

# 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, 2007 No. 22

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## NNPS Designs New Applications for 2007 Partnership Awards

NNPS announces new applications for its annual Partnership Awards, starting in 2007. The applications for schools, districts, states, and organizations continue to be research-based and require evidence of outstanding practice, but the format is friendlier so that more qualified programs may apply.

"In the past," explained Dr. Joyce Epstein, Director, "NNPS recognized a few excellent programs each year,<sup>1</sup> but there are many more that deserve national attention. Interviews with members revealed that some were pressed for time at the end of the school year, and were unable to meet the awards deadline because of the length of the application. The new applications aim for a better balance between NNPS's interest in good evidence and the time members need to participate."

The new award applications are linked to the questionnaires for the annual collection of *Promising Partnership Practices*. All NNPS members may submit their best practices for review for publication. By contrast, only members who worked with NNPS for *two years* or more may apply for a Partnership Award. Under the new system, applicants for awards will supplement their submission for *Promising Partnership Practices* by adding targeted information on their full programs of school, family, and community partnerships.

**SCHOOL AWARDS.** At the school level, applicants will describe and demonstrate how they are using NNPS approaches to meet important challenges to

involve more families and to produce positive results for student success in school.

**DISTRICT AWARDS.** At the district level, applicants will describe

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### New Reports Summarize 2006 *UPDATE* Data

Members of NNPS received two reports summarizing the 2006 *UPDATE* data collected from all schools and districts in the Network. In addition, 22 districts with 8 or more schools that returned *UPDATE* data received a customized summary of their own schools' data. The reports by Kenyatta Williams, Steve Sheldon, and Joyce Epstein show how districts and schools in NNPS are investing time in improving their partnership programs.

Members are encouraged to examine the graphs and compare their work with the actions of schools and districts across the country. By "benchmarking" their progress in this way, district leaders and schools' Action Teams for Partnerships should be able to: (1) plan mid-course changes to improve this year's plans and partnership practices; and (2) reflect on new and needed directions for their next One-Year Action Plans for the '07-'08 school year.

For more about *UPDATE*, see Meeting the Challenge, p. 4 and Research Brief, p. 3. Download copies of the new reports from [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org), in the section Research and Evaluations. ♦

Joyce L. Epstein  
Director

## Parent Liaisons: What IS Their Role in Developing Partnership Programs

NNPS receives many questions about the role of “parent liaisons” in developing comprehensive programs family and community involvement. Some districts and schools hire parent liaisons (also titled parent coordinators, facilitators, parent leaders, family liaisons) to work in the “old way” – assigning them all activities that involve parents. Some serve as “ombudsmen” to address parents’ concerns and complaints. Often, parent liaisons are expected to work alone.

It is clear that parent liaison positions need updating. What are the new directions?

### Emphasize Teamwork

Research and exemplary practice reveal that one person cannot conduct all of the involvement activities that contribute to student success in school. Teachers, too, must connect with families on students’ report card grades, homework completion, test scores, and other links to learning. An Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) of teachers, parents, administrators, community partners, and the parent liaison is needed to plan, implement, evaluate, and sustain a school-based program of family and community involvement.

### Connect to School Improvement Plans

How can districts and schools change the role of parent liaisons for the better?

1. **Include parent liaisons on the Action Team for Partnerships.** In NNPS, more than one hundred schools list parent liaisons as the Chair or Co-Chair of the ATP. Hundreds more include parent liaisons as active team members. Schools that have parent liaisons should include that position on their ATPs for the ’07-’08 school year.

2. **Enable parent liaisons to share leadership for partnership activities.** Parent liaisons in NNPS have conducted book fairs, father-to-father workshops, parent centers, grandparent gatherings, celebrations for volunteers, family nights, workshops on many topics, and other activities in their schools’ written plans for partnerships.<sup>1</sup> Bilingual liaisons are actively translating materials

and serving as interpreters for parents who do not speak English. Whether leading or assisting, parent liaisons should work with others on the ATP on activities for all six types of involvement.

3. **Utilize parent liaisons’ special talents.** Parent liaisons often are hired from the local community to increase their success in relating to parents at the school. On the ATP, they may take the lead for communicating with parents who have special needs, including parents of children with disabilities, homeless families, and English Language Learners. As one example, in Howard County, Maryland, liaisons in Title I schools are on the ATP, trained by the district leader, and responsible for communicating with a number of “focal families” of students who are at risk of failing in school.

4. **Provide appropriate and on-going training.** Districts and schools must start with clear job descriptions for parent liaisons that stress the importance of teamwork at the school. Training must be provided to prepare parent liaisons to work well with teachers, communicate with distressed families, and work as active members of the ATP.<sup>2</sup> They should, of course, attend the full One-Day Team Training workshop for ATPs and help write the One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships. In addition, supervisors and teachers need training in how to work effectively with parent liaisons.

These new directions would justify the dollars invested in parent liaisons’ positions, make better use of their time and talents, and improve the quality of partnerships in a school.◆

<sup>1</sup> See the varied roles of parent liaisons in many activities in NNPS’s annual collections of *Promising Partnership Practices* at [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org) in the section Success Stories.

<sup>2</sup> The California Parent Center, an NNPS partner, offers a certificate program for parent liaisons with training in research-based and goal-linked partnerships. See <http://parent.sdsu.edu/certification/default.pdf>.

# Research Brief

## Summaries of 2006 UPDATE Data Provided to Districts and Schools

How are schools and districts in NNPS developing their partnership programs? Two reports on 2006 UPDATE data were sent to all members of NNPS in January. This summary presents a few results.

### School UPDATE Data

Over 650 schools from 36 states and Canada reported on their progress on partnerships in the '05-'06 school year. The elementary, middle, and high schools were located in urban, suburban, and rural neighborhoods and served families that were racially, ethnically, linguistically, and economically diverse. The schools were at different points of program development, from planning or just beginning their programs (15%), to having average (24%), good (35%), very good (19%), and excellent programs (7%). Elementary schools tended to report higher quality programs. No high schools reported having an excellent program yet, though many are working toward that goal.

Thirteen graphs show how schools are implementing NNPS's research-based components. Most schools organized action teams (81%) and wrote annual plans (79%). Fewer identified their budget for partnerships (60%), and still fewer (45%) had monthly team meetings, as recommended.

### Principals' Support

Although school principals are members of just about all Action Teams for Partnerships, they varied in how actively they supported partnerships. **Figure 1** shows that elementary school principals were more actively engaged in encouraging educators, families, and the community to participate as partners. At all school levels, principals were least active in allocating funds for partnership activities.

The data revealed that there is

room for improvement in schools' actions on family and community involvement to meet NNPS expectations for excellent programs. For example, rather than working only as one large team, many ATPs could accomplish more by organizing committees to oversee activities on each page of the One Year Action Plan. More ATPs need to have regularly scheduled monthly team meetings and conduct end-of-year evaluations. Middle and high schools, especially, need to improve outreach to involve fathers in their children's education. More ATPs at all school levels must address the challenge of getting information from school meetings and workshops to families who cannot attend.

### District UPDATE Data

Leaders for partnerships in 94 school districts in 28 states and 2 Canadian provinces reported on their work and progress in the '05-'06 school year. The districts varied in size from one school to over 250, and leaders were at different stages of program development. About 25% of the district

leaders reported being in a planning year or just beginning; 54% had a good start or good program; and 21% reported a very good or excellent program, overall.

### District Responsibilities

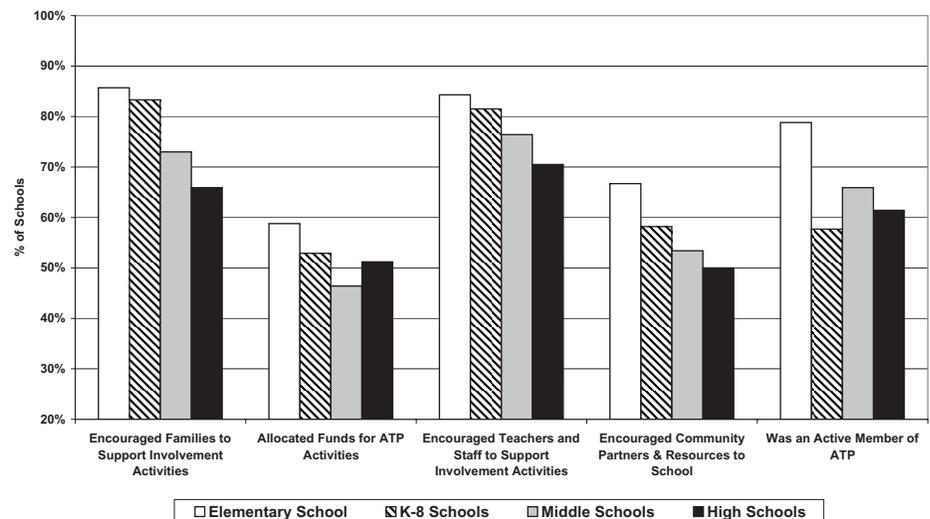
In NNPS, district leaders are expected to conduct district-level leadership and directly assist individual schools in developing their partnership programs. Nine graphs show how districts are progressing on these responsibilities, along with levels of collegial support, adequacy of funding for partnerships, and other indicators.

*Leadership.* In 2006, most districts conducted basic leadership tasks to review policy (86%), share best practices across schools (77%), and conduct training workshops (64%). The data show that more district leaders need to write their own leadership plans outlining their work for the year.

*Facilitation.* Many district leaders were helping schools translate materials for parents into diverse languages (61%) and find community partners (70%). **Figure 2** arrays other actions

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Figure 1  
ATP Reports of "A Lot" of Support from Principals of Partnerships in 2006, by School Level



N= 652 Schools  
Source: 2006 UPDATE Survey

# Meeting the Challenge

Steven B. Sheldon  
Director of Research

## Tackling the Challenge of Evaluation

Developing and maintaining a strong partnership program is an important goal and on-going challenge for all members of NNPS. Studies show that schools with strong programs of school, family, and community partnerships have more parental involvement, higher levels of student achievement, and better student behavior and attendance.<sup>1</sup> Studies also indicate that when action teams evaluate their partnership activities, schools are more likely to improve the overall quality of their partnership program.<sup>2</sup> Many Action Teams for Partnerships, however, are not sure how to evaluate their partnership programs and what tools are available to help them.

### Evaluate to Improve, Not Pass Judgment

The process of evaluation is essential for gaining insight into a program's strengths and weaknesses, and for planning improvements. Evaluating a program and activities does not mean passing judgment about whether the program is good or bad. Rather, the purposes of useful evaluations are to clarify program goals, show whether and how implemented activities are helping to realize the stated goals, and suggest improvements. This information is essential for developing stronger, more effective partnership programs.

### Identify Evaluation Tools

**Use *UPDATE*.** To help Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) conduct meaningful and feasible program evaluations, NNPS provides several tools for schools and school districts. One of these is the annual *UPDATE* survey, which is mailed by NNPS to all members every spring. *UPDATE* gives ATPs the chance to reflect on the quality of key elements of program development and the involvement activities that were implemented during the school year. Members of the ATP are encouraged to meet to discuss how well the partnership program was organized, implemented, and supported by the entire school community. Open-ended questions ask the team to reflect on progress, challenges, and next steps for improving the quality of the program. The key to using

*UPDATE*, like all evaluation tools, is to be honest in these assessments.

**Use other assessments, inventories, and indicators.** In addition to *UPDATE*, other evaluation tools are available in Chapter 9 of the NNPS handbook, *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action, Second Edition*. Particularly valuable is the End-of-Year Evaluation (pp. 360-364). With this tool, ATP members can assess how well activities were implemented to involve families on each school improvement goal (e.g., to improve students' reading, math, attendance, behavior, or other goals). Throughout the school year, the ATP should reflect on and rate the degree to which each activity was successfully implemented. When ATPs take time for these reflections, the strengths and weaknesses of a school's partnership program and involvement activities become more visible.

Those who want to assess progress in meeting challenges to reach all families, also may use and chart the ATP's annual responses to the *Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnerships* (pp. 330-334). This inventory asks whether actions for the six types of involvement are very successfully or need improvement. Along with the other NNPS tools noted above, this measure can help an ATP write the next Action Plan for Partnerships.

Finally, ATPs should take a look at the checklist on the quality of teamwork to help create the best ATP possible (p. 111 of the *Handbook for Action*). Starting the new school year with a well-functioning ATP will contribute to a stronger, more sustainable program.

### Plan to Evaluate

A well-organized team will set aside time to complete *UPDATE* and conduct other useful evaluations as the school year ends. Plan to devote at least one action team meeting to discuss the year's work. Encourage all ATP members to attend that meeting to incorporate diverse perspectives on how well the partnership program was implemented this year and what to improve

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## Elementary School Report

### Involve Families with Students in Science the NNPS Way

Science education offers opportunities and poses challenges to teachers and students in elementary schools. Beginning in 2007-08, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires states to assess students' science learning in at least one grade level each year in grades 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12. Many elementary teachers, however, are unsure about new directions for science instruction using hands-on and inquiry-based approaches. NNPS notes that school, family, and community partnerships help teachers create opportunities for students to study science as active learners.

Parents want to know about the science units that their children study, and can be good partners for young scientists who need to conduct science experiments for homework. Community groups and individuals also play important roles in providing resources and expertise to supplement science classroom instruction.

In NNPS, schools are developing promising partnership practices that enrich science instruction and engage students and families in science. Among many strategies, schools share information with families, create family science nights, include families on field trips, guide families in how to help with science fair projects, and assign interactive homework for students to share their work in science with a family partner. Here are a few examples.<sup>1</sup>

#### Field Trips

A family field trip to the Dodge Nature Center sponsored by the Action Team for Partnerships at **Roosevelt Elementary School** in St. Paul engaged 135 family members with students in grades K-3 to learn about nature up close and personal. They explored ecosystems, studied insects, visited farm animals, and

attended exhibits and demonstrations.

#### Family Nights

A *Science Sci-Fari Adventure* at **Newton Road Elementary School** in Virginia Beach brought more than 200 students and 150 parents to enjoy a family science night. This exciting expedition led participants through a series of stations in the school gymnasium, where they made discoveries and found answers to many science questions, such as: Which item did mold grow on fastest? Did plants fed Coca-Cola or water grow taller?

The **Museum Magnet School** in St. Paul hosted four family nights for different grade levels, with learning stations and student presentations. The school collaborated with the Minnesota Science Museum, which provided staff and equipment, and with local high school students who helped with activities. Students presented their work and answered "key knowledge questions" asked by parents on topics such as magnetism, microscopes, and more. By featuring students and their work, this family night highlighted the most important side of science learning.

#### Information on Science Fairs

**Strategic Learning Initiatives** in Chicago conducted a workshop for parents in three Chicago schools on *Understanding Science Fair Projects* – one of more than a dozen workshops designed to help involve parents in their children's learning. About 130 parents received information on the scientific method, conducted experiments, recorded results, and gained a better understanding of what science fair projects involve and how to assist their children. The goal was to enable students to take responsibility for conducting their own projects.

#### Science Homework

NNPS developed Teachers Involve

Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS), which includes hundreds of prototype assignments for science in the middle grades. TIPS-Science homework requires students to talk with a family partner about something interesting they are learning each week in science class. **Pikesville Middle School** in Maryland partnered with NNPS to increase the number of sample homework activities for various science units. See the TIPS section of the NNPS website for information on available resources, including a video produced by ASCD that shows how the school's teachers, students, and families used the TIPS-Science process.

#### Science Goals and Standards

As stated by the *National Science Education Standards* (1996), "An understanding of science makes it possible for everyone to share in the richness and excitement of comprehending the natural world."<sup>2</sup> Major goals in the elementary grades are for students to enjoy science, learn to solve problems, think critically, use technology, and discuss scientific issues. Their early experiences should prepare students for advanced work in middle and high school, and some will go on to explore science careers. NNPS is learning that, along with high-quality teaching, family and community involvement can boost students' interest and success in science. ♦

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<sup>1</sup> To learn more about these and other science partnership activities, visit the NNPS website, [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org). Click on Success Stories and see the 2005 and 2006 editions of *Promising Partnership Practices*.

<sup>2</sup> See *National Science Education Standards* from the National Academies Press at <http://books.nap.edu/readingroom/books/nses/overview.html>.

## Hawaii Strengthens Structures and Processes to Support Schools' Partnership Programs

In Hawaii, state, regional, and school leaders are working together to improve the organization and quality of programs of school, family, and community partnerships. With strong support from the Hawaii State Board of Education, leaders for partnerships from 15 complex areas (like "districts" in other states) and their Parent Community Network Coordinators (PCNC) are working to strengthen their programs of family and community involvement to help all students meet success.

Leila Hayashida, Education Specialist at the State Department of Education, coordinated a full week of NNPS professional development workshops for complex area leaders for partnerships and their schools. The special workshops occurred along with a state conference on creating good connections in schools.

Last June, Ms. Hayashida attended the NNPS two-day intensive District Leadership Institute in Baltimore. Because Hawaii is a single-statewide school district, she was able to use the information for large school districts, along with her state's policy on parental involvement and her office's goals, to develop a long-term plan for helping the complex areas of Hawaii and their schools organize more goal-linked partnership programs.

NNPS Senior Facilitators, Cecilia S. Martin and Brenda G. Thomas, conducted the workshops and presentations in Hawaii, with support and assistance from Ms. Hayashida and

from the NNPS Technical Assistance component of the Military Child Initiative (MCI) at Johns Hopkins University. Teachers, administrators, and families from military- and non-military-impacted schools came from the



NNPS and Hawaii leaders conduct professional development workshops on family and community involvement for schools across the state

Left to right, first row: Brenda Thomas, Cecelia Martin, Leila Hayashida (Education Specialist and Key Contact to NNPS), Amy Ng. Second Row: Andreas Wiegand, Dr. Paul Ban, Katherine Kawaguchi (Assistant Superintendent for the Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Support), Dr. Allan Awaya

15 complex areas to learn how to apply NNPS's research-based approaches to improve their programs of family and community involvement.

Hawaii's state leaders for partnerships organized their work in three steps.

### **STEP 1. Increase state and area leaders' knowledge and competencies on partnerships.**

One goal in Hawaii was to increase the knowledge and skills of complex areas' leaders for partnerships so they could assist and support their schools in increasing outreach to and involvement of all families. NNPS assisted by conducting a two-day

District Leadership Institute for these area leaders. With the train-the-trainer approach, area leaders for partnerships gained a strong foundation of the NNPS model and framework of six types of involvement. They aligned actions to facilitate their schools with the state policy on parental involvement. At the end of the intensive "boot camp" training, these leaders felt more confident about guiding and supporting their schools in strengthening goal-oriented partnership programs.

### **STEP 2. Strengthen school leaders' knowledge and skills to improve school-based partnership programs.**

A second goal in Hawaii was to give school leaders and support staff an opportunity to increase or refresh their understanding of strategies to involve families and the community in ways that help improve student achievement and

success in school. NNPS assisted by conducting a One-Day Workshop for schools' Action Teams for Partnerships and advanced workshops on important topics to school teams. Advanced topics included improving the success of transitions to new schools for military families, improving the welcoming climate in schools, middle and high school partnerships, including single parents in partnership activities, making better community connections, and more. The special topics help schools meet important challenges to reach parents who are often "hard to reach." By applying new ideas, school-level leaders can be more purposeful about their work on family



Leaders for partnerships from Hawaii's 15 complex areas attended a District Leadership Institute conducted by NNPS

and community involvement. This also will help the complex area leaders for partnerships create a "network" of their area schools dedicated to implementing activities that will involve all families and benefit students.

**STEP 3. Establish a support structure linking state leaders, complex area leaders for partnerships, and school teams, with other organizations to facilitate and encourage all schools to develop and maintain goal-oriented partnership programs.**

A third goal in Hawaii was to clarify and emphasize the flow of positive support and assistance available to schools from multiple sources. A strong facilitative structure is ideal for helping schools see that they are being encouraged to sustain comprehensive programs of school, family, and community partnerships. This is in contrast to the common top-down monitoring of schools for compliance on requirements for parental involvement, which often damages or diminishes relationships between state, district, and school leaders.

In Hawaii, state leaders are collaborating with many key stakeholders, including the state's Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC), *Parents and Children Together*, on ways to increase parental involvement

and improve student achievement and success. The Hawaii PIRC will support the schools' efforts by offering resources, information, and other services to increase the involvement of Hawaii's diverse families in their children's education.

### On the Right Path

The steps taken in Hawaii may be useful in other states and districts for strengthening leadership and programs of partnerships. Preparing district leaders for partnerships to guide their schools in positive ways, providing basic and advanced training to schools' Action Teams for Partnerships, and creating connections with other organizations build a strong infrastructure at the district and school levels for sustaining effective partnership programs.◆

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## New Award Applications for 2007

(Continued from page 1)

and demonstrate their leadership for partnerships and how they are using NNPS approaches to directly assist individual schools' Action Teams for Partnerships to improve their school-based partnership programs.

**STATE AWARDS.** At the state level, applicants will describe and demonstrate their leadership for partnerships and how they inform, encourage, and support districts and schools to use NNPS approaches in developing programs of family and community involvement.

**ORGANIZATION AWARDS.** Organizations will select either the district or state application to describe and demonstrate their work. In NNPS, organizations tend to work "like a district" or "like a state" in assisting individual schools or encouraging many districts to develop their partnership programs.

NNPS Partnership Awards will continue to present Special Recognition prizes of \$500 to up to ten outstanding programs each year. Past award winners have been recognized in national education journals and local newspapers. Many have presented their work at NNPS and other conferences to help others strengthen their partnership programs.

Steve Sheldon, NNPS Research Director, noted, "NNPS Awards are unique in honoring programs that use research-based structures and processes, and that demonstrate sustainability. We hope that many members of NNPS will apply for Partnership Awards to celebrate their excellent work on family and community involvement."◆

<sup>1</sup> Visit past award winners and read summaries of their excellent programs on the NNPS website, [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org) in the section Success Stories.

# Middle and High School Report

## Improve Family Involvement in Post-Secondary Planning

It is never too early for students to begin to think about their post-secondary pathways. Planning for college and careers must start early in students' school lives, not in the eleventh hour of grade 11!

Research shows that schools that conduct meaningful post-secondary planning activities attract parents to attend, who, then, talk with their teens about college planning. And, students who discuss college plans at home are more likely to enroll in advance-level courses in high school in preparation for college and careers.<sup>1</sup> Some schools in NNPS are taking a lead in conducting innovative post-secondary planning activities in the elementary, middle, and high school grades.<sup>2</sup>

### Elementary Grades

The Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) at **Ballentine Elementary School**, in Irmo, South Carolina, conducted *BES Goes to Work* in the '05-'06 school year. BES, the school bear, traveled with Ballentine parents to their places of work, and met a dentist, bank manager, and news anchor, to name a few. Parents took pictures of BES at work and students wrote summaries of their parents' occupations. The activity showcased many careers of parents in the community and provided students with information on an array of possible career paths.

A common activity in the elementary grades is to have parents participate in "career day." In **Paris Elementary School** in rural Paris, Arkansas, parents made short presentations about their work in second grade classrooms in the *Job Share Program*. They also discussed how math, reading, responsibility, and other attributes help them in their work.

More dramatic is a program at the **Charles N. Fortes Magnet Academy** in Providence, Rhode Island. Third graders pledge to stay in school

and stay drug free in the *After School Program for Higher Education*. Each year, students receive mentoring, tutoring, and an enriched after-school program. Parents are involved in supporting children across the grades. Working with the schools, the Rhode Island Children's Crusade for Higher Education plans to provide full college scholarships for students who qualify in their senior year in high school.

### Middle and High School Grades

Fifth and sixth grade students and their parents are provided information on college entry requirements and taken on tour of local college campuses in the program *Going On To College* (GOT College) developed by **Families in Schools** in Los Angeles, California. In 2005, more than 480 students and parents participated from two local districts that serve many low-income families with little or no formal college experience.

**Max S. Hayes Vocational High School**, in Cleveland, Ohio, aimed to *Tell It Like It Is*. Students and parents attended a one-day symposium to learn about career preparation, interview techniques, health issues, and other topics on life after high school graduation. The ATP invited speakers from community-based organizations to share their expertise. Students evaluated what they learned. They wanted to know more about succeeding in post-secondary life.

**Naperville North High School** found that parents and students needed clear information in print on applying for college and other post-secondary education programs. The action team and guidance department collaborated on *The College and Career Planning Guide* with checklists, tips, and examples of resumes, questions to ask college admissions staff, how to write essays, financial aid, and other topics.

Completing the plethora of

financial aid forms for college can be a huge burden on students and parents. The ATP at **Mullins High School**, in Mullins, South Carolina, recognized this challenge and conducted a *Financial Aid Workshop for Parents and Students*. A local college financial aid advisor helped design and conduct the workshop, where over 50 high school seniors and their parents completed their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) forms.<sup>3</sup>

Schools in NNPS are showing that there are age-appropriate topics at all grade levels to help students and families plan for college and careers. ♦

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<sup>1</sup> Simon, B. S. (2004). High school outreach and family involvement. *Social Psychology of Education*, 7, 185-209.

<sup>2</sup> To learn more about these and other partnership activities on post-secondary planning, visit [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org). Click on Success Stories and *Promising Partnership Practices*.

<sup>3</sup> The University of Wisconsin-Madison conducts an annual Careers Conference with information on career-planning tools. See Wis-Careers at <http://wiscareers.wisc.edu>, a web-based program with information on college going, writing resumes, developing a portfolio, and required tests (e.g., PSAT, SAT, ACT).

## Diversity Abounds

# 8.5

Average number of languages other than English spoken by families in schools in NNPS.

\* From 653 school ATPs in 2006 School UPDATE.

# Our Growing Network

New Members in NNPS since September 2006

**SCHOOLS (104 new members)** ★ A. Maceo Walker Middle (Memphis, TN) ★ A.H. Bush Elementary School (Idaho Falls, ID) ★ Ala Wai School (Honolulu, HI) ★ Allegany High School (Cumberland, MD) ★ Avon Lenox (Memphis, TN) ★ Beall Elementary (Frostburg, MD) ★ Beall High School (Frostburg, MD) ★ Bel Air Elementary School (Cumberland, MD) ★ Braddock Middle School (Cumberland, MD) ★ Broad Street School (Bridgeton, NJ) ★ Buckshutem Road School (Bridgeton, NJ) ★ Canyon Elementary School (Cataldo, ID) ★ Cash Valley Elementary School (LaVale, MD) ★ Center for Career & Technical Education (Cresaptown, MD) ★ Charles Dawes Elementary School (Evanston, IL) ★ Chute Middle School (Evanston, IL) ★ Clair E. Gale Junior High (Idaho Falls, ID) ★ Coleman Elementary School (Memphis, TN) ★ Colin Powell Academy (Long Beach, CA) ★ Cresaptown Elementary School (Cresaptown, MD) ★ David E. Walker Elementary School (Evanston, IL) ★ Dennis Township Primary School (Cape May Court House, NJ) ★ Denver Arts and Technology Academy (Denver, CO) ★ Dewey Elementary School (Evanston, IL) ★ Dr. Bessie Rhodes Magnet School (Skokie, IL) ★ Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Experimental Laboratory School (Evanston, IL) ★ Early Childhood Family Education Center-Central School Road (St. Charles, MO) ★ Eleele School (Eleele, HI) ★ Elsie H. Wilcox Elementary School (Lihue, HI) ★ Erickson Elementary School (Idaho Falls, ID) ★ Ethel Boyes Elementary School (Idaho Falls, ID) ★ Flintstone Elementary School (Flintstone, MD) ★ Fort Hill High School (Cumberland, MD) ★ Frances Willard Elementary School (Evanston, IL) ★ Frost Elementary School (Frostburg, MD) ★ George's Creek Elementary School (Lonaconing, MD) ★ Hamilton High (Memphis, TN) ★ Haven Middle School (Evanston, IL) ★ Hawthorne Elementary School (Idaho Falls, ID) ★ Holmes Road Elementary School (Memphis, TN) ★ Hope of Detroit Academy (Detroit, MI) ★ Horace Mann Elementary (West Allis, WI) ★ Horace Mann Elementary School (Long Beach, CA) ★ Jefferson Leadership Academies (Long Beach, CA) ★ John Humbird Elementary School (Cumberland, MD) ★ John Muir Academy for Performing Arts & Technology (Long Beach, CA) ★ Kalaeo School (Kalaeo, HI) ★ Kapaa Middle School (Kapaa, HI) ★ Kauai High School (Lihue, HI) ★ Kekaha Elementary School (Kekaha, HI) ★ Kellogg High School (Kellogg, ID) ★ Kellogg Middle School (Kellogg, ID) ★ Kilauea Elementary School (Kilauea, HI) ★ Kingsley Elementary School (Evanston, IL) ★ Kirby High School (Memphis, TN) ★ Lincoln Middle School (Peoria, IL) ★ Lincoln School (Evanston, IL) ★ Lincolnwood Elementary School (Evanston, IL) ★ Lindbergh Middle School (Long Beach, CA) ★ MacArthur Elementary School (Lakewood, CA) ★ Marshall Middle School (Long Beach, CA) ★ Mary Butler School (Long Beach, CA) ★ Middle Township Elementary #1 (Cape May Court House, NJ) ★ Middle Township Elementary #2 (Cape May Court House, NJ) ★ Middle Township High School (Cape May Court House, NJ) ★ Middle Township Middle School (Cape May Court House, NJ) ★ Monroe Achievement Plus Community School (St. Paul, MN) ★ Mt. Savage Elementary/Middle School (Mt. Savage, MD) ★ Nenana City School (Nenana, AK) ★ Nichols Middle School (Evanston, IL) ★ Northeast Elementary School (Cumberland, MD) ★ Oak Hill Year-Round Elementary (High Point, NC) ★ Oak Pointe Elementary School (Irmo, SC) ★ Oakton Elementary (Evanston, IL) ★ Oltman Junior High (Saint Paul, MN) ★ One Hundred Thirty-Fifth Street Elementary School (Gardena, CA) ★ Orrington Elementary School (Evanston, IL) ★ Parkside Elementary School (LaVale, MD) ★ Pearl Stephens Elementary School (Warner Robins, GA) ★ Pinehurst Elementary School (Pinehurst, ID) ★ Prudy Middle School (Purdy, MO) ★ Pulaski High School (Milwaukee, WI) ★ Sea Isle Elementary (Memphis, TN) ★ Sherwood Middle (Memphis, TN) ★ Skyline High School (Idaho Falls, ID) ★ South Penn Elementary School (Cumberland, MD) ★ Starr King Elementary School (Long Beach, CA) ★ Sunnyside Elementary (Idaho Falls, ID) ★ Sunnyside Elementary School (Kellogg, ID) ★ Tate Topa Tribal School (Fort Totten, ND) ★ Temple View Elementary (Idaho Falls, ID) ★ Trewyn Middle School (Peoria, IL) ★ Tying School (Peoria, IL) ★ Villas Elementary School (Ft. Myers, FL) ★ Waimea Canyon School (Waimea, HI) ★ Washington Middle School (Cumberland, MD) ★ Washington School (Evanston, IL) ★ West Side Elementary (Cumberland, MD) ★ Westernport Elementary School (Westernport, MD) ★ Westhaven Elementary School (Memphis, TN) ★ Westmar High School (Lonaconing, MD) ★ Westmar Middle School (Westernport, MD) ★ Westside Elementary School (Idaho Falls, ID) ★ Wilde Lake Middle School (Columbia, MD) ★

**DISTRICT (15 new members)** ★ Allegany County Public Schools (Cumberland, MD) ★ Cabell County Schools (Huntington, WV) ★ Community Consolidated School District 65 of Evanston-Skokie (Evanston, IL) ★ Dennis Township School District (Cape May Court House, NJ) ★ Fort Worth Independent School District (Fort Worth, TX) ★ Honolulu District (Honolulu, HI) ★ Idaho Falls School District 91 (Idaho Falls, ID) ★ Kauai Complex Area (Kapaa, HI) ★ Ka'u-Kea'au-Pahoa Complex Area (Hilo, HI) ★ Kellogg Joint School District #391 (Kellogg, ID) ★ Leeward Oahu District (Waipahu, HI) ★ Lexington County School District One (Lexington, SC) ★ Maui District (Kahului, HI) ★ Middle Township Public Schools (Cape May Court House, NJ) ★ Palisades School District (Kintnersville, PA) ★

**ORGANIZATION/UNIVERSITY PARTNERS (2 new members)** ★ PACER Center (Bloomington, MN) ★ SASED/Parent & Educator Partnership (Mahomet, IL) ★

Current Active Membership in the National Network of Partnership Schools as of January 31, 2007

Schools: 870    Districts: 127    States: 19    Organizations: 45

# Maryland Partnership Program Development - A Collaborative Venture! Parents as Essential Partners (PEP) and NNPS

Maryland's Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC) is Parents as Essential Partners (PEP), part of the Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium in Bethesda, Maryland.<sup>1</sup> With a new five-year federal grant, PEP will collaborate with NNPS at Johns Hopkins University to strengthen district-level and school-based programs of family and community involvement that will increase student success in school.

PEP plans to conduct a four part program:

- **Early Childhood Component.** PEP works in partnership with Friends of the Family and the Judy Centers to engage parents of preschool children, strengthen parenting skills, and build parents' confidence and leadership.

- **School-Focused Component.** PEP and NNPS will work together to help districts and schools in Maryland strengthen their leadership and programs of partnerships. NNPS's research-based approaches ensure that family and community involvement is linked to school improvement goals for student success. The resulting programs fulfill the state's recommendations, each districts' policies, and NCLB's requirements for family and community involvement.<sup>2</sup>

- **Parent-Focused Component.** PEP selected *Tellin' Stories*, developed by Teaching for Change, to encourage family engagement in education and develop parents' leadership skills. This project will enrich comprehensive partnership programs in participating schools.

- **Statewide Component.** PEP will sponsor four regional conferences for parents, organize an infor-

mation system for parents and the community, and support a bilingual, English-Spanish website.

### Districts and Their Schools

PEP's first year of work focuses on initiating all four components with four school systems: Baltimore City, Prince George's County, Washington County, and Wicomico County. More districts and schools will be added over the five-year grant period. NNPS will enhance the PIRCs investment by extending attention to any or all districts in Maryland that want to develop the School-Focused Component. This will help sustain work on partnership programs started by NNPS with the prior PIRC, The Family Works.

With support from PEP and NNPS, Brenda G. Thomas, Director of Maryland's Partnership Program Development for the School-Focused component, will offer professional development on partnerships to district leaders and new Action Teams for Partnerships throughout the state.

The PEP grant will pay for district leadership training and workshops for new schools' action teams for partnership. This includes support for substitute teachers so that teachers can attend the one-day professional development workshop, which results in a draft One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships linked to goals in their school improvement plans.

In Maryland, 16 districts and 196 schools have started to build their school-based programs for student success, and others are scheduled to begin this systematic

work. Some other states' PIRCs have joined NNPS to take similar steps.<sup>3</sup>

The collaborative work by PEP in Maryland and NNPS is showing that district leaders and their schools can organize plans and practices that meet NCLB requirements for involvement at the district and school levels and engage parents in ways that support student achievement, attendance, behavior and other improvement goals.◆

Brenda G. Thomas  
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<sup>1</sup> For more information on PEP, Maryland's PIRC, visit [www.maec.org](http://www.maec.org).

<sup>2</sup> For a brochure outlining the PEP and NNPS collaborative, see [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org) and click on Professional Development and the Maryland program.

<sup>3</sup> PIRCs interested in joining NNPS to develop similar strategies may contact [bthomas@csos.jhu.edu](mailto:bthomas@csos.jhu.edu).

## What is PPP?

PPP is NNPS's nickname for *Promising Partnership Practices* – the annual collection of good ideas FROM members FOR members.

Return the questionnaire for the 2007 edition. OR, submit your best practice online at [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org). Click on Success Stories, then, *Promising Partnership Practices* and Submit a Practice. Find the right form for your school, district, state, or organization.

**MAY 15, 2007** is the deadline for review for the 2007 collection.

## Summaries of 2006 UPDATE Data Provided to Districts & Schools

(Continued from page 3)

district leaders took to directly assist their schools. About 40% of the district leaders reported that their efforts to collect schools' One Year Action Plans for partnerships were going "very well," and 30% said their end-of-year celebrations for schools to share best practices were successful. Other leaders recognized they "need to improve" these actions, as well as their visits and connections with school teams and how they help schools evaluate their partnership programs.

At any point in time, district leaders in NNPS vary in their actions, in part because of their experience and collegial support. There is, however, evidence of growth in the right direction. Data from 62 districts over two years show small but clear improvements in program quality, with many districts moving from beginning to

"good" programs from '05 to '06.

See the full summaries of the reports, including comments from schools on changes in program quality and links of partnerships to results for students, and comments from district leaders on how they are working to meet NCLB requirements for parental involvement.<sup>1</sup>◆

### From:

Williams, K. J., Epstein, J. L., & Sheldon, S. B. & (2007). *Summary: 2006 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. (2007). *Summary: 2006 UPDATE data from schools in NNPS*. Baltimore: National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University.

<sup>1</sup> Download the full reports from [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org), in the section Research and Evaluations.

## 2007 UPDATE Coming in April — Due June 30

The **2007 UPDATE** surveys will be mailed in April to members who joined NNPS by the end of 2006. The surveys help members assess their progress and enable NNPS to identify program components that help produce high-quality partnerships.

**REMEMBER: NNPS pays the membership renewal fee for all members who return UPDATE.**

When you renew membership, your school, district, state, or organization will continue to receive NNPS benefits and services through the '07-'08 school year.

UPDATEs returned by June 30 are entered in the NNPS UPDATE Lottery. One school, district, state, and organization will be selected at random for a free registration to a future NNPS Leadership Development Conference (a \$250 value).

**IT PAYS TO RETURN  
UPDATE by JUNE 30!**

### Meeting the Challenge

(Continued from page 4)

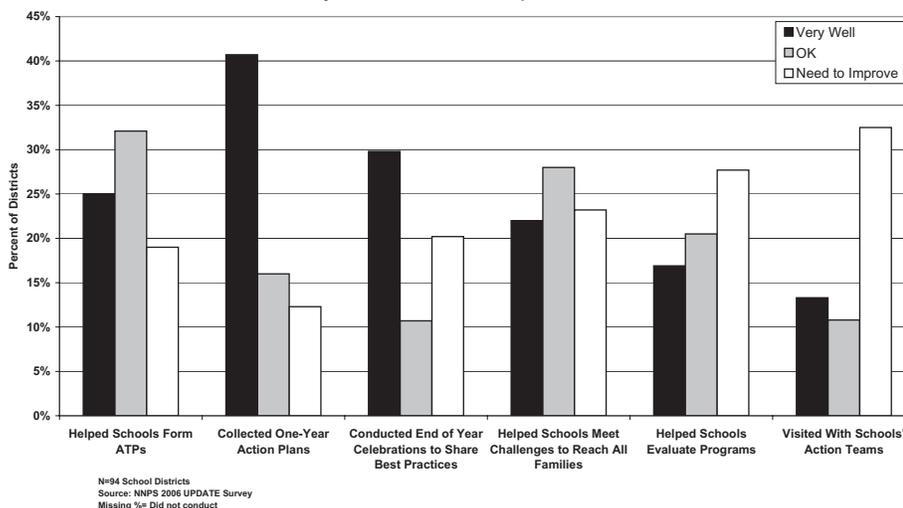
next year. If there are other questions about evaluating your program, call an NNPS Facilitator to talk about how you can use UPDATE and the evaluation tools in the NNPS *Handbook* to chart changes in program quality from year to year.◆

<sup>1</sup> See the *Research and Evaluation* section of the NNPS website, [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org), to learn more about these studies.

<sup>2</sup> Sheldon, S. B. & Van Voorhis, F. L. (2004). Partnership programs in U.S. schools: Their development and relationship to family involvement outcomes. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 15, 125-148.

Figure 2  
Direct Facilitation of Schools on Partnerships

% of District Leaders for Partnerships Who Conducted Selected Actions  
Very Well, OK, or Need to Improve in 2006



### ALERT! NEW DISTRICT LEADERS FOR PARTNERSHIPS

STILL TIME to register for the NNPS District Leadership Institute (DLI), April 26-27 in Baltimore. Learn how to facilitate your schools' Action Teams for Partnerships, write district plans for partnerships for '07-'08, and talk with NNPS staff and other new leaders. Register at [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org).



## Partnership Calendar

2007

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Director: Joyce L. Epstein  
Director of Research: Steven B. Sheldon  
Senior Program Facilitator: Marsha D. Greenfield  
Senior Program Facilitator: Darcy J. Hutchins  
Senior Program Facilitator: Cecelia S. Martin  
Network Coordinator: Kenyatta J. Williams  
Maryland Director of Program Development:  
Brenda G. Thomas (with Parents as Essential  
Partners (PEP))  
Postdoctoral Research Fellow: Claudia L. Galindo  
Senior Advisor: Mavis G. Sanders  
Website Developer & *Type 2*: Gregory C. Pickett

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- March:** Spring issue of *Type 2*.
- March:** Invitation to NNPS members to contribute to *Promising Partnership Practices 2007*.  
Eligible members will be invited to apply for new NNPS Partnership Awards for 2007.
- April:** Members will receive 2006 *UPDATE* in the mail. Due June 30 to renew NNPS membership for the 07-08 school year.
- April 26-27:** 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.
- May 15:** Members submit promising partnership practices for the 2007 collection.
- June 30:** 2007 *UPDATE* due to NNPS to renew membership for '07-'08. NNPS will waive annual membership fees for all members who return *UPDATE*.
- June 30:** Members submit applications for the *NNPS 2007 Partnership Awards*.
- October 11-12:** Leadership Development Conference in Baltimore for new and experienced school, district, state, and organization leaders to strengthen and sustain Partnership Programs.

### NNPS Goes On the Road With Professional Development Workshops

Senior Program Facilitators, Marsha D. Greenfield, Darcy J. Hutchins, Cecelia S. Martin, and Brenda G. Thomas, and Director Joyce L. Epstein, have been "on the road" conducting professional development workshops and presentations for NNPS members, prospective members, and other education leaders. They visited the following locations (listed alphabetically) from September 2006 through February 2007.

Allegany County Public Schools (MD)  
Avon Maitland School Board (Ontario, Canada)  
Bellflower School District (CA)  
Chino Valley Unified School District (CA)  
Connecticut State Department of Education  
Department of Defense Conference on Education for Military-Connected Communities (GA)  
Evanston/Skokie School District 65 (IL)  
Fairfax Public Schools (VA)  
Forth Worth Independent School District (TX)  
Hampton City Schools (VA)  
Hawaii Public State Department of Education (HI)  
Lehigh University School Study Council (PA)  
Memphis City Schools (TN)  
Michigan City Public Schools (IN)  
National Title I Conference (CA)  
Parent Education Conference, University of North TX  
Patterson Park Charter School (MD)  
Peoria Public School District (IL)  
Prince George's County Public Schools (MD)  
Utah State Department of Education  
Virginia Beach Public Schools (VA)  
Waukegan School District (IL)  
Wisconsin Careers Conference, Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison

See *Workshops on the Road* at [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org) in the section on Professional Development. ♦