



States Lead and Succeed: An Inventory for Leadership on Partnerships

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State leaders for partnerships are working (1) to improve state-level policies and actions and (2) to encourage and guide districts and schools in developing effective programs of family and community involvement. To reach these goals, state leaders must write and implement an annual Leadership Action Plan for Partnerships.

This inventory is organized around six leadership strategies: *Create awareness, Align program and policy, Guide learning and program development, Share knowledge, Celebrate milestones, and Document progress and evaluate outcomes*. The inventory outlines over 40 activities that state leaders may select for state-wide initiatives on school, family, and community partnerships. The activities in this inventory are based on analyses of data from state leaders in NNPS over many years.^{1, 2}

State leaders are not expected to implement all of the activities listed. They should, however, consider which ones to include or adapt in their plans, and how increase the quality of partnership programs at the state, district, and school levels.

Directions:

Work on one section at a time.

Check (✓) all activities that your office or colleagues in other departments conduct now.

Star (★) the activities that you want to initiate in the future, as you develop your state's leadership on partnerships.

Add other activities that you conduct now or plan to conduct that are not listed in each section.

Use this information to write your office's Leadership Action Plan for Partnerships (See pp. 264-266 and CD in *Handbook*).

1) With input from state and organization leaders at the October 2007 Leadership Development Conference, Baltimore.

2) Also see: Jansorn, N. and Epstein, J.L. (2005). *Lead and Succeed: An Inventory of District Leadership and Facilitation Strategies for Partnerships*. Baltimore: National Network of Partnership Schools.

NOTE: In NNPS, a COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION and other intermediate professional development units are considered "mini states" to guide and support district leaders for partnerships who will, then, guide schools' ATPs to strengthen goal-linked programs of family and community engagement.

Strategy: Create awareness. Actively promote the state’s partnership program to all key stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, families, and community groups.

- Identify a state leadership “core” of colleagues who work on partnerships across departments. Convene periodic meetings of this interdepartmental group to discuss their various activities and the state’s partnership agenda.
- Convene periodic one-on-one meeting with the state superintendent (designee or supervisor) to discuss goals for the state’s partnership programs, initiatives, and progress.
- Conduct presentations to promote the state’s partnership program for the state board of education, councils, committees, conferences, and other key leadership groups.
- Conduct awareness sessions for district superintendents and district leaders for partnerships, specifying the assistance that the state will provide to districts and schools.
- Post information on the state’s website on the state’s policies, recommendations, leaders, and actions for partnerships.
- Identify districts and schools that will participate in the state’s partnership initiative.
- Attend professional development conferences with state colleagues and/or selected district leaders to gain knowledge and skills on partnership program development.
- Convene and build collaborative projects with business, industry, and community groups.
- Disseminate press releases, periodically, on the state’s accomplishments on partnerships.

OTHER STATE ACTIVITIES to create awareness of the state’s partnership programs

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Strategy: Align program and policy. With support from state leaders, integrate the partnership program with other state policies, requirements, and procedures.

- Review, develop, or update state’s policy on school, family, and community partnerships
- Identify a budget and other resources to implement the state partnership program.
- Obtain approval and support from the state superintendent to inform and encourage districts and schools to strengthen research-based programs of family and community involvement linked to state goals for school improvement.
- Obtain approval for districts and schools to include plans for partnerships as an official section or appendix of their annual school improvement plans.
- Develop a broad three-five year plan of state goals for partnerships and how your office will “scale up” outreach on partnerships to include more districts and their schools over time.
- Write an annual state Leadership Action Plan for Partnerships with a detailed schedule of state-level actions and activities to encourage districts and schools on partnerships. Include goals, strategies, activities, timelines, people responsible, budgets, and other resources.
- Establish a state advisory council or advisory group on state policies and practices for increasing and improving meaningful family and community involvement for student success.
- Develop strategies for the continuity of plans and actions in the event of changes in leaders.
- Work with colleges and universities to develop teaching and administrative courses or modules so that all educators are prepared to conduct effective programs of family and community involvement.

OTHER STATE-LEVEL ACTIVITIES to align partnership programs and policy

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Strategy: Guide learning and program development. Organize, conduct, or support professional development activities to assist state colleagues, and districts and schools in the state to develop and strengthen their partnership programs.

- Conduct or support periodic 2-day training workshops for district leaders for partnerships who are ready to guide their schools in developing comprehensive partnership programs.
- With district leaders, conduct or support periodic 1-day workshops for schools' Action Teams for Partnerships on developing effective programs linked to school goals for student success.
- Convene regularly-scheduled meetings for district (or regional) leaders for partnerships to share ideas, experiences, and to update knowledge on partnership topics.
- Develop and implement professional development workshops for teachers and school staff on partnerships. These may be on-line, in district offices, or in other locations.
- Develop information and training opportunities for parents and for business and community leaders. These may be on-line, in district offices, or in other locations.
- Conduct annual state or regional conferences with workshops to help district leaders for partnerships and school teams share best practices and continue to increase knowledge and skills on partnerships.
- Develop or identify and test useful tools, products, or materials to guide districts and schools in developing their partnership programs.
- Award small grants to districts and schools as incentives to build their partnership programs using research-based approaches.

OTHER STATE ACTIVITIES to guide learning and partnership program development

Strategy: Share knowledge. Foster on-going communications throughout the state department of education, with state partners, and with district leaders to increase knowledge about programs of school, family, and community partnerships.

- Facilitate regularly scheduled meetings with state colleagues across departments working on family involvement issues (e.g., special education, ESOL/bilingual education, Title I) to share work and progress.
- Coordinate SEA actions on federal (Title I) requirements for parental involvement and guide districts to meet requirements for involvement in Section 1118 and other parts of the law.
- Disseminate a monthly e-mail, fax, or periodic newsletter to state colleagues and to district leaders for partnerships with important information, upcoming events, and highlights of work across the state on partnerships.
- Guide districts across the state to share information about district-level and school-based partnership activities throughout the school year.
- Develop and maintain an informative website on the state's program and actions on school, family, and community partnerships.
- Write a regular column on partnership programs for the state's education newsletter.
- Work with business and industry to create flexible leave policies so that parents can volunteer and/or attend conferences with teachers at their children's schools.

OTHER STATE ACTIVITIES to share knowledge at the state, district, and school levels

Strategy: Celebrate milestones. Recognize state, district, and school successes in partnership programs and practices and disseminate information on the successes.

- Write an annual progress report on the state’s partnership program to share with the superintendent, state board, and key stakeholders.
- Organize a recognition program to celebrate excellence in districts and schools on partnerships linked to school improvement goals. Spotlight these programs at the annual state conference on partnerships or other meetings.
- Encourage district leaders to collect and disseminate best practices across their own schools.
- Collect, edit, and disseminate (in print or online) promising partnership practices from the districts and schools in the state.
- Create videos or CDs of especially successful partnership activities in districts and schools across the state to highlight on the state’s website section on partnerships.
- Guide districts and schools to recognize and thank those who assist them in strengthening their partnership programs.
- Hold an appreciation breakfast or event for state partners who assist your office in implementing activities in the state’s annual plan for partnerships.

OTHER STATE ACTIVITIES to celebrate milestones

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Strategy: Document Progress and Evaluate Outcomes. Collect information to document your office’s activities and progress in meeting state goals for partnerships. Guide districts and schools to document and evaluate progress in their partnership plans and programs.

- Establish procedures and identify tools (including those in this *Handbook*) to evaluate the quality and results of the state’s work on partnerships, and the programs in districts and schools.
- Collect district policies and annual district leadership plans for partnerships. Check these for compliance with federal and state requirements for district leadership and research-based approaches on partnerships.
- Use evaluation tools to improve and sustain plans for partnerships from year to year.
- Guide districts to establish viable recordkeeping systems to document their work and their schools’ work on partnerships.
- Conduct or sponsor periodic surveys of district, school, and parent leaders on the quality of their partnership programs and needed improvements, and services needed from your office.
- Support research and evaluation to learn which structures, processes, and practices help districts improve leadership on partnerships, and which practices enable schools to reach all families in ways that support student success.
- Complete the annual State UPDATE survey (required to maintain NNPS membership) to assess the quality of the state’s work on partnerships and ways to improve.
- Guide districts and schools to complete the annual UPDATE survey (required to maintain NNPS membership) to assess the quality of their partnership programs and ways to improve.

OTHER STATE ACTIVITIES to document progress and evaluate outcomes

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STATE LEADERSHIP CHECKLIST

Steps in Developing Excellent Programs of School, Family, and Community Partnerships

The following list assumes that an office for partnerships has been identified, and that a director or coordinator is ready to take basic, initial steps to advance programs of school, family, and community partnerships at the state level and with districts and their schools.

CHECK WHEN YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE FOLLOWING:

- Develop or periodically review the state policy on school, family, and community partnerships.
- Write an annual state Leadership Action Plan for Partnerships that identifies strategies, timelines, and persons responsible for accomplishing specific family and community involvement activities. Focus on key state goals for expanding and improving partnership programs in districts and schools across the state.
- Secure a budget for staff salaries and for the planned partnership program activities.
- Identify and periodically convene interdepartmental leaders who are working on various aspects of family and community involvement to share their views and activities.
- Conduct professional development on partnerships with state colleagues, district leaders, and/or schools' Action Teams for Partnerships.
- Facilitate the work of districts and schools with a regular schedule of professional development workshops, conferences, or other activities to continually improve program quality.
- Establish procedures and select tools to periodically evaluate the quality and results of the state's partnership program and the quality and results of partnership programs in districts and schools.
- Celebrate end-of-the year successes and help districts and schools share good practices.
- Disseminate information about the state's work and districts' and schools' progress on partnerships to the media, state educators, and families.
- If the state joins the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS), report that connection to major policy and decision-making groups in the state department of education, other state agencies, the business community, and districts and schools statewide.
- Outline strategies for program continuity in the event of changes in leadership.
- Develop and implement customized activities to advance research-based programs of school, family, and community partnerships throughout the state.

STATE LEADERSHIP ROLES FOR SCHOOL, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Conduct some or all of the following to strengthen state partnership programs:

- 1. WRITE A POLICY** that identifies state goals for school, family, and community partnerships, including all six types of involvement. Specify enactments to assist districts and schools to understand and implement the policy. Periodically review the policy with input from educators, families, and the public.
- 2. IDENTIFY A DEPARTMENT AND DIRECTOR** for school, family, and community partnerships, with adequate staff and resources. This office will develop plans, take actions, and coordinate work on family and community involvement. The director for partnerships also will identify and periodically convene a leadership team of colleagues across departments to share their work on family and community involvement and to discuss next steps and new directions.
- 3. WRITE A LEADERSHIP ACTION PLAN FOR PARTNERSHIPS** that lists and schedules actions to promote, increase, and support knowledge and skills for conducting effective partnerships at the state level and in districts and schools across the state.
- 4. IDENTIFY A BUDGET WITH ADEQUATE FUNDS** for staff salaries and program costs. This may include funds for professional development, small grants for districts or schools, conferences to share best practices, evaluations, state advisory committee on partnerships, and other leadership activities.
- 5. PROVIDE INSERVICE EDUCATION AND ANNUAL TRAINING WORKSHOPS** for district leaders across the state who are ready to take responsibility for working with their schools to implement effective partnership programs. State leaders will have the most impact if they guide district leaders to work with their own schools on this agenda. Workshops on partnerships also may be offered to schools' Action Teams for Partnerships and/or other educators or parents.
- 6. CONDUCT END-OF-YEAR WORKSHOPS OR ANNUAL CONFERENCES** to celebrate and recognize excellence and to encourage statewide or regional exchanges of best practices and to discuss solutions to challenges of school, family, and community partnerships.
- 7. DEVELOP OR SELECT TOOLS AND PRODUCTS** that districts and schools can use or adapt to improve their partnership programs. Help district leaders learn of available resources for improving district-level and school-based partnership programs.
- 8. ESTABLISH A WEBSITE, LIBRARY, NEWSLETTER, and/or OTHER COMMUNICATIONS** to disseminate effective practices, ideas, materials, research, and other information that will help districts and schools improve their partnership programs. Share information on partnerships with the public and the media.
- 9. SUPPORT RESEARCH AND EVALUATION** to learn which practices contribute to specific results for students, parents, teachers, schools, and communities. This includes an accountability system to monitor progress in district leadership and school program development.
- 10. WORK WITH STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES** to set requirements for teaching and administrative credentials to prepare teachers and administrators to understand and conduct comprehensive programs of school, family, and community partnerships.
- 11. WORK WITH BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY** to establish flexible leave policies so parents can attend conferences at their children's schools. Increase business-school partnerships and volunteer programs.
- 12. CONDUCT OTHER STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES** to build strong and permanent programs at the state level and in all districts and schools.

NOTE: Some Regional, intermediate units, and organizations are like "mini states" that guide and support district leaders for partnerships. The district leaders, then, guide their own schools' ATPs to strengthen their programs of family and community engagement. Leaders of "mini states" may find the format of the Leadership Plan (below) useful.

SAMPLE STATE LEADERSHIP PLAN FOR SCHOOL, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

This example of a district Leadership Plan for Partnerships identifies three important goals and a few specific and thoughtful activities to reach the goals.¹ The goals and activities address all six leadership strategies discussed above. The entries can be transferred to the template for a Leadership Plan for Partnerships (p. 276 and *Handbook CD*) to add details (e.g., activities, dates, responsibilities, expected results, costs).

GOAL 1. Promote a comprehensive definition of school, family, and community partnerships.

Leadership and facilitation strategies: Create awareness. Align program and policy.

Target audience: State colleagues, district, school, and community leaders

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

1. Send a message about the state policy on family and community engagement and plans for enactment from the state superintendent to all district superintendents. Include the name and contact information for the state's director or coordinator for partnerships who will communicate with district leaders for partnerships about their work and progress.
2. Review and update the state policy on partnerships.
3. Conduct a policy forum on partnerships with statewide representation.
4. Develop and distribute model district policies for school, family, and community partnerships to LEAs.
5. Report activities and progress on the implementation of the state's policy by districts and schools across the state at meetings of department heads and at meetings with district leaders.

GOAL 2. Provide professional development and technical assistance to district leaders for partnerships so that they can guide their schools at all levels to develop effective programs of family and community engagement for student success.

Leadership and facilitation strategies: Guide learning and program development. Document progress and evaluate outcomes.

Target audience: Districts leaders for partnerships

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

1. Provide training workshops for district leaders for partnerships to guide their work with all schools.
2. Provide small grants to selected districts for their work with schools, based on clear and ambitious district leadership plans.
3. Provide information to the districts and schools about the state's website and e-resources, and about how to use or customize information to advance district and school-based partnership programs.
4. Provide guidance to districts on evaluating their partnership programs and the quality of their schools' plans and progress.
5. Collaborate with other organizations in the state to increase district leaders' knowledge and skills in working with schools on partnerships.

GOAL 3. Serve as a state resource on partnerships for colleagues in the state department of education and for other state organizations.

Leadership and facilitation strategies: Share knowledge. Celebrate milestones.

Target audience: State department of education offices, other state agencies, and organizations

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

1. Establish and maintain a website and e-library for information on partnerships to share with state colleagues, districts and schools, parents, and the public.
2. Link with other organizations for training, presentations, and conferences.
3. Serve as a resource on partnerships for state department of education committees and other state agencies.
4. Create annual files to share best practices of district leaders and their schools across the state.

For each goal, use one page of the template for a *Leadership Plan for Partnerships*, or reassign the activities to show which will be conducted at the state level (page 1 of plan) and which will facilitate capacity building of district leaders for partnerships to work with their own schools (page 2 of plan). See p. 276 and *Handbook CD* or use an equivalent template.

¹The authors thank leaders for partnership at the Connecticut State Department of Education for sharing their goals for state leadership on partnerships.