

Leadership Line

Number 4
DECEMBER 18, 2024

Leadership Line is the NNPS newsletter for our Professional Development Partners. We will send summaries, recordings, and related notes after NNPS institutes, workshops, and quarterly meetings to support and advance your program of family and community engagement.

Please share each issue of *Leadership Line* with your colleagues and partners who were not able to attend the live event.

Recent NNPS Professional Development

Quarterly Meeting: Let's Learn More about Partnerships

What Research Says about Family and Community Engagement to Improve Students' READING SKILLS and ATTITUDES

Conducted December 11, 2024

Recording: <https://youtu.be/TW57HlapkL4>

The second quarterly *Let's Learn More* session discussed **family and community engagement to improve students' reading skills and attitudes**. NNPS Professional Development Partners and their state, regional, and district colleagues from AR, CT, KY, LA, NH, OH, SC, and WA attended or will review the recorded session.

Research summary. Dr. Steve Sheldon, Co-Director of NNPS, presented results of NNPS and other research on family and community engagement with students to improve reading skills and attitudes. See details on Dr. Sheldon's slide deck, attached. Here are a few main points.

- **Children whose family members read with them tend to develop stronger literacy skills and do better in school. These results apply to students at all age and grade levels, and with diverse family socioeconomic, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds.**
- **About half (50%) of families (both mothers and fathers) with children under 12 read to their children every day and another 25% read to their children a few times a week. (Pew Research Center)**

- **Shared reading** (e.g., parent and child read a story aloud together) gives children opportunities to hear new vocabulary words.
- **Audiobooks** improved struggling students' interest in and confidence about reading in a small study of 4th and 5 graders.
- **Teachers need to know that families are interested in reading with their children. It helps if teachers make families feel welcome as partners in education, communicate with families in their home languages, and guide them to read with their children and talk about the stories they read.**

Overview of practices. Dr. Joyce Epstein, Co-Director of NNPS, shared a few activities that districts and schools in NNPS implemented to engage families on reading with students at all grade levels. See Dr. Epstein's slide deck, attached. Here are a few examples.

- **District leaders conducted monthly meetings in different schools to introduce parents to the district's new reading program and to guide parents on ways to support their child's reading at home.**
- **District leaders invited local pastors to serve as volunteer-guest readers of storybooks that teachers selected for their classes. Over 95 volunteer readers participated.**
- **Elementary and middle schools implemented family engagement activities in reading on the six types of involvement. They engaged parents in different ways and different places.**
- **The NNPS book, *Family Reading Night*, guides schools to organize interactive meetings for parents and children on different genres of books children love—mysteries, poetry, biographies, jokes, traditions, and more. All family activities are in English and Spanish.**

See more examples in the [NNPS Sampler on Reading](#) and in the reading/literacy sections of books of *Promising Partnership Practices* on the NNPS website, www.partnershipschools.org, in the section Success Stories.

What did NNPS Professional Development Partners say about this session? Typical comments:

- Lots of good information.
- Many will be interested in how to connect with families of students who are English Language Learners.
- I appreciated the research on engaging families of middle school students—especially boys.
- The information on shared reading at the preschool level was most useful to me.

EXTRA RESEARCH: TOPIC OF INTEREST

Let's Learn More sessions feature a research topic of interest. On December 11, we summarized a study from Child Trends, co-authored by NNPS Senior Advisor, Dr. Mavis Sanders and her colleagues from the National Black Child Development Institute. In this report, *Black Families Define Protective Community Resources that Support their Well-being*, over 40 parents from 8 states explained *what is essential* for student development and well-being. Parents agreed that *protective people, places, and programs* are essential for their children to succeed across the grades.

The good news is that NNPS Professional Development Partners are working to improve partnership programs to ensure these *essential elements* for students' well-being and success in school. This is an on-going agenda to improve engagement activities from year to year. See the report from Child Trends at <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/black-families-protective-community-resources>.

Attachments and links for Leadership Line #4:

- Sheldon and Epstein PPT Slides for *Let's Learn More: Family and Community Engagement to Improve Students' Reading Skills and Attitudes* (attached).
- Reading Resource Packet. More ideas from NNPS schools on family and community engagement in reading (attached).
- Link to recording of this session: *Let's Learn More: Reading Skills and Attitudes*: <https://youtu.be/d6vWinGfpC8>
- Link to NNPS Sampler: [NNPS Sampler on Reading](#)

Selected References from Presentations, December 11, Let's Learn More

Barger, Moorman Kim, Kuncel, & Pomerantz. (2019). The relation between parents' involvement in children's schooling and children's adjustment: A meta-analysis. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/bul0000201>.

Clark, C. 2007. *Why it is important to involve parents in their children's literacy development*. National Literacy Trust.

Ho & Lau. (2018). Reading engagement & reading literacy performance: Effective policy and practices at home and in school. *Journal of Reading Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9817.12246>

Hutchins, Greenfeld, & Epstein. (2015). *Family Reading Night*. NY: Taylor & Francis.

Loera, Rueda, & Nakamoto. (2011). The association between parental involvement in reading and schooling and children's reading engagement in Latino families. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19388071003731554>

Sanders, Martinez, & Winston. (2024). *Black Families Define Protective Community Resources that Support their Well-being*. Rockville, MD: Child Trends and National Black Child Development Institute. <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/black-families-protective-community-resources>

Van Voorhis, Maier, Epstein, & Lloyd. (2013). [The Impact of Family Involvement on the Education of Children Ages 3 to 8](#). New York: MDRC.

Whittingham, Huffman, Christensen, & McAllister. (2013). Use of audiobooks in a school library and positive effects of struggling readers' participation in a library-sponsored audiobook club. *School Library Research*, 16, 1-18.

COMING UP! NNPS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

January 6-10

Check In with NNPS!

Individual conversations with Brenda Thomas, Senior Facilitator. Brenda will contact you to set a time to chat on your schedule. Ask your questions. Request tools or references. Look ahead to the Spring Term (Jan. to June 2025).

SAVE THE DATE: Wednesday, January 23, 2025 2 -4 p.m. (EST)

**Spring Professional Development Series Begins:
NNPS Awareness Session**

The *NNPS Awareness Session* will help you, your co-leaders, colleagues, and project partners to understand what you are doing to help district leaders and all schools strengthen and continually improve their programs of family and community engagement.

Join the Zoom Meeting, January 23

<https://zoom.us/j/96490670475?pwd=9zSYNqctzpuYDLKqna7Y83BR1qX9J.1>

Meeting ID: 964 9067 0475

Passcode: 173722

We will send a reminder of the Zoom link prior to the *Awareness Session*.

INPUT—INPUT—INPUT

1. Are you working to solve an emerging challenge that you want to discuss at the next NNPS *Let's Talk about Partnerships*? Send your challenging topic to us at nnps@jhu.edu.
2. Do you need NNPS materials, resources, or other assistance to help you with your work? Send your request to us at nnps@jhu.edu.
3. Do you have an idea or new information to share with other Professional Development Partners in the next *Leadership Line*? Send your *INPUT* to us at nnps@jhu.edu.

Have a wonderful Christmas holiday!
We look forward to a happy and productive 2025!

**We are walking the *Leadership Line* with you
on the path to partnerships!**

Joyce L. Epstein
Co-Director, NNPS

Steven B. Sheldon
Co-Director, NNPS

Brenda G. Thomas
NNPS Senior Facilitator