

# 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!

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## In This Issue

Issues and Insights	2
Middle and High School Report	3
Meeting the Challenge	4
Leadership Line	5
Research Brief—'09 UPDATE Data	6
New Members	8
Elementary School Report	9
New Fee Structure	11
NNPS Calendar	12

## Data from Schools and Districts Show Progress in Developing Partnership Programs

More than 750 schools and over 100 districts returned their 2009 NNPS UPDATE surveys to evaluate the quality and progress of their partnership programs. The schools and districts were from over 30 states, D.C., and Canada. They served economically, racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse communities, families, and students. The districts ranged in size from 1 school to over 200 schools. About 60% of the schools were elementary schools and over 70% received Title I funds, indicating that they served families with low incomes. Some schools and districts were new to NNPS, while others were members for up to 13 years.

### Data from Schools

Schools' Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) selected a "portrait" of the overall components and quality of their partnership programs, from just starting to excellent, with most reporting average or good programs. On average, elementary schools reported higher-quality programs than did secondary schools. More than half of the middle schools reported that their programs were in a planning period, just starting, or fair. NNPS charts the progress of all programs from one year to the next.

Data from 08 to 09 indicate that, on average, schools that worked in NNPS for at least two years improved their program over time. Over the two school years, the percentage of schools that were just starting or had fair programs declined, whereas the percentage of schools reporting good, very

good, or excellent programs increased.

In general, schools' ATPs implemented many of the "basic" components of the NNPS model. Most schools conducted activities for all six types of

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## New NNPS Fees and Professional Development to Improve Members' Programs

With the completion of a five-year grant from National Institutes of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), NNPS will direct more attention to "scaling up" programs of partnerships across the country. The completed research increased understanding of (a) how to organize district leadership on partnerships; (b) how to improve the implementation of partnership programs in diverse communities; and (c) how interactive homework affects student attitudes and learning in math, science, and language arts.<sup>1</sup>

The new knowledge and resulting tools, reflected in the new edition of *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action, Third Edition*, and CD (Epstein, et al., 2009, Corwin Press) and *Principals Matter* (Sanders & Sheldon, 2009, Corwin Press) make it possible for NNPS to help more districts and their schools use research-based approaches to improve leadership, programs, plans, and practices of school, family, and community partnerships.

*(Continued on page 11)*

# Issues and Insights

Joyce L. Epstein  
Director

## NNPS Professional Development Sequence Will Help More Districts and Schools

NNPS is a growing network of schools, districts, states, and organizations that want to use research-based approaches and tools to improve and sustain their programs of family and community involvement. On their membership forms, all new members of NNPS explain a goal to improve partnerships in three years, but not every member progresses at the same rate. Some move swiftly toward their goals and become Partnership Award winners. Others move slowly and need help to advance their programs

To help more members reach their partnership goals on a fast track, NNPS will offer a sequence of professional development activities to enable districts and schools to organize, implement, and improve their partnership programs. New members will be interviewed and advised to select workshops, conferences, webinars, or other options for the training they need. Experienced members will discuss their data and programs with NNPS Facilitators and consider their next steps to improve the quality of their programs and outreach to families to support and improve student attitudes, behavior, and school achievements

Three professional development steps will help prospective and new members understand the NNPS approach, join NNPS, and get off to a good start.

### Step 1. Awareness—New Directions for Developing Partnership Programs for Student Success.

Prospective members considering NNPS and new members struggling to get started may select an awareness workshop that brings together all district leaders, principals, school staff, parents, and others to hear about new directions for results-based partnership programs. The awareness session gets all partners “on the same page” in their thinking about partnership program development. Awareness sessions may be conducted with

general audiences or separately for specific stakeholders (e.g., for principals only). Each session will be tailored to meet attendees’ interests and questions. Step 1 also includes a planning meeting with district leaders to outline next steps for identifying leaders for partnership program development and scheduling “basic training.”

### Step 2. Basic Training for District Leadership on Partnerships.

New district leaders for partnership program development need to understand their leadership roles and responsibilities for district-level and school-based partnership program plans and actions. Large districts with several facilitators who will guide clusters of schools on partnership program development will benefit from a full NNPS District Leadership Institute, whereas small districts with one leader for partnerships and a few schools will need a customized planning session on their work to prepare school-based Action Teams for Partnerships to conduct partnership programs linked to school improvement goals.

### Step 3. Basic Training for Schools Action Teams for Partnerships: One-Day Team-Training Workshop.

All schools in a district or the “first cohort” of schools must identify an Action Team for Partnerships consisting of teachers, parents, principal and others who, together, will attend a One-Day Team Training Workshop. This basic training prepares Action Teams for Partnerships to understand the research base for successful and sustainable partnership programs and guides them to write their first One-Year Action Plans for Partnerships linked to their own school improvement goals. District leaders who complete Step 2 may conduct their own Team Training Workshops or may request help from NNPS.

*(Continued on page 10)*

## Middle and High School Report

### Middle and High Schools that PLAN Their Partnership Programs Actually HAVE Good Partnership Programs that Keep Improving

Great partnership programs in middle and high schools are the result of great plans with age-appropriate and goal-linked activities that engage all families with their teens in ways that support student success in school. And, great plans are produced by well-functioning Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) that meet, write plans, implement activities, and evaluate their efforts

Where is YOUR middle or high school on the path to partnerships? For the 09-10 school year, can your ATP check “Yes!” to these basic steps for partnership program development?

- ❑ Our ATP includes teachers, parents, administrators, and community partners (and students in high schools), and meets at least once a month
- ❑ Our ATP wrote a full One-Year Action Plan for Partnership this year.
- ❑ Our ATP identified a budget to cover the activities in our action plan.
- ❑ Our ATP evaluated each activity that was implemented this year using the Annual Evaluation of Activities in the NNPS *Handbook for Action*.
- ❑ Our ATP will complete our NEXT One-Year Action Plan this spring for the 10-11 school year?
- ❑ Our ATP will complete the NNPS UPDATE this spring to renew membership for another year to continue to improve our partnership program.

These very basic steps are easier said than done in many middle and high schools. Some blame a lack of time for their weak programs. Some

still think of family and community involvement as “extra” work that can wait, if time is short. It is important to eliminate excuses and change these attitudes because NNPS research and exemplary practices in schools across the country show that these basic structures must be in place to improve program quality every year.

In NNPS, great plans have four pages that focus on 2 academic goals, 1 non-academic/behavioral goal, and the overall goal for a welcoming climate for partnerships. Many middle and high schools in NNPS have wonderful activities on these pages-of-plan. Here are a few examples.

#### Academic Goals

##### Improve Reading Skills and Attitudes

**Stevens Middle School** in Pasco, WA conducted a unique family reading night with the theme Night at the Oscars for students to link popular books and popular movies (e.g., *Twilight*, *Marley and Me*, *Because of Winn-Dixie*). School rooms became movie sets. Students strengthened reading, writing, thinking, and artistic skills as they wrote trivia questions, became human statues, created Jeopardy games, and conducted other activities to show their families their knowledge of plots and characters and to explore careers in writing and movie-making.

##### Improve Science Skills and Attitudes

**Salisbury Middle School** in Salisbury, Maryland conducted A Night Under the Milky Way. In this activity, three parental involvement activities were merged: time for

parent-teacher conferences, a friendly dinner, and a science Expo. For the main science theme, students drew on reading, math, writing, and critical thinking skills to develop 15 stations linked to space and astronomy for parents and students to visit. They were aided by participation from NASA, the Discovery Channel, and other community partners.

#### Non-Academic Goals

##### Help High School Students Graduate on Time

**Northside High School** in Warner Robins, Georgia, developed an Evening Advisement to help students and their families focus on high school graduation and college and career planning. Over three evenings, 1100 parent-teacher-student meetings were conducted to plan courses for the next semester, discuss credits earned or needed, and to plan students’ futures in high school and beyond. The activity engaged many more parents than in the past with their teen on important school decisions.

#### Overall Partnership Climate

##### Increase Parent Participation Beyond the ATP

Teamwork makes **Francis Howell Middle School** in St. Charles, Missouri, a friendlier place. Every member of the school—teachers, administrators, custodians, librarians, nurse, cafeteria workers, and aides—belongs to one of six action-oriented teams. The Action Team for Partnerships includes teachers, administrators, and parents, but

*(Continued on page 10)*

# Meeting the Challenge

*Steven B. Sheldon  
Director of Research*

## Increase Partnership Practices for STEM Subjects

Since 2006, the U. S. Department of Education has stressed the importance of boosting student achievement in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics – collectively referred to as STEM subjects. Across the country, states, districts, and schools are working to meet targets for student learning in math and science, close gaps in achievement test scores between groups of racially and linguistically diverse students, improve U.S. students' skills and scores compared with students in other nations, and increase students' interest in advanced math and science courses and careers. Educators know that efforts to improve students' math and science learning must begin in the early grades and include school, family, and community partnerships.

### Link Involvement Activities to the Curriculum

Many schools in NNPS are designing creative activities to encourage students to excel in math and science and to increase family and community involvement. **Delmae Elementary School**, in Florence, South Carolina, hosted SMART (Science, Math and Relevant Technology) Night. Parents and students came to play math and science games; students presented “technology tidbits;” and all experienced a robotics display. Among many activities, first-grade students explored geometric shapes using food; fourth-graders made constellations out of film canisters; and the music teacher reinforced a third-grade unit on sound by helping students make music using glasses of water. The activities at SMART Night reinforced the curriculum and extended student learning beyond the school day.

In Lancaster, Pennsylvania, **George Ross Elementary School** put its own spin on STEM subjects by enlisting the help of fathers for their first Dangerous Dads Math and Science Night. Fathers and father-figures hosted various booths with their students from each classroom. Each booth

featured experiments and activities based on math and science units taught in the classroom. All students and parents completed “lab sheets” on the activities at each booth. Prior to that evening, teachers reviewed the knowledge and skills the fathers and students needed to conduct the activities with the families who attended the event.

### Spark Students' Interest in STEM Careers

Keeping older students in the “pipeline” for STEM careers may depend on helping them envision a future where they use science, technology, engineering, and/or math in their lives. **Pulaski High School**, in Milwaukee, WI, accomplished this at the Life After High School: College and Career Fair. Over 70 community partners, including university and healthcare professionals provided information and advice to students on exciting career choices and educational requirements to help them plan their futures.

Alerting students to STEM careers can begin in the early grades. At **John F. Kennedy School**, in Windsor, Connecticut, the Action Team for Partnerships hosted the Science and Technology Expo with representatives from various science professions and industries. Family and community volunteers, including the school nurse, a parent who was a chiropractor, a parent who was a dentist, and high school students from the robotics and environmental clubs, hosted booths to show students how learning science and math in school can lead to exciting uses in the real world.

Policy makers are concerned about American students' abilities to compete in a global workplace that requires strong math and science skills. Along with strong curricula and excellent classroom teaching, it is clear that schools need to help families understand the STEM curriculum and what

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Leadership Line

### NNPS *Samplers* Link Research with Practices in Reading, Math, and Science

NNPS is a unique professional development organization: Our research informs practice and your practice informs our research! The marriage of research with practice helps members of NNPS to design and implement activities that address important goals for student success.

The importance of goal-linked school, family, and community partnerships has been well documented in research. Everyone is interested in the connections, for example, of family involvement in reading with students' reading skills. Often the research is hard to find.<sup>1</sup> Everyone also knows that NNPS's annual books of *Promising Partnership Practices* are wonderful collections of good ideas for involving families in goal-linked ways. But not everyone has time to search through all twelve books for ways to get started.

The new NNPS *Samplers* solve both of these problems. Three *Samplers* have been developed so far on family and community involvement in reading, math, and science. Each *Sampler* puts a summary of research close at hand on the results of partnership practices for students along with ten excellent involvement activities for that subject from our collections of *Promising Partnership Practices*. Each *Sampler* also includes a description of the importance of family involvement for increasing student achievement in that subject.

The activities include family nights, workshops, volunteer activities, student work, and other creative practices that were implemented by members of NNPS. Their reports indicate that the practices were successful in engaging diverse families and enriching student learning in many different ways at all grade levels. The activities

also demonstrate the use of the six types of involvement in the NNPS framework: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. The field-tested activities may be used or adapted by other schools' Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) and by district leaders to strengthen their programs of family and community involvement.

#### Share the Information

Who cares about research-based partnership practices linked to specific goals for student success in reading, math, and science? All of your colleagues care. Action Teams for Partnerships and district, state, and organization Leaders for Partnerships in NNPS should share the *Samplers* with co-workers to build support for your partnership programs.

Principals, reading coaches, math curriculum leaders, science specialists, school board members, other district leaders, and other colleagues need to know that partnership programs can help students improve their attitudes, skills, and test scores in reading, math, and science. Every school should have a well-planned partnership program that deliberately guides parents and community partners to contribute to the same goals that teachers are working on with students at all grade levels.

#### To explore the *Samplers*, click on:

[Sampler: Family and Community Involvement in Reading](#)

Make Partnerships Part of the Story

[Sampler: Family and Community Involvement in Math](#)

Math Partnerships = Student Success

[Sampler: Family and Community Involvement in Science](#)

Scientifically Speaking...

Packets of 10 print copies of the *Samplers* may be ordered from NNPS: [Sampler Order form](#).

Of course, each *Sampler* includes just a few of many excellent activities in the NNPS annual collections. For more ideas visit <http://www.partnershipschools.org> and follow the links to Success Stories and to a particular edition of *Promising Partnership Practices*. Click on the goal(s) that interest you for improving school climate and student success. ♦

1) See a comprehensive review of research by Dr. Steven Sheldon on the results of family involvement on students' reading, math, and science skills, behavior, attendance, and successful school transitions in Chapter 1 of the NNPS Handbook for Action, Third Edition.

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### Meeting the Challenge

(Continued from page 4)

students are expected to learn. Excellent involvement activities will help parents support their children's attitudes and learning in these subjects and may encourage students to pursue STEM careers. ♦

1) For more about these and other captivating activities to increase family and community involvement in STEM subjects see, *Promising Partnership Practices* at [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org) in the section Success Stories.

## Data Show Progress in Developing Partnership Programs

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involvement, linked partnership activities to school improvement goals, and reported on their plans and progress to the PTA/PTO, faculty, and district leaders.

The data indicated that many schools still must improve their programs to meet recommended practice. For example, fewer than half of ATPs met monthly—a basic process to ensure that activities are implemented and that programs are sustained and improved. Many schools still struggle in communicating their plans for partnership activities with all families and in evaluating the quality of the activities that are implemented.

### Important Factors in Schools

**Principal Support.** Most schools in NNPS reported strong support from their principals for their work on partnerships. Almost all (92%) reported that the principal was a member of the ATP, as NNPS outlines. In many schools—especially elementary schools—principals provided time for ATPs to meet and actively encouraged families and teachers to participate in partnership activities. At all school levels, principals were least likely to allocate funds for partnerships, compared to other actions to support the work of their ATPs.

**District Support.** As in prior years, ATPs reported that they benefited from support from district leaders. Schools in districts that also were members of NNPS reported more district support for partnerships than did schools in non-member districts. For example, over 75% of schools in NNPS-member districts reported that district leaders provided technical assistance on partnerships, compared to just over 60% of schools in non-member districts.

NNPS’s statistical analyses of two years of UPDATE data showed that support from district leaders contributed to higher-quality partnership programs at the school level. After controlling for schools’ prior program quality in 2008, principal turnover, average daily attendance, and the percentage of students receiving free or reduced-price lunches, district support for partnerships was a statistically significant predictor of higher quality school programs in 2009.

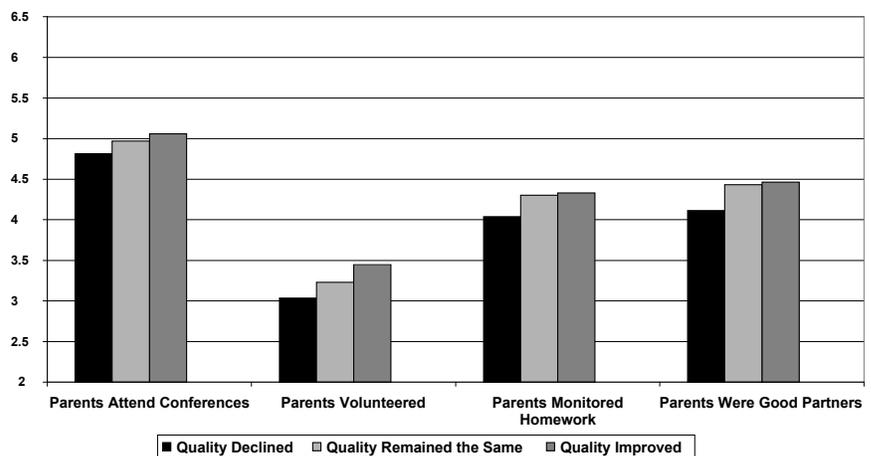
**Solving Challenges.** Most schools in NNPS are working to overcome some challenges to involve more families in their children’s education. For example, most ATPs reported “making good progress” in communicating with all families, including those who speak languages other than English at home. By contrast, ATPs reported only fair progress in getting information from school workshops and meetings to families who could not attend. This is a common but impor-

tant challenge because most parents cannot attend most meetings, but need and want the information that is provided.

**Family Involvement.** NNPS compared schools that improved over one year, remained stable, and declined in the quality of their partnership programs from the 2008 to 2009. Figure 1 shows that schools with improved or stable partnership programs reported that greater percentages of family members attended Back-to-School Nights, volunteered to help teachers or the school, monitored or discussed schoolwork with their children, and were perceived by ATPs to be “good partners” with the school. These schools also reported greater percentages of teachers who supported the partnership program and who utilized volunteers for the classroom or school.

**Summary of Data from Schools.** In 2009, most schools in NNPS reported that they were implementing key components of research-based

Figure 1  
ATP Reports of Family Involvement by Change in Program Quality 08-09



N=535 Schools  
Source: 2008 and 2009 School UPDATE Surveys

partnership programs, but many still need to improve the components and quality of their programs. All ATPs need to meet at least monthly and should organize committees to conduct the activities in their One-Year Action Plans for Partnerships. This might help some ATPs to provide information from school meetings and workshops to parents who could not attend. ATPs need to sustain the strong support they are receiving from principals and district leaders, but need to strengthen their efforts to evaluate their partnership activities.

### Data from Districts

Among the districts in NNPS in 2009, about 10% were in a planning year or just beginning, whereas just over 30% reported having a program that was very good or excellent. Analyses of UPDATE data from districts that worked in NNPS for at least three years showed that districts improved leadership activities and assistance to schools at a modest, but steady, pace.

**Leadership Activities.** District leaders for partnerships reported that they implemented an average of 9 leadership activities in the 08-09 school year, including many of the basic actions guided by NNPS. Most district leaders reviewed or developed district policy on partnerships (83%), established a budget (84%), shared best practices of partnerships across schools (77%), conducted training workshops for schools' Action Teams for Partnerships (67%), and conducted other staff development on partnerships with various district audiences (78%). Most (69%) wrote formal Leadership Action Plans for Partnerships in 08-09, and most (65%) had already completed their plans for the next school year. More than two-thirds of the district Leaders for Partnerships reported that they met

with their Superintendent (69%) and more than three-quarters (79%) had connected with other district leaders and colleagues to coordinate partnership plans throughout the district.

**Facilitation of Schools.** NNPS requires district Leaders for Partnerships to provide direct assistance to school ATPs to help them strengthen and sustain school-based programs of family and community involvement linked to school improvement goals for student success. It is encouraging that only 8% of the district leaders (many just starting to plan their programs) reported giving no direct assistance to schools in 08-09.

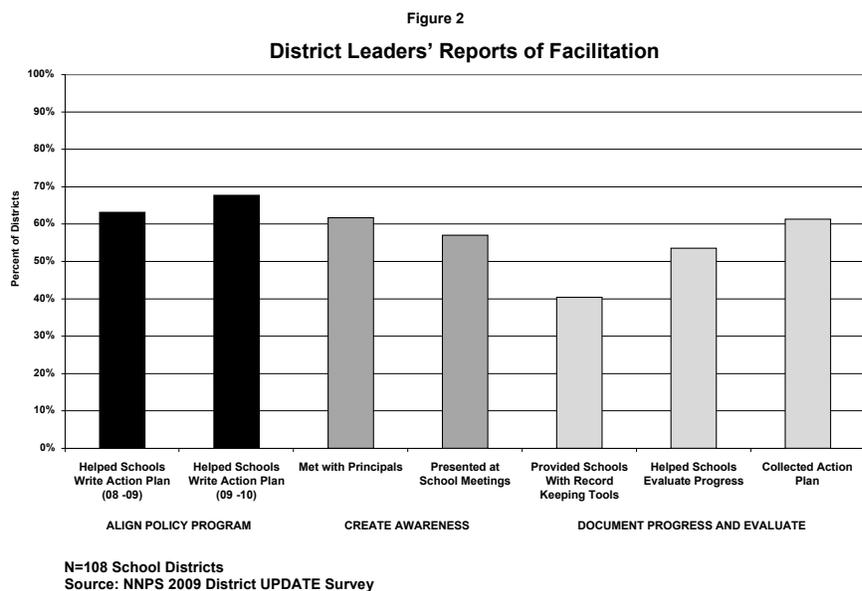
NNPS studies and fieldwork identified six strategies that help district leaders organize their activities: Create Awareness, Align Program and Policy, Guide Learning and Program Development, Share Knowledge, Celebrate Milestones, and Document Progress and Evaluate Outcomes. Figure 2 shows leaders' reports of three types of facilitation. Over 60% reported taking steps to guide learn-

ing and program development by helping schools write Action Plans for Partnerships, collecting these plans, and meeting with principals to discuss ways to strengthen their school-based partnership programs. Many district Leaders for Partnerships, however, have work to do, as only about 40% provided their schools with tools to document progress and evaluate outcomes of school, family, and community partnerships.

### Special Focus: Homework

The 2009 UPDATE asked school ATPs and district Leaders for Partnerships about their homework policies and professional development needs. Most district leaders (over 75%) indicated that most teachers would benefit from professional development on homework—particularly on designing homework that facilitates interactions between students and parents. Similarly, most ATPs reported that teachers need profes-

*(Continued on page 11)*



# Our Growing Network

New Members in NNPS since September 26, 2009

**SCHOOLS (168 new members)** ★ Abita Springs Elementary (Abita Springs, LA) ★ Abita Springs Middle School (Abita Springs, LA) ★ Academia del Pueblo (Phoenix, AZ) ★ Academy with Community Partners (Mesa, AZ) ★ Agua Fria High School (Avondale, AZ) ★ Aguila Elementary School (Aguila, AZ) ★ Alchesay High School (Whiteriver, AZ) ★ Alma J. Brown (Grambling, LA) ★ Alton Elementary School (Slidell, LA) ★ Amphitheater Middle (Tucson, AZ) ★ Arthur "Bo" Felder Learning Academy (Little Rock, AR) ★ Atkins Technology Elementary School (Shreveport, LA) ★ Barnum School (Bridgeport, CT) ★ Barret Paideia Academy (Shreveport, LA) ★ Baseline Elementary School (Little Rock, AR) ★ Bayou Lacombe Middle School (Lacombe, LA) ★ Bayou Woods Elementary (Slidell, LA) ★ Benjamin Franklin Academy (Little Rock, AR) ★ Bethune Math/Science Technology School (Shreveport, LA) ★ Blackham (Bridgeport, CT) ★ Bonne Ecole Elementary (Slidell, LA) ★ Brimhall Junior High School (Mesa, AZ) ★ Brock Elementary School (Slidell, LA) ★ Brookwood Elementary (Virginia Beach, VA) ★ C. Alton Lindsay Middle School (Hampton, VA) ★ C. O. Greenfield Elementary School (Phoenix, AZ) ★ C. Vernon Spratley Middle School (Hampton, VA) ★ Caddo Heights Math/Science Elementary School (Shreveport, LA) ★ Caddo Middle Career and Technology School (Shreveport, LA) ★ Caley Elementary School (King of Prussia, PA) ★ Calli Ollin High School (Tucson, AZ) ★ Candlebrook Elementary (King of Prussia, PA) ★ Captain Gray Early Learning Center (Pasco, WA) ★ Carolyn Park Middle School (Slidell, LA) ★ Carson Junior High School (Mesa, AZ) ★ Carver Elementary (Florence, SC) ★ Carver Elementary (Florence, SC) ★ Center for Academic Success #1 (Sierra Vista, AZ) ★ Center for Academic Success #2 (Douglas, AZ) ★ Cesar Chavez Community School (Phoenix, AZ) ★ Chahta-Ima Elementary School (Lacombe, LA) ★ Chaplain Charles J. Watters #24 (Jersey City, NJ) ★ Charles L. Spragg Elementary School (Egg Harbor City, NJ) ★ Classical Studies Academy (Bridgeport, CT) ★ Cloverdale Middle School (Little Rock, AR) ★ Community Charter School of Paterson (Paterson, NJ) ★ Coolidge High School (Coolidge, AZ) ★ Cotton Boll Elementary (Peoria, AZ) ★ Covington Elementary (Covington, LA) ★ Cunningham Elementary (Beloit, WI) ★ Cypress Springs Elementary (Ruston, LA) ★ David O. Dodd Elementary School (Little Rock, AR) ★ Deep Run Elementary School (Elkridge, MD) ★ Dr. Bernard Black Elementary (Phoenix, AZ) ★ Eastgate Elementary (Kennewick, WA) ★ Elfrida Elementary School (Elfrida, AZ) ★ Emerson Elementary (Mesa, AZ) ★ Fair Park College Preparatory Academy (Shreveport, LA) ★ Fifth Ward Jr. High School (Bush, LA) ★ Florida Avenue Elementary (Slidell, LA) ★ Folsom Elementary (Folsom, LA) ★ Fox Hollow Elementary School (Idaho Falls, ID) ★ Fratt Elementary School (Racine, WI) ★ Ft. Thomas Elementary School (Ft. Thomas, AZ) ★ George N. Smith Junior High (Mesa, AZ) ★ Glen View Elementary (Ruston, LA) ★ Grambling Middle School (Grambling, LA) ★ Green Oaks Performing Arts Academy (Shreveport, LA) ★ Greenway Middle School (Phoenix, AZ) ★ Hallen (Bridgeport, CT) ★ Helen Keller Elementary (Mesa, AZ) ★ Henry Timrod Elementary School (Florence, SC) ★ Hico Elementary School (Dubach, LA) ★ Ignacio G. Conchos (Phoenix, AZ) ★ J. C. Lynch Elementary School (Coward, SC) ★ John F. Kennedy Elementary School (Phoenix, AZ) ★ John L. McLellan Magnet High School (Little Rock, AR) ★ John R. Davis Elementary School (Phoenix, AZ) ★ John Winthrop (Bridgeport, CT) ★ Katherine B. Sutton Elementary (Forsyth, GA) ★ Kempsville Elementary School (Virginia Beach, VA) ★ Kempsville Meadows Elementary (Virginia Beach, VA) ★ Kings Chapel Elementary School (Perry, GA) ★ La Cima Middle School (Tucson, AZ) ★ Lake City High School (Lake City, SC) ★ Lattie Coor School (Avondale, AZ) ★ Lee Road Junior High School (Covington, LA) ★ Liberty High School (Jersey City, NJ) ★ Lincoln High School/Freshman Academy (Jersey City, NJ) ★ Lincoln Parish Career Academy (Ruston, LA) ★ Little Pearl Elementary School (Pearl River, LA) ★ Longfellow Elementary School (Mesa, AZ) ★ Lowell Elementary (Mesa, AZ) ★ Luis Munoz Marin School (Bridgeport, CT) ★ Luxford Elementary School (Virginia Beach, VA) ★ Lyon Elementary School (Covington, LA) ★ M. J. Moore Math Science Magnet Middle School (Shreveport, LA) ★ Mabelvale Middle School (Mabelvale, AR) ★ Main Street Elementary School (Lake City, SC) ★ Maryland Elementary (Phoenix, AZ) ★ McKellips Middle School (Mesa, AZ) ★ Mesa Junior High School (Mesa, AZ) ★ Montecito Community School (Phoenix, AZ) ★ Moore Intermediate School (Florence, SC) ★ Mountain View Elementary School (Rio Rico, AZ) ★ Multicultural Magnet School (Bridgeport, CT) ★ Myers Ganoung Elementary (Tucson, AZ) ★ Naylor Middle School (Tucson, AZ) ★ Newton-Smith Visual and Performing Arts Middle School (Shreveport, LA) ★ North Vista Elementary School (Florence, SC) ★ Oak Park MicroSociety Elementary (Shreveport, LA) ★ Park City Magnet School of Science and Technology (Bridgeport, CT) ★ Peach Spring Elementary School (Peach Springs, AZ) ★ Peña Blanca Elementary School (Rio Rico, AZ) ★ Pima Partnership High School (Tucson, AZ) ★ Pine View Middle School (Covington, LA) ★ Powell Junior High (Mesa, AZ) ★ Precision High School/Precision Academy Systems, Inc (Phoenix, AZ) ★ Princess Anne Middle School (Virginia Beach, VA) ★ Pulaski Heights Elementary School (Little Rock, AR) ★ Pulaski Heights Middle School (Little Rock, AR) ★ Read (Bridgeport, CT) ★ Riverside Elementary (Pearl River, LA) ★ Robert Fulton Elementary School (Lancaster, PA) ★ Robison Elementary (Tucson, AZ) ★ Rockefeller (Little Rock, AR) ★ Roland Park Elementary/Middle School (Baltimore, MD) ★ Romine Interdistrict Elementary School (Little Rock, AR) ★ Rose Linda Elementary School (Phoenix, AZ) ★ Ruston Elementary (Ruston, LA) ★ Sacaton Middle School (Sacaton, AZ) ★ Safford Engineering/Technology Magnet Middle (Tucson, AZ) ★ Salt River High School (Scottsdale, AZ) ★ Sam Rosen Elementary School (Fort Worth, TX) ★ School of Urban Planning and Architecture (SUPAR) (Milwaukee, WI) ★ SHARP (Mesa, AZ) ★ Shaw Butte Elementary (Phoenix, AZ) ★ Sierra Vista Elementary (Phoenix, AZ) ★ Simsboro High School (Simsboro, LA) ★ ixth Ward Elementary (Pearl River, LA) ★ South Elementary (Dillon, SC) ★ Southern Hills Elementary (Shreveport, LA) ★ Southgate Academy (Tucson, AZ) ★ Stephens Elementary School (Little Rock, AR) ★ Summer Grove Elementary (Shreveport, LA) ★ Sunnyslope Elementary School (Phoenix, AZ) ★ Supai Middle School (Scottsdale, AZ) ★ T. G. Barr (Phoenix, AZ) ★ Taylor Jr. High School (Mesa, AZ) ★ Tempe Accelerated High School (Tempe, AZ) ★ Tillicum Elementary (Lakewood, WA) ★ Tyee Park Elementary (Lakewood, WA) ★ Upper Merion Area High School (King of Prussia, PA) ★ V. H. Lassen (Phoenix, AZ) ★ Valley View Elementary School (Phoenix, AZ) ★ Vechij Himdag Alternative School, Inc. (Sacaton, AZ) ★ Vicki A. Romero Charter High School (Phoenix, AZ) ★ Vista de Sur Traditional School (Laveen, AZ) ★ Vista Verde Middle School (Phoenix, AZ) ★ Vivian Elementary-Middle Magnet (Vivian, LA) ★ Wakefield Elementary School (Little Rock, AR) ★ Waltersville School (Bridgeport, CT) ★ Washington Elementary School (Oshkosh, WI) ★ Watson Intermediate School (Little Rock, AR) ★ Werner Park Elementary (Shreveport, LA) ★ West Elementary School (Coolidge, AZ) ★ Western Valley Middle School (Phoenix, AZ) ★ Whispering Forest Elementary School (Slidell, LA) ★ Whiteriver Elementary School (Whiteriver, AZ) ★ Wick Elementary (Romulus, MI) ★ Williams Middle School (Florence, SC) ★ Wilson Elementary (Little Rock, AR) ★ Woodlawn Leadership Academy (Shreveport, LA) ★

**DISTRICTS (17 new members)** ★ Boone County Schools (Florence, KY) ★ Clover Park School District (Lakewood, WA) ★ Darlington County School District (Darlington, SC) ★ Florence County School District One (Florence, SC) ★ Florence County School District Three (Florence, SC) ★ Greendale School District (Greendale, WI) ★ Highland Park District (Highland Park, NJ) ★ Lincoln Consolidated School (Lincoln, AR) ★ Milwaukee Public Schools (Milwaukee, WI) ★ Neptune Township School District (Neptune, NJ) ★ Ontario-Montclair School District (Ontario, CA) ★ Pflugerville ISD (Pflugerville, TX) ★ Richland County School District One (Columbia, SC) ★ Roosevelt Elementary School District (Phoenix, AZ) ★ Saint Joseph School District (St. Joseph, MO) ★ Saint Louis Public Schools (Saint Louis, MO) ★ Sanders Unified School District #18 (Sanders, AZ) ★ West Valley School District (Spokane, WA) ★

**ORGANIZATIONS (6 new members)** ★ Alabama PIRC (Wetumpka, AL) ★ Global Partnership Schools (Laverne, CA) ★ In Reach, Inc. (Cheverly, MD) ★ Learning Leaders (New York, NY) ★ Metro Educational Cooperative Service Unit (St. Anthony, MN) ★ Pennsylvania PIRC (Camp Hill, PA) ★ The Community Foundation (Shreveport, LA) ★

**STATES (1 new member)** ★ Arizona Department of Education ★

Current Active Membership in the National Network of Partnership Schools as of April 15th, 2010  
Schools: 1176 Districts: 145 States: 25 Organizations: 64

## Elementary School Report

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### Create a Welcoming Climate for All Families

Every school's One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships includes a goal to strengthen the climate of partnerships. This is important because the other pages of the plan schedule family and community involvement activities that help increase students' academic success and improve behavior. In order for goal-linked practices to succeed, however, the school must be a welcoming place for all partners.

In NNPS, schools across the country are implementing many innovative activities to help all families feel welcome and to be partners in their children's education. The following are a few of many excellent practices featured in *Promising Partnership Practices 2009* that elementary schools have conducted to improve the partnership climate.

#### Movie Night Plus Learning

Movie nights are popular for bringing students, parents, teachers, and administrators together just for fun. **Parkside Elementary School** in La Vale, MD, held a Fall Movie Night to encourage positive home and school relationships and to increase students' skills. Classroom teachers compiled a set of academic activities—with a *Wizard of Oz* theme—for students to complete prior to the movie night. Children who completed the grade-appropriate activities received a coupon for free popcorn at the movies and their names on a Yellow Brick Road at the front of the school. Staff members, dressed as movie characters, welcomed families and provided participants with instructions for a team scarecrow-making exercise. After the creative activity, families watched *The Wizard of Oz* and enjoyed snacks provided by parents and local businesses.

#### Movie Special Focus: Fathers and Father Figures

Many elementary schools are working to create a welcoming climate specifically for fathers or other important males in students' lives. **John B. Cary Elementary School** in Hampton, VA, encouraged father involvement with My Day with "Dad!" This day-long triple-header invited fathers to select a time to come to school. In the morning, the guests and students had breakfast at 7:15 a.m. and spent 30 minutes eating and talking with teachers. In the afternoon, dads and kids enjoyed snacks, games, and talks with teachers, starting at 3:30 p.m. For those coming at 5:30 p.m., there was dinner and information on students' literacy learning. Fathers and father figures could decide whether some or all three activities fit their schedules.

Pasco, WA's **Emerson Elementary School** also welcomed fathers and father figures at Pizza for Papas. The principal and vice-principal greeted the 200 guests as they entered the school on an evening in March. The children demonstrated basketball skills learned in P.E. and dad's played too. After shooting some hoops, the participants ate pizza and chatted with other parents and teachers. The activity had an informal, relaxed atmosphere. In many cases, the evening served as the first face-to-face contact between fathers and teachers. As one Action Team chair noted, "Students came to school the next day talking about how much fun they had with their dads."

#### In and Out of School

The feeling of good partnerships grows with communications from school to home. **Robert Frost Elementary School** in Pasco, WA sent

Good News Postcards to families. To encourage positive communications, each teacher received mailing labels and post cards. Every week teachers wrote a positive note to a set of parents about their children's accomplishments. By the end of the year, every family received a good news postcard. One parent commented that her son "put his postcard in a picture frame and takes it out to show it off when company comes over."

**W.T. Cooke Elementary School**, in Virginia Beach, VA invited families to take a ride on the Polar Express for the holidays. The school's diverse population—including many families with low incomes and some who are homeless—were treated to holiday festivities. Parents and children entered the school, transformed into a winter wonderland, for an evening of storytelling, dinner, and holiday traditions. The Reading Specialist, dressed as a train conductor, read the *Polar Express*, by Chris van Allsburg, and showed the illustrations on a movie projector. Participants received "train tickets" and boarded school buses, disguised as the Polar Express, to see Virginia Beach's Lights at the Beach—an annual holiday display at the ocean. At the end of the evening, every child received a gift bag containing a candy cane, hot chocolate mix, and a silver bell. The Good News Postcards and the Polar Express illustrate how a welcoming school climate is strengthened by communications and activities at home and in the community. ♦

For more ideas on how all schools may create a welcoming climate of partnerships with all families, visit the NNPS website at <http://www.partnershipschools.org> and click on Success Stories.

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## Issues and Insights

### NNPS Professional Development Sequence

(Continued from page 2)

Prospective and new members may take all or some of the three steps by attending an NNPS conference in Baltimore, by arranging on-site training with an NNPS Facilitator, or by attending an NNPS web conference. The three steps—awareness, leadership training, and team training—will enable new NNPS members to get started quickly and move surely with well-planned partnership programs and plans for measurable progress and results.

#### Steps 4. Advanced Topics

Experienced members of NNPS will benefit from workshops on Advanced Topics to improve their leadership and programs of partnerships. Topics such as Involving Fathers, Engaging Families with Diverse Backgrounds, Improving Teamwork, Improving the Homework Process with TIPS Interactive

Homework, Evaluating Partnership Programs, and many others help districts and their schools reach more families and conduct involvement activities to increase student learning and success in school. Some Advanced Topics are offered at the NNPS Fall Leadership Development Conference or may be arranged with NNPS for on-site presentations. (For information on advanced topics, visit NNPS Workshops on the Road at <http://www.partnershipschools.org>, click on Professional Development, and follow links to workshops.

#### Which Professional Development Activities Do YOU Need?

Every school, district, state, and organization in NNPS is unique, but all members need to get a good start and keep up-to-date on partnerships with professional development that improves their programs and results.

NNPS Facilitators will contact every school, district, state, and organization in NNPS in monthly E-briefs and in individual phone conversations to discuss progress, assess next steps, and plan a professional development sequence that will build district and school leader' expertise and excellent partnership programs. ♦

#### HAVE YOU SAMPLED...?



**NNPS SAMPLERS**  
Research results & involvement  
in  
**READING**  
**MATH**  
**SCIENCE**  
Follow the links  
on the NNPS website.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Of 769 schools' **Action Teams for Partnerships** reporting progress in 2009...

32.9% in Central Cities  
30.6% in Small Cities/Towns  
20.0% in Suburban Areas  
18.7% in Rural Communities

**NNPS**  
serves a diverse  
network of schools  
and their  
students and families!

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## Middle and High Schools that PLAN Their Partnership Programs Keep Improving

(Continued from page 3)

wanted more parents to participate. Adopt-a-Team invited all interested parents to “adopt” one of the staff teams to show appreciation for the hard work that the faculty and staff do to teach, guide, and encourage students throughout the school year.

The activities show how middle and high schools plan and implement age-appropriate involvement activities linked to their school improvement goals. For more information on these and other effective practices in middle and high schools, visit <http://www.partnershipschools.org> and click on Success Stories. Also see Chapter 6 in the NNPS *Handbook for Action, Third Edition*: “Strengthen Partnership Pro-

grams in Middle and High Schools.”

If YOUR middle or high school planned and conducted a great activity to increase student success this year, submit your description for consideration for the next edition of *Promising Partnership Practices 2010* – Due May

1. See Submit a Practice at: <http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/ppp/submit.htm>.

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## New NNPS Fees

(Continued from page 1)

The recent grant that supported research on partnership program implementation enabled NNPS to subsidize costs to members. Now, NNPS must cover the real costs of its benefits and services, as indicated in the following fee structure.

### NEW MEMBERS

Starting July 1, 2010, schools, districts, states, and organizations will pay a one-time processing fee of \$400 to join NNPS and to receive all benefits and services. All new members will receive one copy of the *Handbook for Action*, the most recent copy of *Promising Partnership Practices*, E-copies of the semi-annual *Type 2* newsletters, monthly E-briefs, and E-Alerts on timely topics. All new members will be linked with an NNPS Facilitator for on-call phone and e-mail consultations to discuss NNPS tools and services that will help them plan their next steps to improve their partnership programs from their starting points.

### SPECIAL REPORTS

Starting July 1, 2010, renewing districts and organizations with at least 8 schools in NNPS may request a customized set of graphs of their own schools' UPDATE data to compare with all schools in NNPS (\$100). District leaders also may request NNPS to add a narrative report explaining their schools' data with suggestions for next steps for the district and its schools (\$200).

### NNPS WEB CONFERENCES

Starting July 1, 2010, NNPS web conferences will be offered to district, school, and other leaders with a registration fee of \$50 per site.

### RENEWING MEMBERS

Beginning with the 2011 UPDATE, all members will pay a common renewal fee of \$200 per year to remain active members of NNPS. Each year, active members will submit their annual UPDATE survey to evaluate the progress of their partnership program with their renewal fee. Active members will receive a copy of the new edition of *Promising Partnership Practices*, summary reports on UPDATE data from all schools and districts in NNPS, and all other NNPS benefits and services throughout the next school year.

### CONFERENCES AND INSTITUTES

Registration fees for NNPS conferences will change as hotel costs change from year to year. NNPS members will continue to receive discounts on conference registrations.

### SEQUENCE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

The new fee structure and planning sessions will be supported by an explicit sequence of NNPS professional development services to help new and continuing districts and schools improve their partnership programs. The sequence of workshops on (1) new directions in partnership program development, (2) basic training for district leaders, (3) basic training for schools' Action Teams for Partnerships, plus (4) options for professional development on advanced topics for high-quality partnership programs and results is discussed in Issues and Insights (see page 2 of this issue of *Type 2*).

## Data Show Progress

(Continued from page 7)

sional development to improve the homework process. They emphasized that teachers want to create more motivating assignments for students at all ability levels, help parents set schedules and conditions that support students' completion of homework, and improve parent-student interactions about homework. Even though improvements are needed, over 80% of the ATPs provided examples of successful homework assignments. These are summarized in the full report.

**Summary.** The 2009 District UPDATE data indicate that just about all districts in NNPS are working to improve their leadership on partnerships and their assistance to schools, but some are making more progress than others. Analyses of longitudinal data from district leaders are informative and encouraging. District Leaders for Partnerships who continued their work for at least two years showed improvements in the overall quality of their districts' partnership programs, with higher levels of facilitation of school programs for all six district leadership strategies, and higher levels of support from other district leaders and colleagues. The data confirmed results of prior analyses that indicated that district leaders who sustained their attention to partnerships from year to year improved their own leadership activities and assisted their schools in more and different ways.

Read the full summaries of 2009 UPDATE data from schools and districts in NNPS:

**Schools:** [http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/Research/09School\\_UPDATE\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/Research/09School_UPDATE_Summary.pdf)

**Districts:** [http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/Research/09District%20UPDATE\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/Research/09District%20UPDATE_Summary.pdf)



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## Partnership Calendar

### 2010

- April** Spring issue of *Type 2*.
- April** Invitation NNPS members to contribute to *Promising Partnership Practices 2010*. Due May 1.  
Eligible members will be invited to apply for NNPS Partnership Awards for 2010. Due June 30.
- April** Members will receive 2010 UPDATE in the mail. Due June 30 to renew NNPS membership for the 10-11 school year.
- May 1** Promising partnership practices submissions due for review for the 2010 collection.
- June (TBA)** Web Conference on Evaluating Partnerships Programs. For district, state and organization leaders to learn basic steps in evaluating the quality of district-level and school-based programs.
- June 30** 2010 UPDATE due to NNPS to renew membership for 10-11. NNPS will waive annual membership fees for all members who return UPDATE.
- June 30** Partnership Awards Applications due.
- September** Fall issue of *Type 2* - via e-mail and web site.
- October 26-27** Leadership Development Conference in Baltimore for new and experienced school, district, state, and organization leaders.

NNPS gratefully acknowledges support from

**MetLife Foundation**

### IMPORTANT NNPS DEADLINES COMING UP!

**SPOTLIGHT  
ONE BEST PRACTICE  
by MAY 1**

SUBMIT a best practice for consideration in **Promising Partnership Practices 2010**

**EVALUATE  
YOUR PROGRAM'S  
PROGRESS  
by JUNE 30**

Members before Dec.1 2009 must return an **UPDATE survey** to renew membership for the 2010-11 school year.

**SPOTLIGHT  
YOUR PROGRAM  
by JUNE 30**

Members in NNPS for two years or more may apply for a **Partnership Award**.

Watch the mail, monthly E-Briefs, and upcoming E-Alerts for these opportunities.  
Or, follow the links from the NNPS website at <http://www.partnershipschools.org>.