

District *UPDATE* Summary

*Howard County Public School System
Columbia, Maryland*

At the Howard County Network of Partnership Schools' End-of-Year Celebration, Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) members received an enlightening surprise. Their individual schools' responses to the NNPS 2003 *UPDATE* survey had been compiled into one comprehensive summary of their local network's efforts to build partnership programs. District Facilitator Jean Lewis explained, "Instead of a notebook or file full of *UPDATE* archives, we decided to put the data in a format that would influence future planning and publicize the hard work of the member schools."

The District *UPDATE* Summary provided measurable data on partnership program development in a visually effective manner. The summary included all responses from all member schools, excluding school names and contact information. Colorful, easy-to-read bar graphs and pie charts represented the data. All qualitative responses were written as a list and inserted in the back of the document. The district facilitator gave each celebration attendee a folder containing the 25-page summary, and shared the data in a 30-minute formal presentation.

In addition to the ATP members, the facilitator shared the summary with the district's Curriculum, Instruction, and Administration Leadership Team, which gained a clearer understanding of the district's NNPS member schools' work on partnerships. Staff, parents, central office personnel, and other stakeholders will have opportunities to review the summary throughout the coming months.

The idea to create a district summary

had been brewing for some time, but challenges of time, money, and computer skills delayed the actual production. This was all resolved in a stroke of good luck when a work-study student from a local university, who happened to be a mother of a student in one of the network schools, inquired about working in the district's Family and Community Outreach Office. As Lewis recounted, "When I found out she was proficient in the computer skills needed to develop the *UPDATE* summary, I wasted no time in pulling out my overstuffed notebook." The work-study student skillfully entered the data and made the charts for the document.

Next year, the district, in collaboration with the school ATPs, will use the results summary as baseline data for planning. The Howard County Network of Partnership Schools will use the document to review program components, ATP structures, program support and development, efforts to meet challenges, and overall quality of partnership programs. Ultimately, students will benefit as ATPs review the *UPDATE* summary and strive to continually improve their programs.

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