

Our 10th Anniversary!

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, 2006 No. 20

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Emphasis on Sustainability of Programs Marks NNPS's 10th Anniversary Year

With its mission of “Working Together for Student Success,” the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins University is celebrating its 10th anniversary as an active professional development organization. After years of basic research and field studies, NNPS was established in 1996 to guide schools, districts, state departments of education, and organizations in using research-based approaches to strengthen school, family, and community partnership programs that contribute to student learning and development.

NNPS started with about 230 schools, 35 districts, and 7 states, and has grown to include nearly 1000 schools, over 125 school districts, 17 state departments of education, and more than 60 organizations. “It has been an exciting journey,” said Dr. Joyce Epstein, founder and director of NNPS. “In collaboration with members across the country, we have learned that family involvement need not be a matter of luck. Rather, programs can be well planned, involve all families, and focus on goals for student success.”

Focus on Sustainability

To mark its anniversary, NNPS has selected *sustainability* as a theme for the year. Sustainability refers to developing and maintaining excellent programs, ensuring successful transitions if leaders change, increasing outreach to involve all families, and continually improving practices to produce better results for students. NNPS studies indicate that sustainability presents one of the most difficult challenges for all school improve-

ment efforts, including school, family, and community partnerships.

The focus on sustainability will take several forms this year. NNPS charter states and districts that have sustained their programs since 1996 will be featured in the spring and fall issues of *Type 2* (see Issues and Insights on p. 2). Ideas from NNPS award winners will also be featured in various columns of *Type 2* and in monthly *e-Briefs* to all members. Work-

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Web Conferences Scheduled for Action Teams for Partnerships

NNPS will conduct “Writing Goal-Oriented Action Plans,” a web conference for school-based Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs), on March 15, 2006, from 2:00-3:30 p.m. EST. ATPs in the “Getting Started” phase of developing their partnership programs may register for the web conference. Topics will include: how to write a One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships for the 2006-07 school year, how to strengthen the ATP, and how to develop a more successful partnership program.

A **minimum of three ATP members** must attend the conference, such as the co-chairs and principal, or the chair, the principal, and a parent. NNPS recommends that the whole ATP attend, if possible. Registrants must have a phone line with a speaker phone and a computer with Internet access to view the PowerPoint presentation and participate in the conference.

Registration for the NNPS web conference is free on a first come, first served

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Issues and Insights

Joyce L. Epstein
Director

Interview: State Leaders Discuss How They Sustained Partnership Programs for 10+ Years

Just about every state has a policy or recommendations for improving programs of school, family, and community partnerships, but not every state has assigned a full-time (or equivalent) leader to become an expert, point-person, and resource for promoting the state's agenda and goals for partnerships. What happens if state leaders become experts on partnerships and are supported by the state superintendent and other colleagues for many years?

I interviewed key contacts from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (WI-DPI) and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CT-SDE)—two states that joined NNPS at its inception in 1996. Jane Grinde and Ruth Anne Landsverk, from WI-DPI, have worked together on partnerships since 1988 and guided NNPS on roles for state leaders as we developed the network. Judy Carson, from CT-SDE, is part of a long-standing leadership team that contributed its expertise to the *NNPS Handbook* and other NNPS activities. The leaders from both states raised issues and offered insights that should help other state leaders develop and improve their partnership programs.

NNPS: What has been most important in sustaining your office's leadership and programs of school, family, and community partnerships for the past 10 years?

WI-DPI: We have been fortunate to have three state superintendents over the years who have made family and community involvement one of their priorities for school improvement. Currently, State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster includes partnerships in her plan, the New Wisconsin Promise, which aims to close the achievement gap between diverse groups of students. She strongly believes that family and community involvement is part of the solution.

Teamwork is another sustaining factor. We are the Community Learning and Partnership Team in the Division for Libraries, Technology, and Community Learning, led by Assistant State Superintendent Richard Grobschmidt. We are supported, in part, by

Title V of No Child Left Behind (Promoting Informed Parental Choice and Innovative Programs), but some programs, conferences, publications, and other initiatives are funded by and conducted with teams in other divisions (e.g., Title I). This kind of "collaborative budgeting" has been a challenge, but helped us expand our agenda and increase understanding of school, family, and community partnerships in other divisions in DPI.

CT-SDE: Two commissioners and many internal and external partners have helped us sustain our work. In 1999, the state created the Bureau of Health and Nutrition Services and Child/Family/School Partnerships, which includes our program – School, Family, and Community Partnerships (S/F/C/P). There were ups and downs that reorganized, removed, and reinstated the Bureau over the years. Our current leaders, Commissioner Betty Sternberg, Associate Commissioner George Coleman, and Bureau Chief Charlene Russell-Tucker, truly understand the importance of partnerships and want to see even more progress statewide.

Our state leadership team tries to model a partnership approach. SDE works closely with the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), the State Education Resource Center (SERC), and United Way-CT Parents Plus—the state's Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC). Although finding time to meet is always a challenge, we manage to plan, provide awareness sessions on partnerships, and conduct training workshops for school teams and district leaders. As a team, we "retreat" at the end of the year to evaluate our work. We have worked together for so long that we have developed a shared expectation to maintain momentum and continually improve.

NNPS: What are some notable results of your work on partnerships?

WI-DPI: We have seen great changes in knowledge and attitudes about partnerships at the state, district, and school levels over the past ten years. Our state policy reflects the results of research and includes attention



WI-DPI Row 1: Shirley Moutry, Jane Grinde (NNPS Key Contact), Ruth Anne Landsverk (NNPS Key Contact). Row 2: John Philips, Marianne Erhardt, Teri Dary, Kari Nelson, Megan O'Connell, Stephanie Hogue, Cynthia DiCamelli, Steve Kretzmann, Jill Haglund, Mary Peters.



CT-SDE Judy Carson (NNPS Key Contact), Shelby Pons, Barbara Slone (NNPS Key Contact), Betsy LeBoriosis (NNPS Key Contact), Sally Young, Charlene Russell-Tucker, Sherbie Worthen, Pam Langer.

to the Six Types of Involvement. Our superintendent meets with the Parent Leadership Corps (PLC), guided by our office, for input on prospective policies and initiatives. The PLC developed an inservice workshop, "10 Things Parents Want School Staff to Know," to help teachers and principals understand parents' willingness to become involved in their children's education. Nearly all state task forces and committees now include parent representatives so that parents' voices are heard before decisions are made.

Many schools in Wisconsin have started to work on their partnership programs. One of the best indicators of change is when we run into principals implementing the NNPS model who tell us, "It works!" We are very proud, for example, of the two schools that won 2005 Partnership School Awards from NNPS for their own sustained partnership programs. Our office also produces publications, such as *Parent Guide* and *New Teachers Guide*, which reinforce NCLB requirements for family involvement at the school and district levels.

CT-SDE: Our state board's commitment to S/F/C/P has helped us develop our program. During the past 10 years, we have conducted awareness sessions for thousands of educators on school, family, and community partnerships. Well over 100 schools' Action Teams for Partnerships have attended training workshops to help them plan their programs. Our office has disseminated information on partnerships statewide. For example, *Schools & Families* newsletters are distributed to over 5000 educators across the state.

We are encouraged by the work we started last year, assisting a few pilot districts' leaders to guide their schools in developing partnership programs. We learn from evaluations of our work. Outside evaluators helped us assess the effectiveness of schools' Action Teams for Partnerships and are helping us monitor our current work with district leaders.

NNPS: Look ahead five years. What is your vision for your state's work on school, family, and community partnerships?

WI-DPI: We would like to see all districts help all schools become family-friendly places and use the common-sense concepts in the framework of the Six Types of Involvement to organize ATPs, write and implement plans, and link partnership practices to school improvement goals. All schools in Wisconsin have School Improvement Plans.

NNPS: Is that a realistic dream?

WI-DPI: If we stay on track, we should be able to reach this goal. Our state is at a crossroads. We need to close the achievement gap between students who are native English speakers and those whose families speak other languages at home, and between those from families with high and low incomes. District and school administrators are looking for ways to make everyone feel welcome at their schools. They need to know that there are research-based approaches that will help them engage families in ways that support student attendance, behavior, learning, and achievement.

CT-SDE: We would like to continue strengthening the infrastructure for partnership programs across the state. For example, the Groton School District, which is part of NNPS, recently added family and community involvement to their assessment model to gauge how schools are improving. That is an important direction for other districts and schools.

Some new collaborations in SDE will strengthen our agenda. With the School Improvement Office, we are reviewing parental involvement requirements of district improvement plans. This has generated discussions in SDE about the role of partnership programs in closing the achievement gap. Also, we are collaborating on a project to tie family literacy activities with the curriculum in kindergarten through second grade. Eventually, we envision a "scope and sequence" of partnership activities linked to the curriculum across all grades.

We would like to strengthen our budget for school, family, and community partnerships to provide incentives for districts to allocate staff who help all schools develop partnership programs. This would create a broad-based, state-wide program of partnerships. We also plan to examine the role of parent liaisons and find ways to help them become more productive members of school teams that work on partnerships. ♦

NOTE: You can meet these leaders and read about their award-winning programs on the NNPS website, www.partnershipschoools.org, in the section "In the Spotlight." Learn more about them on the websites for Wisconsin, <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/fsfcp/index.html>, and Connecticut, <http://www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/Family/SFCP/index.htm>

Meeting the Challenge

*Steven B. Sheldon
Director of Research*

Sustaining Your School's Partnership Program

Developing and maintaining a strong partnership program means working hard to implement targeted, well-designed involvement activities that engage and connect with a wide range of families. Sustaining these activities from one year to the next, however, can be difficult. Over its 10 years, NNPS research and interactions with members have revealed that factors such as changes in principals, changes in members of Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs), and changes in district personnel or priorities can all undermine efforts to create long-lasting programs of school, family, and community partnerships.

The annual NNPS awards for excellent partnership programs have shown that strong programs can develop and thrive in the midst of change. But in order for this to happen, schools must conduct and utilize evaluations of their program, and create organizational procedures to ensure that departing ATP members are replaced and new members are trained. The schools that received NNPS Partnership Awards in 2005 for their outstanding programs have demonstrated ways that you can carry out these tasks with your ATP.

Using Your Evaluations

Strong partnership programs use evaluation for more than accountability purposes. Evaluations of partnership programs and activities serve as important resources to help you improve and sustain your family and community involvement program.

Grant Elementary School in Wausau, Wis., for example, goes through its evaluations at the end of each school year to assess which practices worked, which did not, and how each could be improved in the upcoming school year. At **Webster Stanley Elementary School** in Oshkosh, Wis., the action team examines its parent surveys to help set goals in its One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships.

Even if your evaluation is only a headcount of parents at an event, it can help you improve your program over time. At

Orchard Hills School in Milford, Conn., the ATP found that a family involvement activity on literacy had the maximum number of people it could accommodate. As a result, the ATP decided to expand the activity from one to three times a year.

Transitioning Leaders

Establishing organizational procedures helps maintain a strong and stable ATP. **Roosevelt Elementary School** in St. Paul, Minn., asks its action team members to commit to serving on the committee for at least two years. This policy helps the ATP develop members with knowledge and expertise about the school's partnership program, and gives time to identify and train incoming team members. Similarly, **Highlands Elementary School** in Naperville, Ill., has a system where the ATP's chair-elect "shadows" the current chairperson for one year to learn about the duties and responsibilities of that position.

At **Roberts Elementary School** in Wayne, Pa., the ATP actively took part in hiring the school's new principal, ensuring that each candidate was asked about his or her philosophy on family and community involvement. Also, each year the ATP sends one or two members to the NNPS Leadership Development Conference for training. These individuals return to the school and train new ATP members, helping them understand and become comfortable with the NNPS approaches.

Moving Forward Despite Change

Inevitable and unforeseen changes can easily disrupt an ATP's progress. Programs that evaluate activities, assess what parents want and need from the school, and establish mechanisms to stabilize ATP leadership are most likely to improve and sustain their strong efforts. ♦

For more information on each of the 2005 NNPS award-winning school programs, visit www.partnership-schools.org and click on "In the Spotlight."

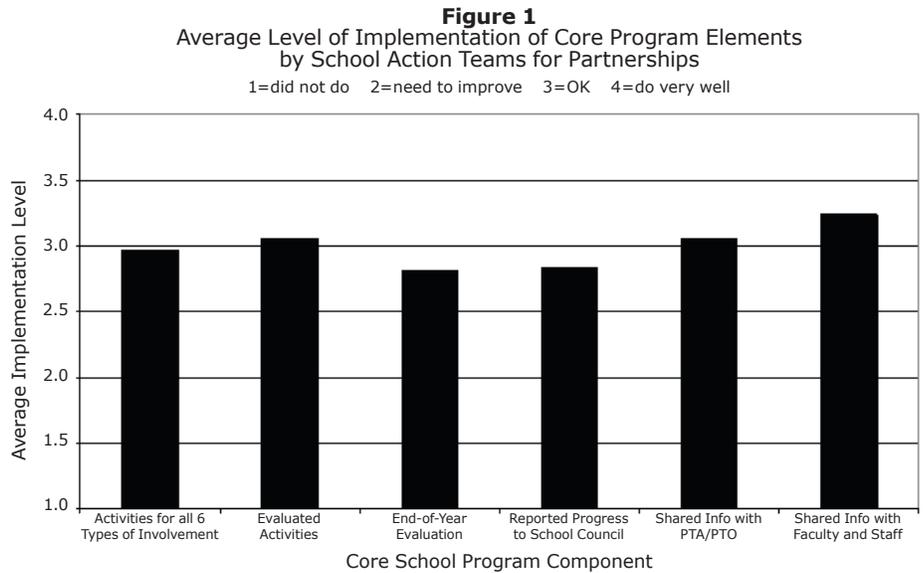
2005 UPDATE Data from Schools and Districts in NNPS Show Progress in Partnership Program Development

School and district data from 2005 UPDATE were summarized in two separate reports by NNPS researchers Kenyatta Williams, Steven Sheldon, and Joyce Epstein. These reports should enable members to compare their work and progress on partnerships with patterns of program development from schools and districts across the country.

School UPDATE Data

Over 550 schools from 34 states and Canada reported their progress in developing partnership programs. The schools varied by grade level, neighborhood, and racial/ethnic and socioeconomic composition of students served. For example, families in some schools spoke only English, whereas, in other schools, different families combined spoke 60 languages. The schools also varied in time working with NNPS, from a few months to nine years. The overall quality of school programs ranged from “just started” (15%) to “average” (20%), “good” (38%), “very good” (17%), and “excellent” (10%).

Results on 11 charts reported how schools implemented core program components and plans; organized the structure, membership, meetings, and funding of their Action Team for Partnerships (ATP); rated principal, district, teacher, and family support; and conducted activities to meet challenges to reach all families. The data indicated that most schools in NNPS were implementing many core components (see Figure 1). On average, elementary schools conducted more activities and reported more parental involvement than middle and high schools. However, many middle and high schools in NNPS were organizing teams, writing plans, and improving the involvement of students’ families.



The results also identified ways schools could improve their programs. Some ATPs need to meet more regularly. Others should organize subcommittees to conduct involvement activities linked to specific school goals. Still others must address key challenges to involve all families, such as getting information from meetings and workshops to parents who cannot attend.

District UPDATE Data

Seventy-eight districts reported on their leadership and programs of partnership. The districts, located in 25 states and 2 Canadian provinces, ranged in size from 1 school to over 200 schools. Leaders varied in responsibilities, hours for work on partnerships, and years in NNPS.

Results on 10 charts reported information on overall program quality (see Figure 2 on p. 8), district-level leadership activities, facilitation of schools’ ATPs, collegial support, attention to challenges to reach all families, efforts to meet NCLB requirements for parental involvement, adequacy of funding, schools’ progress, and uses of

NNPS program planning and evaluation tools and materials.

Most district leaders for partnerships in NNPS were implementing key program components. For example, 90% reviewed or developed their policy on partnerships; more than 75% visited with schools’ ATPs; and most said that their superintendents, principals, school boards, and PTA/PTOs strongly supported their work on partnerships. Also, most districts were working to meet NCLB requirements for parental involvement from Section 1118 and other sections of the law.

The data revealed how districts could improve their partnership programs. Some district leaders need to provide training and support to schools’ ATPs. Others need to help schools think of innovative and effective ways to meet challenges to reach families who do not speak English or face other constraints that limit involvement. Still other district leaders could develop more productive community involvement. Most leaders need to do more to evaluate district-level and school-level partnership programs.

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Our Growing Network

New Members in NNPS since September 2005

SCHOOLS (89 new members) ★ Antietam Academy (Hagerstown, MD) ★ Aycock Middle School (Greensboro, NC) ★ Benjamin Banneker Elementary (Lovesville, MD) ★ Bester Elementary School (Hagerstown, MD) ★ Bridgeton High School (Bridgeton, NJ) ★ Briggs Elementary School (Florence, SC) ★ Britton's Neck Elementary School (Gresham, SC) ★ Cascade Elementary (Cascade, MD) ★ Centerville Middle School (Centerville, MD) ★ Clear Spring Elementary (Clear Spring, MD) ★ Clear Spring Middle School (Clear Spring, MD) ★ Conococheague Elementary (Hagerstown, MD) ★ Creek Bridge High School (Marion, SC) ★ Darlington Middle School (Darlington, SC) ★ Davis Thomas Elementary Middle School (Thomas, WV) ★ Delmae Heights Elementary (Florence, SC) ★ E. Russell Hicks School (Hagerstown, MD) ★ East Middle School (Ponca City, OK) ★ Eastern Elementary School (Hagerstown, MD) ★ Emma K. Doub School For Integrated Arts and Technology (Hagerstown, MD) ★ English Estates Elementary (Fern Park, FL) ★ Forrest Career and Technology Center (Leonardtown, MD) ★ Fountain Rock Elementary School (Hagerstown, MD) ★ Fountaindale School for the Arts and Academics (Hagerstown, MD) ★ Greenbrier Elementary (Boonsboro, MD) ★ Greenview Knolls Elementary School (Great Mills, MD) ★ Greenwood Elementary School (Florence, SC) ★ Hairston Middle School (Greensboro, NC) ★ Hancock Elementary School (Hancock, MD) ★ Hancock Middle Senior High (Hancock, MD) ★ Hazel Goes Cook Elementary School (Chula Vista, CA) ★ Hickory Elementary School (Williamsport, MD) ★ Hollingsworth Elementary School (Las Vegas, NV) ★ Jackson Middle School (Greensboro, NC) ★ Kent Island Elementary School (Stevensville, MD) ★ Kent Island High School (Stevensville, MD) ★ Lincoln Elementary School (Ponca City, OK) ★ Lincolnshire Elementary School (Hagerstown, MD) ★ Maple Elementary School (Cambridge, MD) ★ Marquette Elementary School (Muskegon, MI) ★ Marshall Street/Job Development Program (Hagerstown, MD) ★ Maryvale Elementary School (Rockville, MD) ★ McCormick Elementary (Mullins, SC) ★ Meadowview Elementary School (Eau Claire, WI) ★ Mechanicsville Elementary School (Mechanicsville, MD) ★ Montgomery Blair High School (Silver Spring, MD) ★ Mullins High School (Mullins, SC) ★ Nevada Union High School (Grass Valley, CA) ★ New Lebanon School (Greenwich, CT) ★ North Hagerstown High School (Hagerstown, MD) ★ North Mullins Primary School (Mullins, SC) ★ Northern Middle School (Hagerstown, MD) ★ Northside High School (Warner Robins, GA) ★ Northside Middle School (Warner Robins, GA) ★ Old Forge Elementary School (Hagerstown, MD) ★ Palmetto Elementary/Middle School (Mullins, SC) ★ Pangborn Elementary School (Hagerstown, MD) ★ Paramount Elementary School (Hagerstown, MD) ★ Park Avenue Alternative Education Site (Grass Valley, CA) ★ Pate Elementary (Darlington, SC) ★ Phelan Elementary School (Phelan, CA) ★ Pleasant Valley Elementary (Knoxville, MD) ★ Potomac Heights Elementary School (Hagerstown, MD) ★ Rains Centenary Elementary (Mullins, SC) ★ Roosevelt Elementary (Ponca City, OK) ★ Salem Avenue Elementary School (Hagerstown, MD) ★ Savannah Grove Elementary School (Effingham, SC) ★ Sherman Elementary (Eau Claire, WI) ★ Smithsburg Elementary (Smithsburg, MD) ★ Southwest Baltimore Charter School (Baltimore, MD) ★ Spooner Elementary School (Spooner, WI) ★ Springfield Middle School (Williamsport, MD) ★ Sudlersville Middle School (Sudlersville, MD) ★ The Alternative Academy for Success (Chapin, SC) ★ The Empowerment Academy (Baltimore, MD) ★ Trout Elementary (Ponca City, OK) ★ Tucker County High School (Hambleton, WV) ★ Tucker Valley Elementary Middle School (Hambleton, WV) ★ Union Elementary (Ponca City, OK) ★ Viers Mill Elementary School (Silver Spring, MD) ★ Washington Elementary (Ponca City, OK) ★ Washington Gardner Middle School (Albion, MI) ★ Wenonah Elementary (Waynesboro, VA) ★ Wenzel Elementary (Sturgis, MI) ★ West Middle School (Ponca City, OK) ★ William Penn-Alfred J. Griffin School for the Arts (High Point, NC) ★ Williamsport Elementary School (Williamsport, MD) ★ Williamsport High School (Williamsport, MD) ★ Winter Street Elementary (Hagerstown, MD) ★

DISTRICT (14 new members) ★ Chicago Public Schools (Chicago, IL) ★ Chino Valley Unified School District (Chino, CA) ★ Houston County Schools (Perry, GA) ★ LAUSD-District 8 (Gardena, CA) ★ Nevada Joint Union High School District (Grass Valley, CA) ★ Pajaro Valley Unified School District (Watsonville, CA) ★ Pasadena Unified School District (Pasadena, CA) ★ Pinconning Area Schools (Pinconning, MI) ★ Public Schools of the City of Muskegon (Muskegon, MI) ★ Tinton Falls School District (Tinton Falls, NJ) ★ Tucker County Schools (Parsons, WV) ★ Washington County Public Schools (Hagerstown, MD) ★ Waukegan School District 60 (Waukegan, IL) ★ Western Heights Independent School District (Oklahoma City, OK) ★

ORGANIZATION/UNIVERSITY PARTNERS (3 new members) ★ Center For The Improvement of Child Caring (Studio City, CA) ★ Francis Marion University Center of Excellence to Prepare Teachers of Children of Poverty (Florence, SC) ★ Hamilton County Family & Children First (Cincinnati, OH) ★

STATES (2 new members) ★ Idaho State Department of Education (Boise, ID) ★ New Jersey State Department of Education (Trenton, NJ) ★

Current Active Membership in the National Network of Partnership Schools as of January 18, 2006

Schools: 934 Districts: 126 States: 17 Organizations: 63

Leadership Line

District Support Increases the Effectiveness of Volunteer Programs

Volunteers can add that extra ingredient to spice up a partnership program while positively impacting student achievement. In order to ensure that volunteer programs have desired effects, schools often need guidance and support. Districts are in a unique position to provide leadership to facilitate excellent volunteer programs.

Make It a Priority

The leaders of **Anoka-Hennepin Independent School District 11** in Minnesota have made family and community involvement a district priority with the support of Superintendent Roger Giroux. The Parent Involvement Team includes Parent Involvement Coordinator Linda Rogers, Volunteer Services Supervisor Sue Archbold, and their staff.

Create Opportunities

One successful practice in this district, the Kindergarten Data Collection by Volunteers Project, trained parents and others from the community to record the reading levels of

2,800 kindergarteners. This activity provided important data on students' phonemic awareness and letter identification and saved teachers valuable class time. A graduate student from the University of Minnesota aided the project, providing objective analysis and quality control. In another reading-related activity, Volunteer Services is training volunteers to facilitate Literature Circles (book clubs) to increase students' critical thinking skills.

Anoka-Hennepin offers a wide variety of volunteer opportunities for parents, grandparents, and members of the community, knowing that volunteers are an important asset to the school district. For the 2004-05 school year, parents and community members contributed over 177,245 volunteer hours in 43 schools. According to Independent Sector's value of volunteer hours in 2005, Anoka-Henne-

"Anoka-Hennepin adults volunteer in public education out of their own graciousness to support their children and their neighbors' children. Every school opens its doors to this resource through the Volunteer Services program."

pin's volunteers contributed over \$3 million to the schools and district.

Provide Resources

The Anoka-Hennepin parent involvement website supplies resources for volunteers and other information on developing a good partnership program. The district leaders developed a volunteer handbook to provide volunteers with general guidelines and procedures. Visit <http://www.anoka.k12.mn.us/volunteeropportunities> and click on "District Volunteer Handbook" to view it.

Many districts and schools throughout NNPS are designing and implementing excellent volunteer programs and realizing the benefits of these services. The dual focus of district leadership and facilitation can make volunteer programs linked to student success a well-established school improve-

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Workshop to Increase Partnerships with Families in the Military

NNPS conducted a new workshop, "Ensuring Successful Transitions for Highly Mobile Students and Families," with district leaders and school teams in the **Davis County School District** in Utah (which serves families from the Hillside Air Force Base) and the **Virginia Beach City Public Schools** (which serves families from the Navy's Oceana, Norfolk, and other bases). The workshop, part of the Technical Assistance component of the Military Child Initiative (MCI) project at NNPS, is designed to help schools' Action Teams for

Partnerships (ATPs) welcome highly mobile families and involve them in ways that contribute to student success.

Developed by Cecelia Martin and presented by Darcy Hutchins, the 2½ hour workshop aimed to help ATPs understand the challenges of military and mobile families and students, and use the framework of Six Types of Involvement to include all families in their children's education. The ATPs that already had One-Year Action Plans for Partnerships were guided to add activities to ease the transitions of mobile students

and families. In Utah, new ATPs that just joined NNPS received a full-day team training workshop, with attention to welcoming mobile families as part of their partnership programs.

Other districts in NNPS that have schools serving large numbers of children from military families or other mobile populations may request full team training or advanced workshops on improving family involvement at times of transitions. For more information, contact NNPS facilitators at (410) 516-8800 or cmartin@csos.jbu.edu. ♦

2006 UPDATE Coming Soon

The 2006 UPDATE survey will be mailed in April to members who joined NNPS by the end of 2005. UPDATE, designed to help members review their programs and assess progress, is due June 30.

NNPS will pay the renewal fee for all members who return UPDATE.

Members also will receive:

- Promising Partnership Practices 2006
- Summaries of 2006 UPDATE data
- Ongoing benefits and services from NNPS

UPDATEs returned by June 30 will be entered in the UPDATE Lottery. School, district, state, and organization winners will be drawn at random and presented one free registration to an NNPS Leadership Development Conference or Institute (a \$200 value). It PAYS to return UPDATE!

Sustainability

(Continued from page 1)

shops on maintaining high-quality programs will be offered at the NNPS Leadership Development Conference in October. Basic training will be provided in periodic web conferences to help new schools and districts organize their plans for partnerships. Advanced workshops, currently conducted at the annual conference, will also be options for on-site training for districts and schools that have mastered the basics of the NNPS model.

Looking Ahead

State and district policies on family and community involvement and specific requirements in No Child Left Behind make it more important than ever to organize research-based partnership programs linked to student achievement and success. Epstein noted, "NNPS is looking forward to the next five years of providing professional development that will assist states, districts, schools, and organizations to strengthen their expertise, leadership, and sustainable programs of school, family, and community partnerships." ♦

Web Conference for School Action Teams for Partnerships

(Continued from page 1)

basis. School members may register at <http://www.uwex.edu/ics/whwreg/whwwelcome.cfm>. Look for "National Network of Partnership Schools" and March 15, 2006. Then, set up an account and choose a login name and password.

The NNPS web conference will be archived for two weeks after the session with the complete audio and visual content, and a CD of the conference will be available. Information on how to access the archive and obtain the CD will be provided in *e-Brief* following the conference. For more information contact Darcy Hutchins at (410) 516-8893 or dhutchins@csos.jbu.edu.

Web Conference in November Helped District Leaders

A group of NNPS district, organization, and state members from California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, and Washington met online with NNPS Facilitators for the first free 90-minute web conference on district leadership and facilitation. Participants discussed how district leaders could organize their work and directly assist schools in developing more effective partnership programs. "This was such an amazing use of technology," said one participant. Another commented, "... It was fascinating to hear from people all over the country." ♦

2005 UPDATE Reports from Districts and Schools

(Continued from page 5)

In addition to the school and district reports that were sent to all NNPS members, districts with eight or more schools in NNPS that returned the 2005 School UPDATE survey also received a customized summary of data from their own schools to compare with the patterns from schools across the country. The reports, a new service to members of NNPS, should help them evaluate and

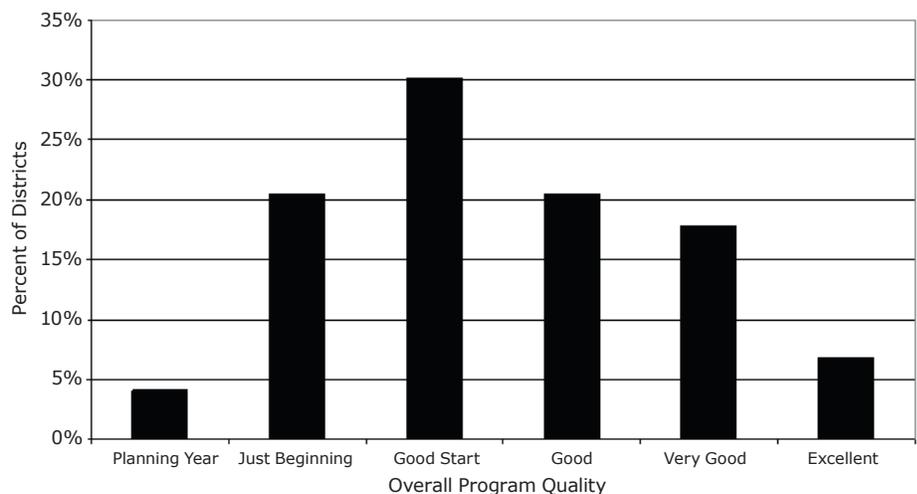
continually improve family and community involvement. ♦

From:

Williams, K. J., Epstein, J. L., & Sheldon, S. B. (2005). Summary: 2005 UPDATE data from districts in NNPS. Baltimore: National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University.

Williams, K. J., Sheldon, S. B., & Epstein, J. L. (2005). Summary: 2005 UPDATE data from schools in NNPS. Baltimore: National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University.

Figure 2
District Program Quality Ratings
% Leaders for Partnerships Reporting Overall Quality of Program



Research Brief

Latino Students Take Different Paths in Learning Math from Kindergarten to Grade 3

The U.S. is experiencing rapid growth of its Hispanic population, with an overrepresentation of families living in poverty. Many Hispanic students are at a high risk of failure in school, with skills that often lag behind those of other racial and ethnic groups. These problematic gaps in learning have been associated with later social and economic inequalities.

Dr. Claudia Galindo, a postdoctoral research scientist with NNPS, used a national database (Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten or ECLS-K) to study Hispanic students' math learning between kindergarten and third grade. Her study explored math achievement differences among Hispanic subgroups with family backgrounds from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, South America, and Central America. She analyzed the effects of socioeconomic status (SES) and English language ability on math learning for 11,623 students, including 2,321 Latino students.

Patterns of Math Learning

Galindo found that Hispanic students entered kindergarten with lower math skills than did White and Black students. Patterns of math learning between kindergarten and third grade clustered in two groups. One group of students, whose families came from Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Central America, began kindergarten with significantly lower math scores than White students and their math disadvantages persisted through third grade. A second group, with Cuban and South American backgrounds, was more similar to White students in math learning over time.

Influence of SES and English Ability

English language ability and SES were strongly related to Hispanic students' math learning. Students with better English skills and higher SES had better math skills than did students who did not possess these qualities. English ability had a greater effect on math learning than did SES for some Hispanic groups of students. SES had a strong effect in the early grades but became less important by grade 3.

Implications for Partnerships

Galindo's study has important implications for programs of school, family, and community partnerships. First, using a national sample, the study identified Hispanic groups who are particularly at risk of failure in school and who would benefit from immediate and responsive attention to math learning. Second, it suggests that schools that serve Hispanic students should communicate and work with parents to better understand the challenges students face in learning math and to guide parents in how to support and encourage math learning. Third, the results suggest that well-planned, math-related family and community involvement activities, along with excellent math teaching, may help reduce the expected relationship of SES and math achievement, particularly if the interventions and activities take into consideration the diversity of Hispanic groups. ♦

From: Galindo, C. L. (2005). *Latino students' math learning trajectories in the early school years: The role of English ability and socioeconomic status*. Doctoral Dissertation. Pennsylvania State University, State College.

Available online at: <http://etda.libraries.psu.edu/theses/approved/WorldWideIndex/ETD-1143/index.html>

Sustainable Programs

81

Percentage of schools' Action Teams for Partnerships that wrote (or were writing) their NEXT One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships BEFORE the end of the school year

From: 2005 School UPDATE

District Volunteer Programs

(Continued from page 7)

ment strategy. Assistant to the Superintendent Dennis Carlson describes the volunteer program as "a wonderful example of community partnership!" He noted that, "Anoka-Hennepin adults volunteer in public education out of their own graciousness to support their children and their neighbors' children. Every school opens its doors to this resource through the Volunteer Services program." This commitment and focus is one of many actions that made Anoka-Hennepin a 2005 Partnership District Award winner with special recognition for exceptional quality and sustained progress. ♦

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Middle and High School Report

Family Involvement Provides Academic Support for Students in Middle Grades

The middle grades present students with increasing academic challenges. At the same time, students receive less outside help at home. As their schoolwork increases in difficulty, studies show that it often proves too challenging for their parents and others who might have provided assistance in the past.¹

Each year, the overwhelming majority of academic activities in the NNPS collection of *Promising Partnership Practices* involve the elementary grades only. But some middle grade schools have taken extra steps to ensure that students receive outside help and parents are guided to support their children's academic activities.

Book Clubs

At the **Pfc. William J. Grabiarz School of Excellence** in Buffalo, N.Y., sixth-grade students read five or six books each year through small book clubs, where they meet to discuss a book that one of the students in their club has chosen. As the students progress through the books, they discuss what they are reading with their families, and write chapter summaries, which a parent must sign. The book clubs culminate with the Annual Book Buffet, where students, families, and friends gather at the school for a pot-luck dinner. Before the meal, students use displays, costumes, props, and book excerpts to present what they have read to everyone.

Science Exhibits

Fifth- and sixth-grade students at the **Museum Magnet School** in St. Paul, Minn., have two important opportunities each year to bring their families into the school and share what they are learning. At Family and Exhibit Nights, students host a series of exhibits with learning stations, generally related to science, but sometimes on topics such as poetry. At the learning stations, parents ask "key knowledge" questions written by the teachers, along with their own, to better understand what and how their children have learned from their projects, and how the school's curriculum is designed. The students, meanwhile, better appreciate the meaning of the work they have done.

Extra Help

SPARK PLUG (Support Parents And Reach Kids: Play, Learn, Unite, Grow) provides at-risk students at **Park Junior High School** in LaGrange Park, Ill., with an opportunity for after-school tutoring, followed by dinner and basketball with their mentors and parents. Once each month, community members, local police officers, and a few teachers meet one-on-one with 25 students for an hour and a half in the school library to help them with homework. This is followed by a game of basketball. Afterwards, families have the opportunity to meet their children's mentors when they all eat together at a community-partner-sponsored dinner. Parents and students attend workshops together after the meal.

Because of the increasing difficulty of homework, parents often find themselves unable to help their students with assignments effectively once they reach the middle grades. The students, meanwhile, must struggle alone with the increased workload. By running workshops to help parents understand

(Continued on page 12)

For 2006:

\$10,000 in Partnership Awards

Celebrate NNPS's 10th Year and
Your Program's Progress

Schools, districts, states, and organizations in NNPS for two years or more that meet NNPS expectations for high-quality, research-based programs should apply for a 2006 NNPS Partnership Award.

- ALL award winners receive one free registration to an NNPS Conference or District Leadership Institute (\$200 value).
- Up to 10 winners receive a \$500 prize for their partnership programs.

2006 ONLY

Up to 10 MORE winners may receive a \$500 cash prize to celebrate NNPS's 10th Anniversary Year.

Award winners in 2005 may earn the ANNIVERSARY PRIZES to celebrate our 10th year!

Award applications will be mailed to eligible members by the end of February and will be available on the NNPS website.

Deadline for award applications is June 30, 2006.

Elementary School Report

Family Nights Make Learning Fun

Looking for ways to boost students' excitement about learning, involve more parents in their children's education, and engage community partners to support school goals? Many elementary schools conduct Family Nights to address these aims, inviting students and their parents into the school for an evening with the teachers. Family Nights may focus on reading, math, science, character development, or other school improvement goals. Parents and children may participate in hands-on learning activities, learn strategies for success in school, and interact with teachers, other parents, and students. Many schools in NNPS conduct successful Family Nights and have reported several key features.

Publicize

Well-publicized events typically draw high attendance. **Leaphart Elementary School** in Columbia, S.C., publicized its Family Literacy Night through fliers, notes, weekly newsletters, the school's marquee, the school's news program, and the principal's daily announcements. Other schools have systematically telephoned parents to remind them of the event, sent out e-mails, and posted information about the Family Night on the school's website.

Provide Dinner

Whether it's breakfast for dinner, pizza, or spaghetti cooked by the PTO, if you supply food, they will come. **Southside Elementary School** in Buffalo, N.Y., held a Dictionary Dinner. Third- and fourth-grade students who attended with their families received a new *Merriam-Webster Illustrated Garfield Dictionary* and instructions from the school librarian on how to use it properly. This presentation was preceded by a hearty chicken dinner, prepared at cost by an alumnus of the school.

Other schools have had businesses donate or discount food as an incentive to attend an event.

Make it Active

Regardless of the subject and content, Family Nights should always be active. When **Roosevelt Elementary School** in St. Paul, Minn., conducted the "Oops—Turn Me Off!" Science Family Night, the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) transformed the cafeteria into a science lab with seven stations for parents and students to work on experiments. The event enlightened families about conserving energy. By providing hands-on activities, schools create richer learning experiences and encourage more students and parents to attend.

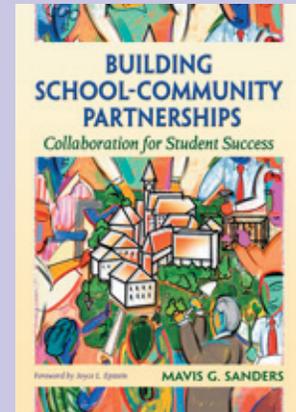
Collaborate

Successful Family Nights typically are planned by several partners in education. The ATP, PTA, math content coach, teachers, administrators, and community members got together to plan Family Math Night at **Glen Haven Elementary School** in Silver Spring, Md. The Montgomery County Credit Union set up a table with banking information for parents, and other local businesses supplied door prizes and refreshments. Community members served as translators for families whose native languages were Spanish, French, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Creole. By reaching out to other partners, the ATP-sponsored Family Night boasted an audience of 250 students and family members.

Evaluate

A key element of a successful Family Night, evaluation may be completed in a number of ways. Glen Haven Elementary asked participants to complete "Exit Cards" to share reactions and suggestions. Leaphart Elementary School videotaped parents' comments

New Book by NNPS Researcher on School-Community Collaborations



Mavis Sanders, senior adviser to NNPS and researcher with the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships, has authored a new book, *Building School-Community Partnerships: Collaboration for Student Success*, published by Corwin Press.

See a summary at <http://www.corwinpress.com/author.aspx?aid=504232>

as they left the Family Literacy Night. By assessing outreach and results, an ATP can learn how to improve any activity.

Family Nights provide a fun way to bring families and children together to learn about different subjects. Because of their versatility, Family Nights can be planned for any goal (academic, behavioral, or climate) in your next One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships, for the 2006-07 school year. For more ideas, explore the various Family Nights in the annual collections of *Promising Partnership Practices* on the NNPS website, www.partnershipschools.org in the section "In the Spotlight." ♦

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Academic Support

(Continued from page 10)

the curriculum and by finding creative ways to engage parents in their children's academics in the middle grades, these schools have increased parents' attention to the school curriculum and students' ability to succeed in class.

For more information about these promising practices, visit www.partnershipschools.org, click on "In the Spotlight," and choose the 2005 collection of *Promising Partnership Practices*. ♦

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References

¹ Epstein, J. L. (2005). School, family, and community partnerships in the middle grades. Pp. 77-96 in T. O. Erb, (ed.), *This we believe in action: Implementing successful middle level schools*. Westerville, OH: National Middle School Association.

Partnership Calendar

2006

- February:** Invitation to school, district, organization, and state members to apply for the *NNPS Partnership Awards* for the 2005-06 school year for excellence in programs of partnership.
- March:** Invitation to NNPS members to contribute to *Promising Partnership Practices 2006*.
- March 15:** "Writing Goal-Oriented Action Plans" web conference for school ATPs in the "Getting Started" phase of their partnership programs
- April 1:** Members will receive 2006 *UPDATE* in the mail. Due June 30 to renew NNPS membership for the 2006-07 school year.
- May 8:** Promising partnership practices due for the 2006 collection.
- June 7-8:** District Leadership Institute in Baltimore for district leaders in the start-up phase of program development. The Institute prepares leaders to provide direct assistance to schools' Action Teams and to establish a district-wide partnership network.
- June 30:** 2006 *UPDATE* due to NNPS to renew membership for the 2006-07 school year. NNPS will waive annual membership fees for all members who return *UPDATE*. Members who return *UPDATE* by the deadline will be entered into a raffle for a free registration to an NNPS conference.
- June 30:** Applications due for *Partnership School Awards*, *Partnership District Awards*, *Partnership Organization Awards*, and *Partnership State Awards* for the 2005-06 school year.
- October 5-6:** Leadership Development Conference in Baltimore for school, district, state, and organization leaders who are organizing partnership programs in the 2006-07 school year, and for experienced members on advanced topics for partnerships.

New Editor Joins NNPS Staff

NNPS welcomes Joseph Brownstein as editorial coordinator. Joseph is the new editor of *Type 2* and will co-author and co-edit the annual collection of *Promising Partnership Practices*. He also assists NNPS by designing, writing, and guiding various brochures and communications, and is leading the redesign and development of the NNPS website.

At the end of the year, we recognized the excellent contributions

of former NNPS Communications Director Karen Clark Salinas. Karen served as editor of *Type 2* and *Promising Partnership Practices*, and played important roles in establishing and improving NNPS for many years. We wish her the best of luck in her new position at Johns Hopkins University. ♦