

ATPs FROM A TO Z

**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
MADISON, WISCONSIN**

To foster the creation and sustainability of Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) in districts and schools across the state, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) made an extensive effort to “spell out” the specific structure, function, and goals of an ATP. In doing so, they demonstrated how a little state-level support and organization of partnership practices can go a long way to realize these goals at the local level.

The state’s approach to promoting partnerships was multi-pronged. In addition to continuing to offer basic ATP training, new strategies included:

- » *Providing better “trainer training” for those who would run the already-implemented Fundamentals of Family Involvement regional workshops.*
- » *Training VISTA members in the ATP process, providing them with follow-up webinars, and contributing articles on forming and supporting ATPs to the monthly VISTA newsletter and the DPI website.*
- » *Offering a one-hour workshop at the annual Parent Leadership Conference, as a follow-up for those who had received training in the Action Team process.*
- » *Developing a network for ATP leaders to share their challenges and successes.*

Before putting these new procedures into action, the DPI received feedback from some sites that were struggling to implement the Action Team process. Some requested extra support in understanding the framework, while others asked how current teams and committees could be retro-fitted for the ATP structure.

With these requests in mind, in addition to the ideas listed above, the DPI drafted a short assessment tool called “Is Your Group a Partnership Action Team?” The handout consisted

of nine Yes-or-No questions related to group membership, involvement, and practices. The questions were followed by a key, so that existing groups could determine how to merge or restructure themselves into school ATPs.

As well as being posted on the DPI Community Learning and Partnerships website (available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/fscp/>), the questionnaire was distributed to the attendees of a workshop entitled “What IS this thing called ‘The Action Team’?”

At the workshop, the Director of Community Learning and Partnerships led over 100 new and veteran ATP practitioners in an opportunity for interactive learning and dialogue. These participants later reported that they learned a number of useful new strategies for involving families in students’ academic achievement.

Said one attendee, “New to me is the concept of parents and teachers truly working together to help meet the needs of children academically—it only makes sense!”

The DPI team will continue development of its web-based toolkit, as well. By utilizing a variety of traditional and new media to reach VISTAs and ATP members and support partnerships throughout Wisconsin, the team continues to be a trailblazer in Action Team leadership from the state level.

Jane Grinde
Director, Community Learning and Partnerships
jane.grinde@dpi.state.wi.gov
