
SPRING PARTNERSHIP RALLY

Ohio Department of Education

Columbus, Ohio

Work on school, family, and community partnerships at the state level is conducted by an interagency team from Ohio Department of Education (especially Title I and Special Education), PTA, Ohio's Parent Information and Resource Center (OhioPIRC), and Ohio Family and Children First, the governor's family support initiative. One strong example of the work of this leadership team is the March 1998 Spring Partnership Rally.

The team wanted to host an event that would increase awareness of Ohio's school, family, and community partnership initiative. The first step was to include a request for funding the rally in our proposal to the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation. Once funding was secured, the leadership team could begin plans for the rally.

The leadership team publicized the upcoming rally in its publications. We required that rally participants attend as members of a balanced team of family members and school staff; we strongly encouraged general community representation.

The team spent many hours developing a special session on what it means to work in partnership so that participants would leave with not only information about the six types of involvement, but also with a sense of what it means to work collaboratively. We sought out speakers who would then lead this session with smaller groups. Leadership team members led the sessions on the six types of involvement and on Ohio's grant opportunity.

The OhioPIRC took major responsibility for compiling and distributing a "Bright Ideas" booklet of partnership activities shared in mid-year reports from Ohio Partnership Schools. To provide the same information to teams that were not able to come to Columbus on the day of the rally, our team led four regional workshops across the state, two of which were held on Saturdays.

The overall effect of this event was to greatly increase awareness of our partnership initiative. The member of the State Board of Education who welcomed rally participants returned to the next

board meeting saying that this effort was the best kept secret in the department. Hope Taft, who is now our state's First Lady, attended and to this day keeps up with our partnership activities.

By building consistently on the framework of the six types of involvement and by inviting membership into Ohio's Network and the National Network of Partnership Schools—all of which received statewide publicity thanks to the rally—we have been able to maintain a focus that has propelled our partnership initiative forward in the relatively brief time of two years.

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