

SUMMARY

2005 UPDATE DATA

FROM SCHOOLS IN NNPS

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In response to requests for information on program development, NNPS is providing a summary of schools' 2005 UPDATE data to all active members of the network. Districts, states, and organizations also will receive a copy of 2005 data from all districts in NNPS.

NNPS assists schools, districts, states, and organizations to improve their partnership programs in many ways.

- The NNPS handbook, *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action, Second Edition*, includes research summaries, planning and evaluation tools, and materials to develop family and community involvement programs and to conduct one-day training workshops for schools' Action Teams for Partnerships.
- *Type 2*, NNPS's periodic newsletter, includes information and examples to guide leadership and actions.
- An annual collection of *Promising Partnership Practices* features examples of family and community involvement activities from members across the country.
- The annual NNPS Leadership Development Conference and District Leadership Institute provide initial and ongoing professional development on partnerships.
- A monthly *e-Brief* from NNPS Facilitators brings leaders up-to-date on ways to advance their programs.
- The NNPS website, www.partnershipschools.org, offers a great deal of information and many ideas for program development and useful family and community involvement practices.

This summary of 2005 UPDATE data adds another service to benefit NNPS members.

SCHOOLS in NNPS

In 2005, 558 school action teams reported UPDATE data by mid-October.¹ The surveys came from schools located in 34 states and Canada. A large majority of schools (64.2%) served students in the elementary grades (PK-6); 10.3% served students in PK-8; 14.0% included the middle grades only (4-8); and 7.5% included high school grades only (9-12). A small percentage of schools (2.4%) served students from PK through high school and (1.6%) served middle and high school grades.

The largest percentage of schools was located in large, central city areas (39.8%), with the remaining schools in small city (21.2%), suburban (26.2%), and rural areas (12.8%). A large majority of schools (72.4%) received school-wide or targeted Title I funds.

On average, schools served students from a range of racial and ethnic backgrounds. About 32.1% of students were African American; 14.2% were Latino/Hispanic American; and 44.9% were White. Schools ranged from 0% to 100% of students from majority and minority populations. The families served by schools spoke an average of 5 languages. In some schools, families spoke

only English at home, whereas other schools served diverse families speaking up to 60 different languages and dialects.

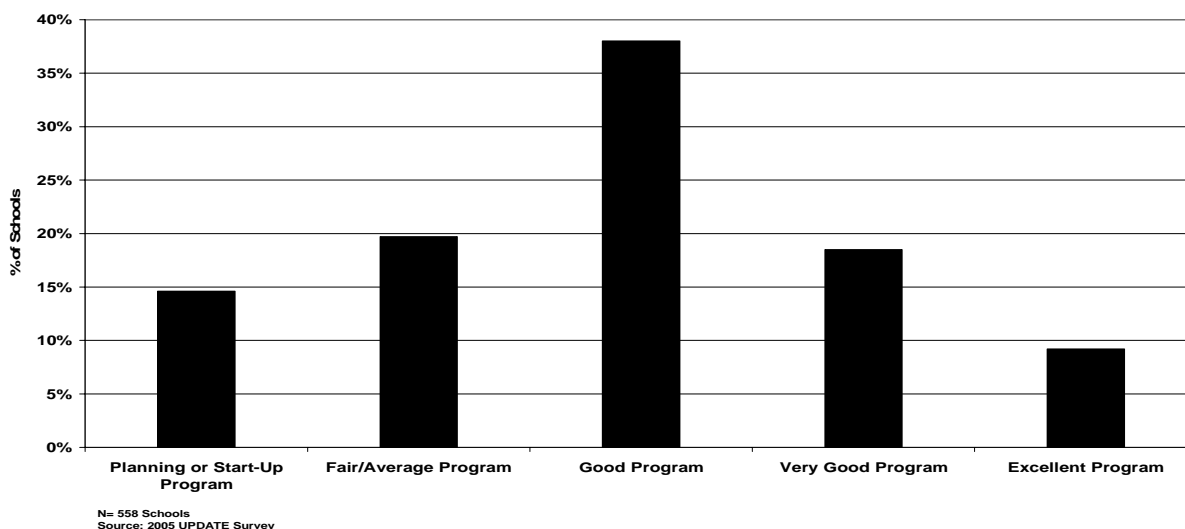
OVERALL PROGRAM QUALITY

The annual NNPS *School UPDATE* survey provides each school's Action Team for Partnerships an opportunity to reflect on the overall quality of its partnership program by identifying one of six program portraits. Each portrait represents a different level of program quality, beginning with a *planning* stage and continuing up to an *excellent* program.

Schools in NNPS reported a normal distribution in the quality of their programs. A few were in a *planning phase* or *just beginning*; some reported a *fair* or *average* program; more said their program was *good*; others reported a *very good* program; and a few identified an *excellent* program, as shown in Figure 1.

- About 15% of schools were planning or just beginning their programs. Almost 10% were excellent, having just about all aspects of a sustainable program in place.
- The largest percentage of schools (38.0%) reported that their programs were *good*, indicating that several activities were implemented for the six types of involvement, teams were working to meet challenges to reach all families, and most teachers and families at the school knew about the program for partnerships and the school's work with NNPS.
- No K-8 or high schools reported having an excellent partnership program yet.

Figure 1
School Program Quality Ratings
% ATPs Reporting Overall Quality

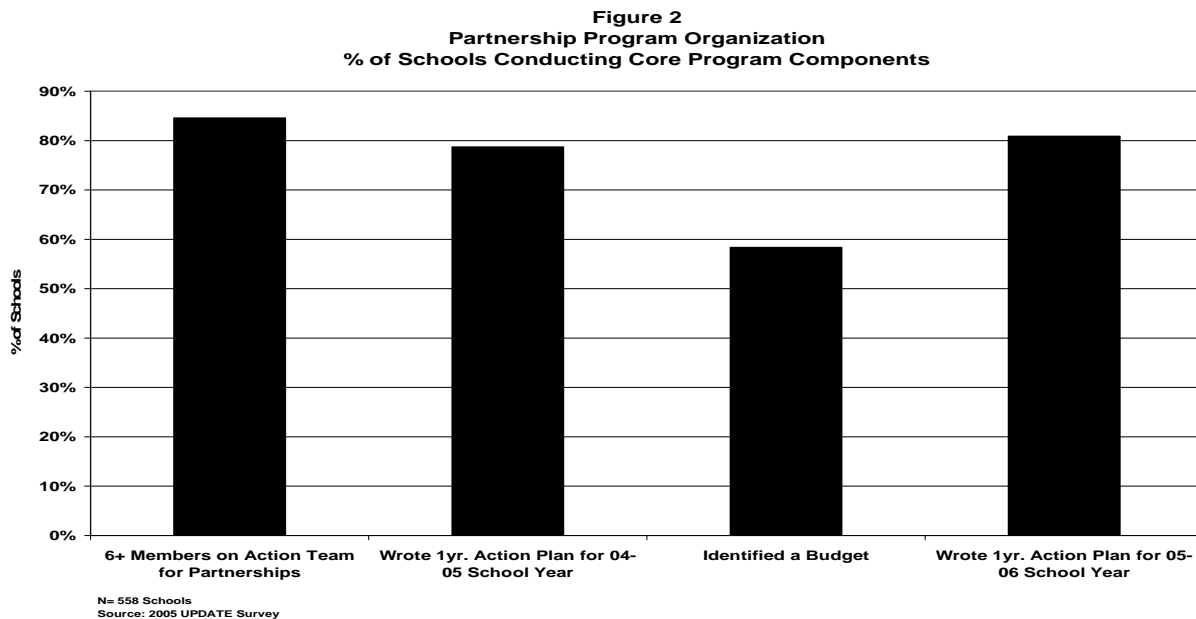


PROGRAM ORGANIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Several *UPDATE* measures indicated whether schools and their Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) were implementing core components of NNPS's research-based partnership program and how well schools were implementing a broad range of programmatic activities.²

CORE COMPONENTS

Core NNPS program components were measured using a 6-item scale ($\alpha = .73$). On average, schools implemented 4.07 out of 6 program components, with a standard deviation of 1.73. Schools were most likely to report that they had an Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) of 6 or more people (80.5%); wrote an action plan for the 04-05 school year (78.7%); and wrote or planned to write an action plan for the 05-06 school year (80.9%), as shown in Figure 2. Schools were least likely to say that they identified a budget for their activities to involve families (58.4%) or participated in an end-of-year celebration (44.2%).



- In 2005, high schools were less likely than other schools to report having 6 or more members on their action teams (70%).
- K-8 schools were most likely to be in districts that organized end-of-year celebrations (64%) to help schools share best practices and to get ideas for their next year's plan for partnerships.

QUALITY OF IMPLEMENTATION

An 11-item scale ($\alpha = .91$) measured how well ATPs organized and implemented the partnership program at the school. Schools reported one of four responses to each item, indicating if they *did not do* the action, *need to improve*, were *OK*, or implemented *very well*. Overall, schools reported strong program implementation, with an average rating of 3.1 out of 4.0 and a standard deviation of 0.65.

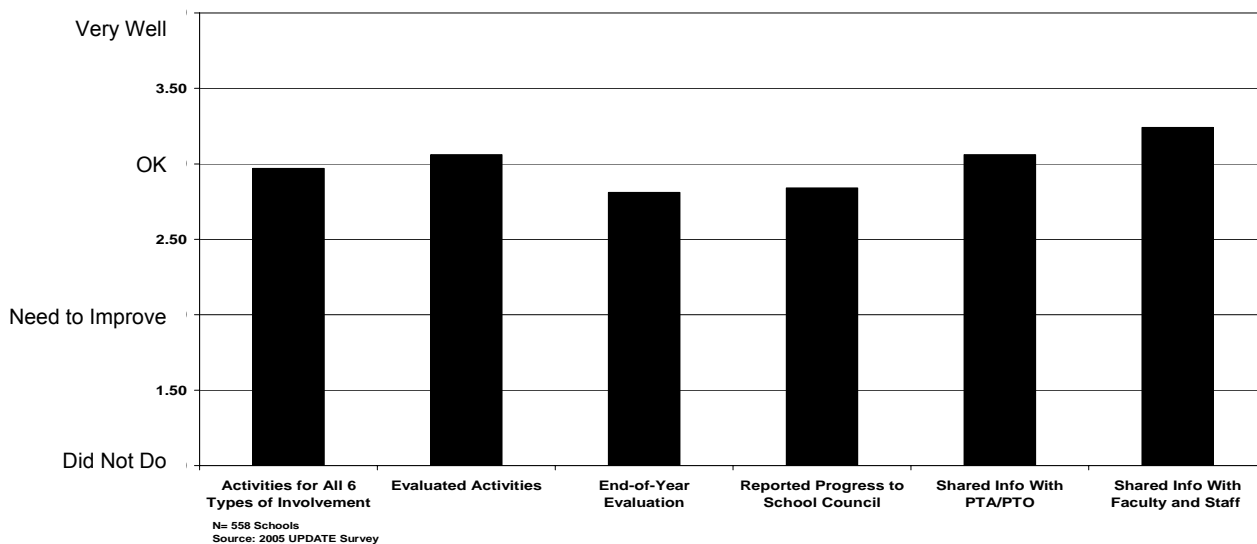
Most schools reported that they were implementing key NNPS program elements between OK and very well implemented, as shown in Figure 3. These program actions included involving families in some activities for the six types of involvement, evaluating the activities conducted,

and reporting information to the school council, PTA/PTO, and faculty and staff.

Although most schools had many activities in place to organize their work on partnerships, some schools lagged behind the others in implementing the 11 elements. For example:

- Over 25% of K-8 schools indicated that they *did not* implement activities for all 6 types of involvement.
- Over 25% of rural schools indicated that they *did not* report their plans and progress on partnerships to the school improvement team or school council.
- Rural schools were the least likely to report that the Action Team for Partnerships shared information about program goals and activities with the PTA/PTO.

Figure 3
Average Level of Implementation of Key Program Elements



ACTION TEAM FOR PARTNERSHIPS (ATP)

In NNPS, each school must have an Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) or an equivalent committee of teachers, parents, and administrators working on family and community involvement. The ATP is responsible for planning, implementing, overseeing, and evaluating partnership activities that are linked to school improvement goals. Its plans and progress should be reported to the School Improvement Team or School Council on a regular basis, just as other committees report their work. Questions on the 2005 UPDATE asked about the structure of schools’ ATPs, members of the team, subcommittee structure, frequency of meetings, and funding for the partnership program.

STRUCTURE

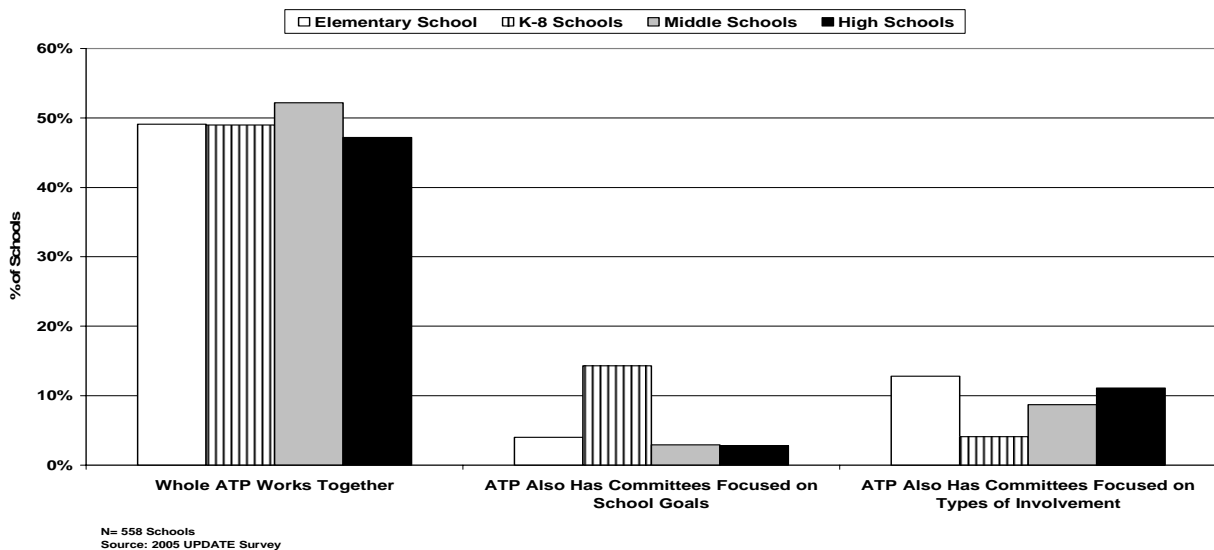
Prior NNPS studies and the *Handbook for Action, Second Edition* (see Chapter 3 in Epstein, et al., 2002) suggest that committees may help ATPs conduct more practices of family and community

involvement because team members and other designated leaders take leadership roles for different activities.

Almost half of all schools' ATPs worked together only as a whole team. Other ATPs organized committees to develop and implement involvement activities for specific school improvement goals and/or for the six types of involvement, as shown in Figure 4.

- K-8 schools' ATPs that had organized committees were more likely to structure them according to school goals (14.3%) than by the types of involvement (4.1%).
- Elementary K-6 schools' ATPs that had committees were more likely to structure them according to the types of involvement (12.8%) than school goals (4.0%).

Figure 4
% of Schools Reporting How Action Teams are Organized, by School Level



MEMBERSHIP

NNPS suggests that each school's Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) include two or three teachers, two or three parents, and one administrator, with one or two students at the high school level, and options for community partners and other educators and representatives to be added at any level. On average, schools in NNPS had between nine and ten members on the ATP, with a standard deviation of 4.87. Some schools had not yet formed the ATP and had no members, and others had as many as 34 people.

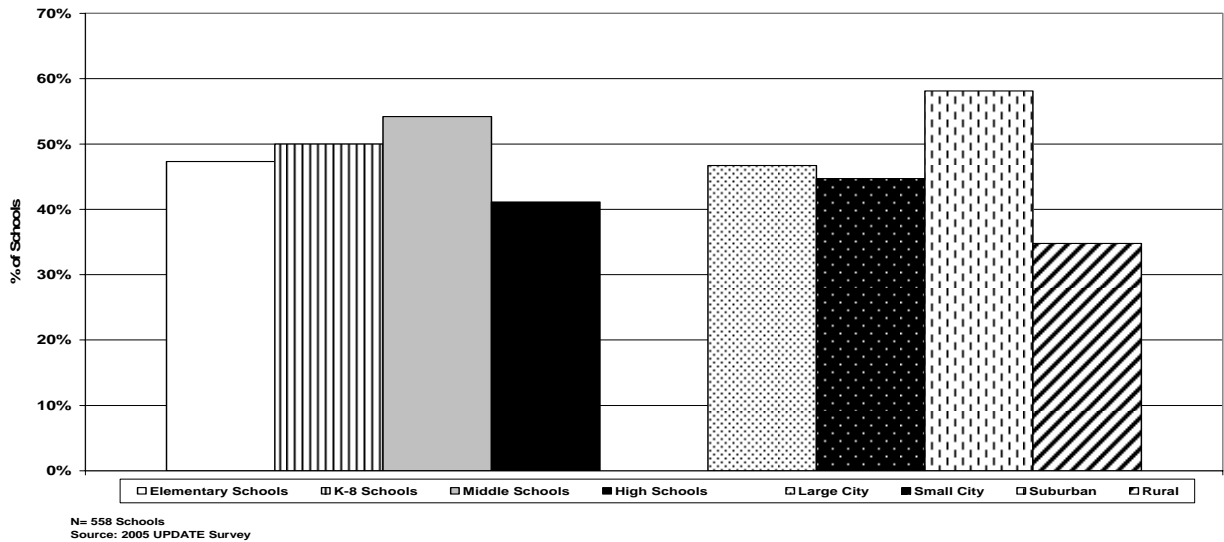
FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

Almost half of the schools' ATPs (48.7%) met at least monthly to plan and implement their partnership efforts, as shown in Figure 5.

- High schools' ATPs were less likely than others to meet at least monthly.

- Rural schools' ATPs were less likely than others to meet at least monthly.

Figure 5
Percent of Schools' Action Teams That Meet at Least Monthly,
by School Level and Location



FUNDING

A single item asked ATPs to rate the level of funding for their schools' partnership programs. The largest percentage of teams reported that they had *adequate funding* for their partnership program (49.0%), although others noted that they receive *no funds* (15.4%) or *not enough funds* (26.1%) for their program. A few (9.6%) said their family and community involvement programs were *well funded*.

ACTION TEAM SUPPORT

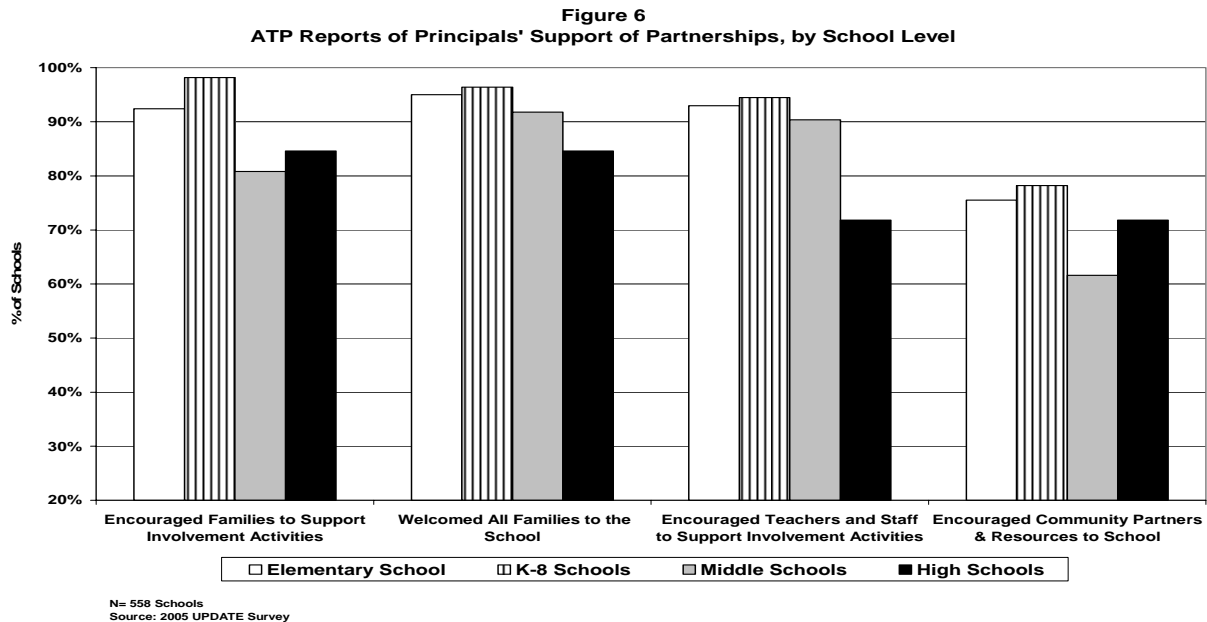
PRINCIPALS' SUPPORT

Partnership programs need the support of the school principal in order to be successful and sustained. ATPs reported whether or not the school principal provided nine different kinds of support for the partnership program ($\alpha = .84$).

Overall, principals were rated as highly supportive of partnerships at their school, providing on average, 7.55 kinds of support, with a standard deviation of 2.13. Support did not vary significantly across urban, suburban, and rural locations, as shown in Figure 6.

- Although still a large majority, fewer ATPs (73.5%) reported that their principals supported increasing collaborations with the community than other kinds of support. Fewer ATPs (68%) reported that their principals allocated funds for involvement activities.
- Compared to ATPs in other schools, ATPs in middle and high schools reported that their principals were less likely to actively encourage families to support involvement activities at the school.

- Compared to ATPs in other schools, ATPs in high schools reported that their principals were less likely to encourage teachers and staff to support the involvement activities at the school.



DISTRICT LEADERS' SUPPORT

Schools' partnership programs also benefit from the support of district leaders. In 2005, ATPs reported whether or not their districts provided up to seven kinds of support for partnerships ($\alpha = .89$). Schools reported an average of 4.82 kinds of support from their districts, with a standard deviation of 2.26.

Schools in NNPS, regardless of grade level or location, reported that the support they received from their district was helpful to their work on school, family, and community partnerships.

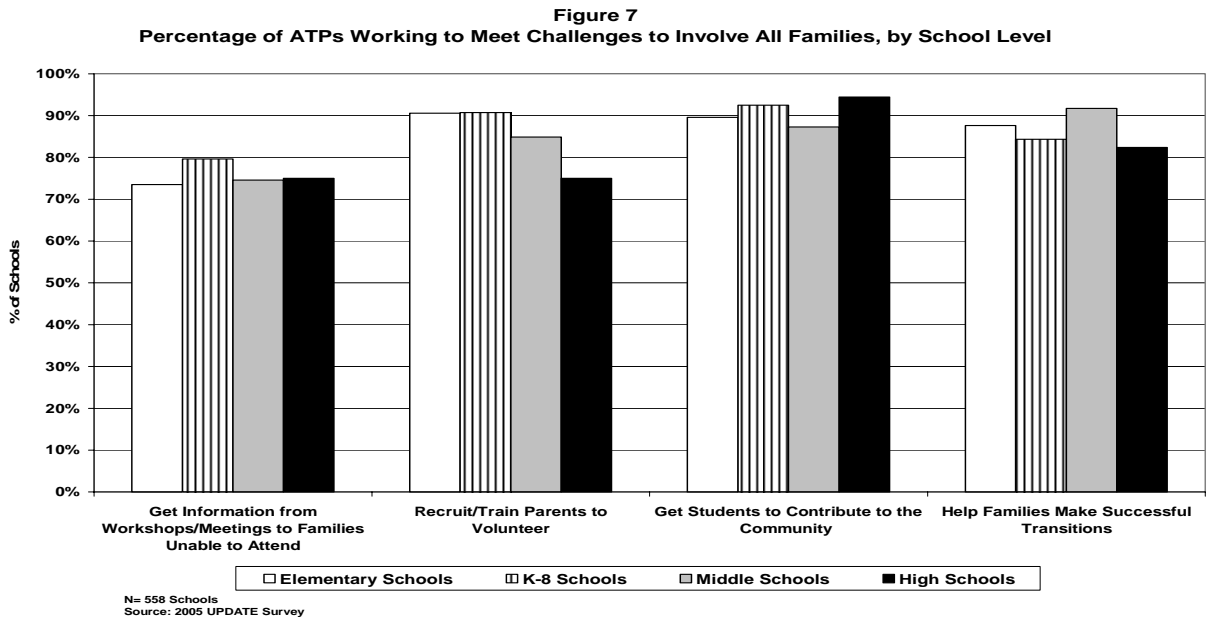
- About 60% of schools reported that their districts provided general funds to support partnerships. This was the least common form of support that districts offered schools.
- Most schools (83.4%) reported that their districts provided information about partnerships.

MEETING CHALLENGES TO REACH ALL FAMILIES

In addition to organizing their partnership programs, ATPs are expected to conduct and encourage other partners (teachers, PTA/PTO, community partners) to conduct activities that involve all families and community partners in ways that support student success. Schools' efforts to solve challenges of outreach and inclusion were measured with a 9-item scale ($\alpha = .84$). ATPs rated their attention to solve challenges on a 4-point scale from *not working on the challenge*, to making *fair progress*, *good progress*, or having *solved the challenge*. The challenges included

communicating with families who do not speak or read English; sending positive feedback to families about their children’s schoolwork; and identifying community partnerships to help meet school improvement goals. Schools’ ATPs averaged 2.65 on this scale, with a standard deviation of 0.58, suggesting that most are making between fair and good progress in involving many families who would not become involved on their own.

The vast majority of NNPS schools were working to overcome many challenges to help more families get involved in their children’s schooling, as shown in Figure 7.

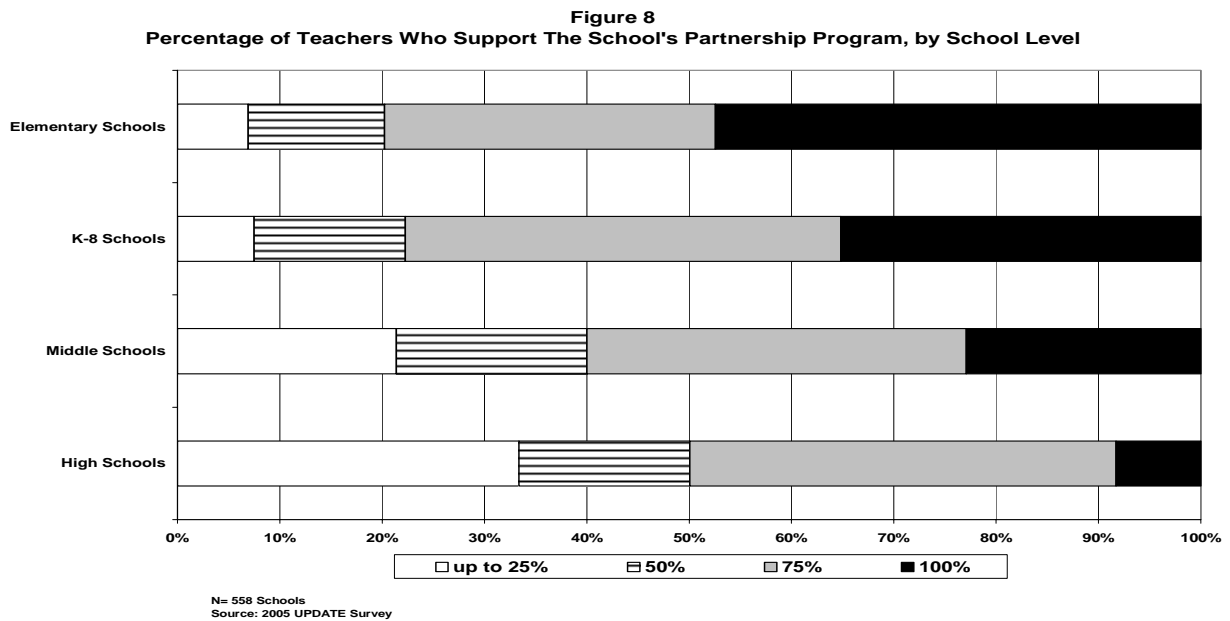


- Schools were least likely to be working on the challenge of getting information from workshops and meetings to families who could not attend the meetings at school.
- Elementary and K-8 schools were more likely than high schools to try to recruit and train volunteers to conduct goal-oriented involvement activities.
- High schools were more likely than other schools to try to get students to contribute to the community.
- Middle schools were more likely than other schools to work with “receiver” schools to help families and students make transitions to the next school they attend.

TEACHERS’ PRACTICES OF INVOLVEMENT

Five items identified the percent of teachers who conducted various family involvement activities, such as holding parent-teacher conferences with each student’s family, communicating with all students’ families, utilizing volunteers in the classroom, guiding parents in discussing homework with their children, and supporting the partnership program. At least half of the ATPs reported that 75% or more of the teachers conducted these activities to involve families in various ways. The following two charts illustrate how teachers’ practices vary by grade level and on two different involvement activities.

TEACHERS' SUPPORT FOR THE SCHOOL'S PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

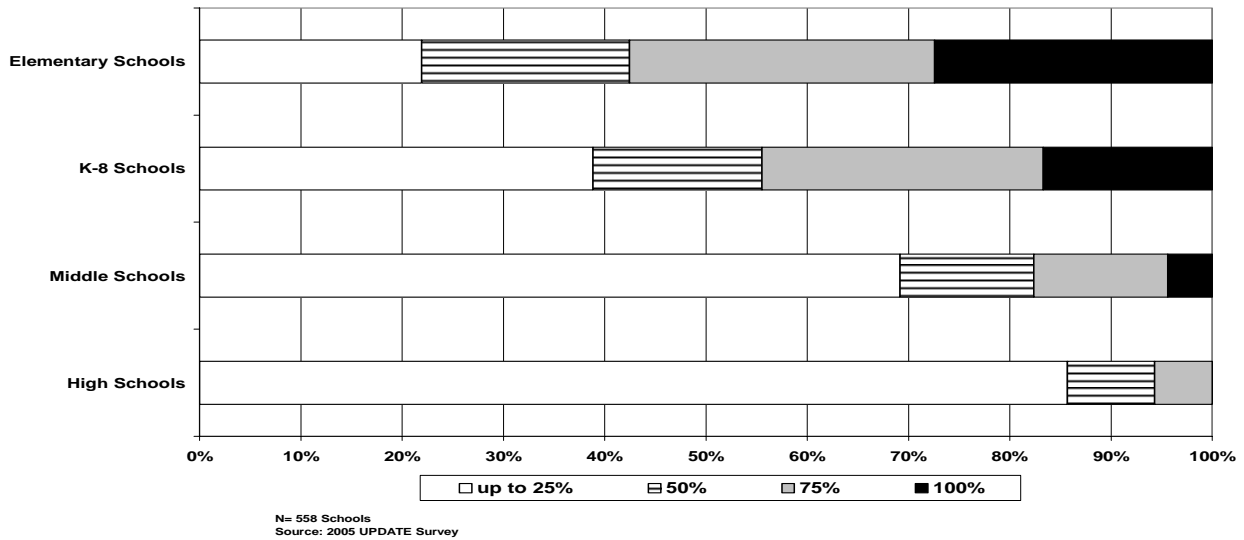


- A majority of teachers at all school levels supported their school's partnership program, as shown in Figure 8.
- Elementary schools tended to have a wider base of support for partnerships from the teachers and staff than did middle or high schools. About 80% of the elementary schools' ATPs reported that 75% to 100% of their teachers supported their school's program of family and community involvement. By contrast, only 50% of high schools' ATPs reported that level of support from teachers.

TEACHERS' UTILIZATION OF PARENT VOLUNTEERS

- Teachers in middle and high schools were less likely than those in elementary schools to recruit parent volunteers to conduct activities in the classroom, at school, or from home, as shown in Figure 9.
- About 60% of ATPs in elementary schools said that from 75% to 100% of their teachers incorporated volunteers in their programs. By contrast, fewer than 20% of ATPs in middle school and 10% of ATPs in high schools reported that teachers worked with volunteers as a form of partnership.

Figure 9
Percentage of Teachers Who Utilize Volunteers
in Class, at School, at Home, by School Level



EXTENT OF FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

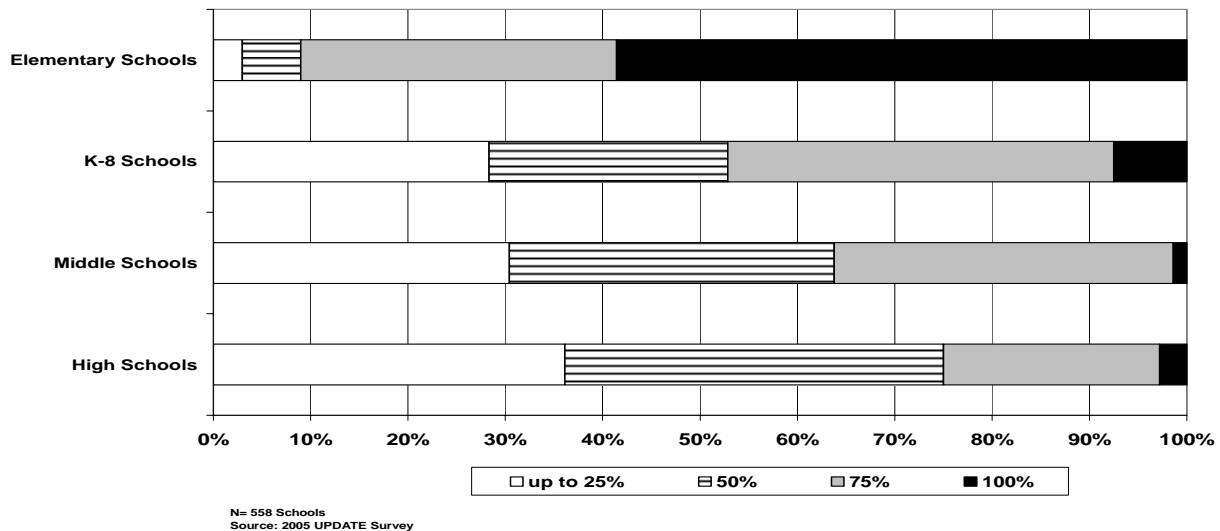
ATPs estimated the percentage of families involved in various partnership activities, including attending a Back-to-School Night, a parent-teacher conference, volunteering to help the school or teachers, monitoring their child’s homework, and being good partners in their children’s education. The following two charts illustrate how family involvement varied by grade level.

Higher percentages of families were involved in elementary schools than in middle and high schools.

FAMILIES AS GOOD PARTNERS IN CHILDREN’S EDUCATION

Figure 10 reports ATPs’ estimates of the percentage of families who were good partners with the school in their children’s education.

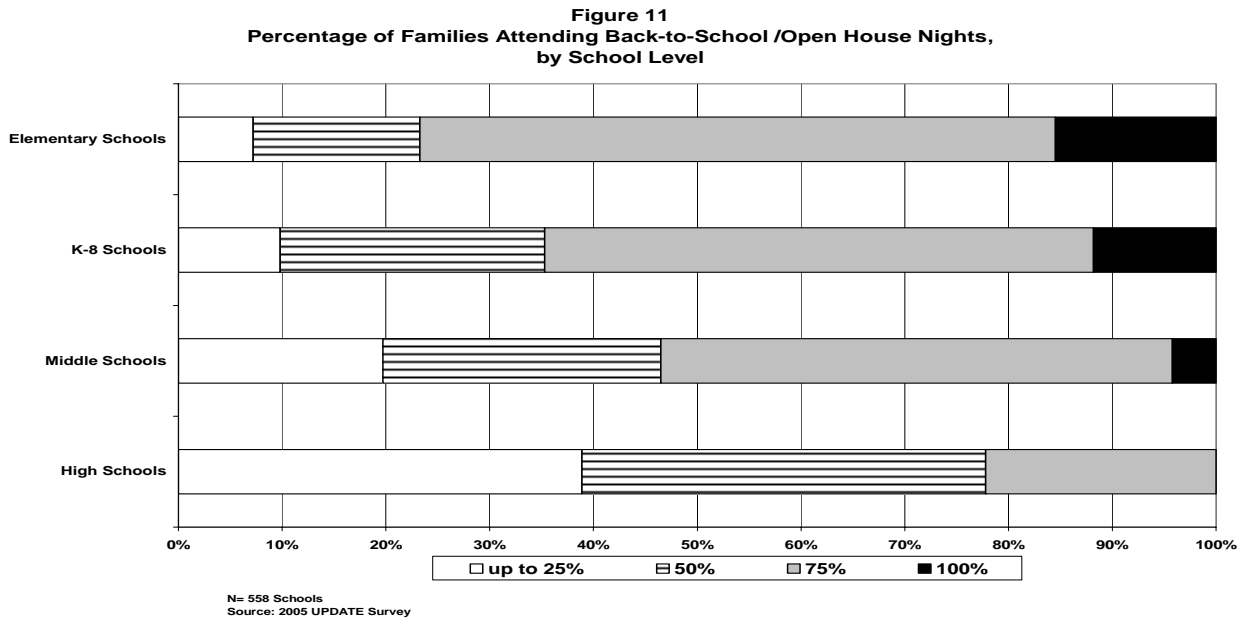
Figure 10
Percentage of Families Who are Good Partners in Education,
by School Level



- Over 90% of the elementary schools' ATPs reported that the vast majority (more than 75%) of their parents were *good partners* with the school.
- By contrast, only 25% of the high schools' ATPs reported that at least 75% of their parents were good partners with the school in their children's education.

Back-to-School/Open House Night Attendance

Figure 11 reports ATPs estimates of the percentage of families who attended Back-to-School or Open House Nights.



- Over 75% of the elementary schools' ATPs reported that the most parents (75% or more) attended Open House Nights and over 15% had full (100%) attendance at these events.
- By contrast, just over 20% of the high schools' ATPs reported that at least 75% of their parents came to an Open House Night.

SCHOOL COMMENTS

The 2005 School *UPDATE* asked ATPs to comment on *what changed most* in their programs of family and community involvement during the 04-05 school year. About 94% of the schools wrote comments on changes in their programs. Of these, about 3% noted problems or a lack of progress. The vast majority noted positive program developments. Many commented on increased communications, parental involvement, volunteers, varied activities for the six types of involvement, higher participation, and a sense of community at the school. Some noted changes in the organization of their programs and in results for students due to goal-linked family and community involvement. The following are typical comments from many ATPs.

PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

We meet more often and really work as a team.

We are more organized using parent volunteers where they are needed in various activities.

The number of teachers' web pages increased significantly as a tool to provide information to parents on activities, curriculum, and home learning.

We changed our activity times to be more receptive to families' needs.

...use of voice mail and e-mail was established for all staff.

... the development of an action plan helped us put it all together.

RESULTS FOR STUDENTS

We had a 45% reduction of discipline referrals. . . . [Our] new math program with parent training promotes higher level skills [of our students].

. . . better student attendance and more parental involvement.

. . .clearer focus on achievement and better communication with diverse families.

Math scores have increased on MAP tests.

We increased student literacy ...[with] . . . a 25% increase in library book circulation... and forming a volunteer parent group to support students in the library.

Our literacy program has improved – higher student achievement and much better support from families.

Proficiency scores improved.

[We had more] awareness for college preparation – forms, scholarships, loans, etc.

Teachers were very enthusiastic about how the family/community involvement triggers students' motivation.

As a result of our school's work on family involvement, we realize how essential the parent component is to the success of our children, and see this as an ongoing challenge.

SUMMARY

The 2005 *UPDATE* data, summarized in this report, indicate that most schools in NNPS are trying to implement the core components and essential elements that NNPS has found affect the quality of partnership programs over time. Presently, elementary schools conduct more activities and report more parental involvement than middle and high schools. Still, many middle and high

schools in NNPS are organizing their teams and work on partnerships just as elementary schools do. Many middle and high schools report high support from principals, but many must still solve organizational and outreach challenges to increase the support and participation of all teachers and families.

The data also suggest several ways for schools to improve the organization of their partnership programs:

- Many schools' Action Teams for Partnerships do not yet meet monthly – an important requirement for systematizing plans and evaluations of program goals.
- Some ATPs have not organized committees to share leadership for activities that involve parents on the six types of involvement and on reaching school improvement goals.
- Too many schools have not solved the challenge of getting information from school meetings and workshops to parents who cannot attend.
- School districts could do more to support elementary, middle, and high schools with technical assistance, facilitative activities, and funding for partnerships to help ATPs continually to improve their programs of family and community involvement.

NNPS encourages schools ATPs to compare their responses on the *2005 School UPDATE* survey to the national network's averages and to NNPS expectations presented in this report. An ATP may work, this year, to improve aspects of their programs that fall below the network's average or that do not reflect NNPS's expectations for excellent programs. An ATP may take pride in, sustain, and continue to improve aspects of the school's partnership program that are relatively strong, compared to other schools across the country. ATPs should share their best practices with their School Improvement Team and other groups at the school and in the community.

Studies indicate that schools that continue to work on partnerships over time will improve their programs, outreach, and results of family and community involvement (Epstein & Salinas, 2004; Salinas, Maushard, Brownstein, & Waxman, 2005; Sheldon & Van Voorhis, 2004; Van Voorhis & Sheldon, 2004). Schools that are just starting to organize their plans and work on partnerships cannot be expected to do as much as schools that have had well-functioning Action Teams for Partnerships for many years. NNPS expects all schools to continue to plan, implement, and evaluate their programs of school, family, and community partnerships. By doing so, schools' ATPs will be able to report progress and new challenges on the *2006 School UPDATE* survey next spring.

NOTES

- 1) A few late *UPDATE* surveys may be added until the end of the calendar year, but are unlikely to change the patterns of results in this summary.
- 2) NNPS *UPDATE* data are analyzed each year in research studies to learn how the various scales and measures combine to affect the quality of district and school programs. For a summary of data collected over the past five years, click on *Research Summary* on the home page of the NNPS website, www.partnershipschools.org. Also see the “Research Briefs” columns in each issue of the NNPS newsletter on the website in the section *Publications and Products*. Follow the links to *Type 2* and “Research Briefs.” The 2005 *UPDATE* data in this summary will be further analyzed for a report at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association in April 2006 and summarized for members of NNPS in a future issue of *Type 2*.

The (α or alpha) reports the *internal reliability* of a scale, indicating whether a number of items are correlated and represent a common construct. Reliability coefficients of .6 or higher indicate that a set of items is consistent and the scale is useful.

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