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**ONLINE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**  
**on School, Family, and Community Partnerships**  
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**NNPS Staff Bios**

**Joyce L. Epstein**, Ph.D. in sociology from Johns Hopkins University, is Director of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships and the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS), and Professor of Education at Johns Hopkins University. In 1995, she established the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS), which provides professional development that enables school, district, and state leaders to develop research-based programs of family and community involvement. Dr. Epstein has over one hundred fifty publications on the nature and effects of family and community involvement. These include *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action, Fourth Edition* (Corwin Press, 2019) and a textbook for college courses for future teachers and administrators, *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Preparing Educators and Improving Schools, 2nd Edition* (Taylor & Francis, 2011, 3rd Edition with S. Sheldon in press). Among major awards, she was named a Fellow of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) in 2009 and received the 2009 Elizabeth Cohen Award for Applied Research from AERA's Sociology of Education Special Interest Group. In all of her work, she is interested in the connections of research, policy, and practice.

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**Rachel V. Chappell** is Network Coordinator for the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University. She oversees the distribution, collection, and processing of NNPS membership forms, fees, and *UPDATE* surveys. She organizes and manages membership and *UPDATE* data files for NNPS, and assists with the analyses of these data. Ms. Chappell also coordinates NNPS communications and professional development institutes, webinars, and other meetings. She is the network's social media connection. She assists school, district, organization, and state leaders with questions about NNPS and with orders of NNPS publications and products. Ms. Chappell also works with our finance office to monitor incoming and outgoing payments. Previously, Ms. Chappell was a sociology major at Bates College and a school aide for second, third, and fifth grades in Lewiston, Maine. Currently, she is working toward a Master's Degree in Research Administration at Johns Hopkins School of Education.

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**Steven B. Sheldon**, Ph.D. in educational psychology from Michigan State University, is Associate Director and Research Director of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships and NNPS, and Associate Professor of Education at the School of Education at Johns Hopkins University. He studies key components of partnership programs in schools and how the quality and outreach of partnership programs affect parents' engagement and student outcomes, such as attendance, behavior, reading and math achievement. His recent book, *The Wiley Handbook of Family, School, and Community Relationships in Education* (co-edited with Tammy Turner-Vorbeck, Wiley-Blackwell, 2019), provides an overview of the field by leading researchers. He is a coauthor of *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Epstein, et al., Corwin Press, 2019), and co-author with J. Epstein of *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Preparing Educators and Improving Schools*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, in press). Dr. Sheldon teaches courses on education research and partnership program development at the JHU School of Education.

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**Brenda G. Thomas**, M.S. in administration supervision from Morgan State University, is Senior Program Facilitator at NNPS. She provides professional development to help leaders in districts, states, and organizations and school teams implement and sustain goal-linked programs of family and community involvement. She develops and conducts workshops and provides technical assistance on all aspects of partnership program development. She is a coauthor of *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (Epstein, et al., Corwin Press, 2019) and lead editor of *Promising Partnership Practices 2021*—the NNPS annual collection of members' best practices. Ms. Thomas had many years of experience as a teacher, Action Team for Partnerships leader, district-level facilitator for partnerships, coordinator of parental involvement in the Baltimore City Public School System, and statewide coordinator of district partnership programs for NNPS with Maryland's prior State Parental Information Resource Center (PIRCs).

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