



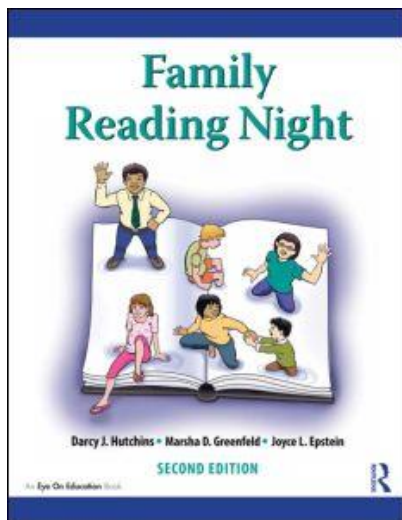
## National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) 2023 November E-Brief for Districts, States, and Organizations



As November makes its way, Thanksgiving draws near!  
We give thanks for great partnerships all through the year.  
Teachers and families work together each day  
To help all students learn. That's the "Giving Thanks Way!"

NNPS will stay connected with you in our monthly *E-Briefs* as you design and implement partnership activities to increase student success. Check *E-Brief* each month for timely information to advance your leadership, plans, and practices of family and community engagement.

**THEME FOR THE YEAR.** The NNPS theme for the 2023-24 school year is:  
**Tools You Can Use.**



The NNPS book, *Family Reading Night* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2015 by D. Hutchins, M Greenfeld, and J. Epstein) is a treasure trove of good ideas. Many schools conduct activities to engage families with students on reading in fun ways, but struggle to conduct a good *Family Reading Night*. This book helps you organize these gatherings in person or online for different genres to help students at all elementary grades read different kinds of stories. Each chapter provides activities in English and Spanish for **Scary Stories, Funny Books, Biographies, Celebrations / Traditions, Poetry, and more.**

**Why is this a good tool to use?** Each chapter lists for teachers the specific *reading standards* and students' *reading and literacy skills* are addressed by the activities that are outlined. Each chapter includes whole group activities (for students and family members) and student presentations for grades K-2 and 3-5. These can be adapted for the middle grades. The appendix provides all forms needed to get started, including invitations and registration lists. [See the book here!](#)

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## LAST CALL! 2023 UPDATES & RENEWALS

Thanks to all members of NNPS who returned the 2023 *UPDATE* and renewal fee to remain members of NNPS for the 2023-24 school year!

If your program received a reminder a few weeks ago about the need to return the 2023 *UPDATE* or renewal fee for NNPS membership, **NOW is the time!**

Check the reminder you received noting what is missing to continue membership, or click on **[NNPS UPDATE and Renewal for 2023-24](#)** and scroll down to complete the correct *UPDATE* for your school, district, or organization.

Do not get “cut” from this important network. Stay active to continue to receive all member benefits (see the l-o-n-g list of benefits at Join NNPS at [www.partnershipschoools.org](http://www.partnershipschoools.org)). Remain a national leader on family and community engagement!

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## Recap: NNPS FALL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE (LI)

The NNPS fall *Leadership Institute* was conducted online October 24, 25, and 26. Leaders from Arkansas, Ohio, and South Carolina participated via *Zoom*. The smart and spirited participants learned how to organize research-based partnership programs in their location, and how to conduct a one-day team training for their schools' Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs). The attendees had many "aha!" moments as they considered new ideas for strong partnership programs. Here are a few examples.

"My AHA! Moment was. . .

- . . . listening to other people's experiences in their schools and districts."
- . . . creating the *One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships*. Having us work through the process ourselves was a very productive activity."
- . . . the overview of the resources available on the NNPS website."
- . . . *Jumping Hurdles* is a great activity and tool to lead in a structured discussion."
- . . . considering how families can be active participants in school decisions rather than just receiving information.
- . . . being able to walk in the shoes of a school Action Team and work on a plan."
- . . . learning about the hard work schools do to plan events. These sites are rockstars!"
- . . . seeing that *goal-linked activities* include successful community involvement."
- . . . gaining the competencies and confidence to support my district and the schools we work with, to be able to develop and present our own workshop. I appreciate the resources."

The next Leadership Institute for district, organization, and state leaders will be in March 2024 (dates TBD).

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## YOUR SPACE

This is *YOUR SPACE!* where we feature creative and important activities from *Promising Partnership Practice 2023*. Feel free to adopt or adapt these ideas. You also may send in a new activity to Brenda Thomas during the year ([bthomas@jhu.edu](mailto:bthomas@jhu.edu)), OR send a question to NNPS to solve an emerging challenge. We will address your question in *YOUR SPACE*.

***Professional Learning Booster Sessions***, reported by **Dr. Barbara Boone, Director of Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center (OhSFEC)**. Last year, OhSFEC leaders hosted two half-day workshops on *Zoom* in October and January for regional coaches,

district leaders, and schools' Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs). In addition to the leaders' presentations, five Ohio district leaders reported on their most effective leadership strategies. The sessions covered requested topics:

(1) How to *raise awareness of all families* about their school's work on family engagement.

(2) How to *redesign* family engagement activities so that they remain fresh and relevant; and

(3) how to *conduct feasible evaluations* of partnership programs and practices.

These topics recognize that most school improvement activities—including those on partnerships—are not perfect on the first try. Also, new students and families enter schools every year. So awareness messages, redesigns, and evaluations are important for programs to continually improve. One recurring guideline is to design or redesign activities that may be conducted in person *and* at home—not only “events” at the school building. OhSFEC has surveys and other tools that leaders and teams can use to assess different components of their partnership programs.

Read more about *Professional Learning Booster Sessions* on page 47 of the 2023 [Promising Partnership Practices book](#).

***All Roads Lead Home*** was conducted by **Columbia High School (CHS)** in Richland County, South Carolina, reported by **Yolanda Smith, Parent and Family Engagement Specialist**. The school's Action Team for Partnerships (ATP), Parent and Family Engagement Specialist, and other teachers and leaders had a good idea for building connections with “the community.” They focused on their *alumni community* to create a more organized way to contact *all* of the high school's alumni with a strong and active Alumni Association for the school. This group would demonstrate the value of the school's past graduates and support current and future students. The planners, including active alumni, planned a kickoff activity. They invited alums from all graduating classes to come to the school to recall memories, celebrate the school, and plan improvements.

Everyone at the school pitched in to contact alums. Current students talked with their parents, family members, and neighbors who attended CHS in the past. Students also set up a yearbook display to prompt many memories. ROTC students provided security for the activity. Teachers contacted alumni they knew, including some prior faculty at CHS. The principal and assistant principal served as advisors. The new Alumni Association initiated several exciting programs (e.g., alumni volunteers and mentors, scholarships for future graduates; a Career Fair, to improve student attendance, graduation rates, college and career plans, and more.

Read more about *All Roads Lead Home* on pages 30-31 of the 2023 [Promising Partnership Practices book](#).

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## NNPS and SOCIAL MEDIA

November is *Parent Engagement Month*—which we and colleagues like to call *School, Family, and Community Partnership Month*! Our excellent colleague, Dr. Darcy Hutchins, Director of Family, School, and Community Partnerships for the Colorado Department of Education, called on her friends to create some powerful links on social media to celebrate work on family and community engagement.

NNPS featured YOUR work in *Promising Partnership Practices 2023*, the NNPS Partnership Award Winners, and NNPS *Handbook for Action*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition.

Check NNPS entries for *Parent Engagement Month* on [Facebook](#) and on [Twitter/“X”](#).

Explore the following hashtags to see the reports from other locations:

**#NNPS**      **#PartnershipSchools**    **#PartnerinEd**      **#FSCPMonth2023**

You can join the celebration of November—Parent Engagement Month/School, Family, and Community Partnerships. Add your message and example. Be sure to use the same hashtags to connect your work with NNPS and our friends.

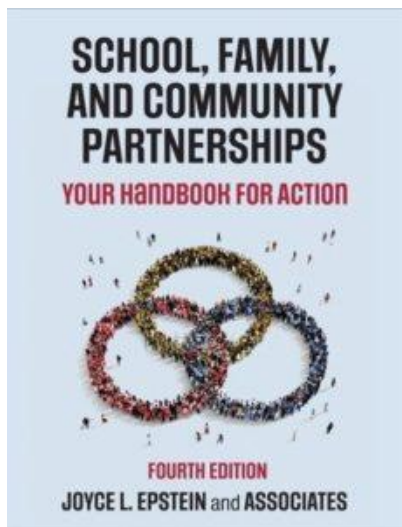
NNPS *Facebook* is a networking tool. Please send photos of the partnership activities that you conduct throughout the year with a short sentence description and your name and affiliation to Brenda Thomas at [nnps@jhu.edu](mailto:nnps@jhu.edu). We will select some to add to NNPS’s *Facebook* page.

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## NNPS Members-Only Access Code

The **MEMBERS-ONLY CODE** gives special benefits to active members of NNPS. The **Members-Only Access Code** is **NNPS23mem**. On the website, [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org), you can use the Code to explore many years’ books of *Promising Partnership Practices* and all 18 NNPS *Samplers* of goal-linked partnership activities in the section Success Stories. We will remind you of the code in every month’s *E-Brief*.

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## INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

This month we direct your attention to the NNPS resource, ***School, Family, and Community Partnerships – Your Handbook for Action, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition***. Does your *Handbook* look brand new? NNPS would like your book to be well-worn and dog-eared! The *Handbook for Action* will help your school, district, organization, region, and state to plan, implement, and continually improve an excellent and equitable program of partnerships. If you follow the guidelines, your program will ensure a welcoming school climate that engages *all* families in ways that benefit *all* students. The *Handbook* keeps no

secrets and provides the information and examples you need to ensure that your partnership program is research-based. If you use the *Handbook* to organize school-level Action Teams for Partnerships that have an annual *Action Plan for Partnerships*, you will have the structures and processes in place that will enable you to make better use of all the other information on family engagement (often “too much information”) that is “out there.” You will be able to pick and choose other information to enhance your own partnership program—always keeping in mind the goal for good partnerships *in all schools, with all families, and for all students*.

- School teams will find good ideas in Chapter 2’s *School Stories*.
- District and Organization Leaders for Partnership will be guided by Chapter 7 on *Leadership for Partnerships*.
- Check all chapters for good information that will support your goals for great partnership programs. Open the book and dog-ear those pages!

Do you have questions about how to use the *Handbook for Action* in your location? Contact Brenda Thomas for a good conversation ([bthomas@jhu.edu](mailto:bthomas@jhu.edu)).

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## SUPPORT NNPS

If you make tax-deductible donations to non-profit organizations at the end of the year, please think of NNPS. Your donation supports NNPS’s unique projects—books of *Promising Partnership Practices*, *Partnership Awards*, monthly *E-Briefs*, Annual *UPDATE* evaluations and reports, and our excellent website. Here’s how: Click the **Donate** link. Indicate your gift and scroll down



through Research Centers to the **National Network of Partnership Schools**. Click **Continue as Guest** and complete your donation.

## **DONATE!**

NNPS appreciates your tax-deductible contribution. The University and NNPS will send official acknowledgements of your donation for tax purposes. Thank you!

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**We are SO thankful for the great partnership work that you are doing!**



**In partnership,  
Brenda, Steve, and  
Joyce  
*The NNPS Team***

The NNPS School E-Brief is disseminated once a month during the school year. The E-Brief is intended to:

1. Offer timely information to support your efforts to build comprehensive school, family, and community partnership programs.
2. Update you on available research, tools, materials, services, and training opportunities from the National Network of Partnership Schools.
3. Provide you with a vehicle to exchange ideas with, ask questions of, and share resources with other NNPS members and the NNPS staff.

To respond to NNPS about an E-Brief, click "Reply" and you will send your email only to me, Brenda Thomas.

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