



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

## *Leadership Line*

Vol. 2 Number 7  
March 25, 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 to improve programs of school, family, and community partnerships.

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 – MARCH

#### NNPS Let's Learn More about Partnerships In Middle and High Schools

March 18, 2026

Recording:  
[https:](https://youtu.be/31xm_J4pktY)

[//youtu.be/31xm\\_J4pktY](https://youtu.be/31xm_J4pktY)

**Let's Learn More about Partnerships** workshops present the results of research so leaders know they are using evidence-based practices to strengthen their programs of family and community engagement. Many NNPS Professional Development Partners asked for more information about family and community engagement in middle and high schools. It is no secret that partnerships in secondary schools pose extra challenges.

**Results of Research:** Steve Sheldon summarized studies on family and community engagement in middle and high schools. He noted that, in general, middle, and high schools tend to do less than elementary schools to organize their partnership programs. Still, studies confirm that age-appropriate partnership activities benefit students through high school graduation.

- Students in middle and high schools do better—higher achievement, fewer behavior problems—if a parent or family partner talks with them about school,

sets high expectations, supports students' ideas, projects, learning, and aspirations.

- Results are more positive if parents guide and encourage students in ways that support—not dictate or overly control—student ideas, projects, and behavior.
- Studies of homework attitudes and completion echo these findings. Parents' *Supportive Homework Involvement (SHI)* results in more students doing their homework than *Intrusive Homework Involvement (IHI)* – overly-controlling parental involvement.
- In the middle grades, studies of *TIPS (Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork)* found positive effects on homework completion and report card grades. With TIPS-Science, students take charge of conducting conversations and at-home experiments with parents about what they are learning in science. Also see TIPS-Math and Language Arts for grade 6-8.

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

**Exemplary practices.** Joyce Epstein introduced activities that give *students* important roles in increasing family and community engagement in middle and high schools. These include:

- Parent-teacher-student conferences (student present) and student-led conferences.
- Students “becoming” historic figures, conducting research, costuming, and presenting their findings to families and community partners.
- Art and Shop Class displays and demonstrations to spotlight students' talents.
- Active individualized workshops for students and parents on credits earned and credits needed each year in high school ensure on-time graduation.
- Solve a problem in the community—students conduct “philanthropic” projects that use students' many talents to improve the quality of their neighborhoods.

Leaders use NNPS guidelines to coach middle and high schools to plan and continually improve their partnership programs.

See attached slides from Dr. Epstein, including where to find additional examples of promising practices for effective partnership programs in middle and high schools.

## Breakout Rooms – Meet and Learn from Each Other

In *Let's Learn* workshops, NNPS Professional Development Partners meet others and exchange ideas in breakout rooms. Here are a few of many good examples that were discussed in breakout rooms:

Sandra Valdez, San Bernardino Unified School District: High school students appreciated visits and talks with alumni. The students—from 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade—learned that they can take various paths to success in different colleges and career training programs.

Mr. Fisher, Paterson Public Schools, described the *Hall of Fame* that features alumni and their paths to success. High school students relate to alumni in their community who were once “in their shoes” and who went on to education, training, and work.

Rosalie Botello, San Bernardino Unified, noted that a leader from Maine discussed the importance of identifying parents' and families' needs. And, then, addressing them with useful solutions and information to create understanding and mutual respect of parents, teachers, and students in middle and high schools.

Hear other views on the recording of this 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 spotlight a Professional Development Partner who demonstrates excellent leadership on partnerships. We learn from each other by sharing good ideas and effective practices.

### NNPS NATIONAL RECOGNITION



NNPS shines its *National Recognition Spotlight* on ROSA FULMORE, Title I Parent & Family Engagement Coordinator, Department of Federal Programs, Charleston County School District in South Carolina.

Ms. Fulmore has worked with NNPS for several years, has great leadership skills, and always is willing to share best practices with other district leaders. In the NNPS *Let's Talk* session in February, Rosa reported how she “grew” her program—year by year—from 4 schools to over 40 schools—including preschools, elementary, middle, and high schools. To increase partnership schools:

- She identified principals who were “ready” to improve family and community engagement.
- Principals learned about the services and support she provided and opted “IN.”
- All partnership schools have teams, write plans, and work to continually improve their programs to engage all students' families in ways that increase student success.

We recognize and appreciate Rosa Fulmore for her strong and consistent leadership on partnerships.

### COMING UP: NNPS Professional Development Activities – Mark Your Calendars!

**April 21**     *Let's Learn More – Evaluate YOUR Program's Progress*

**NNPS E-Z Measures will help you learn about the quality and progress of programs in the 2025-26 school year. 2-4 pm (EDT)**

**E-Z SCHOOL UPDATE – How are schools organizing their work?**

**Are they engaging all families?  
E-Z DISTRICT UPDATE – How are district leaders coaching their  
schools' Action Teams for Partnerships?**

**May 6      *Let's Talk about Partnerships***

***NNPS End-of-Year Information  
NNPS End-of-Year Celebrations***

**May/June – NNPS Individual Interviews with ALL Partners**  
**Brenda Thomas, Senior Facilitator, will contact you  
to arrange a convenient time to talk about your progress  
in the 2025-26 school year and goals for 2026-27.**



**APRIL      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 emerging spring??**

**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