Maryland State Parental Information and Resource Center (MD PIRC) collaborated with the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins University and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to support the development of effective, goal-linked programs of family and community involvement in districts and schools across the state. This shared vision, framed in 2006, aimed to make Maryland the first state with every district having a leader for partnerships working productively with their schools on this agenda. This goal -- still attainable -- would fulfill the Maryland-Parent Advisory Council’s (M-PAC) recommendations for districts and their schools to use research-based approaches to conduct comprehensive programs of partnerships that directly linked to academic achievement and other goals for student success. The M-PAC recommendations are in alignment with Maryland and federal policies and requirements for family involvement (i.e., Title I, IDEA, Special Education, ELL, and others).

Over the past five-years, MD PIRC worked with NNPS and MSDE to encourage districts in Maryland to improve their partnership programs. The MD PIRC completed its 5-year contract with the United States Department of Education and is now operating under its umbrella organization, The Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium, Inc. NNPS will continue to provide benefits to NNPS districts and schools. Let’s not lose the momentum gained from MD PIRC, NNPS, and MSDE assistance! It is time now for each district in Maryland to continue its work to create excellent schools and excellent partnership programs.

**Continued assistance** to strengthen school, family, and community partnerships in your respective districts is **still available**. NNPS remains a “thrifty” resource for fulfilling the original goals for districts who want:

- On-going support with their partnership program development.
- Help with the evaluation of their partnership work. Districts with 8 or more NNPS schools or that have 100% NNPS schools receive an annual customized data report for their own schools.
- To be a part of the national agenda for school, family, and community partnership programs that contribute to student success.
- To share and have their schools share their work nationally – e.g., in the NNPS book of *Promising Partnerships Practices*, NNPS District and/or School Partnership Awards, and other NNPS publications.

**Maryland Shining Stars**
The following district, state/organization, and school members of NNPS were included in *Promising Partnership Practices 2011*

- **Family Connections Facilitation**, Worcester County Public School District
- **Engaging Immigrant Families in Education**, Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and Maryland English Language Learning Family Involvement Network (MELLFIN)
- **Snowy Science Night**, Church Hill Elementary School
- **Queen Anne’s County Public Schools**
- **H.A.R.T.: Help and Respect Togetherness**, Kitzmiller Elementary School
- **Garrett County Public Schools**
- **BBES Supports Our Military Families**, Bollman Bridge Elementary School
- **Howard County Public Schools**
If your district is on a quest to enable every school to work better with family and community partners for student success, you can renew your NNPS district membership or join NNPS as a new member. Encourage your schools to renew their NNPS memberships or join NNPS. We invite you to join other districts and schools across the country moving in this direction for leadership on partnerships!

2011 UPDATES – NNPS members must return the 2011 UPDATE and renewal fee ($200) to continue benefits and services. If you have done so, you should have received:

- **Promising Partnership Practices 2011** (over 100 good ideas)
- Will receive the National Update Summary Report in January
- Will receive a Customized Summary Report of schools’ UPDATE information for districts with 8 or more NNPS schools or 100% NNPS schools in 2010-11.

All NNPS members receive:

- Ongoing and on-call technical assistance from Brenda.
- Monthly NNPS E-Brief.
- Professional Development opportunities at a reduced rate.
- Visit the NNPS website for other excellent information.

If you have not returned the 2011 UPDATE, it is not too late to do so. See [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org) and follow the links to UPDATE from the homepage.

Words from the Maryland Director of Partnership Program Development

It has been a pleasure working with each of you. Thank you for welcoming me in your districts and affording me the opportunity to assist you in taking partnerships to the next level. You have worked diligently to assist your schools in building programs of partnerships that link to academic achievement and student success. Let’s keep the momentum as we work together to help schools build bridges and make connections to create family-friendly schools with school-friendly families!

“Brenda!”

Brenda G. Thomas  
Maryland Director of Partnership Program Development  
Johns Hopkins University  
2701 N. Charles Street, Suite 300  
Baltimore, MD 21218  
Office - (410) 516-8819  Fax - (410) 516-8890  E-mail - bthomas@jhu.edu

“Openings are the doors we open in order to let in the life and love that will transform us into the people we are meant to be.”

Have you stepped forward on the path to good partnerships?