



NATIONAL NETWORK OF  
**Partnership Schools**  
JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

## *Leadership Line*

Vol. 2 Number 6  
February 28, 2026

*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 programs of family and community engagement.

Currently, NNPS Professional Development Partners include state, region, organization, and/or district leaders from AR, CA, CT, LA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, OH, SC, and WA. These leaders are working to guide and support districts and schools. They are growing the National Network of Partnership Schools.

Please email copies of *Leadership Line* to your staff, colleagues, partners, and chairpersons of school teams who help you conduct and improve your partnership program.

### NNPS Professional Development Activities – FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY 2026 was a busy month for NNPS Professional Development Partners with major workshops and meetings to support and advance your work. This issue of *Leadership Line* was delayed a few days to include a summary of the *School Team-Training Workshop* (Feb. 26) and related resources.

### NNPS Let's Talk about Partnerships

February 3, 2026

**Recording:** [https://youtu.be/E28m\\_N3P4W4](https://youtu.be/E28m_N3P4W4).

***Let's Talk...*** helps leaders from across the country meet each other, share best practices, identify emerging challenges, and discuss solutions.

NNPS raises a question—*Something to Talk About*—to strengthen leadership on partnerships. This month, we asked: ***How might leaders find schools that are “ready” for the NNPS School Team-Training Workshop, scheduled on Feb. 26?***

Experienced leaders shared some ideas:

Rosa Fulmore (Charleston, SC) “grew” her program—year by year—from 4 schools to over 40 schools with teams and written plans for continuous improvement. She identified principals and others who knew about the services

and support she provided. Their schools' ATPs were "ready" for an NNPS Team-Training Workshop.

Esmeralda Valencia (Pasco, WA) reported a different path. The district has an *official policy* for family engagement. So, all schools were guided to form ATPs, write plans, and improve connections with families and community partners every year. When new schools opened, they followed suit. The district family engagement leaders guide all school teams to continually improve their partnership programs.

New leaders also shared ideas to help "pioneer" schools improve their partnership plans and programs.

San Bernardino City Unified School District—a new Professional Development Partner with NNPS—is starting to build its "network of partnership schools" with 6 community schools. These start-up schools will "show the way" and encourage other schools to strengthen partnerships for student success.

Leaders for Partnerships may identify "ready schools" at district-wide meetings for principals. The leaders may explain the services they offer to schools. Principals will "sign on" if they know that family and community engagement will help improve student learning and success. In many cases, principals are just waiting to be asked!

## NNPS Leadership Institute

February 12, 2026

**Recording:** <https://youtu.be/3CiHZJfYcv8>

This workshop guides state, region, and district levels to use research-based strategies to conduct and improve their leadership for partnerships and to "coach" their schools. That is, leaders at the state, region, organization, and district levels have two main responsibilities:

1. Lead work on partnerships for their location—as a whole.
2. "Coach" their schools (preschools, elementary, middle, and high schools) to form partnership teams, write and implement plans to engage all families in their children's education, and improve their programs from year to year.

We discussed 6 leadership strategies that shape leaders' work in their locations and with their schools: Create Awareness, Align Program with Policy; Guide Learning; Share Knowledge; Celebrate Milestones, and Evaluate Progress. In breakout rooms, attendees met each other and shared good ideas on these strategies. Here are a few ideas they reported.

Leaders in New Haven, CT, gathered parents' views on what they needed to help solve some attendance problems. Why are students absent? What resources do parents need to support daily attendance? Does student attendance improve when families are partners? This is an ongoing process to Create Awareness, Share Knowledge, and Document Progress.

Leaders in Paterson Public Schools, NJ, conducted sessions to Share Knowledge to help parents learn computer skills. They wanted to assist parents to partner with their children’s teachers and have access to school E-programs.

Leaders in Stratford, CT, compared ideas from this workshop with their current leadership activities. They noted they were doing many things, but still made notes of ways to keep improving.

Leaders in Pasco School District, WA, reminded others that NNPS provides good ideas that they may adopt, but they must also *adapt* all practices to match their own policies and preferences. These leaders “Pasco-ize” good ideas. They recommend all leaders *custom-ize* good ideas for their own locations.

#### Attachments

1. Slides for NNPS *Leadership Institute*
2. Summative activity for leaders to strengthen their programs.

See recording above to “attend” the Leadership Institute.

## NNPS SCHOOL TEAM-TRAINING WORKSHOP

February 26, 2026

**Recording:** <https://youtu.be/xlLjewq53NY>

School-based Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) are guided to use research-based approaches to plan their partnership programs. With this information, school ATPs are ready to write their *One-Year Action Plans* based on goals for student success in their own School Improvement Plans.

#### Attachments

1. Slides for NNPS *School Team-Training Workshop*
2. Activities for schools’ Action Teams for Partnerships – actively apply information from the workshop for their own schools: *Jumping Hurdles; Results Map; Organize an Action Team for Partnerships; School One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships (template)*

See the recording above to “attend” this workshop.

Attendees worked on these activities during the workshop to show they understood how research-based strategies will strengthen their school-based partnership programs. With the information in this workshop, schools’ Action Teams for Partnerships will write a plan for the 2026-27 school year to engage all parents in ways that support student learning and behavior.

Here are a few ideas that attendees shared with others about how the Six Types of Involvement will help them organize strong, goal-linked partnership programs.

A leader from Danbury, CT, reported the school has a goal for *improving student health*. One activity helps parents and students increase knowledge about the dangers of *vaping*, and how to talk at home to help students make healthy decisions about this behavior.

A leader from Paterson Public Schools, NJ, shared good ideas about using the Six Types of Involvement to help parents and students talk about math at home, including “everyday math” in household activities. This goal-linked activity will help students see that math is a useful subject, and enables parents to encourage students’ interest in building math skills.

The point of this workshop activity is to help schools’ Action Teams for Partnerships write and implement **goal-linked activities** that engage parents with students in different ways and in different places—at home, at school, and in the community.

See recording above to “attend” the School Team-Training Workshop.

## 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. We also spotlight a Professional Development Partner who demonstrates excellent leadership on partnerships. We learn from each other by sharing good ideas and effective practices.

### 1. NNPS NATIONAL RECOGNITION



#### FEBRUARY Spotlight

NNPS shines its *National Recognition Spotlight* on **Loree Smith**, Federal Programs Coordinator and Key Contact to NNPS, Calcasieu Parish School Board, Lake Charles, LA. Loree has worked with NNPS for many years, has great leadership skills, and always is willing to share best practices.

Recently, she compiled a list of how she guides nearly 40 schools to improve their connections with families and communities. Her schools know that she is an expert on partnerships and will help them improve their programs from year to year. Here are some of her activities to “coach” and support her schools. Which will you do in 2026-27?

- **Overall—Build Positive Relationships!**
- Put the dates of each school’s ATP meetings on your calendar and attend some schools’ monthly meetings.
- Digitally document each school’s Action Plans for Partnerships. Follow up to learn how things are going.
- Conduct training sessions for district administrators.
- Work closely with other district leaders, e.g., English Learners, Early Childhood, McKinney-Vento.
- Identify and recruit future leaders in our schools. Have them assist me with training.
- Be visible as much as possible in the schools.
- Provide resources as needed.

We recognize and appreciate Loree Smith's long-term, consistent, and superior leadership on partnerships.

## 2. COMING UP: NNPS Professional Development Activities

**MARCH 18**

**Let's Learn More About Partnerships**

The next quarterly *Let's Learn...* is on **Partnership Programs in Middle and High Schools**. Many partners requested research results and successful practices at the secondary level—middle schools, junior highs, and high schools.

Mark your calendars: **Wednesday, March 18 2-4 p.m. (EDT)**



**MARCH**

**TIME WITH BRENDA**

Call to talk with Brenda Thomas, NNPS Senior Facilitator, when you have a question about improving your leadership or programs of family and community engagement. Brenda will help you, individually, to solve challenges in your location. Here's what to do:

- Send Brenda an email at [nnps@jhu.edu](mailto:nnps@jhu.edu).
- Briefly note your question or topic for discussion.
- List 2 days/dates/time (EST) that are good for you.
- Brenda will confirm a day/time and provide a TEAMS link for your chat.

### INPUT—INPUT—INPUT

1. Have you made progress in your program of school, family, and community partnerships? Let NNPS know ([nnps@jhu.edu](mailto:nnps@jhu.edu)) how you are doing. You may be ready 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 about your challenge to [nnps@jhu.edu](mailto:nnps@jhu.edu).
3. Do you need NNPS materials, resources, or other assistance to help you with your work? Send your request to [nnps@jhu.edu](mailto: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](mailto:nnps@jhu.edu).

**Brenda -- Insert path pix for still- winter.**

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

Joyce L. Epstein  
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