



NATIONAL NETWORK OF
Partnership Schools
JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

The Equity Agenda: How Are NNPS Districts and Schools Working to Engage ALL Families?

NNPS Annual Report
District and School 2022 *UPDATE* Data

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March 2023



Engage at Home



Engage Outdoors



Engage In School

Photo Credits

Unique Family Tiles: Carl B. Stokes Head Start Center, Cleveland, OH

Spring Fling: Orchard Elementary School, Richland, WA

Poetry Café: Ladson Elementary School, Ladson, SC

Read about these activities in
Promising Partnership Practices, 2022

**The Equity Agenda:
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Annual Report

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District Demographics. Twenty-eight district leaders for partnerships in highly diverse communities across eight states submitted data on their work and progress on school, family, and community partnerships for the 2021-22 school year.¹

- The districts were in central cities (15%), small cities (19%), suburbs (33%), and rural (33%) areas. They varied in size from one school to over 120 schools.
- On average across districts, about 60% of students were eligible for free or reduced-price meals, ranging from 14% to 100%.
- The districts served populations of students and families who spoke from 1 to 110 languages and dialects at home, with an average of 21 languages spoken by students and their families across districts. On average, about 9% of students were English Language Learners (ELL), ranging from under 1% to 60% of students.
- Taken together, district leaders facilitated over 280 schools in the 2021-22 school year and estimated that these schools engaged over 41,000 families.
- Most district leaders for partnerships (96%) expected to continue in their positions in 2022-23. This kind of stability is important for continuous progress on partnerships in districts and schools (Epstein, Galindo, & Sheldon, 2011).

School Demographics. Nearly 300 school-based Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) participated in the 2022 *UPDATE* evaluation (N=298). They were located in highly diverse communities in 11 states.¹ The sample included 71 preschools (25.7%), 128 elementary schools (44.4%), 38 middle schools (13.8%), and 22 high schools (8%). A few schools combined grade levels or omitted the information. We report some results for the full sample of schools and some separately for elementary and secondary schools.

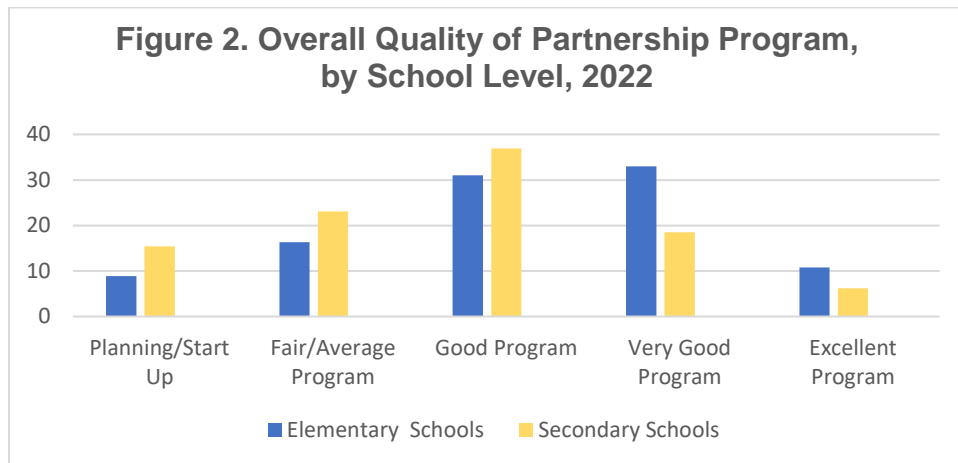
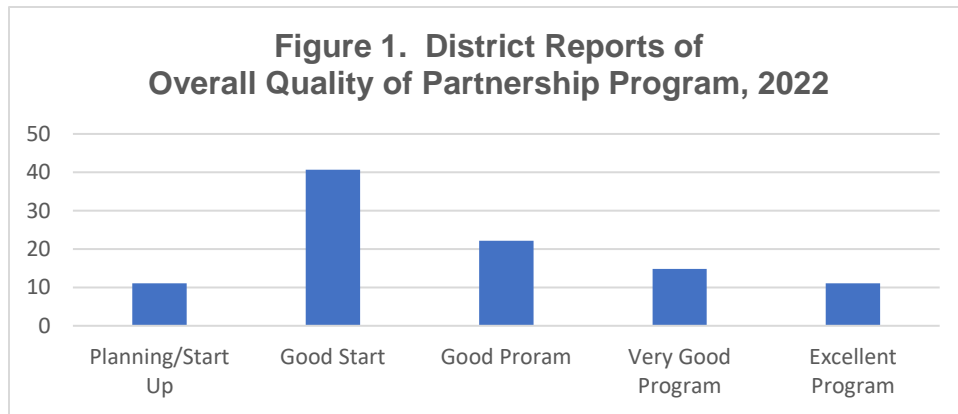
- Schools were located in central cities (34%), small cities (30%), suburban (20%), and rural (16%) areas.
- Schools included students and families who spoke from 1 to 42 languages and dialects at home, with an average of 3.9 languages across schools. On average, about 17% of students were English Language Learners (ELL).
- On average across schools, 81% of students were eligible for free or reduced-price meals, ranging from 0% to 100% of students.

Summary. Districts and schools in NNPS serve economically, racially, linguistically, culturally, and geographically diverse students and families. Large percentages of students receive free or reduced-price meals at school. Some districts and schools have been members of NNPS for many

years and have worked to continually improve outreach to all parents to support student learning and development. Other districts and schools—new to NNPS—are just starting to use research-based structures and processes to organize and strengthen their programs and practices of family and community engagement.

Overall Quality of Partnership Programs

On the *UPDATE* survey, each district and school painted a “portrait” of the status and progress of its partnership program ranging from *Start Up*, to *Good Start*, *Good*, *Very Good*, and *Excellent* programs. They also provided details about how they are implementing research-based structures and processes that frame strong partnership programs. Figures 1 and 2 report the *Overall Quality* of district and school partnership programs in the 2021-22 school year.



A large number of new districts joined NNPS in the past two years. Thus, about half of the districts (52%) were in early stages of program development. The others, mainly more experienced districts, reported good (22%), very good (15%), or excellent (11%) programs. School programs fall along a near-normal curve with startup (11%), average (19%), good (32%), very good (29%) and excellent (9%) programs. An “excellent” rating requires district leaders and school teams to report that they are conducting a *permanent program that is likely to continue even if leaders changed*. This certainty about the sustainability of partnership programs is the ultimate goal in NNPS for all districts and schools.

Summary. The varied “portraits” of districts and schools suggest that partnership programs develop as a continuous improvement process. Over time, district and school leaders improve how they plan, implement, and evaluate partnership activities to engage all families in ways that contribute to student success in school (Epstein et al., 2019; Epstein & Sheldon, 2016).

Other analyses showed that the overall quality of district and school programs was significantly correlated with key measures of program development. In schools, for example, high-quality programs implemented more advanced activities to engage more and different families ($r=.685$, $p<.001$); had strong principal support ($r=.545$, $p<.001$), reported more district facilitation ($r= .413$, $p<.001$), and accessed more NNPS resources throughout the year ($r= .225$, $p<.001$)². These associations were significant for both elementary and secondary schools, and at the district level. It is important to note that the overall quality of schools’ partnership programs was not significantly related to geographic location ($r= .077$, NS), nor to the percentage of students receiving free lunch ($r=.050$, NS). These patterns indicate that schools in any location and with diverse students can develop strong, well-supported partnership programs over time.

SPECIAL TOPICS: *UPDATE 2022*

UPDATE 2022 asked two new questions.

- 1. COVID FOLLOW-UP: How are districts and schools in NNPS adjusting their partnership programs after more than 2 years of COVID challenges?**
- 2. THE EQUITY AGENDA: How are districts and schools progressing on goals for effective and equitable programs that engage ALL families as partners in students’ education?**

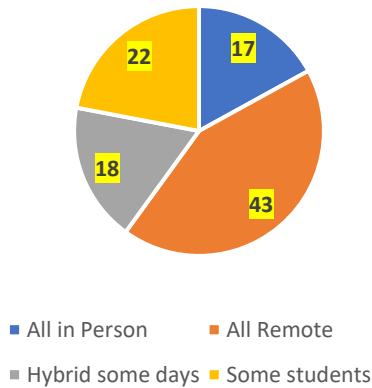
1. COVID FOLLOW-UP

Over the past two years since March 2020, *UPDATE* data reported that districts and schools designed new ways to engage families and community partners when school doors were closed. We wanted to learn whether and how conditions changed in 2021-22 in locations for student learning (i.e., at school or at home) and for meeting with parents (i.e., in school buildings or online).

Location of student learning. At the onset of COVID-19, most students were required to learn from home and experienced shifting schedules from in-person to at-home learning (Epstein, Sheldon, & Chappell, 2021 and 2022). In the 2021-22 school year, most districts and schools returned to face-to-face classes for most students and enjoyed more options for family engagement activities, as shown in Figures 3 and 4.

Figures 3 and 4 reveal dramatic changes in the location for student learning over one year. Over 80% of schools reported all students were back in class in person at the start of the 2021-22 school year. School teams also reported few or no changes in the location for student learning during the year. Schools went from 20% of students learning in the same location all year in 2021 to 78%, indicating a less turbulent learning environment for the past school year. District leaders reported similar percentages. In short, most students were back in school after two difficult years.

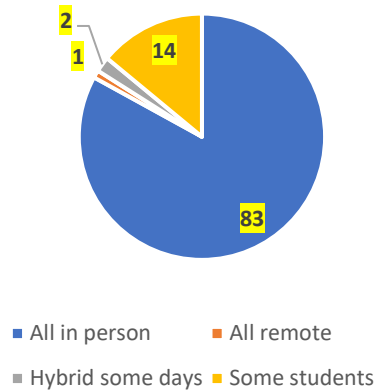
Figure 3: Location of Student Learning, 2020-21



Location of Student Learning	
Last year, 2020-21	% Schools
All students in person	17%
All students remote learning	43%
All students hybrid—some days in person, some days remote	18%
Some students in person	22%
No change in place for learning	20%
Changed location more than once	60%

N=301 Schools. Source: 2021 UPDATE

Figure 4: Location of Student Learning 2021-22

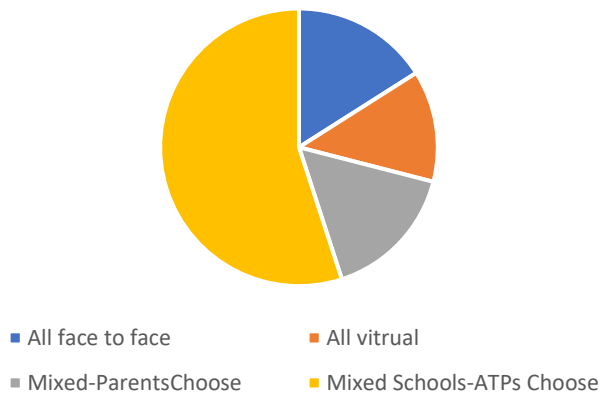


Location of Student Learning	
This year, 2021-22	% Schools
All students in person	83%
All students remote learning	1%
All students hybrid—some days in person, some days remote	2%
Some students in person	14%
No change in place for learning	78%
Changed location more than once	13%

N= 298 Schools. Source: 2022 UPDATE

Meetings with Parents. When school doors closed in 2020 and students were learning from home, all connections with parents and community partners were conducted online. In the past year, 2021-22, COVID-19 restrictions began to be lifted across districts and schools, as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5. School Reports on How Meetings/Activities were Conducted with Parents/Community, 2021-22



School Meetings and Activities with Families	
All face-to-face meetings with parents	16%
All remote meetings with parents	13%
Mixed offerings—parents choose	16%
Mixed offerings—schools/ATPs choose	55%

N= 298 Schools. Source 2022 UPDATE

In the 2021-22 school year, schools conducted meetings and activities with parents in varied ways. A small number of schools held all events and meetings in-person (16%) or all online (13%) activities. Others offered hybrid meetings (16%) so that parents could choose how they wanted to attend in person or online. Most school teams (55%) reported that they decided how to conduct the family engagement activities in their *One-Year Action Plans for Partnerships*. The schools decided whether activities with parents were in person, online, simultaneously available in person or online, and recorded for parents to “attend” at times they choose.

In sum, for two years under COVID restrictions, most students were learning from home with online classes or, for those without computers, with assigned learning packets. Just about all meetings with parents, families, and community partners were online. In 2021-22 as COVID restrictions were lifted, most students were back in class. Most schools began to meet with parents in person, as they did prior to COVID or used various modalities for parent meetings—in person in the school, outdoors, and online.

COVID Carry Over. We wanted to learn whether district leaders and school teams planned to continue strategies designed to meet COVID challenges. Were there “silver linings” to the COVID crisis that might help districts and schools improve their partnership programs? Table 1 reports that over 80% of district leaders and school teams planned to continue some online meetings and activities with parents for the foreseeable future, and their reasons for these decisions. They explained clearly and consistently that *virtual, hybrid, and recorded meetings and activities enabled more and different parents to participate*.

Table 1. District and School Reports and Typical Comments	
Which strategies implemented to meet COVID requirements will be continued?	Why will you continue this strategy?
<p style="text-align: center;">District Leaders: 88% School Teams: 85% reported they will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use <i>Zoom</i> and other virtual platforms for information, meetings, and activities with parents/families • Record and archive in-person and virtual meetings/sessions. • Offer parents hybrid/simultaneous activities. 	<p>Online connections removed traditional barriers and increased parents’ attendance and participation.</p> <p>Helped families who lacked transportation and/or childcare and those with disabilities.</p> <p>Meets the needs of families for flexible schedules.</p> <p>Enabled families to plan time for online “anytime” attendance.</p> <p>Had much better participation offering both options.</p> <p>There has been a great positive response by families and teachers to virtual meetings.</p> <p>Parents expressed their gratitude for the flexibility and accommodations.”</p> <p>Our parents have a variety of different schedules, and this strategy allows them to still be engaged in their child’s education at their convenience.</p>

N = 23 districts; N= 298 schools. Source: NNPS *UPDATEs 2022*

In addition, some district leaders and school teams noted they would continue *drive-thru* and other *outdoor* activities to meet, greet, and engage families (4%); *small group and grade-level activities* in addition to whole-school meetings (4%); and *individual check and connect phone* calls to let parents know that the school valued personal connections with them (4%). Still others noted they would continue creative *at-home* activities including virtual field trips, art and writing activities, cooking sessions, and learning games that parents and children enjoyed doing together at home. (See examples of how these designs worked in various schools and districts in *Promising Partnership Practices 2022*, <https://nnps.jhucos.com/success-stories/promising-partnership-practices/>; Thomas, et al., 2022).

Many district leaders and school teams noted that they want to increase the number of in-person activities, which they explained permit parent-teacher interactions at a “deeper level” than online. As one wrote: “Our parents love to be on campus, and we like having them here to see our school and participate in functions.” The data show clearly, however, that most respondents will continue a mix of in-person and virtual meetings to engage families who were not engaged at school or at home before COVID. Some noted that virtual activities satisfy some parents’ on-going health concerns about face-to-face meetings. Others pointed to family situations as the reason for keeping virtual options available to families. As one school team explained, “Our parents can feed and bathe children without traveling to the school building and no need for a babysitter.” A school leader summed things up: “Virtual meetings will always be an option moving forward.”

Table 1 reports a few typical comments from district leaders and school teams on how parents responded to the designs developed under COVID restrictions. The explanations extend findings in previous reports that nearly 100% of district leaders and school teams agreed that COVID-19 gave them “new insights” into their students’ families lives (Epstein, Sheldon, Chappell, 2021, 2022).

2. THE EQUITY AGENDA

- **How Diverse are NNPS Districts and Schools?**
- **How Are NNPS Districts and Schools Working to Engage ALL Families?**

Official policies for family engagement tell schools to engage *all* students’ families as partners in ways that help *all* students succeed in school. This goal—equity in outreach to and engagement of all families—is also NNPS’s agenda, but it is not an easy goal to attain.

Districts and schools in NNPS serve highly diverse families and students. Thus, there is not just one way to help every district and every school engage the families who are most challenging to reach in their locations. This year, we asked three questions to learn how districts and schools are doing on the equity agenda to engage all families.

- **How diverse are districts and schools in NNPS?**
UPDATE listed 10 groups of families who may be served by NNPS schools: families with diverse racial, economic, and linguistic backgrounds; families in deep poverty; new immigrant, homeless, LGBTQ, and military-connected families; families of children with special needs; and grandparents raising children.

Both schools and districts reported serving an average of 7.7 of the 10 different groups of families on the list, ranging from 1 to all 10 groups.

- **How far along is your district or your school on the equity agenda?**
Responses on a 5-point scale ranged from *just starting* to work on this agenda to making *some, good, or very good progress, and solved the challenge*. Districts averaged 2.69 and schools averaged 3.08 on this scale, indicating that most reported they were making *some to good progress*, as shown in Figure 6.

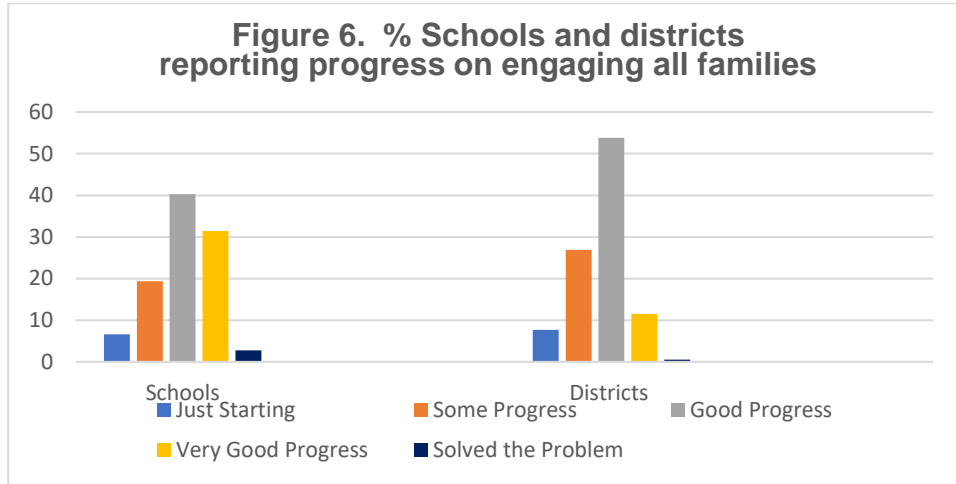


Figure 6 indicates that a few schools and no districts reported that they *solved* challenges to engage *all* families. This is, then, an on-going and imperative agenda.

Table 2 reports correlations of the measure of schools’ progress on the equity agenda (i.e., how “far along” toward full equity) with other qualities of their partnership programs. More progress in engaging all families is associated with stronger overall quality of partnership programs, more facilitation from district leaders for partnerships, more support from the principal, more participation by parents in school activities such as parent-teacher conferences, more communications by teachers with families, and more use of NNPS resources to support program development.

Work and progress on the equity agenda was *not* associated with the number of diverse family groups at the school, nor with the percentage of students receiving free- or reduced-prices meals. The number of different groups of families in schools was not significantly associated with the measure of partnership program quality. There was a small but significant association of schools’ progress on the equity agenda and higher rates of student attendance. Table 2 suggests that schools with stronger programs of partnership are conducting activities to engage more and different families of the students they serve.

Table 2. Correlates of Schools’ Progress on the Equity Agenda

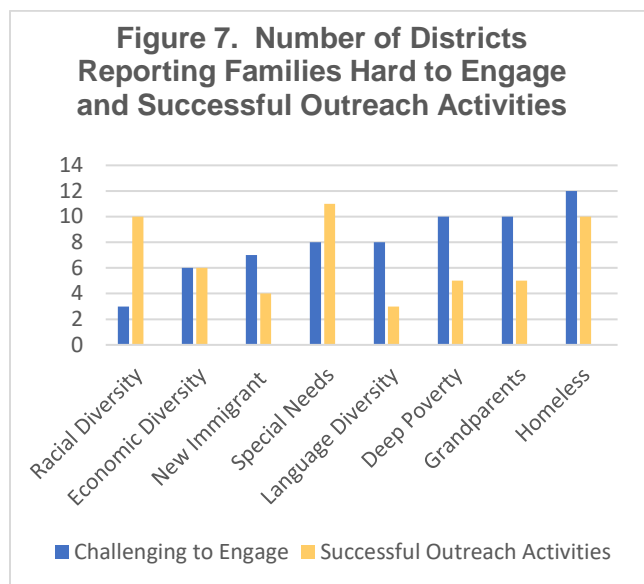
	Overall Program Quality	District Facilitates	Principal Support	Parents at P-T Confs	Teachers Cmmuncate with Fams	Use of NNPS Items	# Diverse Fams	% Free Lunch	Student ADA
How far along is this school in engaging all families?	.548***	.360***	.400***	.341 ***	.336***	.142*	.080 NS	.030 NS	.148*

Source: 2022 SCHOOL UPDATE, N=298
Zero-order correlations: ***p<.001, *p<.05.

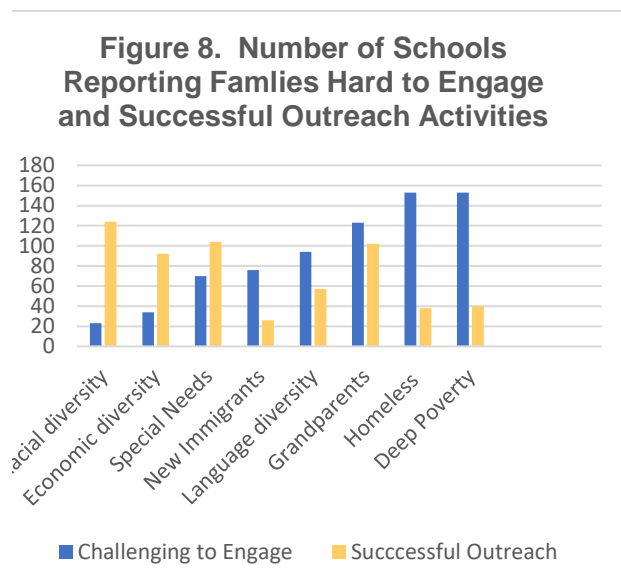
- **Which groups of families are *most challenging* to engage in your location, and why?**

Figures 7 and 8 show the number of districts and schools reporting specific family groups they find most challenging to engage (in blue). Both district leaders and school teams ordered the family groups in their schools from less to more challenging.

Figures 7 and 8 also show the number of district leaders and school teams that reported they designed and implemented activities to engage the same family groups (in yellow). Table 3 lists a few of many examples of effective strategies implemented to engage the families who still are hard to reach in many schools and districts.



Source: District *UPDATE* 2022, N= 28



Source: School *UPDATE* 2022, N=298

It is noteworthy that district leaders and school teams listed **racial diversity** as the *least challenging* descriptor among these family groups. Rather, both districts and schools reported that three groups of families who face multiple hardships were *most challenging* to engage: **families in deep poverty, homeless families, and grandparents raising children**. These factors—poverty, homelessness, and absent parents—seriously affect families of all racial and ethnic backgrounds, but disproportionately affect Black and brown families^a. Though “racial diversity” alone is not the main challenge for schools trying to engage all families, race still plays a role in whether and which families face more serious hardships associated with extreme poverty.

Some districts and schools have made progress in reaching the very families that others still find challenging to engage. Table 3 lists a few successful strategies that were reported to have helped school teams to engage families who were previously unengaged or who felt excluded from their children’s education. The most promising approaches were designed to welcome and to directly assist families facing combined hardships due to poverty, homelessness, and/or challenges faced by grandparents in parenting roles. Reaching all families, then, will require personalized and caring communications and plans for action.

Some districts and schools also listed other groups of families they are challenged to engage, including new immigrant families and families speaking languages other than English at home. Others noted they made progress in reaching these families by working with district-level translators, community cultural groups, family volunteers, and by hiring teachers and staff with the same language and cultural backgrounds.

Reasons why families are hard to engage. District leaders and school teams explained why they thought some families are hard to engage. They noted that many families lacked transportation to attend meetings at school; lacked needed computers and technology to communicate with educators or participate in online activities; worked more than one job or multiple shifts; or changed

^a <https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/what-causes-homelessness/inequality/>

addresses and phone numbers more than once during the school year, making it difficult to reach them. Some parents distrusted schools as official institutions or felt uncomfortable coming to the school building and interacting with teachers and other parents. To complicate matters, some family situations and related needs are, by law, confidential or unidentified.

District leaders and school teams are aware of the serious challenges that families face and that limit their connections, communications, and participation in engagement activities. Wrote one school leader, “These families face bigger issues than even their child’s education.” Nevertheless, official policies are “on the books” that direct all schools to engage all families in ways that ensure their children will succeed in school and many educators understand the importance of school, family, community partnerships in realizing equity within our educational system.

District leaders and school teams also recognized that they needed some additional resources. For example, when building partnerships with *racially diverse* and *linguistically diverse* families were listed as challenges, some school teams explained: “We do not have any African American staff that families and students can relate to.” By contrast, some who made progress on this agenda noted that they had hired d teachers and staff to resolve this challenge.

In sum, it may be difficult for districts and schools to connect with families who lack of time and technology, speak many languages, face family challenges, and who do not feel welcome or comfortable at the school building or with teachers and other families. Some of these factors seem beyond the reach of districts and schools. The good news is that Table 3 lists powerful—yet practical—activities to engage families that some schools find hard to reach. The successful practices feature individual, personal communications, and face-to-face meetings that enable parents and educators to meet, talk, and identify needs that can be matched with resources at the district level and in the community.

Table 3 – District and School Reports of the Most Challenging Groups to Engage and Activities Implemented to Reach These Families, 2022

3 Most Challenging Family Groups	Activities that schools and districts implemented to engage these families
Families in deep poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide meals and childcare at family engagement events/activities • Use federal funds/grants to help this group obtain resources to meet basic needs • Provide information on groups and resources for food, food banks, housing, utilities, transportation, household supplies, clothing, and other needs • Offer families food items each week to take home • Offer families clothing for any child that needs extra items • Make all family events are free of charge
Homeless families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet one-on-one to connect families to services that meet their biggest needs (e.g., transportation, housing assistance, food supplies, and other resources) • Provide support and resources at a community health center • Homeless families are considered “focus families” here. We contact them weekly • Organize backpack buddies (Food Fridays) • Link families with others who were homeless and who resolved this • Create, post, and send home a monthly flyer of all resources in the community • Conduct home visits with families in shelters/hotels
Grandparents raising children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host workshops to help grandparents to use and navigate Chromebooks and other technology to help students on homework • Ensure flexible parent-teacher / grandparent-teacher conference times • Grandparents love volunteering, and participating in activities with their grandchildren at school and at home • Make regular weekly phone calls to check in and provide information and resources • Schedule activities early in the day to avoid conflicts with having to pick up other children from school or sports

Note: Effective activities for one group, above, may be adapted to encourage participation of other groups. See how these activities are implemented in NNPS e-books of *Promising Partnership Practices 2022* at www.partnershipschoools.org.

Table 3 shows that some district leaders and school teams developed and implemented activities to connect and communicate with the same family groups that were challenging in other locations. The successful strategies share a few characteristics. They are caring, creative, and responsive to specific family needs, and include collaborations with other groups and organizations in the community. Some respondents reflected on their progress:

“Our school has a diverse population. Diversity is not a negative factor here. It is readily embraced.”

“Our teams’ well-planned activities are so uplifting that everyone wants to participate.”

“We have a celebratory school culture of all students’ backgrounds with heritage days, flags from all countries in the hall, real time translation services, and more.

“At this school, engage all means ALL families.”

Table 3 (continued): District and School Reports on Challenging Family Groups to Engage and Activities Implemented to Reach These Families, 2022

Other family groups that are challenging to engage	Selected activities implemented to engage these families
New immigrant families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with ESOL, Migrant Families, and other departments, and community cultural organizations to connect families with needed resources and to feel welcome • We have a welcome center, liaisons, and translators for new families; monthly virtual sessions • Employ a bilingual staff and translate all phone and email messages! • Families jump in to help new immigrants
Families speaking languages other than English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have translators and interpreters for all communications and activities • Mystery readers brought in books from their home country books and talked about their cultures • Bilingual Family Ambassadors, front office, and Spanish teacher assist families • District provides schools with newsletters/flyers in families’ native languages • Conduct events and meetings in the English and Spanish; others listed 4 languages • Use ClassDojo for auto-translate; conduct bi-lingual radio/Facebook Live • Families share stories in their native languages with the children • Organize virtual field trips to various countries of our students’ families
Diverse racial groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design culturally relevant and exciting programs • Include time for meals for families to mix and get to know one another • Create affinity groups and collect input and feedback from parents • Our Open House is known and anticipated throughout our community
Diverse economic groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build relationships. Use multiple forms of communication. • Provide those in need with important services, resources, e.g., wi-fi, computers • Parents complete a survey on availability and interests • Offer virtual meetings and presentations and vary time-of-day to fit schedules • Feed families before activities start • Our home visitor helps identify family needs and connects to community resources for food, clothes, and mental health services • Conduct a Family Goal-Setting activity
Families of children with special needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with families face-to-face to build trust, relationships, and programs for students • Three integrated-services counselors and a new social-emotional-trauma coach serve students daily • District has a steering committee of parents of children with special needs • We revised options and formats of IEP meetings to be flexible for families • Provide informational sessions on speech development, gross and fine motor skills, etc. that families can use • Have all-inclusive student participation in activities and recognition ceremonies (K-5) to encourage family engagement

Will any single activity “solve” the inequities in family and community engagement? Of course not. But many schools in NNPS are working to implement caring and purposeful connections to engage families who were previously less engaged, hesitant to participate, or disconnected from their children’s schools. These comments and thoughtful examples show clearly that family engagement is not a “fixed” or “permanent” condition. Engagement is an *alterable variable* and engaging *all* families is an achievable goal. To improve outreach and equity in engaging all families, new designs and responsive actions will be needed to communicate with and support parents who were, previously, excluded or unengaged.

Summary and Conclusions

Districts and schools in NNPS continued to work to improve their programs of school, family, and community partnerships in the 2021-22 school year. *UPDATE 2022* asked two main questions to check progress in schools after COVID-19 restrictions were lifted in many locations:

- **Where are students learning (at school or at home) and how are schools conducting meetings and activities to engage parents in their children’s education?**

The data show that in the 2021-22 school year, most students were back in class for in-person learning. Close to 90% of schools reported that children started the year attending school in person, and few noted disruptions in location for learning during the year.

ATPs were meeting in different ways with families. Over 80% of district leaders and school teams reported they would continue to use multiple modalities to increase parents’ attendance and participation in engagement activities. This includes in-person, virtual, hybrid, and recorded activities. Some district leaders and school teams planned to continue a few other creative approaches, including outdoor, drive-thru, and mixed indoor-outdoor gatherings. Respondents explained that many families participated in virtual meetings and events who, previously, could not come to the school building. Thus, one “silver lining” of the COVID crisis was the expansion of modalities for family and community engagement meetings and activities. These options are likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

- **How are districts and schools progressing on the equity agenda to engage all students’ families as partners in education?**

Districts and schools were very much aware of the importance of the policy directive to engage all families. They varied, however, in how far along they were in meeting this goal. Districts and schools ranged from *just starting* to *making good progress* in engaging all families as partners in their children’s education. Over 95% reported there still is more to do on the equity agenda.

The two questions addressed in this *Annual Report* are connected. During the COVID-19 crisis, district leaders and school-based Action Teams for Partnerships gained new skills and extensive experience in using new technologies to conduct their programs of school, family, and community partnerships. Connections with families and community partners were threatened when school doors closed.

For two years under COVID restrictions, district leaders and school teams in NNPS continued their partnership plans and practices by using *Zoom* or other virtual meeting platforms, social media, phone connections, creative *drive thru* activities, and other new designs (Epstein, Sheldon, & Chappell, 2021, 2022). This year, as COVID restrictions were lifted in most locations, district leaders and school teams reflected on lessons learned and overwhelmingly reported that they

will continue using virtual and hybrid activities *because* this mix of modalities makes these activities accessible to more and different families.

UPDATE 2022 asked about the nature and extent of family diversity in districts and schools. NNPS district and school are highly diverse *and* diverse in many ways. Respondents noted different family groups in their locations who are harder to reach or challenging to engage, especially families facing multiple hardships (i.e., low incomes, homelessness, grandparents raising children) that limited their time and attention to school matters. Other districts and schools shared examples of successful approaches and activities that helped them engage the same family groups. The successful activities had several common qualities. They emphasized personalized, creative, and caring designs that understood and met families' specific needs.

Over the years, *UPDATE* data showed that districts and schools in NNPS that had stronger partnership programs were conducting activities in ways that engaged more and different families. This year, we see, again that districts and schools with high quality partnership programs, overall, were more likely to be working to improve strategies to engage all families. This persistent finding confirms why it is important to keep strengthening partnership programs from year to year. Then, districts and schools will be more likely to respond well to unexpected challenges—like COVID—that may arise at any time.

NOTES

- 1) In 2022, data are from NNPS districts in 8 states: AZ, CT, LA, MN, OH, PA, SC, and WA.
Data are from NNPS schools in 11 states: check AR, AZ, CA, CT, FL, LA, MI, OH, PA, SC, and WA.
- 2) (r) refers to a correlation coefficient that reports the strength of relationships between two variables.

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HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

Review each section of this report and reflect on how *your* program compares with the data from districts and schools across the country.

- Discuss with your colleagues and school teams the two questions addressed in this *Annual Report*:
What are we doing well now? What can we improve in the next school year?
What advice or professional development from NNPS would help us meet our goals?
- District leaders: Review your *Leadership Plan for Partnerships*.
School ATPs: Review your *One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships*.
Does the information in this report give you some ideas to improve your plans for the 23-24 school year? Retain good practices and consider needed improvements.
- District and organization leaders who have 8 schools or more in NNPS that completed the 2021 School *UPDATE*, will receive a *customized conference* with NNPS on their own schools' data. NNPS will ask these leaders how they can use the information in this report to help the schools in their location continue to improve their partnership programs.
- Share this document with your colleagues and supervisors to show that you are working with NNPS to evaluate your work and to improve your plans and practices every year.
- Contact NNPS with questions about this report or to talk about your next steps to improve district-level and school-based partnership programs.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FROM NNPS

Members of NNPS have many options for professional development to continually improve their programs of school, family, and community partnerships.

- Visit the NNPS website: www.partnershipschools.org.
- Use the NNPS *Handbook for Action, 4th Edition*, as your guide to continually improve your leadership and program of family and community engagement.
- Read the monthly NNPS *E-Brief* for news and ideas. Use information from *E-Brief* in your own communications with school-based ATPs.
Make sure your IT office allows *E-Brief* and other e-mail from NNPS, Johns Hopkins University, and Constant Contact.
- District, organization, and state leaders may register for the NNPS Leadership Institute in October or March of the school year. Leadership Institutes are for district, organization, and state leaders who are new to NNPS or who are ready to conduct *One-Day Team Training* workshops with their schools' Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs). Check the NNPS website for information on the next Leadership Institute.
- NNPS conducts free webinars for district leaders and for school teams in January and February, respectively, to review basic guidelines for successful partnership programs. Watch for information in the monthly E-Briefs about the free webinars each year.
- Find good ideas in the NNPS annual books of *Promising Partnership Practices* on the website in the section *Success Stories*.
- Follow NNPS on *Facebook* and *Twitter* for photos, notes, and newsletters from NNPS Institutes and from network members. "LIKE" NNPS on **Facebook** at: <https://www.facebook.com/partnershipschools> and follow us on **Twitter** at: https://twitter.com/NNPS_JHU.
- Scaling up? As you develop YOUR network of partnership schools in your location, ask the new schools to complete the *NNPS School Membership Form* in Join NNPS at www.partnershipschools.org. See "Why NNPS?" in this section.
- E-mail NNPS Facilitator—Brenda Thomas, bthomas@jhu.edu, with YOUR questions about next steps at the district level to strengthen your program and assist your schools.
- Want on-site or online professional development? Contract with NNPS for keynote addresses, presentations, and workshops to support your work and to prepare your schools' ATPs. Contact us by email for more information.



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www.partnershipschools.org

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