
PROMISING PARTNERSHIP PRACTICES BOOK

Buffalo Public Schools

Buffalo, New York

For the past three years, the Buffalo Public Schools' Family Involvement Leadership Team has published its own *Promising Partnership Practices* based on activities from all Buffalo elementary schools who are members of the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS). The Buffalo Leadership Team created its district book as a way to instill pride and uniqueness in what the schools do to involve families and to give all of their schools an opportunity to be able to share and use other successful practices. The team also sent their annual collection to NNPS to recognize their schools' good work.

After studying the promising partnership practice format presented by NNPS at a leadership training conference, the Buffalo Leadership Team facilitators created a similar format tailored to their district schools. The form asked members of the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) to write a narrative answering specific questions about their activity. During one of the cluster meetings of ATP members, facilitators explained in detail the format for narratives and submission deadlines.

The first year's collection received ten promising practices—a good start, but not ideal. The following year, facilitators agreed to place more emphasis on time and content. Approximately two weeks before the submission deadline, the facilitators sent out reminders by mail and fax to building principals and to ATP key contacts. About two days before the deadline, the facilitators sent another reminder to key contacts of the schools who had not yet sent their practice. Then one week after the deadline, the facilitators made phone calls and visits to schools that had not yet responded. The second year's promising partnership practices collection increased by 90%.

The facilitators sent a thank you postcard to every school and a personal thank you to every person who submitted a practice. Celebration and acknowledgements have been instrumental to the success of this district promising partnership practices book. When any of the schools' practices appear in the National Network's *Promising Partnership Practices* book, the Leadership Team sends a note of congratulations to the person who submitted the practice. At the End-of-Year Celebration, the facilitators give certificates of participation to the schools who submitted practices and framed certificates to the schools who were selected for the NNPS book. Each school also receives a copy of *Buffalo Promising Partnership Practices*. The

Action Team for Partnerships members are asked to display the book in the parent room or parent area of their schools so that families and teachers have access to the information.

The costs to implement this practice are minimal. The Leadership Team has its own bookbinding machine so the facilitators produce the books themselves. Expenses include paper, bookbinders, and frames for the certificates. The Leadership Team generates the certificates, cover designs, thank-you cards, and postcards on computers and prints them in-house. The team is considering partnering with a local business to offer unique incentives such as shirts, caps, and jackets to schools that submit practices. This strategy may help the Leadership Team reach its goal of 100% school participation in the district collection.

The annual *Buffalo Promising Partnership Practices* has given Buffalo's Action Team members another resource to utilize when planning new activities in their schools. The book has fostered communication and connections between local schools that are implementing school, family, and community partnership practices to support school goals. The book has also helped Buffalo schools receive greater recognition from the National Network of Partnership Schools.

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