "the research continues to grow and build an ever-strengthening case. When schools, families, and community

groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more." The studies showed that students with involved parents, "no matter what their income or background," were more likely to succeed in school—attending school regularly, earning higher grades, passing their classes, and graduating and going on to post-secondary education.

(Continued on page 11)

Members Participate in Focus on Results: Language Arts and Reading for 2002-03

Over 70 schools volunteered to participate in Focus on Results for the 2002-03 school year. The NNPS study looks at whether school, family, and community partnership activities promote student achievement in language arts and reading. The following schools submitted baseline data and will provide end-of-year reports.

From **ALABAMA**: Maryvale Elementary, Mobil; **CALIFORNIA**: Stonehurst Ave. Elementary, Sun Valley; Bridgeport Elementary, Valencia; Henry P. Mohr Elementary, Pleasanton; **CONNECTICUT**: Scofield Magnet Middle, Stamford; **FLORIDA**: Deerfield Beach High, Deerfield Beach; Shadowlawn Elementary, Naples; **ILLINOIS**: Kennedy Junior High, Lisle; Washington Junior High, Naperville; **LOUISIANA**: Westdale Elementary, Baton Rouge; New Sarpy Kindergarten, Destrehan; **MARYLAND**: William Pinderhughes Elementary, Baltimore; Kennard Elementary, Centreville; Centreville Elementary, Centreville; Phelps Luck Elementary, Columbia; Dasher Green Elementary, Columbia; Swansfield Elementary, Columbia; Grasonville Elementary, Grasonville; Thurmont Middle, Thurmont; Swansfield Elementary, Columbia; **MICHIGAN**: Bennett Elementary, Detroit; **MINNESOTA**: North End Elementary, St. Paul; Washington Technology Magnet Middle, St. Paul; **MISSOURI**: West Boulevard Elementary, Columbia; Southwest Accelerated Elementary, Jefferson City; Hubble Elementary, Marshfield; Sappington Elementary, St. Louis; Marion Elementary, St. Louis; **NEW HAMPSHIRE**: Winchester Elementary, Winchester; **NEW YORK**: West Hertel Academy, Buffalo; Makowski Early Childhood Center, Buffalo; Early Childhood Center #78, Buffalo; Community School #77 E.C.C., Buffalo; Frederick Law Olmsted School, Buffalo; P.S. 152, New York; **OHIO**: Lincoln School, Bucyrus; Baxter Elementary, Canton; Madge Youtz Elementary, Canton; Colerain Middle, Cincinnati; Colerain High, Cincinnati; Cottonwood Elementary, Cincinnati; Schiel PSAE, Cincinnati; Louis Agassiz Elementary,

Cleveland; Fullerton Elementary, Cleveland; East Franklin Elementary, Columbus; East Elementary, Greenville; Centennial Elementary, Wapakoneta; **RHODE ISLAND**: Charles N. Forte Magnet Academy, Providence; **NORTH CAROLINA**: Woodhill Elementary, Gastonia; **SOUTH CAROLINA**: Delmae Heights Elementary, Florence; Whale Branch Elementary, Seabrook; **TEXAS**: Bullock Elementary, Garland; Harleton Elementary, Harleton; **WISCONSIN**: Castle Rock Elementary, Adams; Adams-Friendship Elementary, Adams; Roche-a-Cri Elementary, Arkdale; Caddie Woodlawn Elementary, Durand; Northwoods Elementary, Eau Claire; Pineland Grade School, Friendship; Grand Marsh Elementary, Grand Marsh; Oneida Community Education Center, Green Bay; Hurley K-12 School, Hurley; Columbus Elementary, Kenosha; Lac du Flambeau Public School, Lac du Flambeau; Franklin Elementary, LaCrosse; Ladysmith Elementary, Ladysmith; Even Start Family Literacy Program, Madison; Jefferson Elementary, Oshkosh; Thomas Jefferson Elementary, Wausau; Hawthorn Hills Elementary, Wausau; River Heights Elementary, Menomonie; Dr. Benjamin Carson Academy of Science, Milwaukee; Little Red School, Eau Claire; **CANADA**: Good Shepard School, Peace River, Alberta.

NNPS also thanks the districts, states, and organizations that helped encourage or coordinate school participation in Focus on Results for 2002-03.

DISTRICTS: Assumption Parish Schools, Napoleonville, LA; Lowell Area Schools, Lowell, MI; Providence School Department, Providence, RI; Holy Family Catholic Regional Division No. 37, Peace River, Alberta, Canada; **STATES**: Gary Greene, Illinois State Board of Education; Ann Bohman, Ohio Department of Education; Jane Grinde, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; **ORGANIZATIONS**: Kathy Spitzer, Muskingum Valley Education Service Center, Zanesville, OH; Heidi Wagner, Region 9 Education Service Center, Wichita Falls, TX.

Research on Partnerships

(Continued from page 10)

The report highlights the NNPS framework of six types of involvement and the different results these connections can have. It also discusses how schools can effectively connect with families from all backgrounds. Readers can also explore summaries of each of the 51 studies reviewed, for a deeper understanding of the research.

To order a print copy or to download the report, go to www.sedl.org/connections/resources. You may also call SEDL Publications at 1-800-476-6861 to order a print copy.

Handbook Helps Teams Plan and Evaluate

Chapter 9 of *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action, Second Edition* provides tools to help Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) plan, implement, and evaluate their work. All ATPs should schedule meetings this spring to evaluate the current school year's partnership program and to plan for the upcoming year.

If you need to purchase a copy of the new edition, contact Corwin Press at www.corwinpress.com or order@corwinpress.com.



Epstein, J. L., Sanders, M. G., Simon, B. S., Salinas, K. C., Jansorn, N. R., & Van Voorhis, F. L. (2002). *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action, Second Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.



Partnership Calendar

2003

- April 1:** Members will receive 2003 *UPDATE* in the mail. Due June 30 to renew Network membership for the 2003-04 school year.
- May 16:** Promising partnership practices from members due for the 2003 collection.
- June 30:** 2003 *UPDATE* must be returned to the National Network to renew membership for the 2003-04 school year. NNPS will waive annual membership fees for all members who return *UPDATE*.
- July 11:** Applications due for *Partnership School Awards, Partnership District Awards, Partnership State Awards, and Partnership Organization Awards* for the 2002-03 school year.
- August:** *Promising Partnership Practices—2003* mailed to all members.
- September:** Final data collection for Focus on Results 2002-03: Language Arts and Reading.
- October 16-17:** Leadership Development Conference in Baltimore for new school, district, state, and organization members who want initial training for the 2003-04 school year, and for experienced members on advanced topics for leadership program development.
- November:** Invitation to members to join the cross-site study, Focus on Results 2003-04: School, Family, and Community Partnerships to Improve Student Behavior and Discipline. Initial data collection.

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TIPS Interactive Homework Development at NNPS Continues With New Coordinators

Best of luck to Frances Van Voorhis, NNPS TIPS Coordinator, who recently moved with her husband to North Carolina. For several years, Frances worked with the National Network of Partnership Schools as an Associate Research Scientist and Coordinator of Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) interactive homework. As a result of her move, Frances will no longer serve as the NNPS TIPS Coordinator.

During her tenure, Frances contributed significantly to the research and development of TIPS interactive homework. She completed

her doctoral studies with research on the effects of TIPS-Science interactive homework. Frances' study found that parents of middle grades students dramatically increased their involvement with their children through TIPS-Science, and students increased their science report card grades. Frances also revised all of the prototype TIPS activities, produced them on an interactive CD, and improved the TIPS training materials for educators.

TIPS development at NNPS will be continued by Dr. Joyce L. Epstein and Karen Clark Salinas, original authors of the TIPS process,

with the assistance of other NNPS Facilitators. The next TIPS training workshop will be conducted at the fall NNPS Leadership Development Conference, October 16-17, 2003.

For more information on TIPS materials and program development, visit www.partnershipschools.org and click on Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS), or contact Karen at ksalinas@csos.jhu.edu or 410-516-8818.

We appreciate all of Frances' hard work for NNPS. We know she will make valuable contributions on her future projects.