

Leadership Line



Number 9
May 22, 2025

Leadership Line is the newsletter for NNPS Professional Development Partners. It includes summaries, recordings, and related notes from NNPS institutes, workshops, and quarterly meetings that support and advance your program of family and community engagement.

Currently, NNPS Professional Development Partners include state, region, organization, and district leaders from AR, CT, KY, LA, MD, ME, NJ, NH, OH, PA, SC, and WA. Please share each issue of ***Leadership Line*** with your colleagues and partners who are helping you to conduct and improve your partnership program.

NNPS Professional Development Activities - May 2025

Quarterly Meeting: Let's Talk about Partnerships



Conducted May 6, 2025

Recording: <https://youtu.be/gyTL7MlzaNc>

The quarterly support session—*Let's Talk about Partnerships*—reviewed easy ways for districts and schools to evaluate progress on partnerships at the end of this school year.

Dr. Steve Sheldon summarized how State, Region, and District Leaders for Partnerships can use the [NNPS E-Z District UPDATE](#) to take stock of the overall quality of leadership on partnerships and specific actions to **lead** the district's work on family engagement and **facilitate** school-based partnership programs.

He also reminded District Leaders to use the [NNPS E-Z School UPDATE](#) to measure the **overall quality** of school partnership programs and the **basic and advanced structures and processes** that their schools implemented this year.

These thrifty and reliable questionnaires are easy to use, and provide useful summaries of the quality and progress of district and school programs of family and community engagement. The data can be summarized in simple ways and saved from year to year to chart progress and improvements over time.

Dr. Joyce Epstein reminded NNPS Professional Development Partners that it is important to conduct an end-of-year celebration with all schools in a district (See the *NNPS Handbook for Action*, Chapter 5 for ideas for these confabs.)

Leaders also should collect best practices for schools to share good ideas with each other.

- A collection may be printed or posted on a district's website section for partnerships. See for example many years of [NNPS Promising Partnership Practices](#) and collections by the Colorado State Department of Education at [Colorado SDE Collection of Best Practices](#).
- In addition to best practices, each school may list a few ways they improved their plans for partnerships this year. See for example [Sample Showcase of Partnership Plans in Ohio Schools](#).
- Good work also may be recognized and celebrated at the end of the school year with district awards for excellent advances!

What did NNPS Professional Development Partners say about this session?

Attendees met each other in breakout rooms to exchange information on something they were proud of this year, something to improve next year, and to discuss a puzzling partnership question. Here were a few thoughts:

- We continued to scale up our program district-wide.
- One of our activities focused on engaging fathers. We called this Male Engagement—Working with Dads. We also read a book by Sharmain Harris on engaging dads in family services programs.
- I appreciate the small group conversations. It's a good mix—hearing from others and also hearing from NNPS about what you have learned by working across the country.
- I am hopeful about how much I will learn next year.
- So many great ideas and insights – thank you!

Attached are slides from *Let's Talk about Partnerships – May 6*.

PLAN FOR THE UPCOMING SCHOOL YEAR!

- District leaders that have schools with Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) should guide them to write or update their *One-Year Action Plans for Partnerships*. Then, your schools will be ready to start or continue their partnership programs in the 2025-26 school year.
- District leaders who do not yet have schools with ATPs, NNPS will help you start your schools' ATPs early in the fall so that they plan and conduct good partnerships in the new school year.
- See the NNPS 2025-26 Calendar for Professional Development Partners at [NNPS Calendar for Professional Development Partners 2025-26](#). Or follow the link to NNPS 2025-26 Benefits and Services from the homepage.

NEWS and NOTES

NNPS Leadership Line will include a section for **NEWS and NOTES** on NNPS activities and those conducted by YOU—our Professional Development Partners. Here are a few to report at the end of this school year.

- **Dr. Steven Sheldon**, Co-Director of NNPS, was a guest speaker on *CNN* in Portugal in March 2025. He spoke on the importance of school and family partnership programs and practices. His message included how NNPS helps leaders—like YOU—continually improve programs of family engagement to

support student success in school. You can hear his talk translated in English, click: [Steve Sheldon-CNN Portugal on Partnership Programs](#)

- **Dr. Joyce Epstein**, Co-Director of NNPS, was interviewed on *School Talks*, WIR (Michigan radio). She talked with Dr. Robert Livernois on the pros and cons of homework and the role of homework in programs of school, family, and community partnerships. You can hear the interview at: [Joyce Epstein-Radio interview on homework](#)
- **Two NNPS Professional Development Partners** are conducting statewide conferences on School, Family, and Community Partnerships. You may register to attend online:

Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center (Ohio SFEC) Summit:

Engaging Students Together. September 18-19, 2025.

Online. Keynote and 20 Sessions of Best Practices from across Ohio.

Tickets are \$225. [Register to attend the summit!](#)

**Connecticut Statewide Family Engagement Center CT-SFEC)
Conference**

Joy in Action: High-Impact Partnerships for Meaningful Learning

September 30, 2025, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Keynote and expert-led sessions, interactive workshops, research-based strategies.

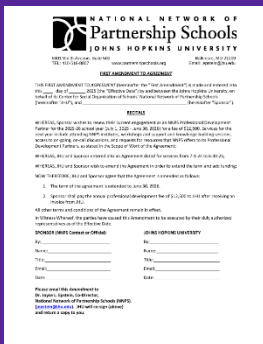
On-site: Sheraton Hartford Hotel, Rocky Hill, CT

Registration fee \$125. [Registration Link](#)

TIME TO RENEW

We celebrate NNPS new directions in the 2024-25 school year to strengthen leadership for partnership programs in all schools, with all families, for the success of all students. You are “growing” your own Network of Partnership Schools. NNPS will serve as a network of networks across more states, regions, districts, and schools. We will continue to guide your work and connect you with other leaders for partnerships. We hope you will continue this journey with NNPS to improve partnerships for student success.

It is time to renew our connections for the 2025-26 school year. This is easy to do! Complete the 1-Page AMENDMENT to our current contract, *attached*. That’s it!



COMING UP! NNPS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN JUNE

TIME TO RENEW

**Professional Development Partners
1-Page AMENDMENT to current contract.
ATTACHED for you. Return NOW to NNPS.
(Thanks to those who sent this in already!)**

JUNE

**NNPS Follow-up Interviews: End of the School Year.
Individual conversations with Brenda Thomas, Senior
Facilitator, at a convenient time on your schedule.**

**We will review progress and discuss next steps
in the 2025-26 school year. NNPS will write an
ANNUAL REPORT to share with you this summer.**

INPUT—INPUT—INPUT

1. The next Leadership Line will be sent in August as we prepare for the 2025-26 school year. If you create a collection of best practices from your districts, regions, and/or schools, send NNPS the LINK to your website. We will share your collection with other Professional Development Partners in the next ***Leadership Line***.
2. Are you working to solve an emerging challenge that you want to discuss at the next NNPS Let's Talk about Partnerships? (September 18, 2025.) Send your challenging topic to us at nnps@jhu.edu.
3. Do you want to suggest a topic for the NNPS quarterly sessions on *Let's Learn More about Partnerships*? The first one for the 2025-26 school year will be October 26. This year we explored research and tested practices to improve family and community partnerships to increase students' attendance, reading skills and attitudes, math skills and attitudes, and evaluating partnership

programs. What topic(s) do you want to learn more about? Send your idea to us at nnps@jhu.edu.

4. Do you need NNPS materials, resources, or other assistance to help you prepare for the next school year? Send your request to us at nnps@jhu.edu.
5. Do you have new information to share with other Professional Development Partners in the *NEWS and NOTES* section of **Leadership Line**? Send your *INPUT* to us at nnps@jhu.edu.



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

Joyce Epstein

NNPS Co-Director

Steve Sheldon

NNPS Co-Director

Brenda Thomas

NNPS Senior Facilitator

The NNPS Leadership Line is disseminated quarterly during the school year.

Leadership Line 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 Partners and the NNPS staff.

To respond to NNPS about a Leadership Line, click “Reply” and you will send your email only to me, Brenda Thomas.

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