

Our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!

# type 2

Communicating to improve partnerships for student success



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

Please make copies of *Type 2* for all members of your Action Team, Leadership Team, Improvement Team, and other interested partners!

Fall, 2006 No. 21

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## 2006 Award Winners Sustain Strong Research-Based Partnership Programs

NNPS recognized seven schools, two districts, three organizations, and two state departments of education with its 2006 Partnership Awards. The winners were from diverse communities in California, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, and Wisconsin (see photos, pp. 6-7). Each site provided detailed information on how they use NNPS's research-based approaches to strengthen and sustain leadership and programs of family and community involvement. All winners received a cash prize of \$500, a free registration to an NNPS conference, an engraved plaque, and other recognition.<sup>1</sup>

### School Awards

All school award winners had well-functioning Action Teams, wrote annual action plans, linked involvement activities to school improvement goals, collaborated with parent associations, created welcoming environments, and evaluated their programs. The school winners – **Cherokee Heights Elementary, Col. E. Brooke Lee Middle School, Grant Elementary, Highlands Elementary, Kennedy Junior High, Phalen Elementary, Webster Stanley Elementary** – conducted many activities to involve families with students on reading, math, writing, health, technology, and study skills. These elementary, middle, and junior high schools effectively linked family and community involvement to involvement with student learning and created positive partnership climates at the same time.

### District, State, and Organization Awards

Both district winners in 2006 are long-standing leaders in family involvement with prior awards from NNPS. Despite changes in leaders in **Naperville Community School District 203** and dramatic reorganizations in **LAUSD Local District 4**, these districts have sustained well-organized offices for partnerships. They also are guiding schools to improve

*(Continued on page 5)*

### NEW and IMPROVED! NNPS Redesigns Website.

[www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org)

NNPS's website has a new look! To celebrate its 10th Anniversary, NNPS launched the new and improved [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org). The website – including research summaries and hundreds of practical ideas on partnerships – is a lifeline to members, prospective members, the media, researchers, parents, and the public.

Visitors to NNPS will see new, friendly colors (see p. 11) and will experience an improved navigation system. Useful menus have been added to each section for users to find more and better information – quicker – on developing programs of family and community involvement.

New sections include *Professional Development*, with information on NNPS conferences and workshops for improving the quality of partnership programs. *Research and Evaluation*

*(Continued on page 11)*

# Issues and Insights

*Joyce L. Epstein*  
Director

## District Leaders Share Secrets of 10 Years of Progress in Programs Partnerships

Every year, new districts join NNPS for research-based tools and materials to develop their programs of family and community involvement. A few districts have worked with NNPS since its start in 1996. To mark the 10th anniversary of NNPS, I interviewed two leaders in “charter” districts – Nina Menis of Naperville, IL (NINA) and Arlene Borner of District 112 in Chaska, MN (ARLENE). Naperville, with 21 schools, is an economically advantaged location, but has several schools that receive Title I funding. District 112 includes 12 schools that serve five communities in and around Chaska, including many economically stressed neighborhoods and a growing number of families who do not speak English at home.

Both district leaders conduct district-level activities and assist all schools in strengthening their partnership programs. The issues and insights of these district leaders are instructive. They tell some similar and some unique “secrets” that should help other district leaders develop and sustain successful partnership programs.

### **NNPS: What factors have helped you sustain your district’s partnership programs for the past 10 years?**

**NINA:** Three factors have been crucial for our work on partnerships. First, our Superintendent, Dr. Alan Leis, supports our work on partnerships 100% and has ideas for improvements. He attends all of our partnership meetings and sends a clear message – district-wide – that partnerships are a critical part of this district’s work. Second, it is important that my position is full time on partnerships. Districts should have a visible and dedicated “champion” to make sure that work on partnerships proceeds in every school. Finally, we have learned that school principals must fully support programs of family and community involvement. We have Principal and Parent Co-Chairs of the partnerships teams in each school and on the district-level advisory group, called our Core Team. By being active in the planning

process, our principals strongly support improving partnership programs.

**ARLENE:** We have benefited from the continuous support of the Community Education Department and from our prior and current Superintendent. Our new director, Jackie Johnston, strongly encourages our work and improvements. Also, we have sustained our work by developing a useful handbook for principals, and all schools use the NNPS framework of six types of involvement to select activities to involve all families.

District 112’s programs have benefited from having part-time Parent Involvement Coordinators (PICs) in every school. The principals say they “want their PICs” to assist the Action Teams for Partnerships. The PICs are parent leaders who earn about \$2,000 a year. Although I am a full time teacher, I also work with all of the PICs. We meet monthly to share ideas and keep improving the schools’ programs. My role as a teacher helps give credibility to the district’s leadership on partnerships. Our office also has a Parent Education Consultant and Volunteer Consultant who assist the PICs and schools with advice and resources for various activities.

The PICs know their schools really well and can customize partnership activities for their students and families. Our district has rural and urban sections, and a growing number of families who speak Spanish, Russian, Somali, and other languages. With our PICs and Consultants, we can conduct this work in all schools in a very thrifty way. This organization works for us.

### **NNPS: What results have you seen in your schools from the districts’ leadership on partnerships?**

**NINA:** Over time, all of our schools have become clearer about linking family and community involvement to the goals in their school improvement plans (SIP). This has made family and community involvement more “central” to school improvement. Our



**Naperville** Row 1: Jane Wernette, Terri Stevens, Karen Currier, Sandy Shamburek. Row 2: Julie Lichter, Gail Zeeb, Erica Eysturlid, Mike VanHarlingen, Kitty Murphy, Patti McIntire, Dr. Alan Leis (Superintendent), Lenore Johnson, Paul Schmidt, Nina Menis (NNPS Key Contact), Karen Noble, Sheila Sarovich, Debbie Shipley.



**District 112** Row 1: Jill Anderson, Jackie Christenson, and Debi Yitalo. Row 2: Denise Cboiniere, Arlene Borner (NNPS Key Contact), and Lois Fiskness. Not pictured: Kristin Raymakers, Shelly Pouliot, Lori Juelich, Bev Diles and Carolyn Barinsky.

principals really know their school improvement goals, and it helps to link family and community involvement to the same goals that educators and students are striving to attain.

We also have seen results from special-topic workshops on grant writing and improving business partners. Some schools wrote successful proposals for funding partnership activities, and many schools increased the number and effectiveness of business partners after the workshops. For example, one school earned a \$15,000 grant from Best Buy to improve technology training and equipment.

Finally, schools have given more attention to the new immigrant families that have moved to our area. We have many more English Language Learners (ELL) in the district, and our schools are working to help these families feel welcome at the schools and be part of their children's school lives.

**ARLENE:** I have seen increasing ownership for partnerships at each building due to the collaboration of the PICs, the Action Teams for Partnerships, and the administrators, teachers, families, and community partners in every location. Importantly, the schools have increased the alignment of district, school, and parent involvement goals. Our district and the School Site Councils have specific goals for students. More and more, schools' plans for family and community involvement are linked to those goals. This is critical for sustaining partnerships in District 112,

because we are very goal-oriented.

Another result is an increase in the use of technology to communicate with more families. Now, most schools have active websites to share information with families and the public, along with their use of traditional communications.

**NNPS: Look ahead five years. What improvements do you want to see as your district and schools continue to strengthen their partnership programs?**

**NINA:** It is my dream that school, family, and community partnerships will be considered a "main dish" and not just "dessert" for school improvement. We can do this by continuing to closely align curricular goals and family involvement so that partnerships are understood as a real tool for increasing student learning and behavior.

**NNPS: Are your dreams realistic?**

**NINA:** I already see some connections of partnerships and curricular goals – even at the high school level. For example, business partners are now central in some advanced marketing classes and consumer education in high school. When partnership programs are clearly linked to students' education, they will be sustainable.

**ARLENE:** I would like to develop stronger connections between our Cultural Liaisons with the PICs in all schools. We have over 600 English Language Learners whose families speak over 40 languages. We need to improve the connections of paren-

tal involvement and these students' educational activities. I can imagine a Cultural Education Consultant working with our Community Education Office to help the PICs and the schools' action teams with their plans for family involvement.

**NNPS: Is that realistic?**

**ARLENE:** I think so. The district is seeking grants to support the education of the diverse students we serve. It would be a small step to increase attention to these students' families, while creating welcoming schools and involving all families in ways that support student learning.

**NNPS: Do you have any other comments that may help NNPS members?**

**NINA:** District leaders should stay active in NNPS. Even after 10 years, we still benefit from networking with the staff at Johns Hopkins. We also appreciate the national recognition that we receive by sharing our best practices with other districts and schools in NNPS.

**ARLENE:** Our district has learned to balance NNPS structures with elements that we need in our community. The way we see it, family involvement is not an exact science. It must be research-based, but still flexible. Networking in our district and with NNPS helps us organize our work on partnerships. ♦

# Meeting the Challenge

Steven B. Sheldon  
Director of Research

## Helping Single-Parent Families Stay Involved

Studies show that, on average, children from single-parent households are less likely to demonstrate high achievement and complete school on time, compared to their peers from two-parent families. The differences in school performance can be partially explained by the fact that single mothers or fathers are less likely to be as involved as other parents in their children's education. Because virtually every school has children from single-parent households, it is important for all schools to develop partnership programs with activities that engage these parents in their children's education.

One of the most significant challenges to family involvement confronting single-parents is a lack of time. Often, single-parents are employed during the school day, come home to household chores, and must get their children and themselves ready for the next day without help from a partner or adult family member. Schools striving to get more single-parents involved must implement activities that are sensitive to parents' time constraints.

### Expanding Opportunities

For example, for single parents and others employed during the school day, school meetings, workshops, and opportunities to volunteer cannot occur only at school during the daytime. Opportunities also must be developed for parents to contribute to their child's school or classroom from home, at work, or in the community. **Ballentine Elementary School** in Irmo, SC, did this when they implemented *BES Goes to Work*. Parents took a miniature version of the school mascot (BES, the Bear) to work with them so that BES could report back to students. At work, using a disposable camera provided, parents took a picture with BES and wrote a short summary of what BES saw on the job. This activity allowed parents who might not be able to visit the school during the day to participate as volunteers by providing students descriptions of interesting careers in the community.

Another strong practice for involving

single-parent families was implemented by **Ethel Schoeffner Elementary School** in Destrehan, LA, called *Neighborhood Outreach*. The partnership team organized a picnic in a park located in one of the neighborhoods where many low-income students live. They served pizza and cold drinks to families. Faculty, school staff, neighborhood leaders, and church leaders attended the event. Parents were able to visit with children's teachers and hear about school programs in a convenient locale.

### Building Communities

Single parents sometimes face financial stresses. In Green Bay, WI, **Chappell Elementary School** addressed this challenge by having free, monthly family events. The events included movie nights, Mardi Gras dances, family photo nights, and roller skating. Each event included dinner and a free gift (e.g., a book to take home) and provided parents an opportunity to enjoy a fun evening with their children and interact with school staff in a relaxed environment. The school's action team reported that the number of parents involved has increased, negative behaviors and suspensions declined, and test scores and attendance rates have risen.

These and many other activities featured in NNPS's annual collections of *Promising Partnership Practices*<sup>1</sup> are designed to help single-parents – and all parents – stay involved in their children's education by addressing the challenges of involving parents who have limited time and restricted budgets. The creation of flexible ways to volunteer for the school, meet teachers, and take advantage of community activities give single-parent families more opportunities to join the school community and support their children's education and the school. ♦

<sup>1</sup> The activities featured in the article are in the NNPS collections of *Promising Partnership Practices* in 2005 and 2006 available on the website, [www.partnershipschoools.org](http://www.partnershipschoools.org) in the section Success Stories In the Spotlight.

# Elementary School Report

## Family Nights Focus on Student Math Achievement

With the nation's emphasis on statewide testing, administrators and teachers are increasingly aware of the importance of boosting student achievement in math. Educators are working to increase the quality of the math curriculum, improve instruction to reach struggling students, and devote more time to math in the busy school day. It also is important to involve parents in their children's math education in positive ways to increase the likelihood that students are motivated to succeed in this critical subject.

Four elementary schools in the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) shared information on how they organized family math nights in different ways. They all had the goal of helping families and students experience the practical and fun aspects of math education.

### Designs for Family Math Nights

Participants of *Passport to the World of Math*, conducted by the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) at **Suring Elementary School** in Suring WI, traveled the world of math together. Families were given a "passport" and visited various stations to complete practical math activities. They estimated their weight, counted jumps per minute, completed math games, guessed the number of candies in 12 jars, and more. All of the activities emphasized that math is applicable to real-life situations. Their passports were stamped each time they completed an activity. With a certain number of stamps, each family received a goodie bag.

**Conococheague Elementary School** in Hagerstown, MD, conducted *Family Math Night* to teach parents and children math games. Teachers made the games that focused on skills that students were learning in class. Each family received a copy

of a game to use at home. Participants said that the evening was fun, educational, and strengthened home-school relationships.

The Action Team for Partnerships at **Emma K. Doub Elementary School**, a school serving grades 3-6 in Hagerstown, MD, partnered with its feeder school serving grades K-2 to hold *Math Game Night*. A local merchant donated math games to the school, which teachers then adapted to match skills previously taught in class at different grade levels. Attendees played many games that ranged from easy skills for young students to advanced multiplication in the older grades. Parents left the event feeling comfortable about playing the games with their children at home and students left knowing that math really was fun!

*Math for Families Night* at **Rolling Terrace Elementary School** in Takoma Park, MD, had an agenda filled with pizza, performances, and puzzles. Students performed math-related skits and then, with their families, completed hands-on math activities. In one activity 32,000 cubes were used in a math game. Parents learned how to reinforce math topics at home and observed how their children learn.

### Subject-Specific Involvement Activities

Family Math Nights are one way to bring families together to learn that math is important and enjoyable. All of the above events linked to the math curriculum, were scheduled at convenient times for most families, and provided materials to reinforce math skills at home. Other strategies, including the NNPS *TIPS-Math Interactive Homework* process, also can be implemented to help all families increase students' math skills. Schools that report the greatest success in

math achievement include subject-specific math involvement activities in their action plans for partnerships every year.

For complete summaries of the activities in this article and other ideas for family involvement in math, see the collections of *Promising Partnership Practices* on the NNPS website at [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org). Click on Success Stories In the Spotlight. Also see the TIPS section on the website. ♦

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### 2006 Award Winners

(Continued from page 1)

their programs of family and community involvement.

The state departments of education in **California** and **Wisconsin**, also prior recipients of NNPS Partnership State Awards, take different approaches. Both states have developed effective ways to work with colleagues in other departments and with other organizations on partnership policies and practices.

Three very different organizations were recognized. The **Family Works**, of the Family Services Agency in Maryland, guided many districts in the state to strengthen leadership on partnerships and helped schools improve their partnership programs. The **California Parent Center** at the June Burnett Institute also takes a state-wide approach. This group conducted regional workshops to help district leaders and school teams across the state develop research-based partnership programs. In Illinois, **Strategic Learning Initiatives** provided parent workshops and supported schools to strengthen and sustain their partnership programs. ♦

<sup>1</sup> Read about the NNPS 2006 Partnership Award winners at [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org) in the section Success Stories In the Spotlight.

# 2006 Partnership Award Winners

## Schools

### Kennedy Jr. High School Naperville, IL



Row 1: Deb Whang, Jeanne Weizeorick, and Linda Cusack.  
Row 2: Amy Vanderveen, Don Perry (Principal), Alison Ferwerda, Paul Shipman, Lisa Kolick, Sberri Fitzgerald, Pradnya Parulekar, Jessica Jozwiak (NNPS Key Contact), Lisa Trychta (NNPS Key Contact), Beth DeGeeter, and Lynn Gissler.

### Phalen Lake Elementary St. Paul, MN



Ray Schwabe, April Bellovich, Sharyn Long, Jan Hopke-Almer (Principal), Thao Lor Lee, Mary Sellers (NNPS Key Contact), Neftali Ramirez, and Ong Vang. Not Pictured: Edward Vang and Jonathan Goss.

### Grant Elementary Wausau, WI



Row 1: Jane Hamburg, Terry O'Connell (Principal), and Teri Hess. Row 2: Sarah Hanke, Jon Seamon, Wendy Hazuga, Amanda Kressel, Marion Veblow, and Ahyce Balk.

### Cherokee Heights School St. Paul, MN



Row 1: Debbie Grassi Cueto, Amanda Kubista, Yer Her, Raquel Cervantes-Bethke, Maureen Seibert (Principal), Martha Mena, Laura Thielges, and Shirley Andino (NNPS Key Contact). Row 2: Matthew Ingersoll, Kathy Thompson, and Kathi Treston. Not Pictured: Kim Hwang, Karen Vaccareck, Cboua Her, and Lily Alibomi.

### Col. E. Brooke Lee Middle School Montgomery County Public Schools, MD



Row 1: Yvette Laureano, Mary Beth Waits (Principal/NNPS Key Contact), and Beatriz Mendoza. Row 2: Peyton Taylor, Chon Davis, Margret Rudt, and Karen Turner.

### Webster Stanley Elementary Oshkosh, WI



Row 1: Tanya Schmidt, Sarah Poquette, Janice Welsb, and Brad Strand. Row 2: Marcie Gundlach, Patti Vickman (Principal/NNPS Key Contact), Karin Derenne, Deb Rothenbach, Brenna Garrison-Bruden, Stacy Berger, Renee Larson, Pacqui Hiscocks, Margie VandenBoogaard, Sally Joel, and John Pieper. Not Pictured: Tami Goodwin, Ev Marg, Ava McCall, Dennis Kavanaugh, Rich Norenberg, John Toson, and Amy Weinsheim.

### Highlands Elementary Naperville, IL



Row 1: Leslie Cameli (NNPS Key Contact), Deb Whang, Amy Vanderveen, Susan Stuckey (Principal), Janet Anderson, Sheryl Robinson, Amy Connelly, and Susie Fischer. Row 2: Lynn Gissler (NNPS Key Contact), Stephanie Birch, Claire Dunnett, Jennifer Madson, Cheryl Fortman, Celeste Akre, Lisa Wisinski, Brian Kessler, Christine O'Neil, Sue Kouri, and Connie Eilers.

## Districts

### LAUSD, Local District 4 Los Angeles Unified School District



Row 1: Dr. Rosa Maria Hernandez, Philip Naimo, Linda Ariyasu (NNPS Key Contact), Richard A. Alonzo (Superintendent), Beatrice LaPisto, Byron Maltez, and Mary Kurzeka. Row 2: Jorge Luna, Rocio Arriaga, Maria Gonzalez, Virginia Lampson, Maureen Diekmann, Jasmin Medel, Angelina Cardenas, Elaine Kinoshita, and Gabino Alvarado.

### Naperville

Community School District 203



Row 1: Jane Wernette, Terri Stevens, Karen Currier, and Sandy Shamburek. Row 2: Julie Lichter, Gail Zeeb, Erica Eysturliid, Mike VanHarlingen, Kitty Murphy, Patti McIntire, Dr. Alan Leis (Superintendent), Lenore Johnson, Paul Schmidt, Nina Menis (NNPS Key Contact), Karen Noble, Sheila Sarovich, and Debbie Shipley.

## State Departments of Education

### California Department of Education



Lucy Keola, Carol Dickson (NNPS Key Contact), Camille Maben, Anne Just, Howie DeLane, Francesca Wright, and Teresa Gerringer.

### Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction



John Philips, Andrea Ward, Dawn Follendorf, Jill Camber Davidson, Jane Grinde (NNPS Key Contact), Stephanie Hogue, Ruth Anne Landsverk (NNPS Key Contact), Jill Haglund, and Neldine Nichols. Not Pictured: Steve Kretzmann, Teri Dary, Justin Steiner, and Courtney Rothenbach.

## Organizations

### California PARENT CENTER of the June Burnett Institute San Diego, CA



Row 1: Ellen Yaffa, Jeana Preston (NNPS Key Contact), and Bea Fernandez. Row 2: Yee Khun, Beth Sondak, John Wedemeyer (Executive Director/NNPS Key Contact), Maria Moore-Flagg, and Tony Herrera. Not Pictured: Barbara Withrow.

### The Family Works The Family Services Agency, Inc. Gaithersburg, MD



Brenda Thomas, Vicki Strella, Thom Harr (Director), Barbara Gimperling (NNPS Key Contact), and Iveth Smith.

### Strategic Learning Initiatives Chicago, IL



Row 1: Cris Whitehead (NNPS Key Contact), Stephanie Ward, and Mary Canbola (NNPS Key Contact). Row 2: Maria Gutierrez, Mayra Hernandez, Francisca Gonzalez, and Bridgette Staniel.

# Our Growing Network

New Members in NNPS since January 2006

**SCHOOLS (117 new members)** ★ Academy of Learning Through the Arts (Washington, DC) ★ Albert Cammon Middle School (St. Rose, LA) ★ Alternative Optional Education Center (Waukegan, IL) ★ Antietam Middle School (Hagerstown, MD) ★ Arrowhead Elementary School (Virginia Beach, VA) ★ Augusta A. Mayo Elementary (Compton, CA) ★ Bayside Elementary School (Virginia Beach, VA) ★ Bear River High School (Grass Valley, CA) ★ Caldwell Elementary (Compton, CA) ★ Carman-Buckner Elementary (Waukegan, IL) ★ Chestnut Learning Academy for Student Success (Waukegan, IL) ★ Clear Spring High (Clear Spring, MD) ★ Clearview Elementary School (Waukegan, IL) ★ Colin P. Kelly Elementary School (Compton, CA) ★ Compton High School (Compton, CA) ★ Cooke Magnet School (Waukegan, IL) ★ Daniel Boone Elementary (Wentzville, MO) ★ Davis Middle School (Compton, CA) ★ Dickison Elementary School (Compton, CA) ★ EPIC- Shiloh School (Waukegan, IL) ★ Foster Elementary (Compton, CA) ★ Four Seasons A+ (St. Paul, MN) ★ Frances Willard Elementary (Compton, CA) ★ Funkstown School for Early Childhood Education (Hagerstown, MD) ★ Gateway Elementary School (Ridgecrest, CA) ★ George Washington Carver Elementary (Los Angeles, CA) ★ George Washington Elementary School (Compton, CA) ★ Glen Flora Elementary School (Waukegan, IL) ★ Glenwood Elementary School (Waukegan, IL) ★ Greenwood Elementary School (Waukegan, IL) ★ H.C. Morton Elementary School (Benton Harbor, MI) ★ H.R. McCall School (Waukegan, IL) ★ Hannah Pamplico Elementary/Middle School (Pamplico, SC) ★ Highland Park Elementary International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (St. Paul, MN) ★ Hilton Elementary School (Baltimore, MD) ★ Howard Road Academy Public Charter School (Washington, DC) ★ Hyde Park Elementary (Waukegan, IL) ★ Inyokern Elementary School (Inyokern, CA) ★ J.B. Martin Middle School (Paradis, LA) ★ Jack Benny Middle School (Waukegan, IL) ★ John S. Clark (Waukegan, IL) ★ Kiser Middle School (Greensboro, NC) ★ Lake Park Elementary School (Lake Park, GA) ★ Lamar Elementary (Lamar, SC) ★ Landstown High School (Virginia Beach, VA) ★ Langley Elementary School (Hampton, VA) ★ Latta Middle School (Latta, SC) ★ Laurel Street Elementary (Compton, CA) ★ Leonardtown Middle School (Leonardtown, MD) ★ Lincoln Elementary School (Bucyrus, OH) ★ Lincoln-Drew Elementary School (Los Angeles, CA) ★ Lindsey Elementary (Warner Robins, GA) ★ Little Bennett Elementary School (Clarksburg, MD) ★ Little Fort Elementary School (Waukegan, IL) ★ Longfellow Elementary School (Columbia, MD) ★ Lyon Magnet School (Waukegan, IL) ★ Maddux Elementary (Cincinnati, OH) ★ Malcolm X (Washington, DC) ★ Marian Anderson Elementary School (Compton, CA) ★ Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School (Compton, CA) ★ Miguel Juarez Middle School (Waukegan, IL) ★ Miller Elementary School (Warner Robins, GA) ★ Morningside Elementary (Perry, GA) ★ Mountville Elementary School (LaGrange, GA) ★ North Elementary School (Waukegan, IL) ★ Northern Middle School (Hagerstown, MD) ★ Northridge High School (Layton, UT) ★ Oakdale Elementary (Waukegan, IL) ★ Parker Mathis Elementary School (Valdosta, GA) ★ Paul Public Charter School (Washington, DC) ★ Perry Primary School (Perry, GA) ★ Pierce Elementary School (Ridgecrest, CA) ★ Pine Grove Elementary School (Valdosta, GA) ★ Ponca City Senior High School (Ponca City, OK) ★ Potomac Lighthouse Public Charter School (Washington, DC) ★ Princess Anne High School (Virginia Beach, VA) ★ Ralph J. Bunche Elementary School (Carson, CA) ★ Ralph Waldo Emerson Elementary (Compton, CA) ★ Richard Riordan Primary Center (Los Angeles, CA) ★ Richmond Elementary School (Ridgecrest, CA) ★ Robert Abbott Middle School (Waukegan, IL) ★ Romulus Elementary (Romulus, MI) ★ Roosevelt Middle School (Compton, CA) ★ Rosecrans Elementary School (Compton, CA) ★ Sally B. Mathis (Jacksonville, FL) ★ Sand Springs Elementary School (Layton, UT) ★ Smithsburg High School (Smithsburg, MD) ★ South Hagerstown High School (Hagerstown, MD) ★ St. Johns Lane Elementary (Ellicott City, MD) ★ St. Paul Primary (Summerton, SC) ★ St. Stephen School (Kingsville, MD) ★ Theodore H. Faller Elementary School (Ridgecrest, CA) ★ Thomas Jefferson Elementary School (Compton, CA) ★ Thomas Jefferson Elementary School (Bellflower, CA) ★ Thomas Jefferson Middle School (Waukegan, IL) ★ Thomson Middle School (Centerville, GA) ★ Tohaali Community School (Newcomb, NM) ★ Tri-Community Public Charter School (Washington, DC) ★ Unity Elementary School (LaGrange, GA) ★ Van Duzen Elementary (Bridgeville, CA) ★ Vanguard Learning Center (Los Angeles, CA) ★ Wallace-Gregg Elementary (Florence, SC) ★ Walton Middle School (Compton, CA) ★ Warwick Elementary (Secretary, MD) ★ Washington County Technical High School (Hagerstown, MD) ★ Washington Elementary School (Waukegan, IL) ★ Washington Gardner Elementary (Albion, MI) ★ Waukegan High School (Waukegan, IL) ★ Webster Middle School (Waukegan, IL) ★ Western Heights Middle (Hagerstown, MD) ★ Westside Elementary School (Warner Robins, GA) ★ Whittier Elementary School (Waukesha, WI) ★ Whittier Kindergarten Center (Waukegan, IL) ★ Willowbrook Middle School (Compton, CA) ★ Wonderland Elementary School (Los Angeles, CA) ★ Woodlands Elementary School (Ponca City, OK) ★ Yulee Elementary School (Yulee, FL) ★

**DISTRICT (14 new members)** ★ Albemarle County Public Schools (Charlottesville, VA) ★ Cicero Public Schools District 99 (Cicero, IL) ★ Eugene School District 45 (Eugene, OR) ★ Mansfield City Schools (Mansfield, OH) ★ Martinez Unified School District (Martinez, CA) ★ Michigan City Area Schools (Michigan City, IN) ★ Minneapolis Public Schools (Minneapolis, MN) ★ North Penn School District (Lansdale, PA) ★ Peoria Public School District 150 (Peoria, IL) ★ San Francisco Unified School District (San Francisco, CA) ★ The School District of Philadelphia (Philadelphia, PA) ★ Troup County School System (Lagrange, GA) ★ Woodburn School District #103 (Woodburn, OR) ★ York Region District School Board (Aurora, Ontario, Canada) ★

**ORGANIZATION/UNIVERSITY PARTNERS (5 new members)** ★ Camp Curtin Branch YMCA (Harrisburg, PA) ★ Center for Adult Learning Leadership-ISU (Normal, IL) ★ Family Leadership Connection (Fresno, CA) ★ New Life Family Learning Center (Hammond, IN) ★ Title I Dissemination Project, Inc. (Woburn, MA) ★

**STATES (2 new members)** ★ Minnesota Department of Education (Roseville, MN) ★ Nebraska Department of Education (Lincoln, NE) ★

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Current Active Membership in the National Network of Partnership Schools as of September 21, 2006

Schools: 1068    Districts: 141    States: 19    Organizations: 68

# Moving Forward: What Have We Learned to Improve Programs of School, Family, and Community Partnerships?

If family involvement is important for student success, as decades of studies indicate, then we must address a harder, but more difficult question: *How can more families – indeed, all families – become involved in their children’s education in ways that contribute to student success?* This question underlies NNPS’s efforts to help states, districts, schools, and organizations “think new” about developing excellent partnership programs that contribute to student achievement, motivation, behavior, and other indicators of success in school.

A new chapter by Epstein and Sheldon (2006) discusses seven principles that have emerged from our and others’ research. These principles should help researchers apply more rigorous methods to study partnerships, and help educators, parents, and community partners work better together to support student success.

***School, family, and community partnerships is a better term than parental involvement*** to recognize that parents, educators, and others in the community share responsibility for students’ learning and development. The theory of “overlapping spheres of influence” (Epstein, 2001) improves our depiction of how home, school, and community affect children’s education and development.

***School, family, and community partnerships is a multidimensional concept.*** A framework of six types of involvement guides the development of comprehensive partnership programs (Epstein et al., 2002). Each type of involvement raises key challenges that must be solved to reach all families and produce positive results.

***A planned program of school, family, and community partnerships is an essential component of school and classroom organization.*** Studies need to include measures of schools’

actions to implement partnership programs and activities to involve all parents. NNPS uses an Action Team for Partnerships and a written One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships linked to goals in the school improvement plan to ensure an organized approach to program development. In policy and practice, this links family and community involvement directly to the school improvement planning process.

***Programs of school, family, and community partnerships require multi-level leadership.*** Districts and states have leadership roles to play in guiding schools to strengthen and sustain programs of family and community involvement. In NNPS, district leaders for partnerships are required to guide schools to improve their programs; state leaders provide resources and training in many ways.

***Programs of school, family, and community partnerships must focus on increasing student learning and development.*** When plans for partnerships are linked to specific school improvement goals, family and community involvement can measurably affect student achievement and other outcomes. NNPS research stresses longitudinal measures of program implementation, interim outcomes (e.g., parents’ responses), and results for students.

***All programs of school, family, and community partnerships are about equity.*** The sixth principle – equity – is pivotal for developing and sustaining partnership programs that provide equal opportunities for all families to become involved in their children’s education. Researchers must conduct studies that go beyond documenting inequities to identify practices that promote greater equity in the involvement of diverse families and greater equality of effects for students.

***Methods of research on school, family, and community partnerships must continue to improve.*** It is important for new studies to attack challenging measurement issues, such as isolating the effects of family and community involvement on student outcomes over time.

All seven principles must guide new research and programs of school, family, and community partnerships. By thinking in new ways about how to plan, implement, evaluate, and continuously improve leadership and programs of school, family, and community partnerships, researchers will increase knowledge about partnerships and educators will improve policy and practice. ♦

From: Epstein, J. L., & Sheldon, S. B. (2006). **Moving forward: Ideas for research on school, family, and community partnerships.** Pp. 117-138, in C. F. Conrad & R. Serlin (Eds.). *SAGE handbook for research in education Engaging ideas and enriching inquiry.* Thousand Oaks, C.A.: Sage Publications. A complete summary of the literature review with all references is available on the NNPS website, [www.partnershipschoools.org](http://www.partnershipschoools.org), in the section Research and Evaluation.

## Taking a Challenge

# 92.6

Percentage of school ATPs that reported working to improve communications with all families, including those who do not speak English at home.

7.4% reported not working on this challenge yet.

\* From NNPS 2005 UPDATE.

# Middle and High School Report

## A World of Possibilities: Connecting with Diverse Families

The middle and high school years pose many challenges for family and community involvement. Teenagers and their families cope with transitions to new and larger schools, course selections, and decisions about post-secondary education. These important decisions require that families have useful information to stay connected to their teens and their schools. These challenges can be particularly daunting for families who are new to the country, unfamiliar with U.S. schools, and who do not speak or read English very well. Most schools in NNPS serve diverse families and are working to welcome and engage all families in their children's education. Some examples of successful involvement activities in middle and high schools are chronicled in *Promising Partnership Practices 2006*<sup>1</sup> as reported below.

### Middle Schools Work to Increase Involvement

The **Studio School of Arts and Culture** (PS 295 and MS 443) in Brooklyn, NY, serves many families who have recently immigrated to the U.S. The school offered weekly conversational English classes to parents to strengthen functional language skills such as talking with teachers and completing job applications. In addition, mini-classes were offered to English-speaking parents to learn Spanish. The ESL activities increased immigrant parents' participation and led to the Bilingual Library Squad of parent volunteers.

Following discussions with Hispanic families and community leaders, **Col. E. Brooke Lee Middle School**, Silver Spring, MD, conducted four community forums in Spanish and English to discuss report cards, course selection, peer pressure, bullying and gangs, and other topics on early adolescents that parents selected. The school principal, district pupil per-

sonnel worker, translator, and Action Team Members attended the forums, which increased interactions with many parents.

### High Schools Involve Parents in Course Choices and Postsecondary Planning

A workshop on *Navigating the Course Selection Process* at **Naperville Central High School** helped eighth graders, high school students, and parents understand the regular, elective, and Advanced Placement (AP) courses offered, along with useful information on the stresses of high school. Workshops like this can be conducted in large or small groups, with invitations sent in the languages of the families, and interpreters present to assist families who do not speak English. For example, in 2005, **Gaithersburg High School** in Maryland conducted *Hispanic Parents Education Evenings* – monthly meetings to help parents of Hispanic students understand the intricacies of the school system and how to support teens' success in high school.

A *College and Career Guide*, prepared by **Naperville North High School**, gave parents and teens something to talk about. Topics included how to start to search for college, information on college applications, ideas for writing an effective essay, financial aid information, information on entrance exams, ideas for college visits, and a month-by-month checklist. Given to all students, starting with grade 9, the guide will help students and parents plan for the future. In 2005, in the *English Language Learners Translation Services* project, nearly 20 parents at the school who speak at least 10 different languages, volunteered to translate school materials and information for parents.<sup>1</sup>

Information for parents, workshop materials, college and career guides, and financial aid forms can be trans-

lated into the languages families need to guide their teens. In NNPS, middle and high schools are increasingly aware of the need for responsive actions that open a world of possibilities for partnerships with diverse families. ♦

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<sup>1</sup> For complete descriptions of the activities in this articles, see *Promising Partnership Practices 2006* and prior years' collections on the NNPS website, [www.partnershipschoools.org](http://www.partnershipschoools.org) in the section Success Stories In the Spotlight.

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## NNPS Offers

### Professional Development: Workshops — On the Road

(Continued from page 12)

activities and to facilitate their schools' partnership programs. The workshops also guide schools' Action Teams for Partnerships to organize their programs and involve all families in their children's education.

The professional development workshops include the NNPS One-Day Workshop for Action Teams for Partnerships, the 2-day District Leadership Institute for district leaders, and many advanced topics to increase partnership program quality. Topics include improving family and community involvement at times of transition, in single-parent households, with multicultural families, in ways that support student learning in reading, math, and other subjects, and more.

The workshops, to be conducted by contract, may be offered to many schools' teams at the same time, many district leaders in a region, as breakout sessions at state conferences, and in other ways arranged with NNPS Facilitators. A brochure on *NNPS Workshops-On the Road* will be mailed to NNPS members this fall. ♦

# Military Child Initiative (MCI)

## Involving Highly Mobile Families: Plan Successful Transitions

For many schools, “keeping up with the Joneses” means, literally, keeping up with families on the move. Schools across the country are facing the challenge of developing meaningful partnerships with highly mobile parents who are deployed for military duty. NNPS is providing technical assistance to districts and schools that serve students from military families to help them improve connections with highly mobile families.<sup>1</sup> What are some examples?

### Take Action with Innovative Involvement Activities

Parents who are away from home for military duty may not be able to attend a workshop at the school building or volunteer during the school day. Schools with well-planned partnership programs are using innovative activities for mobile parents to communicate with teachers, counselors,

and with other parents; have input to school decisions; and monitor their children’s academic progress. With new technologies, parents stationed in a different state or country can obtain information, ask questions, and discuss concerns. Schools are using e-mail, websites, and message boards to help parents stay informed and in touch with teachers and school staff.

### Learn from Others

*Promising Partnership Practices 2006* includes examples of innovative practices from schools and districts that serve students from military families. For example, **Arrowhead Elementary School** in Virginia Beach, VA, organized *Partnerships with the USS San Jacinto* – a pen pal and buddy program with the Navy ship to help students improve writing, geography skills, and behavior. The sailors volunteered their time at the school,

assisted teachers, tutored students in reading, wrote to students from Iraq, and become mentors. The mentors were linked with students’ parents and served as role models for students with behavior problems.<sup>1</sup>

### Know and Welcome Families

The first step to building partnerships with military families is to know that they are in the school population. Deployed parents may be reservists or in the National Guard, called to active duty. Schools may be unaware that military-linked family transitions are occurring. With attention to these matters, schools can create a welcoming environment for the parent who remains at home or for grandparents or other family members who are caring for children while a parent is deployed. For example, **Point O’ View Elementary School** in Virginia Beach conducted their *Beginning of School Year*

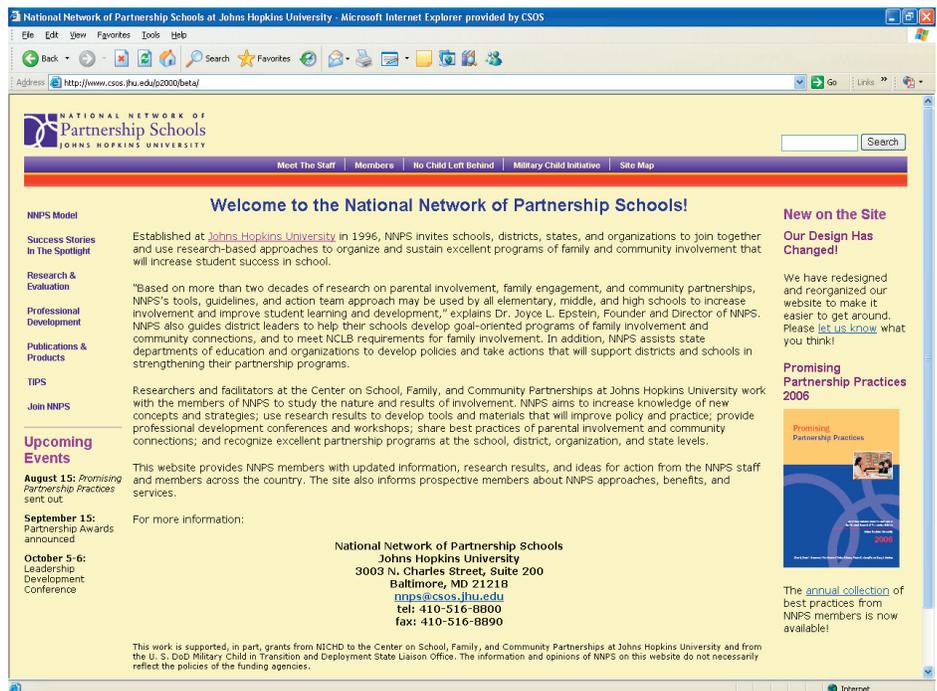
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## NNPS Website Redesigned

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includes research summaries and a list of NNPS publications. New links make it easier to find information on NNPS’s technical assistance for the *Military Child Initiative* and on meeting requirements for family involvement in the *No Child Left Behind Act*.

Other features of the old website have been retained. *NNPS Model* provides the basic components for school, district, state, and organization programs. *Success Stories in the Spotlight* gives easy access to over 600 involvement activities. A few sections are still under construction and will be completed soon. NNPS invites members to visit the website often and suggest topics to help them improve the quality of their partnership programs. ♦





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## Military Child Initiative

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**Cookout.** New and returning families met teachers and each other, enjoyed a picnic, visited classrooms, and built a sense of community. Good partnership practices help caregivers and students feel less isolated and, ultimately, contribute to student success. ♦

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on technical assistance for districts and schools with families in this military, visit the NNPS website, [www.partnershipschools.com](http://www.partnershipschools.com), and click on the Military Child Initiative. For complete descriptions of the activities in this article, see *Promising Partnership Practices 2006* on the website in Success Stories In the Spotlight.

# Partnership Calendar

## 2006

- November 15:** Web conference for district leaders on program development and direct facilitation of schools. Registration information will be available at [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org) in mid-October.
- December:** Members will receive the *NNPS Annual Report*, summarizing data from schools and districts on 2006 *UPDATE*.

## 2007

- January 24:** Web conference for schools' Action Teams for Partnerships (ATP) in the start-up phase of program development for ideas on "Writing Goal-Oriented Action Plans" for 07-08 school year.
- February:** Spring issue of *Type 2*.
- March:** Invitation to NNPS members to contribute to *Promising Partnership Practices 2007*.  
  
Eligible members will be invited to apply for new NNPS Partnership Awards for 2007.
- April 1:** Members will receive 2006 *UPDATE* in the mail. Due June 30 to renew NNPS membership for the 07-08 school year.
- April 26-27:** District Leadership Institute in Baltimore for district leaders in the start-up phase of program development. The Institute prepares leaders to provide direct assistance to schools' Action Teams and to establish a district-wide partnership network.
- May 15:** Promising partnership practices due for the 2007 collection.
- June 30:** 2007 *UPDATE* due to NNPS to renew membership for 07-08. NNPS will waive annual membership fees for all members who return *UPDATE*.
- October 11-12:** Leadership Development Conference in Baltimore for school, district, state, and organization leaders.

## NNPS Offers Professional Development:

### Workshops — On the Road

**N** NNPS *Workshops – On the Road* is a new service to help members continuously improve their partnership programs. The professional development workshops include basic training for district leaders and for school teams to start their programs, and advanced topics for members of NNPS who are ready to tackle tough challenges to involve all families in their locations.

Some members of NNPS come to Baltimore for professional development,

but many others are unable to attend those conferences. Taking the workshops on the road – directly to members' sites – will help more schools, districts, and states increase the quality their partnership programs.

The workshops were developed for NNPS's annual Leadership Development Conferences, District Leadership Institute, and the Military Child Initiative. They prepare district leaders to conduct district-level involvement

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