

# type 2

Fall, 1998 No. 5 National Network of Partnership Schools

## National Network Selected as a Tool for Comprehensive School Reform

**NOTE:** This is a printer-friendly version of *Type 2*, downloadable from the National Network of Partnership Schools web site ([www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org)). Some formatting has been changed from the original newsletter (e.g., graphics/photos may not appear). For hard copies of *Type 2*, please e-mail the Network staff at [nnps@csos.jhu.edu](mailto:nnps@csos.jhu.edu) or call 410-516-8800.



**PARTNERSHIPSCHOOLS**

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The National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) was identified as one of 27 research-based comprehensive school reform models supported by the National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students of the U. S. Department of Education. The school improvement approaches are described in a directory, *Tools for Schools*, along with information on why each program started, how it works, what it costs, how it is implemented, its research base, evidence of success, and contacts for more information. States, districts, and schools may use the Network's research-based Action Team approach as a Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program.

### Eligibility and Requirements of CSRD

The new federal Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) Program (also known as the Obey-Porter initiative) will award about \$150 million to states that apply for these funds. According to the legislation, states will conduct competitive grants programs for eligible schools that "need to substantially improve student achievement, particularly Title I schools." Grants of at least \$50,000 per year for three years will be awarded to schools selected by their states. Some school-wide

Title I members of the National Network of Partnership Schools may be eligible for this funding.

The Network's approach includes the nine components for comprehensive school reform specified in the CSRD legislation. They are: a research-based method; aligned components for effective school functioning; professional development; measurable goals; school support; parent and community involvement; external technical support; evaluation strategies; and the coordination of resources. The Network's Action Team approach;

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## Two School Districts in NNPS Win Awards

Ypsilanti, Michigan and Sacramento, California, district members of the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS), were recognized by Hand-in-Hand with awards for excellent work on school, family, and community partnerships. The monetary awards were the result of a competitive application process completed in the spring of 1998 by Hand-in-Hand, a program of the Institute of Educational Lead-

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**PLEASE MAKE COPIES OF TYPE 2 FOR ALL MEMBERS OF YOUR ACTION TEAM, LEADERSHIP OR IMPROVEMENT TEAM, AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTNERS!**

# Issues and Insights

## ***Sharing the Role of Expert*** **In the National Network of Partnership Schools**

Joyce L. Epstein, Director

The National Network of Partnership Schools started the 1998-99 school year with about 1000 schools, 100 school districts, and 9 states as members. The successful work that is in progress in many of these locations reflects the Network's approach of *sharing the role of expert*. The expertise – knowledge, actions, and will – of educators, families, communities, students, *and* researchers all are essential for developing, implementing, evaluating, and continually improving programs of school, family, and community partnerships.

### **We share expertise to advance research.**

Members of the Network work with researchers to increase knowledge about partnerships. Field studies and data from *UPDATE* surveys from states, districts, and schools have confirmed the usefulness of the Network's requirements, structures, processes, and materials. We have learned, for example, that districts make progress when they are supported and assisted by their states. Schools make progress when they have well-functioning Action Teams, adequate funding, and on-going support and guidance. Research is showing that side-by-side facilitation, rather than top-down dictation, builds the expertise of teachers, administrators, and parents in each school to conduct partnership programs. Researchers and Network members will continue to work together on cross-site Focus On Results studies, annual *UPDATES*, and other activities to evaluate partnership programs and their effects.

**We share expertise to develop policies that lead to action.** States, districts, and schools may start their work on partnerships by writing a policy. Research reveals, however, that policy statements

alone are not sufficient for enabling all schools to develop effective home-school-community connections. Rather, effective training, grants, recognition, annual evaluations, and on-going guidance about school-based plans are needed to turn district or state policies into school practices that inform and involve all families in their children's education. Policies accompanied by enactments, budgets, staff, and specific plans for support are needed to translate state and district goals into school leadership and action.

### **We share expertise to improve practice.**

The Network's approaches are research-based. This means that states, districts, and schools can use the framework of six types of involvement, the Action Team approach, and the Network's pre-tested planning and evaluation tools with confidence that their partnership programs will succeed. The truth is that researchers cannot implement programs alone. It takes principals, teachers, parents, and students, along with school, district, and state administrators and school boards to do the hard work of implementing successful partnership programs. In the Network, these efforts also generate field-based ideas and questions for new research and development.

Over fifteen years of research led to the Network's approaches and, now, the members of the Network are helping to define and conduct new research on the design, implementation, and effects of partnerships. *Sharing the role of expert* is proving to be a highly effective way of improving research, policies, programs, and practices of partnership in states, districts, and schools.

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## District Record

### Taunton, Massachusetts Builds Educational Success with Partnerships

Taunton Public School District's commitment to school, family, and community partnerships is not new. During the 1991-92 school year, under the leadership of its superintendent, Dr. Gerald Croteau, the district began a formal program designed to improve parental and community involvement in support of student achievement. This initiative is called Project B.E.S.T—Building Educational Success Together. In 1997, the District joined the National Network of Partnership Schools to enhance its partnership efforts, and to more broadly define and understand family and community involvement.

When completing the Network's district membership form, Kathleen Callahan, District Key Contact to the National Network, Coordinator of B. E.S.T, and Taunton Public Schools' Community Liaison, wrote that the limited involvement of some families

in the district, "stems from a sense that there is not a real need for them to be involved and a perception that schools do not really want their involvement."

To address these misperceptions, Ms. Callahan works with Action Teams at all 16 elementary, middle, and high schools as district facilitator. Among many responsibilities, she helps school Action Teams plan, implement, and evaluate activities for the six types of involvement. Ms. Callahan meets with each school's Action Team, as requested. During these visits, she reviews Teams' One-Year Action Plans to help clarify goals and suggest ways of improving or expanding partnership activities. She also troubleshoots so that different parent groups and organizations at the schools work together more productively and effi-

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## School Reform

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framework of six types of involvement; on-going staff development with training, handbook, newsletters, guidelines, e-mail and web site assistance; and research and evaluation opportunities enable schools to organize and implement comprehensive reform to meet school goals for student success in school. The National Network of Partnership Schools also can serve as the family and community component in other school reform models, and in other proposals for funds for school improvement.

CSRD funds may be used to support on-site facilitators who are Key Contacts to the Network, and who work with their Action Teams to plan, implement, evaluate, and continually improve activities linked to school improvement goals. Funds also may be used for staff development to help teachers, administrators, and parents on Action Teams work together to develop and implement clear action plans to meet school goals. Because there is no membership fee to join the National Network of Partnership Schools, all CSRD grant monies support staff and program costs at the school site, and related training on site or at Johns Hopkins University.

### Federal Funding Information

For more information on CSRD and other federal funding opportunities, see [www.ed.gov/funding.html](http://www.ed.gov/funding.html). Districts and schools should ask their state departments of education for information about CSRD requirements. *Tools for Schools* is available from the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington DC 20208.

### National Network of Partnership Schools

Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships *and*  
Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR)  
Johns Hopkins University, 3003 North Charles Street, Suite 200, Baltimore MD 21218  
tel: 410-516-8818 fax: 410-516-8890 e-mail: [nnps@csos.jhu.edu](mailto:nnps@csos.jhu.edu)  
web site: [www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000)

Director: Joyce L. Epstein  
Assistant Director: Mavis G. Sanders  
Communications Director and Editor: Karen Clark Salinas  
Dissemination Director: Beth S. Simon  
Network Coordinator: Laurel A. Clark

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# Meeting the Challenge

## How Schools Can Reach Out So That the Community Can Reach In

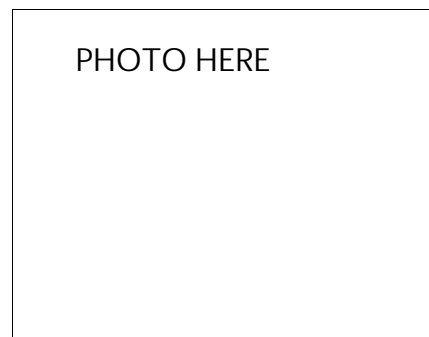
Mavis G. Sanders, Assistant Director

Effective collaborations with the community (Type 6) are important for developing comprehensive programs of partnership. Current educational reforms emphasize the need for mobilizing human and material resources in communities to help students succeed. If they are well implemented, school-community collaborations provide important experiences and services to students, schools, families, and communities. This is something that Network member Dundalk High School in Maryland has discovered through its many connections with the local community.

Dundalk High School has conducted partnership activities to promote its students' academic and social success. The high school's 8th-grade transition program featured in the Network's publication, *Promising Partnership Practices 1998*, involved many types of involvement, including community collaborations. According to Patricia Zavetz, the Action Team Chair in 1998, Dundalk High School worked with feeder middle schools, the high school's Alumni Association, and local businesses to ensure that eighth grade students and their families were supported in their transition to high school.

The Action Team also worked with others in the school to encourage community linkages that would help students meet the state's service learning requirement for graduation. Students volunteer their time at local businesses, agencies, and institutions to assist others in their community and to gain meaningful experiences. Local business owner, Jeffrey Sims, provided such an experience to Dundalk High School student, Richard James. Mr. Sims explains, "I want to support and help youth who want to help themselves. This was my opportunity to do so . . . to make a small

difference." To recognize Mr. Sims' contribution, the school provided him with a certificate of appreciation, which hangs in his barbershop in Turner Station, MD—*The Cutting Edge*.



Jeffery Sims, local business owner (left), and Richard James, Dundalk High School senior

When asked what he gained from volunteering, Richard said, "I received my service learning credits and I really enjoyed the experience. I especially liked watching Mr. Sims. I learned a lot." Richard is considering becoming a barber himself one day and owning his own shop. He explained, "For one of my tech classes, I'm going to interview Mr. Sims to learn the steps that he took to get where he is." Through his service learning experience, Richard now has a knowledgeable contact in the community with whom to discuss his goals.

The above examples show some of the benefits that can be gained through school-community linkages. However, had they not been asked, Mr. Sims and others in the community would not have known how to become involved in the school's partnership program. This highlights the importance of schools reaching out so that families and communities can reach in to help students, their families, and the school.

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## Focus on Results Will Study Links to Behavior/Discipline

FOCUS ON RESULTS is the Network's annual cross-site study on the effects of school, family, and community partnerships for improving student success in school. Participation is voluntary. Network members are encouraged to take part to learn more about the results of family and community involvement. The 1997-98 study focused on math achievement. Because end-of-the-year test scores are still being collected from the 28 participating schools, results will be reported in the spring issue of *Type 2*.

### Focus on Results 1998-99

For the 1998-99 school year, Focus on Results will examine **STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE**. The cross-site study will address the following questions:

- Which practices of school-family-community partnerships help students improve and maintain good behavior and discipline in class and at school?
- How are schools meeting challenges to involve families and communities in improving students' conduct and behavior?
- How do schools, districts, and states evaluate whether or how family and community partnership activities affect student behavior and discipline?

Schools will receive an invitation to join the 1998-99 Focus on Results in November. State and district Key Contacts to the Network also will receive information on the cross-site

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## State Line

### Wisconsin Demonstrates State Leadership On School, Family, and Community Partnerships

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (WI DPI), with Key Contacts Jane Grinde and Ruth Anne Landsverk, joined the National Network of Partnership Schools as a "charter state member" in the 1996-97 school year. A strong advocate for school-family-community partnerships, John Benson, Wisconsin's State Superintendent of Public Instruction, created the Family-School-Community Partnership Team (FSCP) at the department; allocated federal Title VI and Goals 2000 funds to DPI for state leadership activities; established a Parent Advisory Council to advise the superintendent; and implemented a policy for state employees to volunteer at schools, libraries, or child care centers.

With these funds and official support, the FSCP Team (1) sponsors annual family-school-community partnership conferences for Action Teams of parents, teachers, administrators, and community members; (2) provides small seed grants (\$200-\$500) to family-school-community partnership teams to fund activities to improve partnerships; (3) provides modest partnership grants (\$2000) to fund Action Team coordinators who also serve as liaisons to parents; (4) publishes *Learning Together* packets which guide and share ideas with Action Teams; and (5) conducts other state leadership activities.

By fall 1998, nearly 250 teams of parents, teachers, school administrators, and community members in Wisconsin have learned

about the six types of involvement, and have written plans for partnership. Grinde and Landsverk noted, "With modest grant money, schools' Action Teams for School, Family, and Community Partnerships have done wonderful things to forge closer, stronger bonds to improve children's learning."

The FSCP team also connects with the University of Wisconsin-Madison to obtain resources from various departments, and to serve as speakers and advisors in courses and educational programs. FSCP has an ongoing relationship with Wisconsin Public Broadcasting to cosponsor Wisconsin Family Read-In, volunteer programs, and Kids Vote.

As a member of the National Network of Partnership Schools, the WI DPI is demonstrating strong state leadership in scaling up the number and quality of school, family, and community partnerships in districts and schools in Wisconsin.

**For more information contact** Jane Grinde (608/266-9356 or grindjl@mail.state.wi.us), Director, Bright Beginnings/Family-School-Community Partnerships; or Ruth Anne Landsverk (608/266-9757 or landsra@mail.state.wi.us), Coordinator, Family-School-Community Partnerships.

### New Tool for Districts: Evaluation of Facilitators

The National Network of Partnership Schools designed and tested an annual evaluation check-list to help districts assess the work of Facilitators for School, Family, and Community Partnerships. District members may contact the Network for this professional assessment tool.

## Members at Network Training Workshop Gain Ideas on Successful Action Teams

At the spring 1998 training workshops for new members of the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University, over 150 attendees from states, districts, and schools in the Network shared information on developing successful Action Teams for School, Family, and Community Partnerships. The session started with the basic distinction between a group and a team. Three main challenges to good team work were discussed, along with some solutions.

### Finding Time to Meet

Many Network members at the spring workshops said that finding time for meetings is a major obstacle to effective Action Team functioning. Workshop participants suggested several ways to overcome this obstacle. Some participants suggested creating a realistic meeting schedule. In some schools, monthly meetings are all that is required to ensure that Action Teams can discuss and implement activities outlined in the One-Year Action Plan. At other schools, Action Teams may meet more or less frequently. Whatever the meeting schedule, participants noted that Action Team members must make every effort to attend meetings and “not allow other things to take a greater priority.” To ensure a steady flow of information and support between meetings, participants suggested that Action Team members use creative ways to communicate (e.g., routing memos) between formal meetings.

### Developing Trust, Respect, and Support

Several Network members observed

that in order for an Action Team to function effectively, all members must feel that they can communicate openly and that they are supported in their efforts by other members of the Team. How can this be accomplished? Some participants suggested that Action Teams “take time for team building and developing team skills.” The Action Team chairperson plays a key role in establishing and maintaining team cohesion, but all members must work together to create a “climate of trust, respect, and support.” The attendees agreed that attention to this challenge should help to promote team stability and reduce the likelihood of “factionalism and fragmentation.”

### Establishing Clear Goals and a Shared Vision

Workshop participants highlighted the importance of establishing clear goals and a shared vision for the effective functioning of Action Teams. They suggested that during the first Action Team meeting of each school year, all members should discuss the Team’s purpose and goals, and review the One-Year Action Plan for the new school year. They also suggested that the Action Team should write down its purpose and goals, and refer to them if personal agendas emerge that override or compromise the Team’s common agenda.

Action Teams may face these or other challenges. Whatever the challenges may be, it is important to solve problems and maintain good team spirit. Remember, the Action Team is the “action arm” of a school’s partnership program, and vital to program development, prog-

## Districts Win Awards

*(Continued from page 1)*

ership (IEL) in Washington, D.C.

Ypsilanti’s Key Contact to the Network, Noni Miller, Executive Director of Academic Services, with the support of Superintendent Dr. David Zuhlke, explained that the district’s mission for partnerships is to “develop and utilize family/school/partnerships to help all children reach their full potential with special attention to at-risk, underserved students.”

Sacramento described its mission as providing “assistance and support by facilitating the continuous development of partnerships between families, schools, and communities in their effort to help children achieve academically and socially in school and throughout life.” Sacramento is establishing a new Parent Engagement Office. Its director will replace retired Key Contact to the Network, Elaine Freedman, who, supported by Superintendent Dr. James Sweeney, submitted the application for the award.

Both districts not only assist their elementary, middle, and high schools’ Action Teams for School, Family, and Community Partnerships, but also conduct and coordinate district-level leadership activities, including work with community-based organizations and parent groups. In Ypsilanti, all twelve elementary, middle, and high schools are part of the National Network of Partnership Schools. Sacramento has actively increased the number of schools in the Network from twelve to about 30 schools over three years.

**NEW MEMBERS GRAPHIC HERE**

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## School Report

### Middle and High Schools in Williamston, MI Organize Volunteers to Tap Parents' Talents

Williamston Middle School and High School wanted to improve their Type 3 - Volunteering activities by making better use of parents' talents and interests. The Action Team created a worksheet to survey parents about their careers, hobbies, interests, availability, and about volunteer opportunities.

The Action Team presented the worksheet at the fall 1997 Open House, and the principal asked parents to complete the worksheet before the end of the evening. Completing the survey provided information for future volunteer opportunities, but was not a commitment to volunteer. 125 worksheets were collected at the middle school, and 230 worksheets were collected at the high school.

A simple database was created to generate lists of parents who might be willing to help with staff appreciation, make phone calls, conduct classroom presentations on interests or careers, provide snacks, assist in classrooms or the office, and so on. The lists were bound together into the *Parent Resource Directory*.

Next, a parent was recruited at each grade level to serve as volunteer coordinator. All teachers and volunteer coordinators were trained to use the *Parent Resource Directory*.

The front of the directory includes a Parent Volunteer Request Form. A teacher or other staff person makes a copy of the form, indicates the

number of parents needed, date, time, and any instructions, and gives it to a volunteer coordinator. The coordinator finds parents who are suited to the teacher's request, records the parents' names and phone numbers on the request form, and returns it to the teacher.

Since the directory was produced and distributed in December 1997, parent help and involvement has increased. In the middle school, over 70 parents have chaperoned parties and field trips, helped in classrooms and the computer lab, graded papers at home, made phone calls to other parents, and presented information to students about their careers, cultural backgrounds, and travels.

At the high school, over 80 parents participated in a career fair and conducted mock interviews for eleventh graders, served bagels and juice to students during exam week, evaluated student presentations in physics classes, organized a committee for an all-night after-prom party, and evaluated book talks presented by tenth graders.

Staff now refer to the directory to find helpful parents, and parents appreciate participating in their teen's education in meaningful ways. According to Ann Cody, Action Team Co-Chair, "The *Parent Resource Directory* has been a great success!"

For more information and other good examples see: *Promising Partnership Practices 1998*, National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University. The full report of the *Parent Resource Directory* includes the parent volunteer worksheet.

### West Virginia Title I Schools Produce Video on Partnerships

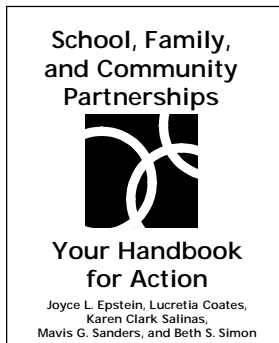
Eight vignettes on partnerships and their challenges are included in a videotape produced by *Partnerships with Parents*, a project conducted by six Title I rural elementary schools in West Virginia. Lynn Sobolov, a Key Contact to the National Network from Monongalia County, describes the project's four goals: increase awareness of the value of partnerships; identify effective parent-teacher collaborations; help schools plan for partnerships; and increase communication about partnerships.

To develop the project, the school district reached out to the National Network of Partnership Schools for a nationally-recognized, research-based approach to school, family, and community partnerships. They also worked with WNPB-TV and the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at West Virginia University. Teams of Title I and other classroom teachers, parents, administrators, and pre-service teachers worked together to discuss their ideas, goals, and concerns about comprehensive partnership programs.

The videotape covers the six types of involvement in the Network's framework, along with topics of "differences" and "rumors." Project evaluations indicate that the video is informative and stimulates discussions about partnerships. The participating schools reported an increase in the quality and the quantity of home-school communications.

For more information contact Lynn Sobolov, c/o Monongalia County Schools, 13 S. High Street, Morgantown, WV 26505, tel. 304-291-9300 or sobolov@access.mountain.net. The videotape and

## Handbook Available from Corwin Press



All new members of the National Network in the U. S. receive one free copy of *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action*. The *Handbook* includes the information and tools needed to develop comprehensive programs of partnership. Additional copies are available from Corwin Press, 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks, CA 91320-2218; tel: 805-499-8071; fax: 805-499-9774; or e-mail: [order@corwin.sagepub.com](mailto:order@corwin.sagepub.com).

## Focus on Results

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study, in case they want to coordinate the participation of their schools, or conduct parallel or related studies.

Participation in Focus on Results requires two short data collection activities, including base-line information in November and a short follow-up survey in the spring.

If good student behavior or improved school discipline is one of your school goals, we encourage you to join FOCUS ON RESULTS in 1998-99. This is one important way that members of the National Network of Partnership Schools are collaborating with researchers to increase knowledge about the design and results of school, family, and community partnerships.

## Partnering for Success in Taunton

(Continued from page 3)  
ciently to support students' learning. Ms. Callahan is responsible for several other district-level partnership activities. With Dr. Croteau's active support, she identifies and recruits business partners who work with schools in the district. Currently, each school in Taunton enjoys a partnership with an area business. Ms. Callahan also represents the school district on various community advisory boards, and works to promote greater collaboration with community agencies to maximize resources, and improve services to students and families.

She also oversees data collection for B.E.S.T. Data on rates of homework completion, volunteer hours—both on-site and off-site—and school-home compacts are presented in an annual report which helps schools review and chart progress in these areas, and develop strategies for improvement.

Two of Ms. Callahan's goals for the upcoming year include reaching "hard-to-reach" pockets of families in each school, and promoting parent-to-parent outreach. With the ever-growing support of families, students, teachers, district leaders, and the larger Taunton community, Ms. Callahan is confident that these goals will be realized.

## Update on *UPDATE*

MANY THANKS to the states, districts, and schools that returned the 1998 *UPDATE*. The annual *UPDATE* is the ONE communication that is required to *RENEW* membership in the Network. Its return keeps state, district, and school members on our mailing list to receive this newsletter, all other information and publications from our Center, and other Network benefits and services, including direct assistance from Network staff by phone, e-mail, and web site. If your school, district, or state joined the Network *before* December 1997, you received an *UPDATE* and a reminder. (New members did not receive an *UPDATE* this year, but will in April 1999.)

ATTENTION! Check the upper left corner of the first page of this newsletter. A label on the front page means that we have not received your *UPDATE*. Your membership in the Network will expire at the end of 1998 unless we receive your *UPDATE* or hear from you. If your membership expires, this will be your last *Type 2*, as well as other communications from the Network. **Please return *UPDATE* right away, in order to remain a member of the Network.** If you need a copy, contact Laurel Clark at 410-516-2318, or e-mail: [lclark@csos.jhu.edu](mailto:lclark@csos.jhu.edu). You may mail it back or fax all sides of your completed *UPDATE* to Laurel at 410-516-8890.

## [www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000)

Visit our web site for ideas about improving your school, family, and community partnership program. Click on **In the Spotlight** to read the first annual collection of *Promising Partnership Practices 1998*. Click on **Publications** and then *Type 2* to read earlier issues of the newsletter. Click on **Contact the Staff** to communicate with us. Click on **Publications** to find articles, reports, and materials in the List of Publications of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships.

If you would like to establish a reciprocal link between your website and the Network's, please e-mail [bsimon@csos.jhu.edu](mailto:bsimon@csos.jhu.edu).

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## Research Briefs

### Leaders of Colleges and Universities Report the Need to Prepare Educators for School, Family, and Community Partnerships

How well are teachers, principals, and counselors prepared to conduct school, family, and community partnerships? Researchers Joyce L. Epstein, Mavis G. Sanders, and Laurel A. Clark of the National Network of Partnership Schools conducted a national survey of educators in 161 Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education (SCDE) in the United States. Questions asked about present course offerings; leaders' attitudes and perspectives about school, family, and community partnerships; and readiness to change courses and content of required and elective courses. Respondents also provided open-ended comments on these issues.

#### Highlights

Results supported the following conclusions:

- The survey reveals a dramatic gap at most SCDEs between leaders' strong beliefs about the importance for educators to conduct effective partnerships and current low preparedness of

graduates to work effectively with students' families and communities.

- Most SCDEs offer at least one course and some coverage of topics on partnerships, but not enough to prepare all teachers, counselors, and administrators to effectively conduct practices and programs of school, family, and community partnerships. Most offerings are in early childhood and special education, as in the past.
- Leaders in SCDEs are aware of the need to better prepare new educators to conduct school, family, and community partnerships. They express a readiness to change. Almost equal numbers recommended improving the curriculum for those preparing to be teachers at the preschool (51.3%), elementary (46.7%), middle (41.9%), and high (42.1%) school levels.
- Most leaders at SCDEs are aware of growing pressure and explicit mandates to improve

partnerships from state departments of education, accrediting organizations, and from school and district educators who hire SCDE graduates. However, too many leaders (over one fourth) "do not know" what the state and accreditation requirements are about partnerships.

Institutional change in higher education is possible, but requires effort and action. "If you put something in, you must take something out," wrote one survey respondent. This comment acknowledges that it will be necessary to set new priorities to prepare teachers and administrators with essential skills for working with families and communities. As another leader wrote, "This should be taught, and not just expected to occur by accident."

From: Joyce L. Epstein, Mavis G. Sanders, and Laurel A. Clark. (1998). **Preparing Educators for School-Family-Community Partnerships: Results of a National Survey of Colleges and Universities.** Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, San Francisco.

### Home, School, and Community Effects on the Academic Achievement of African-American Adolescents

To determine the effects of gender on the relationship between school, family, and community support and academic achievement, survey and interview data from 826 African-American urban adolescents in the southeastern United States were analyzed. Results suggest that the school, family, and church simultaneously influence students' academic achievement through their effects on

academic self-concept and school behavior. These effects remain constant even after controlling for student background characteristics.

However, differences exist in the effects for males and females in the study. These differences are primarily related to the attributes female African-American adolescents bring to school compared to males. Fe-

male adolescents in the study perceive more family and teacher support, and are more active in the black church than are male adolescents. It is not surprising, therefore, that African-American females also report more positive academic self-concepts and achievement ideologies, less disruptive school behavior, and higher achievement than the male students

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## African-American Adolescents

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surveyed.

The study's findings highlight the importance of: (1) student affiliation in stable adult-supervised, community-based organizations like the black church; (2) the family's support of and high expectations for school achievement; and (3) teacher support for student learning for the academic success of *both* male and female African American urban youth. Support from the home, school, and community can be enhanced through well-designed and implemented partnership programs. The study further suggests that such programs may be especially important for African-American male and female students who live below the poverty level, and for students who are older than average for their grade level.

From: Mavis G. Sanders and Jerald R. Herting. (In press). Gender and the effects of school, family and church support on the academic achievement of African-American urban youth. In Mavis G. Sanders (ed.), *Schooling Students Placed At Risk: Research, Policy, and Practice in the Education of Poor and Minority Adolescents*. New Jersey: Lawrence-Erlbaum Publishers.

## New Network Staff

The National Network of Partnership Schools welcomes Frances Van Voorhis to the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University. Frances will assist with Network communications, research, and dissemination services.

## Districts Recommend Excellent Schools

District members of the National Network of Partnership Schools were asked in the '98 *UPDATE* to recommend school members that have developed outstanding programs of school, family, and community partnerships. The following schools were recommended by their districts:

Chapelle Elementary School, School District of Ypsilanti, MI

Curundu Elementary School, DoDDS - Cuba/Panama Region

Elmwood Elementary School, Naperville Community School District 203, IL

Fairsite Elementary School and River Oaks Elementary School, Galt Elementary School District, CA

Father Keith B. Kenny Elementary School and Will C. Wood Middle School, Sacramento City Unified Schools, CA

Haviland Elementary School, Waterford School District, MI

Early Childhood Center and Bluff Creek Elementary School, District 112, Chaska, MN

Bessie Hoffman Elementary School, Lincoln Consolidated Schools, Ypsilanti, MI

## Wisconsin Schools Develop Programs and Practices with State Support

Schools in Wisconsin in the National Network of Partnership Schools are supported by state grants, training, and on-going assistance. Many schools have developed exciting activities including:

Programs that welcome parents by speaking and writing in the languages they understand best;

Packs of school supplies for families who cannot afford them for their children;

Children's "dressers" to recycle clothing and to provide clothing in emergencies

Parent surveys, parent handbooks, parenting classes, and school-based family centers;

Parent-student-teacher journals, parent-student-teacher compacts, and videotaped school events for community cable TV;

Mentors, study buddies, and adopted grandparents for children who need them;

Family Fun Nights, Family Math and Science Nights, Family Read-Ins, Back-to-School Ice Cream Socials, and Family Math Chili Feeds to help parents get to know their school, one another, and what their children are learning;

"Families and Communities Together" Suppers and Community Forums to decide together how to solve space needs and budget crunches;

Buttons proclaiming that each student is an "Absolutely Incredible Kid"—the best reason for doing partnerships in the first place!

Reported by Jane Grinde and Ruth Anne Landsverk, Key Contacts to the Network. See State Line on Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, page 5.

## Meeting the Challenge: Community Connections

(Continued from page 4)

To reach out most effectively, school Action Teams should address the challenges for Type 6 activities when they write their One-Year Action Plans. These challenges include clearly identifying roles, responsibilities, funds, and venues for collaborative activities, and matching community volunteers and resources with school goals to maintain a focused and purposeful program. When these challenges are met, schools can more fully and successfully include the *community* in their school, family, and community partnership programs.

Look for analyses of 1998 *UPDATE* data on community connections in the next issue of *Type 2*.

## National Network of Partnership Schools CALENDAR for 1998-99

November 17:	Invitational meeting of state members on evaluation issues.
November:	Invitation to members to join the cross-site study, Focus on Results 1998-99: School-Family-Community Partnerships to Improve Student Behavior/Discipline. Initial data collection.
January:	Invitation to members to contribute information on their promising partnership practices at the school, district, and state levels.
March:	Next issue of <i>Type 2</i> .
April 9-10, 1999:	Optional Training Workshop at Johns Hopkins University for new members who want initial training to prepare for the 1999-2000 school year.
April:	UPDATE: Annual Report to the National Network of Partnership Schools. (Required of all members who join by 12/98.)

## U. S. Dept. of Education's 1998 Regional Conferences on Improving America's Schools

Regional Conferences on Improving America's Schools will be conducted by the U. S. Department of Education in Denver, CO (November 18-20) and Nashville, TN (December 15-17). Topics include comprehensive school reform, partnerships, and other federal, state, and local issues. Contact: 800-203-5494 or [www.ncbe.gwu/iasconferences](http://www.ncbe.gwu/iasconferences).

### CLIP OR PHOTOCOPY THIS SECTION AND SEND IN YOUR IDEAS.

The staff of the National Network of Partnership Schools wants to hear from school, district, and state members. Tell us . . .

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

School, district, or state name \_\_\_\_\_

Suggestions for future issues of *TYPE 2* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a NEWS SENTENCE for the next issue of *Type 2* about an **important activity** in your program of school, family, and community partnerships, or about an **award or recognition** that your partnership program received? (Please tell who, what, when, where, and why.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If you wish, write a news paragraph on a separate page and send it along. Or, watch for the call for promising practices in 1999. Return this tear-off to: Karen Salinas, National Network of Partnership Schools, Johns Hopkins University, 3003 North Charles Street, Suite 200, Baltimore, MD 21218; or fax: 410-516-8890. Thank you!