

# SUMMARY

## 2006 UPDATE DATA

### FROM SCHOOLS IN NNPS

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In response to requests for information on program development and positive feedback from members about last year's summary report, NNPS is providing a summary of schools' 2006 *UPDATE* data to all active members of the network.

### SCHOOLS in NNPS

In 2006, 652 Action Teams for Partnerships reported *UPDATE* data by mid-October. Surveys came from schools located in 36 states and Canada. A large majority of schools (65.1%) served students in the elementary grades (PK-6); 8.8% served students in PK-8; 14.5% included the middle grades only (4-8); and 7.3% included high school grades only (9-12). A small percentage of schools (2.4%) served students from PK through high school and (1.9%) served middle and high school grades.

The largest percentage of schools was located in large, central city areas (32.6%), with the remaining schools in small city (22.0%), suburban (29.2%), and rural areas (16.2%). A large majority of schools (67.3%) received school-wide or targeted Title I funds.

On average, schools served students from a range of racial and ethnic backgrounds. About 34.3% of students were African American; 12.8% were Latino/Hispanic American; and 45.6% were White. Schools ranged from 0% to 100% in the mix of students from majority and minority populations. The families served by schools spoke an average of 8.5 languages. In some schools, families spoke only English at home, whereas other schools served diverse families speaking up to 101 different languages and dialects.

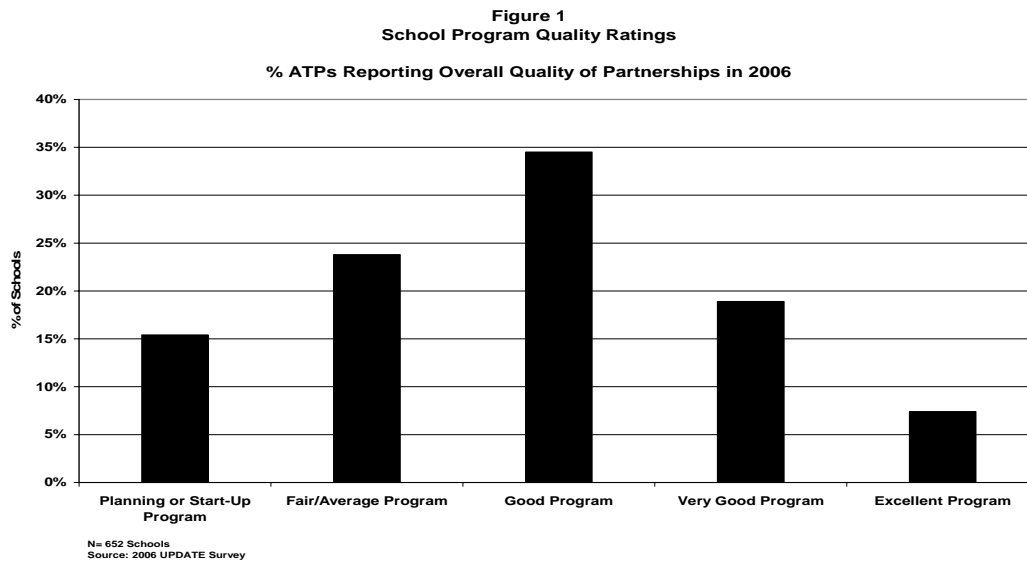
### OVERALL PROGRAM QUALITY

The annual NNPS *School UPDATE* survey provides each school's Action Team for Partnerships an opportunity to reflect on the overall quality of its partnership program by identifying one of six program portraits. Each portrait represents a different level of program quality, beginning with a *planning* stage and continuing up to an *excellent* program.

**Schools in NNPS reported a normal distribution in the quality of their programs (Figure 1). A few were in a *planning phase* or *just beginning*; some reported a *fair* or *average* program; more said their program was *good*; others reported a *very good* program; and a few identified an *excellent* program.**

- About 15% of schools were planning or just beginning their programs. Almost 8% reported excellent programs, with just about all aspects of a sustainable program in place.

- The largest percentage of schools (34.6%) reported that their programs were *good*, indicating that several activities were implemented for the six types of involvement, teams were working to meet challenges to reach all families, and most teachers and families at the school knew about the program for partnerships and the school’s work with NNPS.
- No high schools reported having an excellent partnership program yet.



## PROGRAM ORGANIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

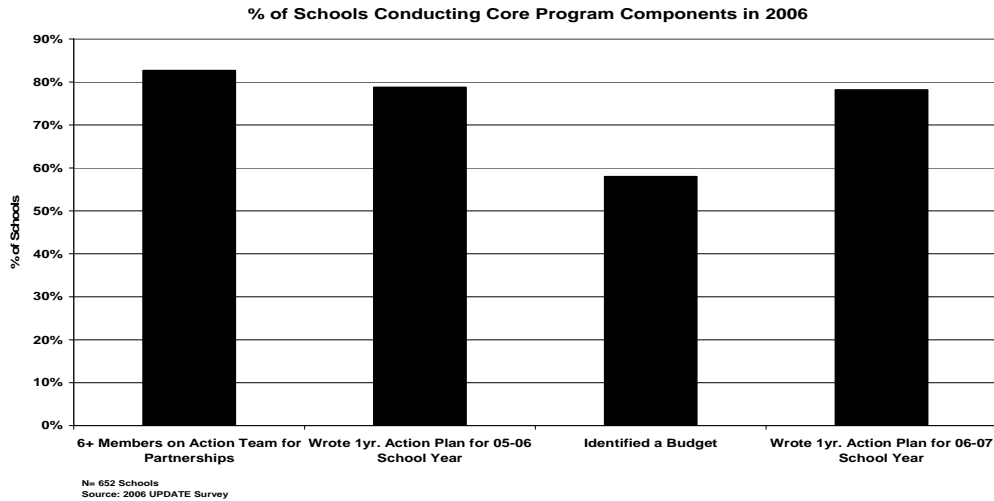
Several *UPDATE* measures indicated whether schools and their Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) were implementing core components of NNPS’s research-based partnership program and how well schools were implementing a broad range of programmatic activities.<sup>1</sup>

### CORE COMPONENTS

Core NNPS program components were measured using a 6-item scale ( $\alpha = .73$ ).<sup>2</sup> On average, schools implemented 4.04 out of 6 program components. Schools were most likely to report that they had an Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) of six or more people (80%); wrote an action plan for the 05-06 school year (79%); and wrote (or planned to write) an action plan for the 06-07 school year (78%), as shown in Figure 2. Schools were least likely to say that they identified a budget for their activities to involve families (58%) or participated in an end-of-year celebration (41%).

- In 2006, high schools were less likely than other schools to report having 6 or more members on their action teams (70%).
- K-8 schools were most likely to have identified a budget for their partnerships efforts (71%).

Figure 2  
Partnership Program Organization



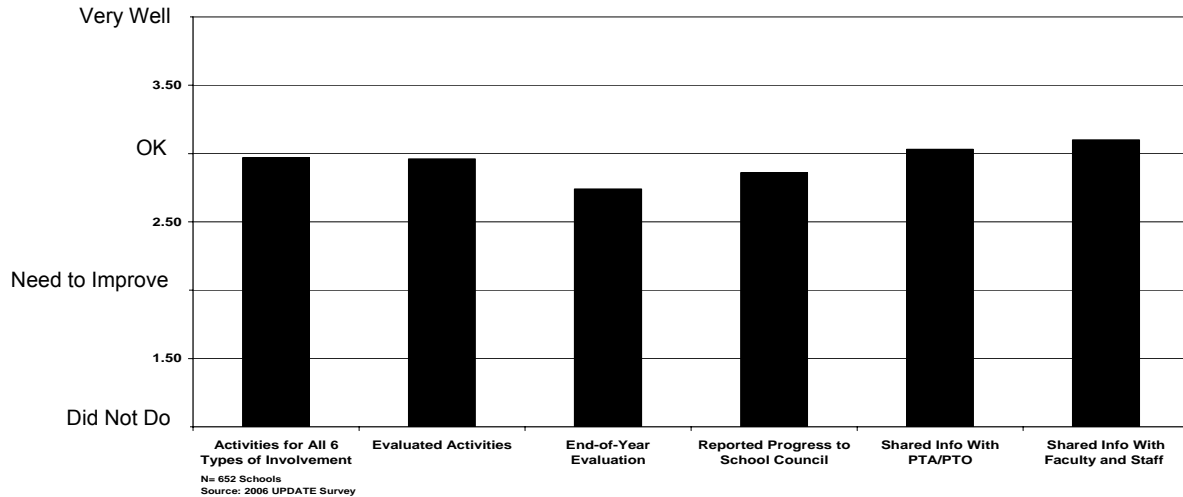
### QUALITY OF IMPLEMENTATION

A 13-item scale ( $\alpha = .93$ ) measured how well ATPs organized and implemented the partnership program at the school. These program actions included involving families in some activities for all six types of involvement, evaluating the activities conducted, and reporting information to the school council, PTA/PTO, and faculty and staff. Schools reported one of four responses to each item, indicating if they *did not do* the action, *need to improve*, were *OK*, or implemented *very well*. Overall, schools reported strong program implementation.

**Most schools reported that they were implementing key NNPS program elements between OK and very well implemented, as shown in Figure 3.**

- Schools were weakest in evaluating their program at the end of the year to reflect on the progress made and to identify areas for improvement, as well as in their communication with all families about the partnership program.
- Schools were most confident in their ability to connect the family and community involvement program to school improvement goals and in their scheduling activities throughout the school year.

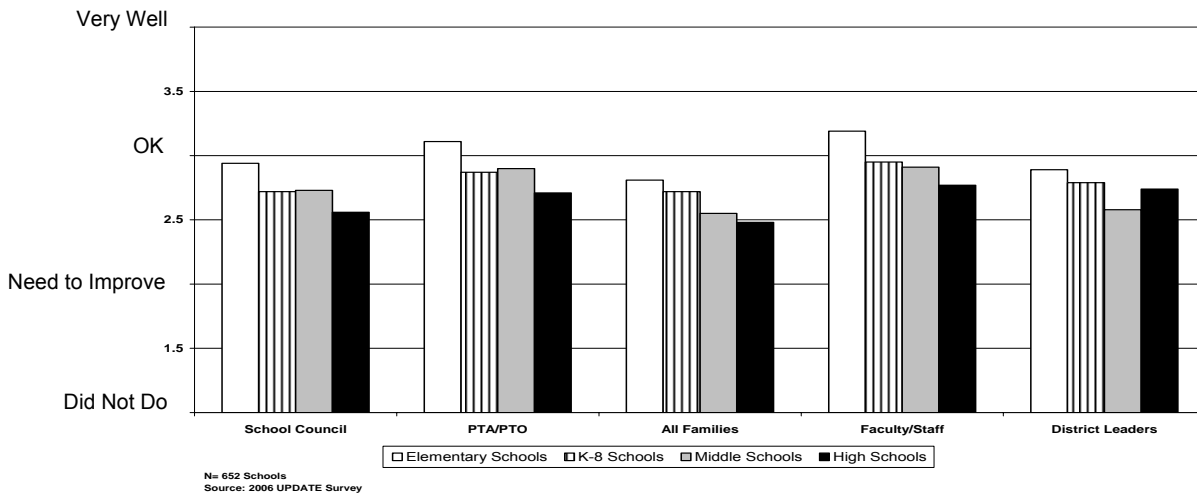
**Figure 3**  
Average Level of Implementation of Key Program Elements in 2006



Although most schools had many activities in place to organize their work on partnerships, some schools lagged behind the others in implementing various elements. For example:

- Over 20% of middle schools indicated that they did not share information about their partnership program with someone from their district.
- Elementary schools consistently reported better communications with the range of school, family, and district partners (Figure 4).

**Figure 4**  
Average Level of Quality of ATP Communications in 2006 by School Level



## **ACTION TEAM FOR PARTNERSHIPS (ATP)**

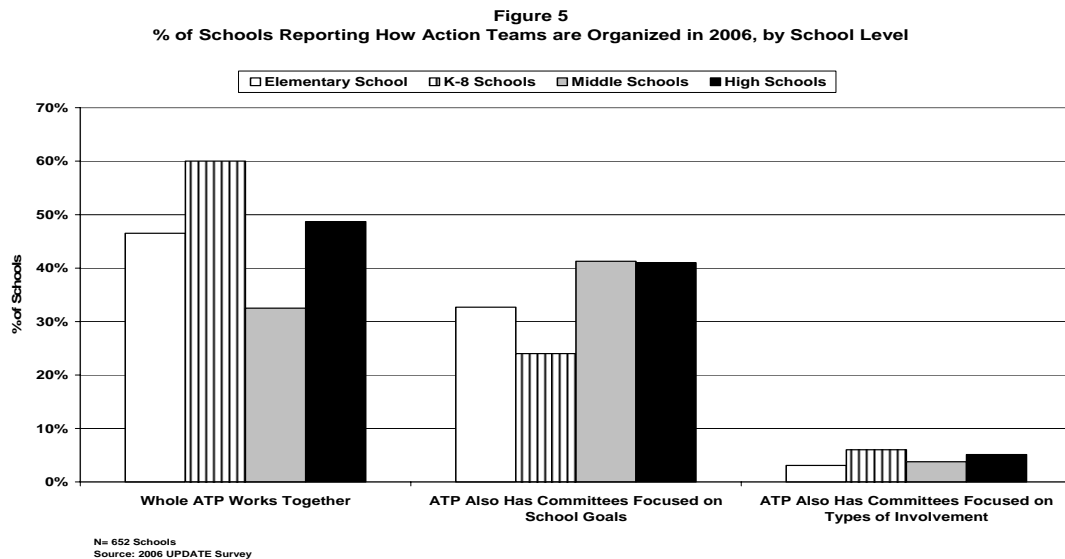
In NNPS, each school must have an Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) or an equivalent committee of teachers, parents, and administrators working on family and community involvement. The ATP is responsible for planning, implementing, overseeing, and evaluating partnership activities that are linked to school improvement goals. Its plans and progress should be reported to the School Improvement Team or School Council on a regular basis, just as other committees report their work. Questions on the *2006 UPDATE* asked about the structure of schools' ATPs, members of the team, subcommittee structure, frequency of meetings, and funding for the partnership program.

## STRUCTURE

Prior NNPS studies and the *Handbook for Action, Second Edition* (see Chapter 3 in Epstein, et al., 2002) suggest that committees may help ATPs conduct more practices of family and community involvement because team members and others not on the team can share leadership for different activities.

**Almost half of all schools' ATPs worked together only as a whole team. Other ATPs organized committees to develop and implement involvement activities for specific school improvement goals and/or for the six types of involvement, as shown in Figure 5.**

- K-8 schools were most likely to organize their ATPs as a single, whole committee.
- Middle and high schools were most likely to organize their ATPs with subcommittees addressing specific school improvement goals.



## MEMBERSHIP

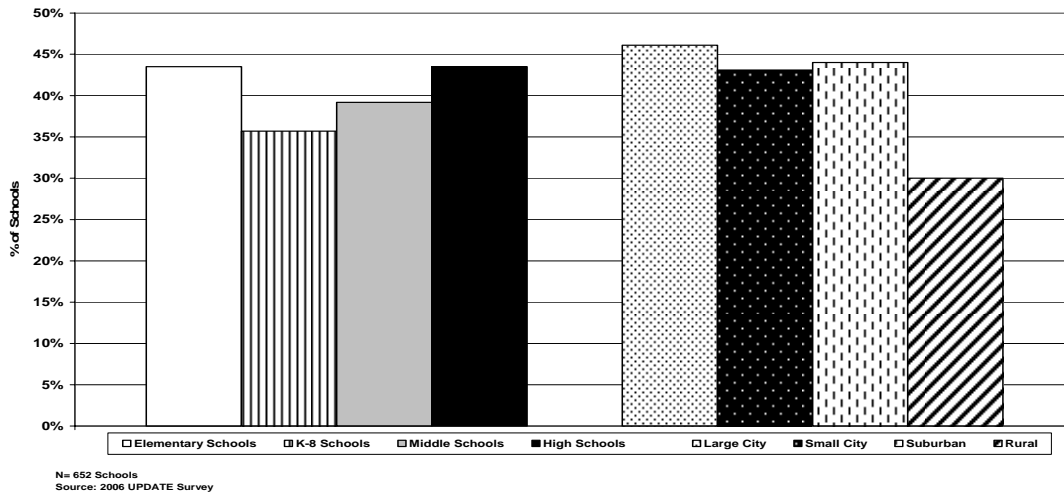
NNPS suggests that each school's Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) include two or three teachers, two or three parents, and one administrator, with one or two students at the high school level, and options for community partners and other educators and representatives at any level. On average, schools in NNPS had between nine and ten members on their ATPs. Some schools had not yet formed an ATP and had no members, and others had as many as 45 people.

## FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

**Fewer than half of the schools' ATPs (42.5%) met at least monthly to plan and implement their partnership efforts, as shown in Figure 6.**

- K-8 and rural schools' ATPs were less likely than others to meet at least monthly.

**Figure 6**  
**Percent of Schools' Action Teams That Met at Least Monthly in 2006,**  
**by School Level and Location**



## FUNDING

A single item asked ATPs to rate the level of funding for their schools' partnership programs. The largest percentage of teams reported that they had *adequate funding* for their partnership program (49.4%), although others noted that they receive *no funds* (14.3%) or *not enough funds* (27.4%) for their programs. A few (8.9%) said their family and community involvement programs were *well funded*. Overall, most schools (58.3%) were managing with the available funding, possibly because most schools in NNPS receive Title I funds, which require that districts and schools allocate some funding for family and community involvement (Sheldon, in press).

## ACTION TEAM SUPPORT

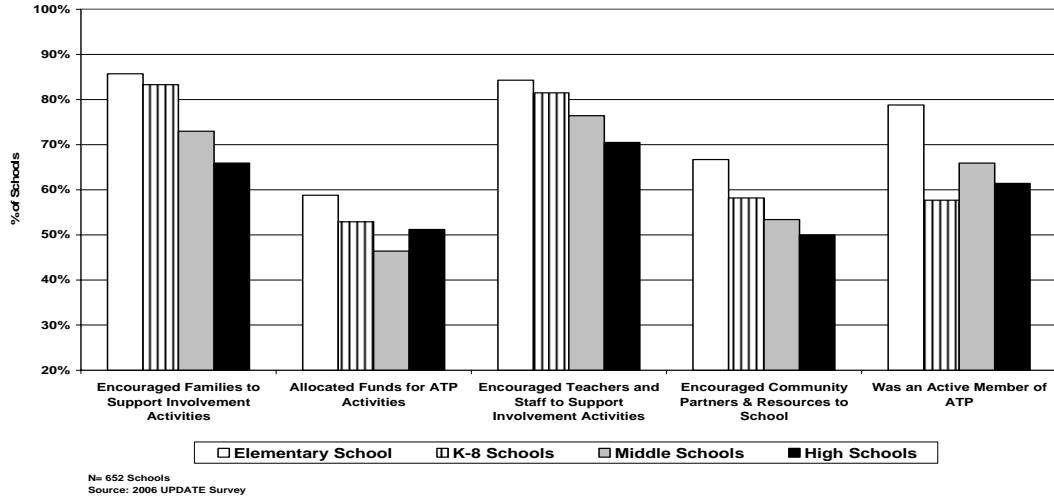
### PRINCIPALS' SUPPORT

Partnership programs need the support of the school principal in order to be successful and sustained (Van Voorhis & Sheldon, 2004). Almost all schools (96%) reported that the principal was a member of the action team for partnerships, as NNPS requires. ATPs reported whether or not the school principal provided "no," "some," or "a lot" of support for nine kinds of actions for the partnership program ( $\alpha = .91$ ).

**Overall, principals were rated as highly supportive of partnerships at their school.**

- Principals were least supportive in their allocation of funding to partnerships. Almost half of schools (44.6%) reported that their principal allocated no or some funding for involvement activities.
- Principals were also less likely to help establish school-community partnerships. Thirty-seven percent of schools reported the principal provided no or some help establishing school-community partnerships.
- Middle and high school principals were less likely to help encourage families to support involvement activities at the school. High school principals were also less likely to encourage their teachers and staff to support the involvement activities at the school.

Figure 7  
ATP Reports of "A Lot" of Support from Principals  
of Partnerships in 2006, by School Level



### DISTRICT LEADERS' SUPPORT

Schools' partnership programs also benefit from the support of district leaders. In 2006, ATPs rated the quality of 7 types of district help they received from not provided, to not very helpful, helpful, and very helpful ( $\alpha = .90$ ). Schools reported receiving an average of 5 supportive actions from their districts.

**Schools in NNPS, regardless of grade level, reported that the support they received from their district leaders was helpful or very helpful to their work on school, family, and community partnerships.**

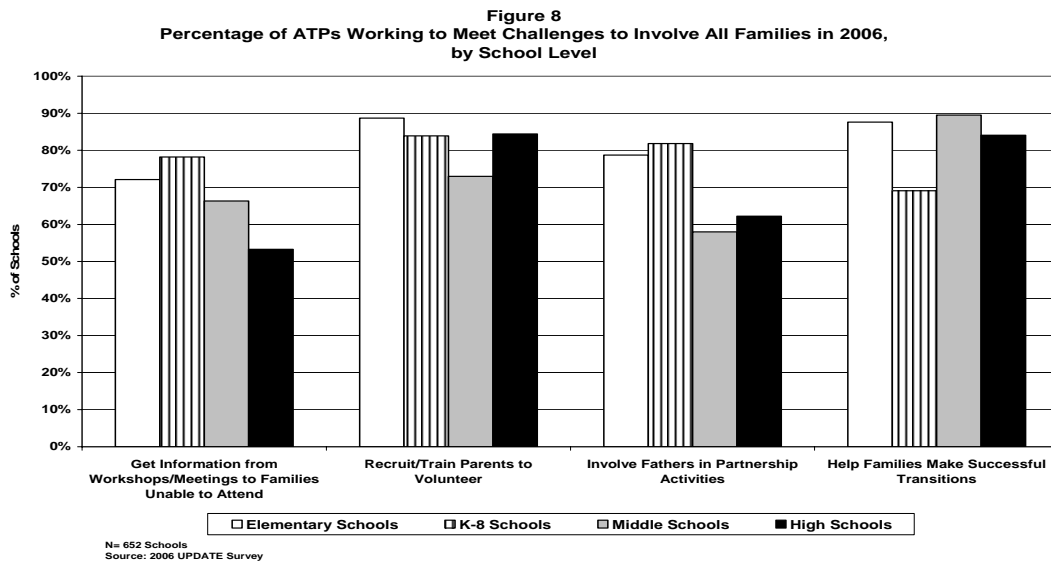
- About 60% of schools reported that their districts provided general funds to support partnerships. This was the least common form of support districts offered schools.
- Most schools (84.5%) reported that their districts provided information about partnerships.
- About 25% of schools reported that their district did not provide workshops on partnerships, offer technical assistance on partnerships, meet with principals, or evaluate the quality of their partnership program. These schools were more likely to be in districts that were not NNPS members.

### MEETING CHALLENGES TO REACH ALL FAMILIES

In addition to organizing their partnership programs, ATPs are expected to conduct and encourage other partners (teachers, PTA/PTO, community partners) to conduct activities that involve all families and community partners in ways that support student success. Schools' efforts to solve challenges of outreach and the involvement of all families were measured with a 9-item scale ( $\alpha = .86$ ). ATPs rated their attention to solve challenges on a 4-point scale from *not working on the challenge*, to making *fair progress*, *good progress*, or having *solved the challenge*. Schools' ATPs averaged 2.57 on this scale, suggesting that most are making between fair and good progress in trying to solve challenges to involve many families who would not become involved on their own.

**The vast majority of NNPS schools were working to overcome many challenges to help more families get involved in their children’s schooling, as shown in Figure 8.**

- Schools were least likely to be working on the challenge of getting information from workshops and meetings to families who could not attend the meetings at school.
- Schools were also less likely to be working to involve fathers in their children’s education.
- Almost all schools said that they were taking some steps to send home positive communications about children’s work and to use community partners to help meet school improvement goals.



- Elementary and K-8 schools were more likely than middle or high schools to work on getting fathers involved in their children’s education
- K-8 schools were least likely to work on helping students transition into and out of the school.

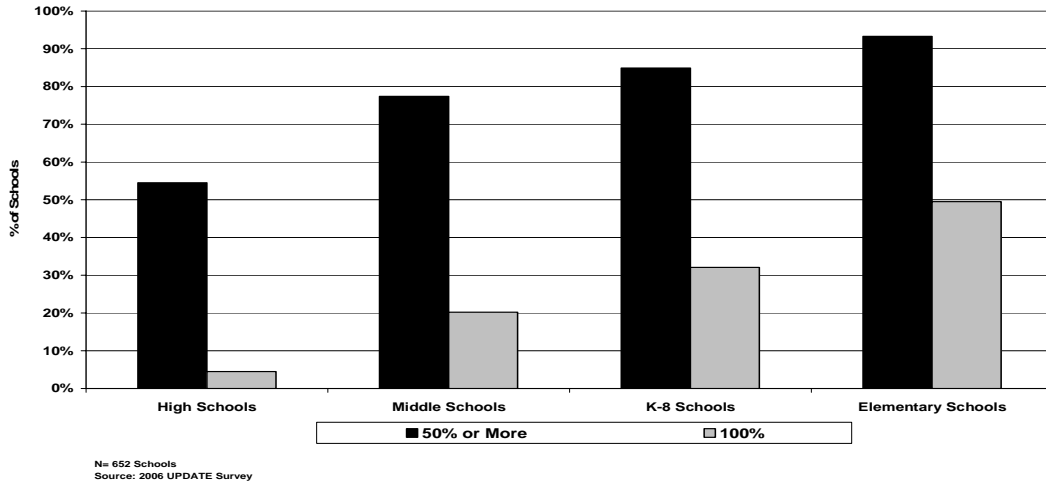
## TEACHERS’ PRACTICES OF INVOLVEMENT

Five items identified the percent of teachers who conducted various family involvement activities, such as holding parent-teacher conferences with each student’s family, communicating with all students’ families, utilizing volunteers in the classroom, guiding parents in discussing homework with their children, and supporting the partnership program. At least half of the ATPs reported that 50% or more of the teachers conducted these activities to involve families in various ways. The following two charts illustrate how teachers’ practices vary by grade level on two different involvement activities.

### *TEACHERS’ SUPPORT FOR THE SCHOOL’S PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM*

- A majority of teachers at all school levels supported their school’s partnership program.

**Figure 9**  
**Percentage of Teachers Who Support the School's Partnership Program in 2006,**  
**by School Level**

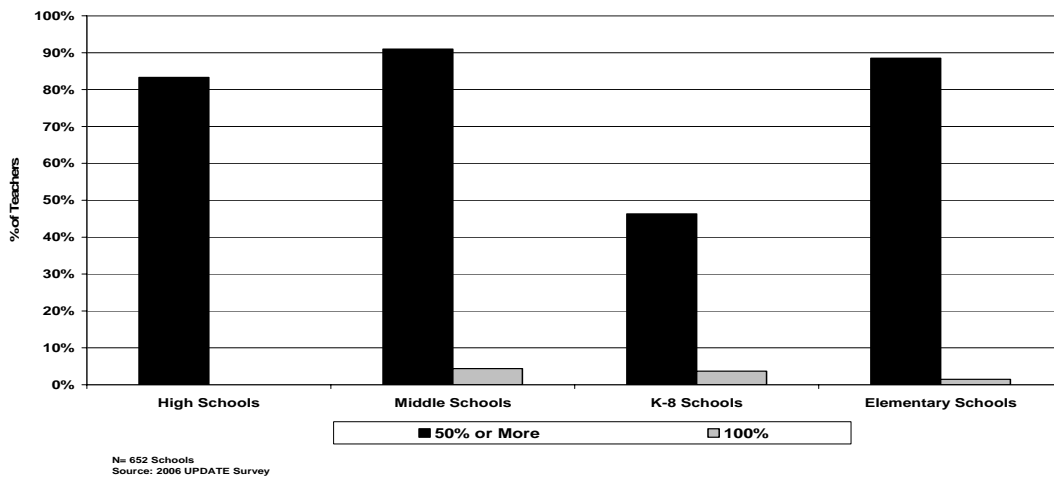


- Elementary schools tended to have a broader base of support for partnerships from teachers and staff than did middle or high schools. Over 90% of elementary schools' ATPs reported that at least half of the teachers supported their partnership program, and 50% of the elementary schools reported that all (100%) of the teachers supported their school's program of family and community involvement.

*TEACHERS' UTILIZATION OF PARENT VOLUNTEERS*

- Teachers in K-8 schools were less likely to utilize volunteers in the classroom, at school, or from home, as shown in Figure 10

**Figure 10**  
**Percentage of Teachers Who Utilize Volunteers**  
**in Class, at School, or at Home in 2006, by School Level**



**EXTENT OF FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

ATPs estimated the percent of families involved in various partnership activities, including attending a Back-to-School Night, a parent-teacher conference, volunteering to help the school or teachers, monitoring their child's homework, and being good partners in their children's education. The following charts illustrates how family involvement varied by grade level.

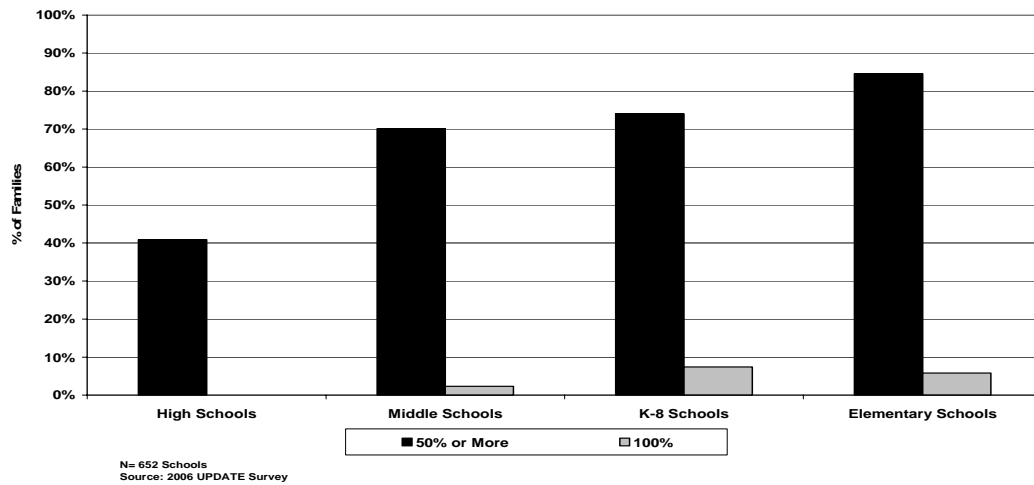
**Family involvement was more common in elementary and K-8 schools, becoming less likely as the grade level of the school increased.**

*FAMILIES AS GOOD PARTNERS IN CHILDREN’S EDUCATION*

Figure 11 reports ATPs’ estimates of the percentage of families who were good partners with the school in their children’s education.

- About half of all schools’ ATPs reported that at least 50% of all parents were “good partners” with the school. High schools tended to report the smallest percentage of families who were “good partners.”

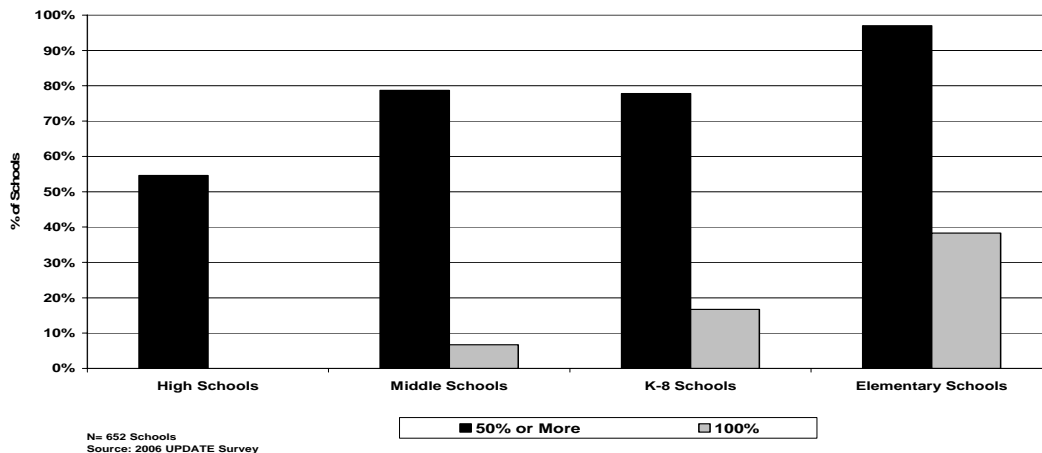
**Figure 11**  
Percentage of Families Who are Good Partners in Education in 2006, by School Level



*FAMILY ATTENDANCE AT PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES*

- Nearly all elementary schools reported that 50% or more of all families attended at least one parent-teacher conference and were more likely to report that 100% of their families attended at least one parent-teachers conference (Figure 12).

**Figure 12**  
Percentage of Teachers Who Conducted at Least One Parent-Teacher Conference with Each Student’s Family in 2006, by School Level



## **SCHOOL COMMENTS**

The 2006 School *UPDATE* asked ATPs to comment on *what changed most* in their programs of family and community involvement during the 05-06 school year. About 93% of the school teams comments on changes in their programs. The vast majority noted positive program developments.

- Many commented on increased communications to provide information to parents, more volunteers, more participation in workshops and meetings, more volunteers, varied activities for the six types of involvement, more positive relationships among teachers and parents, and more participation over all.
- Some noted changes in sharing leadership and organizing work, including establishing subcommittees for Action Teams for Partnerships, sharing leadership for implementing activities, attending to challenges to reach diverse parents who are not yet involved, and closer collaboration in planning partnership activities among school groups including teachers, the PTA or PTO, the Action Team for Partnerships, and School Improvement Team.
- Others noted observed results for students due to goal-linked family and community involvement. The reported results of involvement on improving attendance, reading, math, and student behavior reflect school observations of the same results reported in NNPS and other studies (see reviews of NNPS research and publications list at [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org) in the section Research and Evaluation.

The following are typical comments from many ATPs.

### ***IMPROVED PROGRAM ORGANIZATION***

- *Business partnerships increased.*
- *Changed attitudes of teachers on parent involvement activities*
- *...(N)ew building principal embraced our parent/community programs and her support has taken us further..*
- *We incorporated an open forum time into our regular family involvement meetings and invited families to come with any questions, ideas, or concerns*
- *Teachers learned new ways of including parents in their classroom.*
- *We developed a transition plan that reached more families for the next level of school*

### ***INVOLVED DIVERSE FAMILIES***

- *More parents of special education students were involved.*
- *More information was translated for our bilingual parents.*
- *We involved our South Asian parents more ... and would like to do more next year.*
- *School involvement of families who speak English as a second language increased.*
- *We are seeing more dads involved in partnership activities.*
- *Our parents felt more welcome and gave an increased amount of positive feedback.*
- *Parents attitudes toward the high expectations of the school (changed) from can't do to can do.*

### ***IMPROVED RESULTS FOR STUDENTS***

- *Improved attendance*
- *School experienced a 45% reduction in the number of behavioral office referrals.*
- *Academic improvement can be demonstrated with data. Office referrals have decreased.*
- *CRCT scored showed significant gains*

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade math scores improved 15% above projection.
- Test scores of students with involved parents increased.
- Student grades and test scores improved.

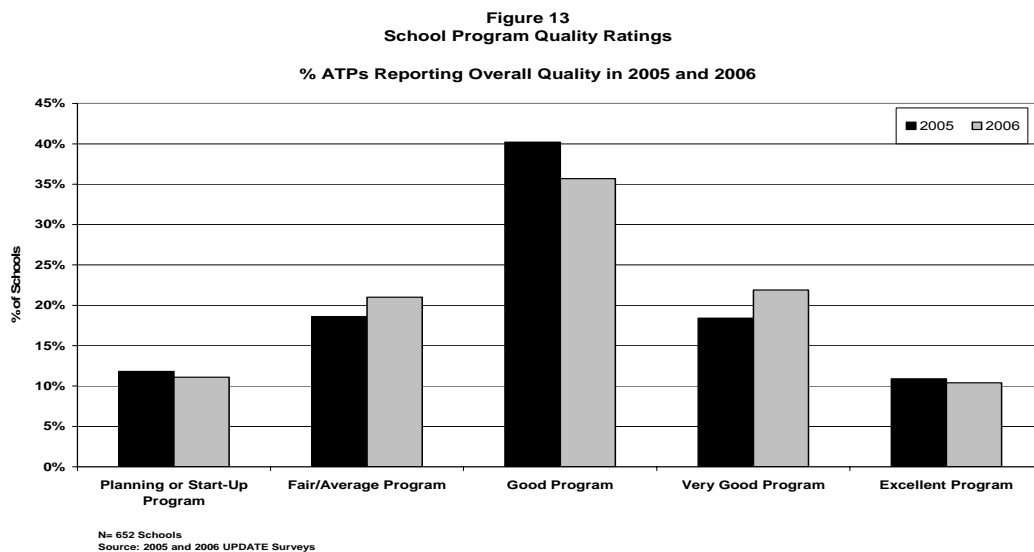
## Comparisons of Results from 2005 to 2006

Data from 425 schools that returned UPDATE surveys in 2005 and 2006 showed only small fluctuations in the program implementation measures reported above. Most schools maintained their work on partnerships in working to meet challenges to help all families become involved, getting support from teachers on family involvement, and earning the support and assistance of families. In a few instances, however, there were measurable changes in the two annual reports.

### PORTRAIT OF OVERALL PROGRAM QUALITY

Schools in 2006 reported slight improvements in the overall quality of their partnership program, as shown in Figure 13. The most change seemed to occur as fewer reported “good” quality and more rated their programs as “very good.” Percentages of schools at the planning/start-up phase and with excellent quality were similar in both years.

- The percentage of schools that reported improving their partnership programs, overall, (26.9%) was equivalent to the number that reported a decline in overall quality of their program (27.4%).



### CORE COMPONENTS

In general, schools were as likely to implement the core components of the NNPS program in 2006 as in 2005 (Table 1). The exception to this seems to be writing an action plan for the next school year. In 2005, 85% of schools reported writing their next action plan, whereas in 2006 only 77% of schools had done so (or believed they would before the end of the school year). Although most schools address these basic steps, it is critical for schools to complete these actions for developing high quality programs.

**Table 1: Percentage of Schools Implementing Core Program Components (2005 & 2006)**

	2005	2006
<b>6 of more members on the action team</b>	84%	81%
<b>Wrote a one-year action plan for the school year</b>	80%	79%
<b>Identified a budget for partnerships</b>	61%	60%
<b>Wrote a one-year action plan for the next school year</b>	85%	77%
<b>Held an end-of-year celebration</b>	43%	41%
<b>Replaced members of action team who left</b>	74%	72%

## DISTRICT SUPPORT

Schools reported about the same degree of support from their districts on partnership program development in 2005 and 2006. Two types of district support – meeting with the school principal and helping the school evaluate its program – were equally likely to have been provided in both years, but were rated as less helpful in 2006.

NNPS researchers will be examining *UPDATE* data from 2005 to 2006 to identify which school-based and district-level actions affected changes in the quality of schools' partnership programs over time. (See the summary of recent studies at [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org) in the section Research and Evaluation, click on *Five Year Summary*.)

## SUMMARY

The 2006 *UPDATE* data indicate that most schools in NNPS are working to implement core components and essential elements that NNPS has found affect the quality of partnership programs over time. Presently, elementary schools conduct more activities and report more parental involvement than middle and high schools. Still, many middle and high schools in NNPS are organizing their Action Teams for Partnerships and are working to improve their programs, just as elementary schools do.

The data also suggest several ways for schools to improve the organization of their partnership programs:

- Many schools' Action Teams for Partnerships do not yet meet monthly – an important requirement for systematizing plans and evaluations of program goals.
- Many ATPs have not organized committees to share leadership for implementing activities that focus on specific school goals or on the six types of involvement.
- Too many schools have not solved the challenge of getting information from school meetings and workshops to parents who cannot attend.
- Schools need to better plan their partnership programs by writing action plans before the end of one school year so they are ready to start work when the new school year begins.
- School districts could do more to support elementary, middle, and high schools by improving meetings with principals and by helping schools' Action Teams evaluate the progress and quality of their partnership programs.

NNPS expects all schools to continue to plan, implement, and evaluate their programs of school, family, and community partnerships. By doing so, schools' ATPs will be able to report progress and

new challenges on the 2007 *School UPDATE* survey next spring. Schools may compare the data in this report with their own responses on the 2006 *School UPDATE*. ATPs should take pride in practices that are strong, compared to other schools across the country. ATPs are invited to share their best practices with NNPS in the 2007 collection of *Promising Partnership Practices*. Ideas are due May 15, 2007 and can be submitted at any time at [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org) in the section Success Stories, click on Submit a Practice/Online.

ATPs should work this year to improve aspects of their programs that fall below NNPS averages or that do not reflect NNPS's expectations for excellent programs. Studies indicate that schools that work on partnerships over time will improve their programs, outreach, and results of family and community involvement (Brownstein, et al., 2006; Epstein & Salinas, 2004; Sheldon, in press; Sheldon & Van Voorhis, 2004; Van Voorhis & Sheldon, 2004).

## NOTES

- 1) NNPS *UPDATE* data are analyzed each year in research studies to learn how the various scales and measures combine to affect the quality of district and school programs. For a summary of results of studies collected over the past five years, visit the NNPS website, [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org), in the section *Research and Evaluation*, click on Research Summaries and Five Years of NNPS Research.

Also see the Research Briefs in each issue of the NNPS newsletter, *Type 2*. These are on the website in the section *Publications and Products*.

- 2) The ( $\alpha$  or alpha) reports the *internal reliability* of a scale, indicating whether a number of items are correlated and represent a common construct. Reliability coefficients of .6 or higher indicate that a set of items is consistent and the scale is useful.

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