

# 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, 2012 No. 32

## I n T h i s I s s u e

Issues and Insights	2
Leadership Line	3
Meeting the Challenge	4
Middle and High School Report	5
Research Brief - UPDATE Data	6
New Members	8
Elementary School Report	9
Research Brief - Early Learning	11
NNPS Calendar	12

## Data Show NNPS Schools and Districts Are Moving in the Right Direction

Over 550 schools and 64 districts evaluated their work and progress on the NNPS 2011 *UPDATE* surveys. These sites conducted end-of-year evaluations because they know it is important to chart progress, note challenges, and plan improvements in their programs of school, family, and community partnerships. They also renewed their membership (with matching funds from NNPS) to continue receiving NNPS services and publications through the 2011-12 school year.

### DISTRICTS IN NNPS

In 2011, districts in NNPS were located in large cities (29%), small cities (19%), suburban (32%), and rural (19%) areas in 21 states and Ontario, Canada. They varied in size from 1 school to over 240 schools serving from 660 to over 240,000 students. Families spoke from one to over 100 different languages, with an average of 39 languages within districts.

The 2011 *District UPDATE* asked leaders to identify a *portrait* of the quality of their partnership programs ranging from initial to advanced stages of program development. A few district leaders rated their program quality *low* (about 11% were in a “planning year” or “just beginning”). Over half rated their programs as *average* (48% had a “good start” or “good program”). The remaining respondents reported their partnership program quality as *high* (41% had a “very good” or “excellent” program). Program quality varied based on districts’ starting points when they joined NNPS

and different investments in time, funds, support, and program activities.

NNPS guides district leaders to (1) organize their offices and conduct leadership activities that establish a “culture of  
(Continued on page 6)

### Two New NNPS Resources Give Ideas for School Programs

NNPS published two new resources—a book and a collection of nine booklets—to help schools improve their partnership programs. District and state leaders also will find these resources useful for guiding schools’ ATPs toward more equitable and goal-linked partnership programs.

**New Book.** *Multicultural Partnerships Involve All Families* (by Hutchins, Greenfeld, Epstein, Sanders, and Galindo, Eye on Education, March 2012) is an essential resource for all elementary and middle schools that serve culturally and linguistically diverse families. The book includes a short review of research on multicultural partnerships, guidelines for effective implementations, and three sections on Multicultural Family Nights, Workshops for Parents, and Curriculum Connections.

Each section includes three chapters with practical and enjoyable strategies, including some that were designed and tested in NNPS schools. Each chapter will help schools raise awareness of the strengths of all cultures and engage more and dif-

(Continued on page 10)

# Issues and Insights

Joyce L. Epstein  
Director

## NNPS Solves the Policy Predicament: Not just WHAT to do, but HOW to do it well!

Reporter Sean Cavanagh looked back and looked ahead to the reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)* and section 1118 on school, family, and community partnerships. In his article, *Parental Engagement Proves No Easy Goal* (*Education Week*, April 4, 2012, p. 1), Cavanagh interviewed several leaders who praised and criticized the current law.

**Good Points/Bad Points.** Among the good points, people praised the important goal of increasing family involvement in children's education. In addition, I would commend the current law for requiring "nested leadership" and actions by state, district, and school leaders to ensure that all parents are engaged in their children's education in ways that support student achievement and success in school. For example, Section 1118 recognized, expanded, and specified responsibilities of district leaders to help all schools build capacities to work with all students' families.

Among the criticisms, some who were interviewed said that the law was too focused on "compliance," was too directive, and that funds for parental involvement were poorly allocated. The law does not give clear guidance to districts or schools on what to do to develop their partnership programs. Others noted that, too often, parental involvement remains an "add on" or after-thought to school improvement initiatives—not a strategic, well-planned, and evaluated program that supports students, families, and school goals. These criticisms are true, but policies tend to tell people *what to do* not *how to do it*.

**The NNPS Way.** NNPS focuses explicitly on *how* to help schools, districts, states and organizations build their expertise—their capacities—to fulfill the letter and the spirit of the law. The *EdWeek* reporter talked with Dr. Steven Sheldon, NNPS Research Director, and with me. We extended his front page story by describing how NNPS guides

district leaders, school-based action teams, and others to strengthen and sustain goal-linked partnership programs and practices that contribute to student success in school. The reporter described NNPS as *an organization that helps school leaders engage parents in creative and focused ways*. He shared our views and hot-linked readers to the NNPS website, where visitors will see the work of members of NNPS in annual books of *Promising Partnership Practices* and in descriptions of the NNPS Partnership Award winners.

**Creative and Focused Work.** The good work by NNPS members is in contrast to the ineffective piecemeal and un-evaluated activities that still characterize family and community involvement in many places. The summaries of 2011 UPDATE data (p. 1+ in this issue of *Type 2*) show that school teams and district leaders are using NNPS's research-based tools, training, and materials to strengthen their leadership, teamwork, plans, and actions to reach more families in noteworthy ways.

Further, the exemplary practices in the new NNPS book, *Multicultural Partnerships Involve All Families*, and in new *Samplers* that draw from many years of NNPS schools' reports in *Promising Partnership Practices* confirm the reporter's description. NNPS is, indeed, an organization that encourages creative and focused work on partnerships.

When *ESEA* is reauthorized, it will, again, tell districts and schools *to do* more to engage families and communities in students' learning. NNPS will remain an important resource for those who want to know *how to* do this work well.

---

The full article is on the Education Week website for subscribers (<http://www.edweek.org>) and was reproduced by Philadelphia Public School's at: <http://www.thenotebook.org/blog/124719/no-child-left-behind-and-parental-engagement>

### District Leaders Communicate with Schools to Improve their Partnership Programs

District leaders not only need a vision and policy on school, family, and community partnerships, but also must communicate—intentionally, consistently, and effectively—with school-based Action Teams for Partnerships. The professional development and on-going technical assistance that District Leaders for Partnerships provide can help all schools' Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) plan and implement activities that engage families and community partners in ways that contribute to students' success in school.

#### District Leaders Become Experts on Partnerships

Research shows that strong district-level leadership for partnerships adds significantly to the quality of schools' programs of family and community involvement—over and above what a school may do on its own (Epstein, Galindo, & Sheldon, 2011). When expert district leaders prepare ATPs and facilitate their work and progress, the schools conduct more outreach activities, address more challenges to involve all families, and have higher quality partnership programs.

The strongest district leaders communicate in various ways to advance the work of their schools' ATPs. They may start by communicating with all schools about the importance of using research-based approaches in practice to strengthen family and community involvement. They may continue by providing NNPS-based team training workshops, helping school teams understand the functions of the six types of involvement, and communicating with each principal about his/her support for the work of school's

ATP. On-going connections and advanced training workshops help schools' ATPs to strengthen their capacities to work effectively with their own students' families.

#### Good Communications by District Leaders

Here are a few of many examples of district leaders' communications with schools' ATPs to help them improve their partnership programs.

#### Help ATP Co-Chairs Build Leadership Skills

District Leaders for Partnerships in **Pasco School District** in Washington work together to provide on-going professional development to all schools' ATPs. The district leaders recognize that the Co-Chairs of ATPs have important responsibilities and need on-going guidance and encouragement to lead their school teams. In 2011, the district leaders selected the theme of *Empowering and Developing Leaders*.

At quarterly cluster meetings, the district leaders not only asked school leaders to share best practices, but also conducted engaging activities that helped the ATP Co-Chairs learn new approaches to communicate clearly with team members and to delegate tasks to share leadership with other team members for activities at their schools.

#### Customize Technical Assistance to Meet Schools' Needs

Leaders for Partnerships in **Naperville Community District 203** in Illinois noticed that after the initial

team training workshops, the school-based partnership teams began to move forward at different rates. Some teams made swifter progress than others. The variation in the schools' work and progress meant that District Leaders for Partnerships needed to provide small group workshops to help schools meet specific challenges or address questions they were facing at the time. This makes the guidance to schools more meaningful, as the school teams or chairpersons are spending time on issues that matter to them. The content of customized workshops should help each school take next steps in strengthening teamwork, reaching out to more families, and connecting involvement activities with results for students.

#### Communicate in Multi-Languages

Today, many if not most schools serve families who speak many languages other than English at home. According to the latest UPDATE survey, an average of 4.7 languages are spoken by students and families in NNPS schools, and many schools have even more diverse populations. Federal, state, and local policies require schools to communicate with all students' families in languages they understand. This remains a challenge in many places.

**Madison Metropolitan School District** in Wisconsin serves culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students. There, District Leaders for Partnerships are working with others to strengthen connections with the families of English Language Learners through the *Intercambio Language and Cultural Exchange Program*.

(Continued on page 10)

# Meeting the Challenge

Steven B. Sheldon  
Director of Research

## Evaluate to Improve Your School's Partnership Program and Practices

The key to a strong and successful partnership program is persistence and continuous improvement. Strong programs of school, family, and community partnerships are not born as such, but develop over time. To keep a school's program moving in the right direction, the Action Team for Partnership (ATP) needs to follow an *evaluation process* to monitor the success of efforts to engage family and community partners in children's education.

Data from the annual *UPDATE* surveys show that of the four major NNPS program components (Teamwork, Written Plans Using the Six Types of Involvement, Implementation of Plans, and Evaluation), ATPs are least likely to evaluate the quality of the partnership activities that they implement (Hutchins & Sheldon, 2012).

It is important to meet the challenge of evaluating partnership programs. A strong evaluation shows whether and how well a program's goals have been met, how well a program has been implemented, and where a program needs to improve (Owen, 2007). Finally, conducting an evaluation sends the message that the program is a serious effort and important to the school (Weiss, 1998).

### Tool to Evaluate Each Activity

To help schools evaluate their programs and practices, NNPS offers members numerous resources. For example, in the third edition of *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action*, we provide a template for the *Annual Evaluation of Activities* that guides ATPs to reflect on and assess the quality of each partnership activity that is implemented throughout the school year (Epstein & Sheldon, 2009).

### Annual UPDATES to Evaluate Program Progress

The annual *UPDATE* survey is another

evaluation tool that helps members of NNPS assess program quality and consider next steps. *UPDATE* must be completed at the end of each school year and returned to NNPS to renew membership for the next school year. *UPDATE* surveys are designed to provide feedback on the essential elements of strong partnership programs.

At the school level, the ATP should complete *UPDATE* as a team at one of the final ATP meetings of the school year (e.g., in May or June). By discussing each section of *UPDATE*, team members share their views on how well the ATP established the core elements of a partnership program and how well practices were implemented. The ATP assesses how well the school is attending to challenges that may inhibit some families from getting involved in their children's schooling. The team reviews how much support the ATP received from stakeholders in the school community (e.g., teachers, administrators, staff, families, and community members), and the kinds and quality of support for partnerships from the district. By completing *UPDATE*, ATP members can identify areas to continue or improve in the next One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships.

### Use Data to Plan Next Steps

Schools also may compare their progress on school, family, and community partnerships with other schools in NNPS. Each winter, NNPS compiles, analyzes, and reports the *UPDATE* survey data from schools across the country. The 2011 report is on the NNPS website (<http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/Research/index.htm>). Schools may compare their responses on *UPDATE* with those from other schools in NNPS, all of which are working to improve programs of family and community involvement.

Evaluating programs, practices, and progress on partnerships need not be confusing. We encourage NNPS members to contact

(Continued on page 10)



## Middle and High School Report

---

### Prepare Students for Brighter Futures: Family and Community Involvement in Plans for College and Careers

Preparing students for college or a career may begin as early as kindergarten. Career awareness in the early grades develops students' understanding of opportunities that are "out there" for them. Students may develop interests, skills, and talents that influence them to graduate from high school and plan for their futures.

Most serious plans for college or careers are made at the high school level. Educators in secondary schools must remember that parents and community members are important stakeholders in students' education and in students' plans for the future. Studies show that teens are more likely to go to their parents than to other adults (including school counselors) for advice about college or career planning (Bartini & Hesel, 2007). Yet, parents report that they do not have the information they need to advise their teens about the preparation and actions needed to apply for postsecondary education programs.

Researchers also found that IF high schools conducted postsecondary-planning activities (e.g., workshops for parents on credits needed for high school graduation, or on financial aid options), THEN more parents talked with their teens about preparing for college (Simon, 2004). This finding fits neatly with NNPS guidelines for high schools to organize age-appropriate, goal-oriented programs and practices of family and community involvement.

Here are a few important strategies from past years' books of *Promising Partnership Practices* conducted by schools' Action Teams for Partnerships (ATP). The activities may be used or adapted by middle and high

schools to involve parents and the community with students on planning for postsecondary education.

#### Discuss Options for Postsecondary Education

**Pulaski High School**, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin partnered with representatives from over 70 organizations to share resources at the *Life after High School: College and Career Fair*. Over 550 students and more than 180 parents and others from the community visited booths for information on careers in healthcare, firefighting, law enforcement, the military, and other fields. Two-year and four-year colleges and technical schools from the area also presented information on programs in engineering, graphic arts and design, aviation, technology, and other fields. The event not only shared local resources, but also encouraged students to stay in school so their dreams for the future could become realities.

#### Partner with the Community for Student Internships

Some high schools work with community partners to develop internship programs. **Bridgeton High School** in Bridgeton, New Jersey implemented a *Business Partnership Breakfast* for students to share the projects and accomplishments in the school's career placement program. Students made PowerPoint presentations on their projects in marketing, entrepreneurship, computer design, and engineering. Then, 20 community partners enjoyed breakfast and offered feedback to the students about their projects. One local bank owner offered several students summer internships and other leaders conducted a mini-job-

fair for graduating seniors.

#### Inform Parents and Students about College Applications

Applying for college can be a logistical nightmare for students and their families. Many parents may be unaware of important deadlines that their teens must meet. **Mullins High School** in South Carolina and **Naperville North High School** in Illinois addressed this challenge. At Mullins, the ATP held a *Financial Aid Workshop* for parents and adolescents to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) right there.

The evening moved from information to action. At Naperville North, the School Family Community Partnership (SFCP) team responded to families' questions about college preparation by developing the *College and Career Guide*. This booklet included a month-by-month checklist for college and career planning; an outline for a student resume; a college application organizer; tips for writing an effective essay; and financial aid information. Every Naperville North student received a copy of the booklet at the beginning of the school year.

#### NNPS Sampler on College and Careers

Career awareness and postsecondary planning for college or careers can be addressed in age-appropriate ways at all grade levels in comprehensive programs of school, family, and community partnerships. NNPS offers a new resource to help schools conduct postsecondary activities and initiatives. *A Sampler—Ready for College and Careers: Family and Community Involvement in Postsecondary Planning—*

(Continued on page 11)

### UPDATA Data Show Schools and Districts Are Moving in the Right Direction

(Continued from page 1)

partnerships” throughout the district and (2) facilitate school-based Action Teams for Partnerships so that every school has the capacity to work well with its students’ families in ways that support student learning and success in school.

**District-Level Leadership** Nearly 80% of the district leaders conducted staff development on partnerships and more reported that they reviewed district policy (83%), disseminated best practices (86%), and conducted workshops for parents (89%). Fewer (64%) developed a section on the district website on partnerships to provide and exchange information with parents. This percentage was higher than in past years, indicating leadership moving in the right direction.

**Facilitate Schools’ ATPs** Among many measures of how district leaders guided school-based ATPs, this year over 80% met with school principals to discuss their partnership programs and support for their ATPs, and helped schools understand the six types of involvement, write action plans, and address challenges to engage all families. Figure 1 shows that more district leaders collected ATPs plans in 2011 (87%) than in 2010 (74%), and more helped schools evaluate progress in 2011 (81%) than in 2010 (61%). These actions enable district leaders to take purposeful steps to build their schools’ capacities to work with family and community partners.

**Importance of Evaluation** A new measure this year—*Emphasis on Evaluation* (7 items,  $\alpha = .71$ )—was significantly and positively associated with other program qualities. Districts that evaluated their own and their schools’ partnership programs conducted more district-leadership activities ( $r = .483$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and more actively facilitated

their schools’ ATPs ( $r = .474$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The overall quality of district programs was correlated with the number of years districts worked with NNPS ( $r = .420$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The results reveal a *constellation of leadership measures* that build strong partnership programs at the district and school levels over time.

It is important to note that the demographics of districts (i.e., percent of students receiving free or reduced-price meals and the number of languages spoken by students’ parents) were *not* significantly associated with the overall quality of districts’ partnership programs. The data show that in NNPS, district leaders in all communities and their schools can strengthen their knowledge and skills to conduct more effective and more equitable partnership programs.

The full report also includes district leaders’ reports on funding, their schools’ progress, change resulting from their efforts, and questions about persistent challenges.

#### SCHOOLS IN NNPS

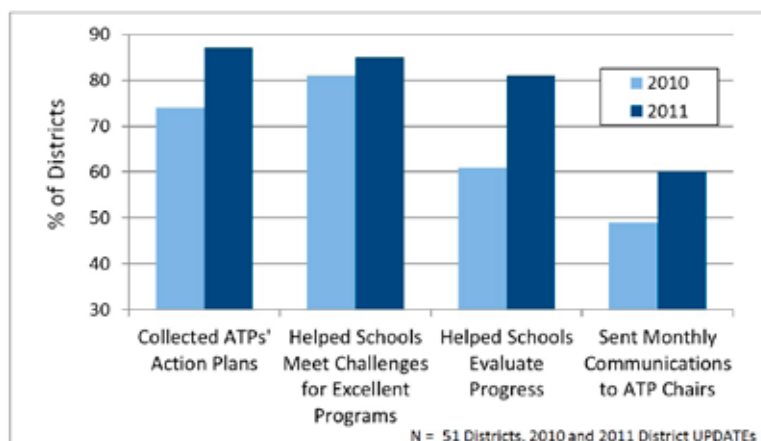
Over 550 schools reported their

work and progress on partnership program development. The schools were located in urban, suburban, and rural districts. Most were elementary schools (84%), with some middle (10%) and high schools (3%). Most schools (79%) received school-wide or targeted Title I funds. Students were from varied racial and cultural backgrounds, and families spoke an average of 4.7 languages within schools.

About 12% of schools were planning or just beginning their programs. About 10% reported excellent and sustainable programs. The rest were in middle stages of average-to-good development.

**General Patterns** In 2011, most schools’ ATPs implemented the basic structures and processes recommended by NNPS, and many moved on to advanced outreach activities to engage more and different parents with their students’ on activities for the six types of involvement. For example, over 85% of the schools had an ATP and wrote a One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships. Most ATPs (86%) reported strong support from their principals for their work to engage families and community partners.

Figure 1: Change in District Leaders’ Support for ATPs to Advance their School-Based Partnership Programs, 2010 and 2011



Schools that had high quality partnership programs also made AYP in 2011, after controlling for school level and the % of students receiving free or reduced price meals ( $r=.159$ ,  $p<.001$ ;  $b=.139$ ,  $p<.004$ ). This is not a causal pattern because it is based on cross-sectional data, but it is an encouraging indicator that there is a robust connection of the quality of partnership programs and schools' progress on state test scores.

At all school levels, ATPs in districts that were members of NNPS reported receiving more help on partnerships from their district leaders than did schools not in NNPS-member districts. This finding supports other NNPS research that indicated that district leaders significantly helped schools to improve the quality of their partnership programs.

The data also showed that schools need to keep improving their partnership programs. Most schools need timely guidance to evaluate progress. Many ATPs need more funds for activities in their One-Year Action Plans for Partnerships. More than half the ATPs need to systematize their schedules so that they meet monthly to ensure that activities are planned, implemented, and evaluated successfully. Although many schools made good progress in communicating with parents in languages they understand, most schools reported only "fair" progress in ensuring that families with diverse backgrounds were represented on school committees and in engaging fathers in their children's education. Solving challenges to reach all families is an ongoing agenda in all elementary, middle, and high schools.

**Grade level differences** As in the past, elementary and K-8 schools implemented more partnership program components than did middle

and high schools, addressed more challenges to reach all families, and had higher quality programs overall. Interestingly, secondary schools' ATPs (86%) were more likely than elementary and K-8 schools (75%) to say that their district leaders' technical assistance on partnerships helped them improve their programs. This may reflect the earlier stages of secondary schools' initiatives.

**Longitudinal data patterns** Data from 383 schools that reported *UPDATE* data in 2010 and 2011 showed that schools that *maintained* or *improved* the quality of their programs implemented more activities to engage families and communities, had more support from their districts, had ATPs that were supported by more teachers at the school, and used more NNPS materials and services than did schools that declined in quality over time, as shown in Figure 2.

The full report also includes ATPs' data on teamwork, implementations, support from teachers and from district leaders, funding, and responses from families.

## SUMMARY

The 2011 *UPDATE* data confirmed

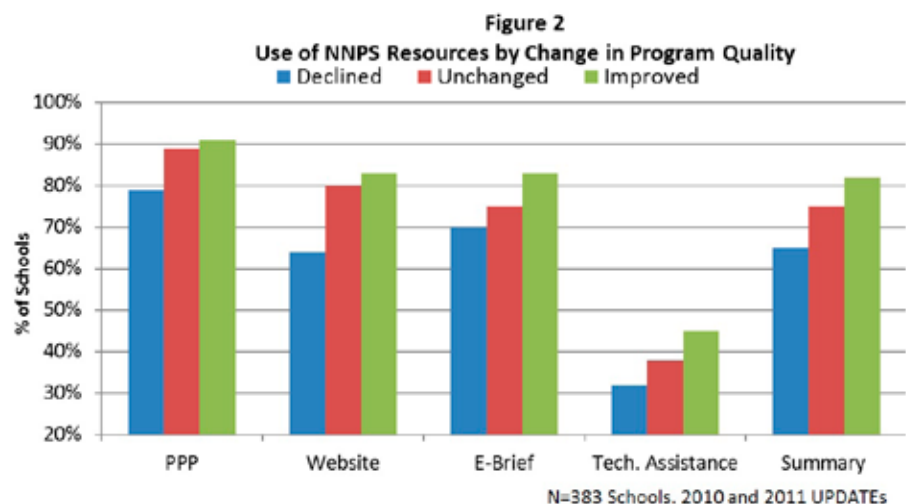
that, overall, districts and schools in NNPS were working to implement key components of effective partnership programs. Most district leaders and many schools were conducting basic and advanced activities to engage families and community partners in ways that would improve the school climate and increased student success. The 2011 *UPDATE* data indicate that district leaders and schools in very diverse communities were moving in the right direction by using research-based approaches to improve their programs of family and community involvement.

## Full Reports

Epstein, J. L. & Ganss, J. (2012). *Summary 2011 District Data*. Baltimore: National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins University.

Hutchins, D. J. & Sheldon, S. B. (2012). *Summary 2011 School Data*. Baltimore: National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins University.

The full reports are at [www.partnershipschoools.org](http://www.partnershipschoools.org) in the section Research and Evaluation. Click on Research Summaries and 2011 *UPDATE* Data.



# Our Growing Network

New Members in NNPS since November 1, 2011

**SCHOOLS (17 new members)** ★ Booker T. Washington High School (Miami, FL) ★ Broadmoor Middle School (Baton Rouge, LA) ★ Charles R. Drew Middle School (Miami, FL) ★ Dever-McCormack K-8 School (Dorchester, MA) ★ George Ross Elementary School (Lancaster, PA) ★ George Washington Elementary School (Lancaster, PA) ★ Hahira Elementary School (Hahira, GA) ★ Halecreek Elementary School (Romulus, MI) ★ Integrated Arts Academy (Burlington, VT) ★ J. P. McCaskey High School (Lancaster, PA) ★ Jackson Middle School (Champlin, MN) ★ Miami Edison Middle School (Miami, FL) ★ Rio Rico High School (Rio Rico, AZ) ★ The English High School (Jamaica Plain, MA) ★ TRECA Digital Academy (Marion, OH) ★ Wheatland Middle School (Lancaster, PA) ★

**DISTRICTS (4 New Members)** ★ Allamuchy Township School District (Allamuchy, NJ) ★ Community School District 14 (Brooklyn, NY) ★ Eloy Elementary School District #11 (Eloy, AZ) ★ Rangely School District (Rangely, CO) ★

**ORGANIZATIONS/UNIVERSITY PARTNERS (2 new members)** ★ Accord Institute for Education Research (Westminster, CA) ★ Schools Industry Partnership (New South Wales, Australia) ★

Current Active Membership in the National Network of Partnership Schools as of April 15, 2012

**Schools: 760**

**Districts: 88**

**States: 12**

**Organizations: 37**

## CONGRATULATIONS!

These schools' activities are featured in the new NNPS book:

*Multicultural Partnerships Involve All Families.*

Featured School	District/State	Activity to Involve ALL Families
El Rancho Elementary School	Chino Valley Unified, CA (school now consolidated)	Workshop for Parents: Celebrate Our Differences
Highwood Hills Elementary School	St. Paul Public Schools, MN	Family Night: Arts Extravaganza
Isaac Stevens Middle School	Pasco School District, WA	Curriculum Connections: Amacca Museum
L'Etoile du Nord French Immersion School	St. Paul Public Schools, MN	Curriculum Connections: Understand Culture & Identify Through Family Artifacts
Patterson High School	Baltimore City Public Schools, MD	Workshops for Parents: International Parent Workshops
Ranch View Elementary School	Naperville Community Schools District 203, IL	Workshop for Parents: Open the Windows to Writing
Roger Wolcott Early Childhood Center	Windsor Public Schools, CT	Curriculum Connections: Hooked on Books
Ruth Livingston Elementary School	Pasco School District, WA	Family Night: Games from Around the World
Saeger Middle School	Francis Howell School District, St. Charles, MO.	Family Night: Celebration of Nations

The following NNPS schools also are cited in the book for their multicultural partnership activities:  
Grove Elementary School, Wisconsin Rapids, WI; Highlands Elementary School, Naperville, IL,  
McLoughlin Middle School, Pasco, WA; and Meadow Glens Elementary school, Naperville, IL.



### Follow Paths of Influence to Improve Students' Attitudes and Achievements in Science

Research shows that involving families and the community in children's education contributes to academic success in school. At the elementary school level, it is extremely important to engage families and the community in ways that contribute to student learning. Students still are dependent on their parents and educators know that parents are strong influences in their children's lives.

Although this is true, it is important to understand how family and community involvement activities affect student achievement in specific subjects. Many variables contribute to students' success or failure in school. First, student learning is mainly influenced by excellent teaching every day in class. Second, for family involvement to affect student achievement, the activities must establish several "*paths of influence*." For example, a parent may attend a workshop or enjoy a subject-specific family night with their child. Then, the parent must absorb useful information and conduct follow up discussions or activities at home to encourage and enable the student to develop positive attitudes and increase skills in a specific subject.

#### Interim and Ultimate Outcomes

At any point—from the design and implementation of an activity to interim outcomes for parents to ultimate outcomes for students—the influence path for student learning may be broken. The miracle is that well-planned, goal-linked partnership programs can help connect all of the dots and carry the student toward better learning and more positive attitudes about school.

The point is that it takes more than

*Muffins for Moms, Donuts for Dads, and Granolas for Grands* to increase student report card grades and achievement test scores in any subject. As Action Teams for Partnerships develop plans for family and community involvement to support student learning, the team should check available data to determine students' starting skills. Then, it will be possible to monitor results over time of (1) *interim outcomes*, such as how well an activity is implemented, and whether and how parents participate at school or at home and (2) *ultimate outcomes*, such as how students' attitudes, report card grades, or achievement test scores change over time due to good classroom teaching and to parents' participation with students on goal-linked involvement activities.

#### Paths of Influence to Science Learning

Here is an example from *Promising Partnership Practices 2011* of how one school began to develop paths of influence to improve students' attitudes about science, parents' responses and interactions with students about science, and students' science report card grades and achievement test scores.

**Church Hill Elementary School** in Maryland conducted *Snowy Science Night* to help more students develop positive attitudes about science and increase science learning measured on state science achievement tests. Children and their parents explored several

science stations focused on the formation of snowflakes, understanding symmetry to create snowflake patterns, testing three kinds of salt for effects on melting snow, and other snow-related topics. The local arboretum set up two tables of activities with interesting facts, figures, and graphics of how rodents live in tunnels under the snow through the winter, how to find and identify animal footprints in the snow, and other "cool" wintery facts. One teacher observed, "Students were actively engaged, thinking, and finding out that learning can be fun."

At the Snowy Science Night, parents were introduced to the skills students need to be successful on tests, including as reading and following directions, completing tasks, keeping students engaged, and how the school uses an integrated approach to instructing the students. The students used these skills with parents as they conducted the various science activities.

With the principal's support, teachers will continue to engage families and community partners to increase students' interests and achievements in science. They will monitor students' report card grades and state science test scores over time.

Brenda G. Thomas  
bthomas@csos.jhu.edu

Follow the paths of influence for science learning...

Quality of a school activity on a specific learning goal (e.g., science)

→→→ response(s) from parents

→→→ parents' interactions with students

→→→ students' attitudes, motivation to learn, attention in class, homework completion

→→→ higher report card grades and subject-specific test scores.

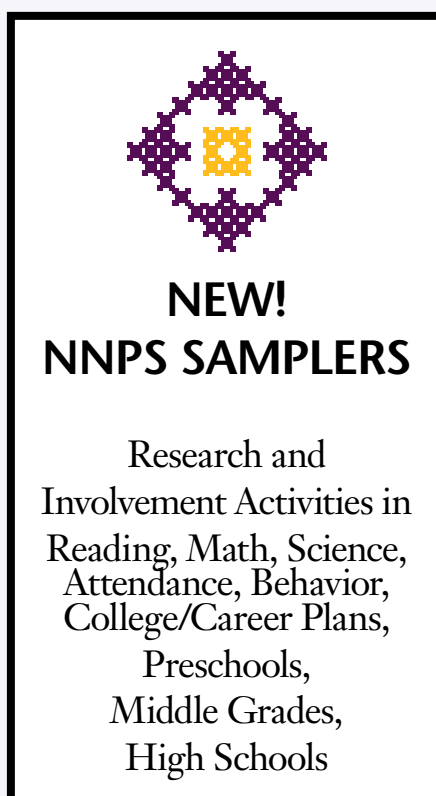
## Two New NNPS Resources Give Ideas for School Programs

(Continued from page 1)

ferent families (indeed, all families) in their children's education. Each chapter provides step-by-step descriptions for conducting the activities and handouts or communications in English and in Spanish. Many of these are "downloadable" for easy printing at no cost from the publisher's website with the purchase of the book. To review the book, go to: [www.eyeeoneeducation.com](http://www.eyeeoneeducation.com). NNPS members receive a 10% discount if they use the code MULTIFAM with their orders.

**New Samplers.** Nine booklets of research and practical ideas for improving partnership programs and for focusing on goals for student success are posted on the NNPS website and are available in print form. The *Samplers* (by Marsha Greenfeld and colleagues, NNPS, March 2012) present ways to engage families and the community to help students improve *Reading, Math, and Science* skills, *Attendance, Behavior*, and *College/Career Plans*, and to help *Preschools, Middle Level Schools, and High Schools* improve their partnership programs.

Each *Sampler* describes the importance of family and community involvement for the selected topic or goal and includes a summary of related research. Each booklet features ten basic and creative activities—such as family nights, workshops, volunteer activities, and student work—that have been implemented by members of NNPS and reported over the years in annual collections of *Promising Partnership Practices*. Because there are, now, over 1200 activities in the annual books, it should help school and district leaders to have a sample of ten activities to adopt or adapt for their diverse communities. The nine booklets of research and involvement activities are posted at [NNPS Samplers](#). Packets of print copies also are available (see order form on the website).



## Leadership Line

(Continued from page 3)

Madison's goals are three-fold: (1) To improve communications among parents and teachers; (2) to help educators learn about families' cultures so that culturally-responsive teaching practices will make classwork more meaningful, and (3) to increase students' literacy achievement.

See these and other district and organization leadership activities to communicate with district colleagues and with school teams are in each edition of *Promising Partnership Practices* at [www.partnershipschoools.org](http://www.partnershipschoools.org) in the section Success Stories.

### References

Epstein, J. L., Galindo, C. & Sheldon, S. B. (2011). Levels of leadership: Effects of district and school leaders on the quality of school programs of family and community involvement. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 47, 462-495.

Marsha G. Greenfeld  
[mgreenfeld@jhu.edu](mailto:mgreenfeld@jhu.edu)

## Meeting the Challenge

(Continued from page 4)

an NNPS facilitator or researcher to discuss their school's *UPDATE* data, the year's progress, and next steps for improving their program of family and community involvement.

### References

Epstein, J. L., & Sheldon, S. B. (2009). Evaluate your partnership program. Chapter 9, pp. 330-341, in *School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action, third edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Hutchins, D. J. & Sheldon, S. B. (2012). *Summary 2011 school data*. Baltimore: National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University.  
Owen, J. M. (2007). *Program evaluation: Forms and approaches, 3rd edition*. Guilford: New York, NY.

Weiss, C. H. (1998). Have we learned anything new about the use of evaluation? *American Journal of Evaluation*, 19, 21 – 33.

## Research Brief

### School and Home Connections Affect Children's Kindergarten Achievement Gains

There is ample evidence that, from the earliest grades on, home and school have important independent and combined influences on student learning and development. Research, however, has been less explicit about the extent to which schools' *outreach* activities promote family involvement and whether and how outreach efforts are related to student outcomes. To address these issues, Dr. Claudia Galindo (University of Maryland-Baltimore County) and Dr. Steven Sheldon (NNPS Director of Research) analyzed data from a nationally representative sample of kindergarten children and their families (16,425 students from 864 schools).

#### Outreach Matters

The research team found that, on average:

- (1) Schools' outreach to communicate with and engage families predicted greater family involvement in school.
- (2) Family involvement at school and parents' educational expectations for their children were associated with students' gains in reading and math achievement in kindergarten.
- (3) Schools' outreach to families was associated, directly, with student achievement in reading and math at the end of kindergarten.
- (4) Family involvement at school partially explained how school outreach to families is translated into children's math and reading achievement in kindergarten.

#### Starting in the Early Grades

The study shows that, even after controlling for family and student background variables including students' prior (fall) achievement, schools' invitations and encouragement for family involvement affected parents' involvement at school, which influenced student learning in reading and math by the end of kindergarten.

Future studies will be needed to investigate the mechanisms by which school outreach directly affects student learning. It may be, for example, that schools with stronger outreach efforts also have a more positive school climate where more parents feel welcome and more students experience support for learning. Students in these schools, then, may gain in reading and math skills, whether their own parents are involved at school or in other ways at home.

The findings confirm the importance of school outreach and family involvement for improving students' reading and math achievement from the beginning of children's school careers. The results also suggest that educators could increase more students' learning by communicating with all families and by organizing activities and opportunities that encourage all families to become involved in their children's education.

From: Galindo, C., & Sheldon, S. B. (2012). School and home connections and children's kindergarten achievement gains: The mediating role of family involvement. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 27, 90-103.

#### REGISTER NOW!

### NNPS Leadership Development Conference

**OCTOBER 11-12, 2012**

Attendees say, "Best professional development for programs of family and community involvement!"

New members learn "the basics" to organize your school, district, state, or organization partnership program.

Experienced members choose from 20 concurrent sessions to advance knowledge and skills in leadership and program development.

See the conference brochure, agenda, and registration materials on the NNPS website, [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org). Follow the links from the homepage to the fall conference.

**We hope to see you in Baltimore!**

### Middle and High School Report

(Continued from page 3)

includes a review of research and 10 promising partnership practices on the topic for elementary, middle, and high schools. For more information about this resource, visit the NNPS website at [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org) and follow the links to the Samplers from the home page.

#### References

Bartini, M., & Hesel, R. A. (2007). *Student poll, volume 6 #1: High school students want parents to be more involved in college planning*. Retrieved 11-29-11 from [http://www.collegeboard.com/about/news\\_info/report.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/about/news_info/report.html).

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

Darcy J. Hutchins  
[dhutchins@jhu.edu](mailto:dhutchins@jhu.edu)



## Partnership Calendar

2012

National Network of Partnership Schools  
Johns Hopkins University  
2701 North Charles Street, Suite 300  
Baltimore, Maryland 21218  
tel: 410-516-8800 fax: 410-516-8890  
e-mail: [nnps@csos.jhu.edu](mailto:nnps@csos.jhu.edu)  
website: [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org)

Director: Joyce L. Epstein  
Director of Research: Steven B. Sheldon  
Senior Program Facilitators:  
Marsha D. Greenfeld, Darcy J. Hutchins  
Brenda G. Thomas  
Senior Advisor: Mavis G. Sanders  
Network Coordinator: Jenn Ganss  
Website Developer & *Type 2*: Liz Gubernatis

*Type 2* is a semi-annual publication of the National Network of Partnership Schools. It is distributed to members at no charge and may be copied for Action Teams for Partnerships, district or state staffs, and others. Research and development are supported, in part by a grant from MetLife Foundation to the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University. The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the policies of the funding organization. © 2012

- April** Spring issue of *Type 2*, #32 via E-Alert and website.
- April** Invitation for NNPS members to contribute to *Promising Partnership Practices 2012*. Due May 15.
- Eligible members will be invited to apply for **NNPS Partnership Awards** for 2012. Due June 30.
- April** Members will receive **2012 UPDATE** in the mail. Due June 30 with renewal fee (\$200) for NNPS membership for the 12-13 school year.
- May 15** Promising partnership practices **submissions due** for review for the 2012 collection.
- June 30** **2012 UPDATE due** to NNPS to renew membership for 12-13. NNPS will pay a matching sum (\$200) for all renewals.
- June 30** **Partnership Awards Applications due.**
- August** **Members of NNPS receive** new book of *Promising Partnership Practices 2012*.
- September** **Fall issue of *Type 2* - #33** via E-Alert and website.
- October 11-12** **Leadership Development Conference** in Baltimore for new and experienced school, district, state, and organization leaders.

NNPS gratefully acknowledges support from

**MetLife Foundation**

Spring Dates — Your Program Will Blossom!



**Submit YOUR Best Practice by MAY 15**

for consideration in  
*Promising Partnership Practices 2012*



**APPLY for a PARTNERSHIP AWARD by JUNE 30**

Members of NNPS for 2 years or more may apply.



**EVALUATE YOUR Programs' Progress by JUNE 30**

Members before December 1, 2011 must return **UPDATE** and renewal fee to continue membership for the 12-13 school year.

Forms for all 3 on the NNPS website. NNPS will pay a matching fee (\$200) to support membership for all renewals who return UPDATE forms by June 30.