



National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) 2024 January E-Brief for Districts, Regions, Organizations, and States



Happy New Year!

Each New Year prompts resolutions to increase student success!
Strong partnerships help students do their very best.
We resolve: “Students will complete each grade, and schools will graduate more.”
That’s a plan and a promise worth keeping in 2024!

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: **Tools You Can Use.**



Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) interactive homework enables teachers to engage students with a family

partner on homework. Each TIPS activity guides **students** to talk with someone at home about something interesting they are learning in class. Studies show that, with TIPS, more students complete their homework, and master basic skills in key subjects. There are hundreds of prototype TIPS activities that are FREE to members of NNPS. At the elementary level, see **Early Reading K-3** (88 activities); **Math K-5** (217 activities); and a few science prototypes. In the middle grades, see **Math 6-8** (75 activities); **Language Arts 6-8** (116 activities); and **Science 6-8** (174 activities).

Why is this a good tool to use?

- TIPS helps *all* parents become involved, not just a few who are comfortable with school subjects.
- TIPS does not ask parents to “teach” school subjects. Rather, students conduct positive conversations about what they are learning and how school skills are used in the “real world.”
- Every TIPS activity includes a section of *Home-to-School Communications* for parents to comment on their interactions with their children or ask a question.

See all TIPS resources at www.partnershipschoools.org or click [TIPS Interactive Homework](#).

Contact NNPS to contract for a TIPS introductory webinar or for a full-day TIPS Implementation Workshop for your district, region, or school.

Free NNPS Webinar for School ATPs February 20, 2024—2 - 3:30 p.m., EST

This webinar will help school-based Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) understand NNPS “Basics.” Topics include *Ten Steps to Partnership Success*, how to strengthen ATPs this year, and how to write a goal-linked action plan for the 2024-25 school year. Members of the ATP should attend this webinar together.

To register, contact Brenda Thomas at nnps@jhu.edu. List your name, affiliation, e-mail address, and the words **Register for Free NNPS School ATP Webinar**. The webinar is a benefit of membership. District and organization leaders may attend with their school teams.

NNPS Leadership Institute – Live Online in Three Parts! March 12, 13, and 14, 2024 (2 - 5 p.m., EDT)

Join district, organization, regional, and state leaders from across the country for the live-online NNPS Leadership Institute on research-based partnership program development. This intensive institute will enable you to guide all schools' Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) to organize, conduct, evaluate, and continually improve their programs of family and community engagement for student success in school. **The Leadership Institute is for:**

- (1) new leaders at the district, organization, region, and state level.**
- (2) all leaders who are ready to start to work with school ATPs.**
- (3) new colleagues working as leaders of partnership programs.**

The Spring 2024 Leadership Institute will celebrate teamwork! One leader registers and may bring along one colleague at no extra cost.

Don't miss your opportunity to participate in this important professional development from NNPS. PLUS ONE BONUS—**ONE registration covers two (2) colleagues who attend the Institute together. Register NOW! Follow the link from the homepage (www.partnershipschools.org) or click [March 2024 NNPS Leadership Institute](#)**

NEW! Here is the Members-Only Access Code for 2024

The **MEMBERS-ONLY ACCESS CODE** changes each January to give special benefits and useful resources to active members of NNPS who renew membership for the new year. You may use the new code—**memNNPS24**—to explore many years' books of *Promising Partnership Practices* and all *18 NNPS Samplers* at www.partnershipschools.org in the section *Success Stories*. We will remind you of this year's access code in every *E-Brief*.

RECAP: WEBINAR FOR DISTRICTS, ORGANIZATIONS, REGIONS, and STATES

Leaders for partnerships from Charleston, Florence, and Lake City, South Carolina; Columbus, Ohio; Pasco, Washington; Dublin, Ireland; and Santiago, Chile attended the NNPS free webinar to strengthen leadership and facilitation strategies (January 18). Participants received a quick “refresher” on the roles and responsibilities of leaders for partnerships. They gathered and shared ideas to facilitate school-based Action Teams for Partnerships. It was enriching to have leaders from three nations—US, Ireland, and Chile—learning together with NNPS.

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), OR send a question to NNPS to solve an emerging challenge. We will address your question in *YOUR SPACE*.

***Parent PEP Rallies: Motivating and Encouraging Families* was reported by Latorsha Murray, Parent & Family Engagement Coordinator, Richland County School District One, Columbia, SC.** At the request of the district Superintendent, each of 7 high schools hosted a *Pep Rally* to help their families and incoming ninth graders make a successful transition to high school. Each *Pep Rally* had a full agenda with messages about the importance of family engagement and examples of many ways for parents to volunteer at their child's school, serve on school and district committees, and encourage their child's learning at home.

A *Pep Rally* needs “pep,” which was provided by each high school's band, cheerleading squad, dance club, and ROTC. The Superintendent, School Board Chair, host principal, parent leaders on each school's Action Team for Partnerships (ATP), School Improvement Council (SIC), and PTA participated. Other district and school leaders also were engaged including translation services, safety and security teams, IT squad, custodians, theater services, and others. Click here to read more about [***Parent PEP Rallies: Motivating and Encouraging Families***](#), on pp. 50-51 in *Promising Partnership Practices 2023*.

***Seeing the Potential and Worth of All* was reported by Andrenna A. Smith, Principal of W. G. Sanders Middle School, Richland County School District One in Columbia, SC.** This practice grew from a conversation with students after a senseless killing in the community. The students concluded, “We need to show that there is potential and worth in each and every student.” This led to a new program making student leadership central to all aspects of the school program—not for one student leader, but for all students. Teachers gave students greater voice and choice in leadership activities and helped them showcase their talents and family cultures with pride. Business, faith-based partners, and parents supported students' leadership in service-learning projects in the community.

Students took leadership roles on bus duty, fire drills, and discipline sessions. They worked to solve school problems, help peers resolve conflicts, improve relationships with teachers, and celebrate the diversity of families and students at the school. Students even provided feedback to teachers on instructional practices. Growing student leadership is not a one-and-done-activity. One business partner reflected on the year's work: “I believe our future is in good

hands.” Read more about [Seeing the Potential and Worth of All](#) on pp. 38-39 in Promising Partnership Practices 2023.

2024 New Year’s Resolutions

Following on the opening poem:

If you resolved to do more to facilitate your school ATPs, you may want to follow in the steps of **Rosa Fulmore, Title I Parent & Family Engagement Coordinator, Department of Federal Programs, Charleston County School District, Charleston, SC**. Rosa kicked off a “Happy New Year!” by registering all of her schools for the NNPS free School Webinar, February 20, 2024!

If you want to take some proven actions to improve your school’s partnership program, take a look at **Ten Steps to Success: School-Based Programs of School, Family, and Community Partnerships** (page 105 in *School, Family, and Community Partnerships, Your Handbook for Action, 4th Edition*). As a team, discuss how your program is doing now on these basic steps, and select one way to improve family and community engagement even more this school year. You still can register your ATP to participate in the FREE School Webinar on February 20, 2024! (See the information above.)

NNPS and SOCIAL MEDIA

The *HUB* (the news and communications center at Johns Hopkins University) interviewed Dr. Joyce Epstein, Co-Director of NNPS about her research on the nature and effects of homework and the development of TIPS interactive homework assignments (see the section on *Theme for the Year*, above). The reporter asked Joyce: **Does homework still have value?** Read the interview to see if you agree with Joyce that teachers must connect the *purpose* and *design* of homework to assign *better* homework. Click [NNPS interview about homework research and practice](#).

NNPS is on Facebook and X (Twitter). You will see extra items – including members’ newsletters and photos, and NNPS activities.

Like us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/partnershipschools>. Follow us on X at https://twitter.com/NNPS_JHU

NNPS Facebook is a networking tool. Send photos from the exciting partnership activities that your program conducts throughout the year with a short sentence

description and your name to nnps@jhu.edu for the NNPS Facebook and Twitter pages.

OPPORTUNITIES AND RESOURCES

Prepare for Black History Month in February. For ideas for family engagement activities during Black History Month in February, visit the [National Museum of African American History & Culture](#).

See the sections:

- [Teaching and Learning](#)
- [Families](#)
- [Grandparents](#)

National Education Association (NEA) provides information to help children and families find good books to read for pleasure. Consider these resources to bring free or inexpensive print and online books to your school and your students. These resources may extend your partnership program with prizes or free take-aways at your *Family Reading Nights* and other reading/literacy activities. Visit [NEA Good Books to Read](#).

DONATE TO NNPS

If you make tax-deductible donations in 2024, 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.

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

Happy New Year!

2024 is our year of strong partnerships for student success!



**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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