



Leadership Line

Vol. 2 Number 4
December 16, 2025

Leadership Line is the newsletter for NNPS Professional Development Partners. It includes recordings, summaries, and resources from NNPS workshops and meetings to support and advance YOUR program of family and community engagement.

Currently, NNPS Professional Development Partners include state, region, organization, and/or district leaders from AR, CT, LA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, OH, SC, and WA.

Please share each issue of ***Leadership Line*** with your staff, colleagues, and partners who help you conduct and improve your partnership program.

NNPS Professional Development Activities – December

**Let's Learn More about Partnerships:
Student Roles to Increase Family Engagement
December 10, 2025**

Recording: <https://youtu.be/08wm7FMelw0>

NNPS conducts quarterly meetings—*Let's Learn More about Partnerships*—to share useful research findings and exemplary practices. The workshop on *Student Roles in Family Engagement* includes 3 parts.

Part 1. What does research say about Student Roles to increase and improve family and community engagement?

Steve Sheldon summarized the results of studies of student voice and participation in family engagement activities. He discussed *implicit* and *explicit* messages that students give to encourage (a) family attendance at school activities, (b) interactions and assistance at home, and (c) students' actions to follow teachers' assignments to talk with a parent about homework.

He discussed studies at the middle and high school levels that found that students *want* their parents and community partners to support their schoolwork and activities in positive ways.

Steve stressed that every school must create a welcoming environment for family engagement. Even as students actively encourage family participation, schools must organize programs and practices that make clear that parents are partners in their children's education.

See attached slides from Dr. Sheldon, including references to research studies.

Part 2. What are a few exemplary practices of student roles in family and community engagement activities at all school levels—preschool, elementary, middle, and high?

Joyce Epstein reminded leaders that the NNPS theoretical model — *Overlapping Spheres of Influence* — places STUDENTS at the center of all partnership activities. The STUDENTS are the *learners* and the reason for school and family connections for student success.

She shared an NNPS rubric of Student Roles. Students may invite, guide, present, teach, perform, participate, evaluate, make decisions, and take other roles in family and community engagement activities. Each role gives students important experience in increasing parents' participation at schools or at home. In many ways, *students* support their school's partnership program.

See attached slides from Dr. Epstein, including references to NNPS resources.

Part 3. Breakout Rooms – Meet and Learn from Each Other

NNPS Professional Development Partners discussed their best practices that gave students "starring" or "support" roles to boost family and community engagement.

As a full group, they shared a couple of examples from the breakout discussions.

Kristen Wilder, District Leader for Partnerships in Farmington CT, described *Family Fun Bags*. Selected kindergarten students who will benefit from extra resources and extra guidance are given read-aloud books, fun games, and other supplies to support early reading and other school skills. They take the bags home to play, read, and talk with a parent and siblings. Kristen meets with the students to preview and demonstrate the resources. The students receive a new *Family Fun Bag* each month. The students are couriers, presenters, and participants in increasing family engagement at home.

Monica Baumgarten, at Gillis Elementary School in Lake Charles, LA, described how students were preparing to surprise parents with a *Motown Xmas* performance. The school is a French immersion school, so some students will be singing in English and others in French. Parents were invited to the concert but were not told the theme nor language variations. It will be a happy holiday with students as performers.

Check the recording of this workshop for more information.

NEWS, NOTES, and NATIONAL RECOGNITION

This section of *Leadership Line* provides information on upcoming NNPS professional development activities, announcements, and questions from Professional Development Partners for each other, and—new this year—a spotlight for National Recognition of Professional Development Partners who demonstrate excellent leadership on partnerships and noteworthy activities.

NEWS and NOTES

1. NEW THIS YEAR! NNPS NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Each issue of *Leadership Line* will spotlight a state, region, and/or district that conducted an excellent leadership activity to strengthen its partnership program. We learn from each other by sharing good ideas and effective practices.



DECEMBER Spotlight

NNPS shines a spotlight this month on GOOD LEADERSHIP AND GOOD WORK in the **STRATFORD School District** in Connecticut. **Migda Carrero, Family and Community Engagement Specialist** reported that ALL 13 SCHOOLS (9 elementary, 2 middle, and 2 high schools) have Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs). This is an NNPS indicator of strong district leadership—all schools have ATPs, write *One-Year Action Plans for Partnerships*, implement their plans, and improve their programs from year to year. Keep up the good work **Stratford district and schools!** See info from the Stratford FACE office: <https://www.stratfordk12.org/o/sps/page/family-and-community-engagement-office>

2. COMING UP: NNPS Professional Development Activities

JANUARY 22 - Spring Term 2026 begins with the **NNPS Awareness Session**.

JANUARY



TIME WITH BRENDA EASY AS A, B, C! The DAY and TIME will be set by YOU!

NNPS is changing ***Talk Time with Brenda*** to make it easier to contact her at a convenient time for YOU. Discuss a challenge or next steps in developing your program. Here's what to do:

Send Brenda an email at nnps@jhu.edu.

- A) Note your topic for discussion.
- B) List 2 days/dates/time (EST) that will be best for you.
- C) Brenda will confirm a good day/time to talk.
She will provide a TEAMS link for you to talk together.

INPUT—INPUT—INPUT

1. Have you made good progress in your program of school, family, and community partnerships? Let NNPS know and we will talk with you about your work for NNPS National Recognition.
2. Are you working to solve a challenge that you want to discuss at the next NNPS *Let's Talk about Partnerships*? Send a note on your challenging topic to nnps@jhu.edu.
3. Do you need NNPS materials, resources, or other assistance to help you with your work? Send your request to us at nnps@jhu.edu.
4. Do you have an idea, new information, or a question to share with other Professional Development Partners in the next *Leadership Line*? Send your idea to nnps@jhu.edu.



**NNPS wishes you a wonderful holiday season,
and a happy, healthy, and productive 2026!**

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

Joyce L. Epstein
Co-Director, NNPS

Steven B. Sheldon
Co-Director, NNPS

Brenda G. Thomas
NNPS Senior Facilitator