

# Districtwide Partnerships Pilot Program

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*Groton Public Schools  
Mystic, Connecticut*

Groton Public Schools was chosen by the Connecticut State Department of Education (SDE) as one of three districts in the state to pilot a new initiative for developing sustainable School/Family/Community Partnerships (SFCP) programs. Prior to this, some schools in Groton had independently joined NNPS and carried out action plans successfully. However, the school programs were on shaky grounds if the principal, teachers, or parent leaders changed or left the school. By creating a district plan and by providing training and support activities, Groton's leaders hoped to make SFCP sustainable in all schools.

Co-facilitators for the SFCP pilot program were trained by NNPS and SDE. The co-facilitators developed a district leadership plan with the assistance of the assistant superintendent. They also facilitated the pilot program, disseminated information between the District Quality Council (DQC) and Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs), trained and supported the schools' ATPs, and helped evaluate the program.

ATPs from all 12 schools were trained, with the high school entering the project after one year. Each ATP developed its own school-based action plan for partnerships linked to school goals for students. The DQC, consisting of district leaders, school representatives, parents, board members, and community partners, was assigned to oversee the project. The DQC met monthly and received updated reports from each school's ATP about the implementation of activities and any needs or concerns.

Support came from many leaders. The superintendent announced the initiative to the district staff at the beginning of the school year and made presentations to the Groton Board of Education and the Townwide PTO. A local newspaper covered the program. Individual principals publicized their partnership programs and the work of their ATPs in their own school communities via open houses, newsletters, staff meetings, and the PTO. The district is developing a link about the project for the Groton Public Schools website and a video to share on the public access channel.

The pilot program aims to sustain SFCP programs by creating a districtwide plan and avoiding problems that these programs may face if leaders change. The project is helping the district and schools meet requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act by involving parents in the education of their children using the Six Types of Involvement. Each ATP considers how the Six Types can be applied to meet academic, climatic, and behavioral goals. In this way, the schools' ATPs can activate involvement to promote growth in student performance.

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