

# type2

Spring, 1999 No. 6    **National Network of Partnership Schools**

## Network Adds *Time* as a Requirement on New School Membership Forms

**NOTE:** This is a printer-friendly version of *Type 2*, downloadable from the National Network of Partnership Schools web site ([www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org)). Some formatting has been changed from the original newsletter (e.g., graphics/photos may not appear). For hard copies of *Type 2*, please e-mail the Network staff at [nmps@csos.jhu.edu](mailto:nmps@csos.jhu.edu) or call 410-516-8800.

Membership forms for school members of the National Network of Partnership Schools now include a requirement to *allocate time* for training, planning, and evaluating partnership programs and activities. The new School Membership Form requires schools to "Allocate time for an initial day-long team training workshop, and at least one hour per month for the Action Team for School, Family, and Community Partnerships to plan, coordinate, and evaluate activities each year."

The change is based on data collected from Network members on UPDATE surveys and in discussions at National Training Workshops. School members indicated that lack of time is one of the greatest challenges they face in developing partnership programs. Schools need to set aside time for the Action Team for School, Family, and Community Partnerships to meet and conduct its work. Time also is needed for subcommittees to implement activities scheduled on the One-Year Action Plan.

UPDATE data also reveal that schools with more years of experience in conducting partnerships are more likely to have well-implemented and high-quality programs.

Maintaining a permanent program of partnerships requires time to meet, plan, implement, and evaluate activities, and to continue to write annual plans for partnerships.

Based on analyses of the '97 UPDATE data from schools, Assistant Director Mavis Sanders explained, "*Time* is a central ingredient for schools' successful partnership program development. The other ingredients—an active and supportive Action Team, appropriate funding, leadership, and guidance from the

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 PARTNERSHIPSCHOOLS

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## New Bulletin Board On Network Web Site

The National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) opened its Bulletin Board to provide members with an interactive forum for sharing questions, answers, and comments about school, family, and community partnerships. The Bulletin Board includes space to post questions and responses, and to review listings. It is found through the link to the Bulletin Board at [www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000).

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**PLEASE MAKE COPIES OF TYPE 2 FOR ALL MEMBERS  
OF YOUR ACTION TEAM, LEADERSHIP OR IMPROVEMENT TEAM,  
AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTNERS!**

# Issues and Insights

## Good Endings Lead to Good Beginnings

Joyce L. Epstein, Director

A thousand graduation speeches this spring will observe that good endings lead to good beginnings. This adage is, indeed, true for graduating seniors, but it also is true for on-going programs of school, family, and community partnerships. End-of-year activities conducted this spring that evaluate progress, celebrate success, and plan for the future will help partnership programs get off to a good start in the fall.

### Evaluate Progress

It is important to reflect on how well your action plan for partnerships was implemented in 1998-99. The following tools will assist with evaluations.

'99 UPDATE, the end-of-year survey from the National Network, helps schools, districts, and states assess progress and identify areas for improvement. UPDATE also renews membership in the Network from year to year.

End-of-Year Evaluation in the Network's *Handbook* (pp. 137-143) helps Action Teams reflect on the quality of activities for the six types of involvement and discuss needed improvements.

### Celebrate Success

It is important to celebrate advances in partnerships and to recognize everyone's hard work. Which activities will your program conduct?

End-of-Year Celebration Workshops enable schools and districts to share best practices and discuss challenges and solutions. (See Network's *Handbook*, pp. 60-66).

Recognition breakfasts, thank you notes, and other acknowledgments boost spirits and maintain commitments of team leaders, parents, students, community members, and other volunteers in the partnership program.

### Plan for the Future

The most important end-of-year activity for schools, districts, and states is to write a detailed One-Year Action Plan for 1999-2000. Other activities also help plan for the future. The following tools will facilitate program planning.

One-Year Action Plans in the Network's *Handbook* offer two options for writing annual plans for partnerships. Form A (pp. 130-135) should be used to address the six types of involvement. Form B (p. 136) should be used to link partnership practices to specific school improvement goals, such as increasing achievement and attendance, and improving partnerships and school climate.

Three-Year Outlines in the Network's *Handbook* (pp. 126-129) offer two options for writing vision statements on how partnership programs will grow from 1999-2000 to the 2001-2002 school year.

New team members must be identified to replace teachers, parents, administrators, counselors, or others who are leaving. (See *Handbook* pp. 103 and 148-150 to welcome and identify the talents of new team members.)

Summer activities may be needed to strengthen partnership programs. These may include funded projects such as teachers developing interactive homework assignments, summer school for children, and orientation activities before school starts for new students and families.

Of course, there are other end-of-year activities that may be conducted. The important thing is for every school, district, and state in the National Network to take thoughtful and spirited actions to end this year in good style, and to prepare for the new school year.

# School Report

## School in Old Saybrook, CT Helps Parents Plan Children's Summers

How can schools help parents keep children meaningfully engaged in learning and recreational activities during the summer months? The Home/School Forum of Kathleen E. Goodwin Elementary School's P.T.O. sponsored an evening in April, 1998 to answer this question. The team invited community organizations to come to the school to provide parents with information about summer programs—a Type 6: Collaborating with the Community activity.

To allow time for planning, the committee chose the date for the activity one year in advance. Four months before the event, committee members invited community organizations that provide valuable activities for children to present summer program information to parents at a Summer Learning Fair. The response from the organizations was overwhelmingly favorable. The P.T.O. mailed registration information to approxi-

mately 30 organizations in February. Fliers were sent home with students and publicity information was provided to local newspapers.

The agenda for the event included: a list of presenters and a map of classrooms, a 10-minute welcome session, and a rotation schedule of 10-minute presentations for parents to hear about 8 programs. To keep the focus on information, parents could not register their children for any programs at the Fair.

Almost 200 parents in a school of 440 children learned about a variety of summer learning activities, including nature center camp programs, Boy and Girl Scouts, public library programs, YMCA programs, sailing lessons, and more. The Summer Learning Fair was simple and inexpensive to organize, including mainly costs for fliers and mailings.

According to Dr. John Walsh, prin-

pal, "Parents were happy to have program information in one place, and to speak to many representatives at one time." Parents also appreciated hearing information about activities that their children would be eligible for in the future. For example, parents learned when to register their children before popular programs or classes would be filled. In addition, community organizations and parents were able to discuss programs offered during the school year. The Summer Learning Fair was so successful that plans are underway for 35-40 community organizations to present information about summer programs this April.

For more information and other good examples see: *Promising Partnership Practices—1998*, National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University.

## Texas Joins Network

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is the tenth state to join the National Network of Partnership Schools. Commissioner Mike Moses approved the state's membership form in February. Albert Black, Director of the Parent Involvement and Community Empowerment Unit in the TEA, will be the Key Contact to the Network.

Along with Albert Black, TEA leaders Deborah Blue and Angelica Gayton, the Parent Involvement Specialists in the state's 20 Regional Education Service Centers, and others from varied departments in the TEA will form the core of a dynamic and talented Texas state leadership team. Texas aims to encourage and assist districts and schools to develop local programs of partnership.

### National Network of Partnership Schools

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## **Network Schools Collaborate to Explore Student Behavior and Discipline**

Seventy-four schools volunteered to participate in the Network's Focus on Results 1998-99 cross-site study. This year the topic is how school-family-community partnerships help improve or maintain good student behavior and discipline at school. Participants submitted baseline data and will complete end-of-year data in the spring. Six districts and two states also volunteered to collaborate by encouraging schools to participate in the study.

School participants for Focus on Results 1998-99 are:

Academy of Detroit West, Detroit, MI; Anderson Elementary, Wichita, KS; Antwerp Elementary, Antwerp, OH; Bainbridge Elementary, Bainbridge, OH; Barclay Elementary/Middle, Baltimore, MD; Barton Elementary, Barton, MD; Batesville Middle, Batesville, AR; Bloomfield Grade School, Jackson, OH; Caledonia Middle, Caledonia, MI; Cherry Hill Elementary, Baltimore, MD; Colerain High School, Cincinnati, OH; Cottonwood Elementary, Cincinnati, OH; Cresaptown Elementary, Cresaptown, MD; Dorr Elementary, Toledo, OH; Dr. Lillie M. Jackson, Baltimore, MD; East Elementary, Fairborn, OH; East Taunton Elementary, Taunton, MA; Frank Nicholas Elementary, Dayton, OH; Garrett Primary, Lufkin, TX; General Rufus Putnam Community Elementary, Zanesville, OH; George Clymer Elementary, Philadelphia, PA; Glenwood School, Toledo, OH; Greenspring Middle, Baltimore, MD; Hamilton Elementary, LaCrosse, WI; Hampstead Hill Elementary, Baltimore, MD; Harry Russell Elementary, West Carrollton, OH; Harry Street Elementary, Wichita, KS; Hazelwood School, Baltimore, MD; Hilton Elementary, Baltimore, MD; Houston Elementary, Talladega, FL; James McHenry Elementary, Baltimore, MD; Kaiserslautern American Middle, Germany; Leavitt Middle, Leavittsburg, OH; Leddy Elementary, Taunton, MA; Lincoln School, Buyrns, OH; Lincoln Way Elementary, Wooster, OH; Longfellow Elementary, Eau Claire, WI; Long Prairie - Grey Eagle Middle, Long Prairie, MN; School District of Abbotsford, Abbotsford, WI; Lorain Middle, Lorain, OH; Maplebrook Elementary, Mapleville, IL; Mars Estates Elementary, Baltimore, MD; McGuffey Elementary, Columbus, OH; Model Elementary, Ypsilanti, MI; Naperville North High School, Naperville, IL; Nashport Elementary, Nashport, OH; Nicolet Ele-

mentary, Kaukauna, WI; North Union High, Richmond, OH; Northeast Middle, Baltimore, MD; Northside Elementary, St. James, MN; Northwoods Elementary, Eau Claire, WI; Norwood Street Elementary, Los Angeles, CA; Oliver Ellsworth, Windsor, CT; Osan American Middle/High, Japan; Park Foreign Language Magnet, Wichita, KS; Patapsco Elementary, Baltimore, MD; Ramstein American High School, Germany; Ridge Elementary, Bellevue, OH; Russian Mission School, Russian Mission, AK; Sheldon Point School, Sheldon Point, AK; Sylvania Elementary, Sylvania, OH; Tiffany Creek Elementary, Boyceville, WI; Turtle Cake Elementary, Turtle Cake, WI; University Park Elementary School, Ester, AK; Walter Shade Elementary School, West Carrollton, OH; Washington Elementary School, Mondelein, IL; Washington School, Oconto, WI; Waupun High School, Waupun, WI; West Carrollton Middle School, West Carrollton, OH; West Elementary, Fort Recovery, OH; Westlake Elementary, New Carlisle, OH; William Pinderhughes Elementary, Baltimore, MD; Wilson Middle School, Newark, OH; Winfield Elementary School, Westminster, MD; Winston Middle School, Baltimore, MD.

Districts and states taking leadership roles in Focus on Results are:

Carroll County Public Schools, Westminster, MD; DoDDS Korea; Kaiserslautern District, Germany; Los Angeles County Office of Education, CA; Lower Yukon School District, Mountain Village, AK; West Carrollton City Schools, West Carrollton, OH; State of Illinois; State of Wisconsin.

## **Time Requirement**

*(Continued from page 1)*

Network—already are included as requirements on school membership forms. It is necessary to make the importance of time explicit if schools are to succeed in maintaining their partnership programs."

Time also is needed for leadership and team training. The new requirement will encourage schools to take greater advantage of the training opportunities provided by the Network. The team development workshops ensure that new members understand the Network's approaches and materials, and are prepared to organize and conduct full programs of partnership.

State and district membership forms already include provisions for time by requiring full-time state leaders and full-time or part-time district facilitators, depending on the number of schools in a district. Although time was not a requirement for current school members, the Network encourages all schools to allocate at least one hour per month for Action Team meetings, starting in the 1999-2000 school year.

## **Funding Reported in '98 UPDATE Surveys**

Schools, districts, and states reported how they supported their 1997-98 programs of school, family, and community partnerships in the Network's '98 UPDATE surveys. The following is a summary of the range of investments, average budgets, and main sources of funds.

### **Levels of Investments in Partnership Programs**

Schools: From under \$100 to over \$900,000, with an average of \$11,538

Districts: From under \$100 to \$1.3 million, with an average of \$89,033

States: From \$20,000 to \$410,000, with an average of \$163,333

### **Sources of Funds for Partnership Programs**

The most common sources of funds were: Title I, Safe and Drug Free Schools, Goals 2000, and various general state, district, and school funds. In addition to these budgets, states call upon Even Start and foundation grants, and schools call upon PTA funds to support their partnership programs.

Source: '98 UPDATE survey items on funding from 356 schools, 39 districts, and 6 states

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## District Record

### District Members Discuss Evaluation Issues at Special-Topics Workshop

The first special-topics meeting for districts in the National Network of Partnership Schools was held at Johns Hopkins University in October 1998, with 20 districts represented. Districts attending the meeting on evaluation issues were: Allegany County, MD; Baltimore City; Central Administration, Northeast, Northern, Northwest, Southeast, and Southwest Areas, MD; Canton, OH; Covington, KY; Howard County, MD; Los Angeles County, CA; Los Angeles Unified; Polytechnic/North Hollywood, Lincoln/Wilson Clusters, and Annenberg Metropolitan Project, CA; Monongalia, WV; Naperville, IL; Rush-Henrietta, NY; San Antonio, TX; Taunton, MA; and Ypsilanti, MI.

The meeting focused on issues and concerns about the evaluation of school and district partnership programs and other topics of interest. District members and Network staff discussed the districts' goals and requirements for evaluating partnership programs. Two common goals crossed district boundaries. These were to measure (1) whether and how much partnership programs helped schools reach specific school improvement goals, including higher student achievement; and (2) whether and how much partnerships with families and communities improved or increased over time.

Districts reported that they evaluate their partnership programs by using school surveys, teacher and principal evaluations, schools' One-Year Action Plans, standardized tests, attendance records, and sign-in sheets for volunteers and for parents

attending events. Most stated they need help in using these and other tools more effectively.

In another session, district members reviewed Network evaluation tools and shared ideas about how these might help them with their evaluation goals. The tools included: Starting Points, End-of-Year Evaluation Forms A and B, the Focus on Results cross-site studies, and UPDATE surveys. Participants generally agreed that they could use these tools more extensively in evaluating the implementation and results of partnerships. For example, one district reported using Starting Points at the beginning of each school year to chart progress. Another reported using the End-of-Year Evaluation Form at mid-year to reflect on what needed to be done by the end of the school year.

Other topics included a discussion of the Network's expectations of district leaders, and Key Contacts' expectations of the Network. It was agreed that districts could help their schools better understand their direct link to the National Network in order to facilitate greater use of Network services. In turn, district leaders expressed a need for more communication with the Network and with each other. They also want more information on grants, funding, and research results, and more workshops on special topics, such as the TIPS interactive homework process.

A meeting was held in November, 1998 for State Key Contacts on similar evaluation topics, with

attention to state-level interests in assessing the implementation and results of partnerships. Attending were state members from California, Connecticut, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Ohio, Utah, and Wisconsin.

Another special-topics workshop for districts and states will be conducted November 4, 1999 to continue to develop leadership skills and high quality programs of school, family, and community partnerships. District and State Key Contacts may suggest workshop topics (e-mail [nmps@cosos.jhu.edu](mailto:nmps@cosos.jhu.edu) or call Karen Salinas at 410-516-8818).

### Bulletin Board on Web

*(Continued from page 1)*

"Members are eager to exchange ideas about their successes and challenges," said Communications Director, Karen Clark Salinas. "We hope that members will use the Bulletin Board to ask each other questions about partnership activities and materials."

Over the past two years, members' visits to the Network's web site have increased from 42% to 87% of states, from 22% to 42% of districts, and from 5% to 19% of schools. According to Key Contacts' reports on the '98 UPDATE surveys, most now have access to the Internet. The Network expects that over the next few years its web site will be an important tool for timely and frequent communications among members. For members who do not have access to the Internet yet, selected questions and answers from the Bulletin Board will be shared in each issue of *Type 2*.

# Meeting the Challenge

## Families and Schools Interact to Support Students' Learning Activities at Home

Mavis G. Sanders, Assistant Director

Type 4 involvement—Learning at Home—is central to a school's comprehensive program of partnerships. Research in the United States and abroad has shown that when families get involved with their children's learning at home, students' attitudes toward learning and school performance improve. To encourage this very important form of home-school partnership, many schools are meeting a key challenge for Type 4 involvement by implementing interactive homework.

One form of interactive homework is Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS), developed by Joyce L. Epstein, Karen Clark Salinas, colleagues at the Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University, and teachers in several school districts. TIPS is designed to promote greater communication between families and children around homework. It does not require family members to "teach" children school subjects. Instead, it encourages children to share their work and enables families to better support, praise, guide, monitor, and discuss the work that their children bring home from school.

Many schools across the country use TIPS activities in their elementary and middle school classrooms. Some high schools in the National Network of Partnership Schools are beginning to develop TIPS activities for high school students and families. Mark Bignell at David Glasgow Farragut High School, a Department of Defense School in Rota, Spain, has developed TIPS activities for his music classes.

Schools in the National Network are experimenting with other forms of interactive homework. For example, Lois

T. Murray School in Baltimore has a successful program to involve family and community members in the education of children with special needs (see the Research Brief on p. 10). The school selects seventeen topics on which they focus during the school year, including traffic safety, public transportation, grocery shopping, dining out, and clothes shopping. There are classroom and community-based activities for each topic. At the start of the year, parents are given a schedule of the seventeen units. During each PTO meeting, school staff give families information on the content of the units being covered that month, and discuss the skills that will be taught. This information also is provided in the school's monthly newsletter for parents who cannot attend the PTO meetings. Further, to ensure that all families can participate, a week before each unit begins, teachers send letters to parents describing the unit and activities to do with their children to reinforce the targeted skills at home. According to school principal Mr. Johnny Smith, "Our goal is to keep parents informed about the education of our children."

When schools meet the challenge of developing interactive homework, families become more active supporters of students' learning. Everyone wins—students, families, and schools. Does your school have interactive homework planned for the upcoming academic year? If not, take the challenge to work with teachers during the summer to develop interactive homework activities for 1999-2000. See Chapter 7 in *School, Family and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action* for information on the TIPS process. You may also visit Publications on the Network's web site at [www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000), or contact Karen Salinas at 410-516-8818.

## **NEW MEMBERS GRAPHIC HERE**

## **New Tools for Network Members**

The following tools supplement those in the Network's *Handbook*, and may be requested by Network members by contacting Laurel Clark or Karen Clark Salinas, phone: 410-516-8800; fax: 410-516-8890; or e-mail [nmps@csos.jhu.edu](mailto:nmps@csos.jhu.edu).

*End-of-Year Evaluation.* This tool may be used to reflect on progress and next steps on the goals-oriented One-Year Action Plan (Form B).

*Annual Evaluation Report.* This tool may be used to assess the profes-

sional work of district-level facilitators for school, family, and community partnerships.

*Spanish translations.* The following pages of the Network's *Handbook* were translated by the Los Angeles Unified School District Translation Unit for use in workshops for new Action Teams: the overlapping spheres of influence model, "keys," six types of involvement, summary of results (pp. 72, 74, 76-81, 94-99), Starting Points Inventory (p. 122-125), and workshop activity on results of partnerships (p. 157).

## **Linking Web Sites**

The National Network of Partnership Schools invites members to link web sites. The Polytechnic/North Hollywood Cluster of schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District, Wisconsin State Department of Public Instruction, and California Department of Education are the first members of the Network to establish reciprocal web sites. Visitors to the Network's web site also may visit these locations to learn how they are working on school, family, and community partnerships, and vice versa. To link web sites, contact Beth Simon at [bsimon@csos.jhu.edu](mailto:bsimon@csos.jhu.edu) or follow the directions on the LINKS button at [www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000).

## **State Line**

### **Connecticut Sets Three Goals for School-Family-Community Partnerships**

The Connecticut School-Family-Community Partnership Project helps educators, parents, and community members develop partnership programs. The project, strongly supported by Theodore S. Sergi, Commissioner of Education, is collaboratively led by the State Department of Education, The Special Education Resource Center, and the Governor's Prevention Partnership. It is guided by the principle that all families have strengths and are capable of playing critical roles in their children's educational success. Leaders Harriet Feldlaufer, Judy Carson, and Barbara Slone selected three goals to organize the work of the project.

**Goal 1. Promote a Comprehensive Definition of School-Family-Community Partnerships.** The Connecticut State Board of Education adopted a definition of partnerships (see box). To promote implementation of the state's definition, the Partnership Project sponsored a Policy Forum with over 160 education, business, community, and parent groups to discuss how to work together to improve students' education and achievement. Along with the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education and the Connecticut PTA, the Partnership published *A Policy Action Packet for School-Family-Community Partnerships: A Guide to Developing Partnership Programs for Student Success*. The publication was designed to help districts develop local policies and build programs consistent with the new state law. A biannual newsletter also promotes the development of partnership programs, calls attention to research and policy developments, and

highlights local programs.

#### **Goal 2: Train School Teams to Develop and Maintain School-Family-Community Partnerships.**

A major activity of the Partnership Project is providing two-day training workshops and on-going technical assistance to school-based teams. The action-oriented teams from schools in several districts develop and maintain programs of school, family, and community partnerships focused on student success. The training is based on Epstein's framework which helps the state and its schools work well with the National Network of Partnership Schools. The Project also conducts a competitive grants program for small cash stipends to support partnerships in schools with high educational and economic needs. "Hot Topic" workshops are conducted twice a year for school teams on subjects such as how partnerships support early literacy, improve student behavior, and reduce violence in schools and communities.

#### **Goal 3: Serve as a Resource for Building School-Family-Community Partnerships.**

The Connecticut School-Family-Community Partnership Project has produced a collection of books, videos, and other resources and materials to help schools develop their policies and programs, and to increase public awareness of the positive impact of school-family-community partnerships on student learning. The materials may be borrowed from the state's lending library for special education and family support resources. These resources are listed in an annotated bibliography, and soon will be

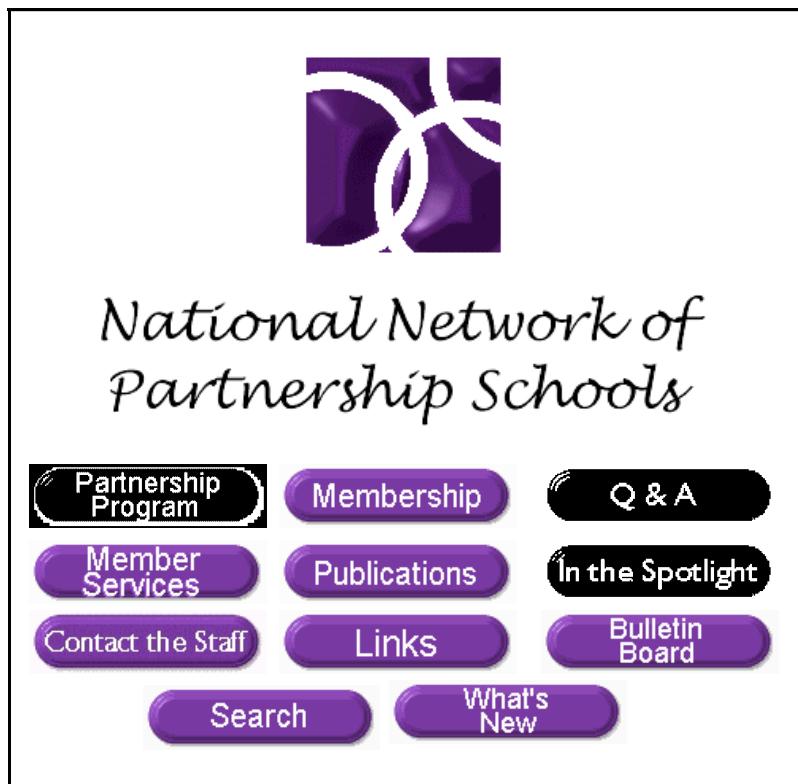
online.

As a state leader in the National Network of Partnership Schools, Connecticut is practicing its message of partnership. It collaborates with several state groups, and facilitates the work of schools and districts. The staff and programs are supported, in part, by federal funds from Even Start, Special Education, and Safe and Drug Free Schools, and the Parent Information and Resource Center which is funded by a Goals 2000 grant to the United Way of Connecticut. Connecticut's leaders have designed and implemented an important program that demonstrates the state's clear vision, strong leadership, and dynamic support for action on school, family, and community partnerships.

For more information contact harriet.feldlaufer@po.state.ct.us, (860-566-5620); judy.carson@state.ct.us, (860-807-2058) at the Connecticut State Department of Education; or slone@rh.edu (860-632-1485) at the Special Education Resource Center.

#### **Connecticut State Board of Education Defines Partnerships**

The State Board of Education defines school-family-community partnerships as the continuous planning, support, and participation of school personnel, families, and community organizations in coordinated activities and efforts at home, in the school, and in the community that directly and positively affect the success of all children's learning. Each partner is viewed as an equally contributing member, maintaining a certain independence while acknowledging shared responsibility. To succeed, the partnership must be flexible and based on mutual respect. Schools must take the lead in developing and sustaining effective partnerships. (August 7, 1997)



## New Web Site Developments—[www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000)

The web site for the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) is always “under construction” to provide useful information to members about partnership program development. Since Fall 1998, we have added several new features. Members may explore new ideas on the Network’s web site before writing the next One-Year Action Plan for the 1999-2000 school year.

**SEARCH**—Use this search engine to scan the NNPS web site, including back issues of *Type 2*, for pages containing specific words or phrases. Interested in Type 3—Volunteering practices? Type in “volunteer” and see what happens!

**WHAT'S NEW**—Click here for links to recent web site updates and additions. Visit often for a quick reference to the latest web site developments.

**BULLETIN BOARD**—Chat with others in NNPS to discuss school-family-community partnership program development. Share ideas and questions with members and others interested in building excellent partnership programs and practices to reach school goals.

**IN THE SPOTLIGHT**—See what members are doing to build school-family-community partnerships in *Promising Partnership Practices—1998*, a collection of over 35 school, district, and state examples of successful school-family-community partnership activities.

**PUBLICATIONS**—View lists of publications from the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships. The lists of research articles and materials may be printed and used as order forms. Credit card payment options have been added.

**MEMBERSHIP**—Click here for updated membership requirements. Schools, districts, and states can request forms to join the Network with the Membership button.

**Q & A**—Read the new frequently asked questions on many topics puzzling Network members. Some questions were asked by members on the ‘98 UPDATE surveys. Many questions are answered with information from *Type 2* newsletters, the collection of *Promising Partnership Practices—1998*, and the Network’s *Handbook*. Find answers to questions that are puzzling you, or submit your own questions to Network staff in Q & A.

**MEMBER SERVICES**—See the *Partnership Schools* t-shirts, mugs, and pens that may be purchased to reward and recognize the hard work of Action Team members, leaders, and other active participants in your partnership program.

**LINKS**—Visit the Network Member Sites page to see what other states, districts, and schools in the Network are doing on location. Also, connect to other web sites of organizations and agencies that focus on school, family, and community partnerships.

# Research Brief

## Lessons Learned from Two Schools for Students with Special Needs

In the spring of 1998, case studies were conducted of two schools, Dr. Lillie M. Jackson and Lois T. Murray, that serve students with special needs and their families in the Baltimore City Public School System. The data included interviews, observations, and school documents. The data were collected to uncover issues and strategies that schools should consider when developing comprehensive partnership programs that meet the needs of all students and families.

Data analyses revealed three processes that were central to the schools' success in developing comprehensive and inclusive partnerships with their students' families. These processes—creating avenues for communication, opening doors for decision-making, and promoting pathways for student progress—are briefly described below.

### Creating avenues for communication

Communication was central to the partnership program at each school in the study. This communication took several forms, including monthly newsletters, parent and faculty surveys, student notebooks, telephone calls, calendars, flyers, school meetings, home visits, and parent-teacher conferences. These school-home communications were content rich, caring, creative, and encouraged parental input.

### Opening doors for decision-making

Both schools designed several opportunities and vehicles for parents to take active roles in school

decisions that affected their children. These ranged from deciding topics for parent meetings, to helping assess the treatment needs of their children, and planning for student transitions. The schools encouraged active parental involvement in these decisions by soliciting parents' ideas and opinions, and by demystifying processes and structures in special education.

### Promoting pathways for student progress

The two processes previously described—school-to-home and home-to-school communications, and parental involvement in decision making—were integrally linked to students' intellectual and socio-emotional development. Through their various communications, educators and parents shared information and made decisions about students' progress and what to do to promote greater progress. At

each school, parent, school, and community resources were mobilized to encourage multiple pathways for students' success.

Through their efforts, these schools were able to document increased parental attendance at Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and at Admissions, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) meetings, and improved parental attitudes toward the school. These successes tell us a great deal about creating partnership programs that address the needs and concerns of all families and students in any school, including those serving students with disabilities.

From: Sanders, M.G. (1999). *Partnering with families of students' with disabilities: What every school should know*. Paper to be presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, April, 1999.

PHOTO HERE

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Parents at Lois T. Murray School promote children's progress with one-on-one assistance. Because of good communication with teachers, parents know how to help students on specific skills.

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## Questions & Answers

### How Can Schools Improve Type 6-Collaborating with the Community?

Many members of the National Network of Partnership Schools raised important questions on the '98 UPDATE surveys. Several questions and answers are posted on the Q & A section of the Network's web site, [www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000). Because this information may be of interest to Network members who do not have Internet access, the Network will share selected Q & As in each issue of *Type 2*. Members may contribute other ideas by following the Q & A button or the Bulletin Board button on the Network's web site.

#### How Are Community Partners Useful?

To determine how community partners can best help your school, the school Action Team should start by reviewing the school improvement goals and by writing a One-Year Action Plan for partnerships to meet important goals.

Identify the Action Plan goals that will be reached more successfully with community support. Brainstorm with the Action Team a "wish list" of in-kind donations, services, programs, and/or money that will help meet these goals. Then, make a list of potential business, government, university, cultural, or other partners in your community who might be able to help. Write a clear, brief plan of how the support will help reach school goals.

Businesses can be approached for an in-kind donation such as food from a restaurant for refreshments at a meeting or plants from a nursery for door prizes at a workshop. Businesses and community partners can also be contacted to provide services such as mentoring, tutoring, or other ways of volunteering.

#### Whom Should We Ask?

Common places to ask for support include libraries, book stores, zoos, museums, religious institutions, universities, grocery stores, barber shops/beauty salons, hospitals, senior citizen groups, and community organizations (e.g., YMCA, Kiwanis Club, Big Brothers/Big Sisters). Check the Network's collection of *Promising Partnership Practices—1998* and previous issues of *Type 2* for more ideas.

#### How Do We Approach a Potential Partner?

Once needs are clearly outlined, you can approach potential business/community partners with a short letter. Later, you may follow-up with a phone call or a visit. Here are some suggestions for writing an initial letter:

- Find the name and address of the owner or president of the business/community organization and address the letter accordingly.
- Include the school's name and location.
- Describe the school's mission/goals for high standards and success for its students.
- Briefly explain your emphasis on school, family, and community partnerships.
- Describe how the partner's support can help achieve important school goals.
- Illustrate how the partnership will benefit the community partner and/or the community as a whole.
- Specify how the business or organization will be recognized for its support.
- Note that you will call or visit in the next week.
- Include the Principal's signature and a contact person's phone number and address.

Send letters to many potential partners because not everyone will be able to match your school's needs.

#### How Do We Maintain Community Partnerships?

It is important to thank your partners and recognize their contributions. Think of creative ways to recognize the value of their support, such as artwork or letters from students, an item with the school's mascot, an appreciation breakfast, or a band/chorus/drama performance. Advertise the business/community partner's support at the sponsored activity. Recognize partners in district, school, and local newspapers.

Ask all partners for feedback on the partnership relationship and activities. Use the feedback to improve your school-family-community partnership program each year. By reaching out to the community to meet specific school goals and recognizing their support, you will improve community involvement at your school.

## Funding Opportunities

The U. S Dept. of Ed's *Reading Excellence Program* will make \$260 million in grants to states (SEAs) in late April. Then, states will offer competitive two-year grants to improve reading in low-performing districts and schools.

The U.S. Dept. of Ed, HHS, and Justice are administering \$566 million in competitive grants in the *Safe Schools/Healthy Students* initiative, due from LEAs on August 1. Three-year grants (\$1-\$3 million per year) will be awarded to schools and communities to improve student safety and well-being.

These grants are linked to school, family, and community partnerships. States, districts, and schools can refer to the National Network of Partnership Schools to strengthen proposals. For information on these and other funding opportunities, call 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit [www.ed.gov/initis/FY99/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/initis/FY99/index.html).

## National Network of Partnership Schools Calendar for 1999

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|-------------------|---|
| April 5, 1999:    | Members who joined the Network by 12/98 will receive '99 UPDATE in the mail. Due May 17 to renew Network membership for 1999-2000.  |
| April 9-10, 1999: | Optional Training Workshop at Johns Hopkins University for new members who want initial training to prepare for the 1999-2000 school year.  |
| May:              | Final data collection for Focus on Results 1998-99 on Student Behavior and Discipline.  |
| May 17, 1999:     | '99 UPDATE must be returned to National Network to renew membership for 1999-2000.  |
| August 15, 1999:  | <i>Promising Partnership Practices—1999</i> mailed to all members.  |
| October:          | Next issue of <i>Type 2</i> .   |
| November 4, 1999: | Special-topics meeting at Johns Hopkins University for districts and states in the National Network who want assistance with program evaluation, program development, and interactions with other district and state members. |

# '99 UPDATE Due May 17 to Renew Network Membership for 1999-2000

The '99 UPDATE asks members to update names, addresses, and other information that the Network uses to communicate with all members, and to indicate the challenges faced and progress made in the 1998-99 school year.

'99 UPDATE must be returned for members to continue to receive the Network's *Type 2* newsletters, the annual collection of *Promising Partnership Practices*, information on research opportunities, invitations to workshops, and other communications throughout the year. For quick and easy renewal of membership for 1999-2000:

### The Network Will:

- Mail '99 UPDATE in early April
- Provide a Network pen and self-addressed, stamped envelope
- Set an early due date—May 17—to share results in a timely manner

### Members Will:\*

- Schedule a team meeting in April or May to complete '99 UPDATE as an end-of-year activity
- Complete '99 UPDATE easily
- Return '99 UPDATE promptly—by May 17, 1999

\*Note: All schools, districts, and states that joined the Network before December 31, 1998 must RENEW membership in the National Network of Partnership Schools for the 1999-2000 school year by returning the '99 UPDATE. Members joining after December 31, 1998 will receive the UPDATE survey in the year 2000.