Dear Colleague:

**You are invited** . . . You are invited to join the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins University. NNPS invites schools, districts, states, and organizations to work together to improve their leadership and programs of school, family, and community partnerships. Based on more than two decades of research and field tests, we know that this goal can be attained by all elementary, middle, and high schools, and that district, state, and organization leaders can play important roles in assisting schools to improve partnerships in ways that increase student success.

**About NNPS** . . . NNPS guides school teams of educators, parents, and community partners to use a research-based framework of six types of involvement (parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community) to plan and conduct comprehensive partnership programs. Researchers and facilitators at Johns Hopkins University train and assist school, district, state, and organization leaders to understand, implement, evaluate, and continually improve goal-oriented programs of partnerships. In NNPS, researchers, educators, families, and policy leaders work together to improve the effectiveness and effects of family and community involvement.

NNPS includes over 1000 schools, over 150 districts, 21 states, and many organizations that want to use research-based approaches to improve the quality of family and community involvement and results for students. The NNPS website, www.partnershipschools.org, includes information on key program components (see NNPS Model), research summaries, and examples of outstanding programs and practices (see Success Stories). Also view the NNPS video, *Working Together for Student Success*, to learn about the components, services, and education leaders’ experiences in NNPS, in the section Publications and Products.

**Requirements** . . . Schools, districts, states, and organizations that join the National Network of Partnership Schools must meet a few requirements described on the membership form. Our research identified 8 essential elements of successful programs: leadership, teamwork, written plans, implemented action, funding, collegial support, evaluation, and networking. You must be willing to meet (or work to establish) the basic requirements listed on the membership form to join NNPS. Then, NNPS will assist you to develop all of the essential elements for a research-based program that will improve from year to year.

One NNPS requirement is for all members to return an **annual UPDATE survey** to report progress and challenges during the school year.

**Fees** . . . NNPS charges very modest fees for many benefits and services.

- There is a **professional development/processing fee of $400 for each district, state, and organization**, which must accompany each membership form. Districts are advised to join **along with** an initial set of schools or with all schools in the district.
- NNPS members are invited to attend a **2-day fall Leadership Development Conference** in Baltimore to prepare for their work on partnerships and to continually improve their knowledge, leadership, skills, and programs. Members receive a discount on the registration fee for the two-day conference. New district leaders are invited to attend a **District Leadership Institute (DLI)** to prepare for their work. The DLI is offered each spring.
- There is an annual renewal fee of $200 per member to continue membership benefits and services from year to year.
Benefits. . . The National Network of Partnership Schools offers many benefits and services to help members increase their knowledge and develop skills in developing effective programs of partnerships for student success. These are provided at no cost, as part of membership, except for conferences, as noted. To assist and guide your work, NNPS offers the following benefits:

- **A comprehensive handbook.** *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action, Third Edition* includes summaries of research, guidelines for workshops on partnerships, presentation overheads, an inventory of starting points, planning and evaluation forms, and other tools to help develop and strengthen your partnership program.

- **A certificate of membership.** This recognizes your commitment to developing a goal-oriented program of school, family, and community partnerships.

- **Annual Leadership Development Conference.** Sessions prepare new members to establish their partnership programs and help experienced members improve their knowledge and skills. The 2-day conference includes step-by-step training in how to use the *Handbook* and conduct team-training, and advanced workshops on several topics, including the Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) interactive homework process. An intensive *District Leadership Institute for new district leaders* who will directly facilitate schools on partnerships is conducted each spring.

- **Type 2, the Network’s semi-annual newsletter.** This informative newsletter (see archived issues on the website in the section *Publications and Products*) includes research summaries, examples of good practices, and guidelines for continuous progress in partnership program development. *Type 2* is e-mailed to all NNPS Key Contacts and may be copied and distributed to team members and other colleagues.

- **Promising Partnership Practices.** This annual book spotlights activities from schools, districts, states, and organizations in NNPS. Earlier editions are on the NNPS website in Success Stories.

- **On-call consultations with NNPS staff.** NNPS members may ask questions or request information about partnership program development from NNPS staff by phone, e-mail, and website.

- **An interactive website – www.partnershipschools.org.** The NNPS website is chock full of information on partnerships; research summaries; examples of best practices in elementary, middle, and high schools, districts, states, and organizations; and more.

- **Annual research and evaluation opportunities.** The annual *UPDATE* survey, required for renewal of membership, enables members to assess their progress each year. NNPS provides summaries of *UPDATE* data from schools and districts for members to compare their work with the network as a whole. Members may be invited to participate in projects to learn about the processes and results of partnerships. *UPDATE*, renewal certificates, and data reports are e-mailed each year.

- **Annual Partnership Awards.** NNPS recognizes schools, districts, states, and organizations that demonstrate excellence in implementing and improving their programs of school, family, and community partnerships for two or more years.

- **Other tools, materials, and programs.** NNPS designs and develops new guidelines and training activities each year to assist you with your work on school, family, and community partnerships.

Why should you join? NNPS will help your school, district, state, or organization become a national leader in connecting school, family, and community partnerships to school improvement goals. NNPS’s research-based approaches help create a welcoming school environment, strengthen families, and increase student success in school. These approaches enable schools, LEAs, and SEAs to meet the requirements for family involvement in the *No Child Left Behind* act (NCLB). In NNPS, members network with each other to learn about and share successful partnership practices.

NNPS has learned that it takes at least three years to create and sustain a well-planned, goal-oriented partnership program. If you wish to make a commitment to improve family and community involvement, download and return the correct *Membership Form* (for school, district, state, or organization) to NNPS. My staff and I look forward to working with you on this important agenda to increase student success.

Sincerely,

Joyce L. Epstein, Ph.D.
Director and Principal Research Scientist

The National Network of Partnership Schools is partially supported by grants for research and development to the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University. All information and ideas are from the researchers and staff at NNPS and no official endorsement by any funding agency should be inferred.
WORKING TOGETHER FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

MEMBERSHIP FORM FOR DISTRICTS

Please complete and return this form to register your school district as a member of the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins University. After NNPS receives this form, the Key Contact will be sent a handbook and other information to help your district organize and strengthen its program of school, family, and community partnerships.

School District: __________________________________________

Name of District Facilitator/Key Contact to the National Network of Partnership Schools:

______________________________________________________________________________

Position: ____________________________

Mailing Address: __________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Telephone: (_____) __________________________ Fax: (_____) _________________________________

E-mail address: __________________________ Website: __________________________

ABOUT YOUR DISTRICT

How many schools are in your district?

____ elementary schools  ____ middle schools  ____ high schools

____ other (describe) __________________________

PLEASE GIVE YOUR BEST ESTIMATES FOR YOUR DISTRICT:

Number of students: ____________  Number of classroom teachers: ____________

Percent of students in your district who are:

____% African American  ____% American Indian  ____% Asian American

____% Latino/Hispanic American  ____% White  ____% Other

Percent of families who speak a language other than English at home: ____%

Percent of children receiving free or reduced-price lunch: ____%

Number of schools receiving Title I funds? ______  Number Title I school-wide programs? ______

Number of:  Magnet Schools? ______  Charter Schools? ______  City-wide Schools? ______

Number of schools attended by children with families in the military? __________________________

Notes: “District” refers to an LEA or to a defined Area or Cluster of schools within a larger district, with its own superintendent or area executive.

Each school must complete a School Membership Form to join NNPS for benefits and services.

For more information about the Network, visit www.partnershipschools.org
FOUR REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP
To join the National Network of Partnership Schools, a school must be able to meet four membership requirements. NNPS will guide your district in completing these requirements.

THIS DISTRICT WILL . . .    Check YES or NO

1. Assign the equivalent of one full-time facilitator to work with Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) in 15 to 30 schools.
   The facilitator provides team training to each school, and guides schools’ ATPs to write plans, implement activities, share ideas, evaluate progress, and connect with the National Network. Districts with fewer than 15 schools must support a part-time equivalent position. District leaders for partnerships will write an annual plan outlining their activities for district leadership on partnerships and how schools will be assisted to develop their partnership programs.

2. Allocate an annual budget for salaries and program costs for the district’s program of school, family, and community partnerships.
   Funds for district-level facilitators for partnerships and activities may come from federal, state, and local programs that mandate or support family and community involvement, including Title I and other sources.

3. Complete an annual UPDATE survey to renew district membership in the National Network of Partnership Schools.
   The district must complete UPDATE, a progress report for the National Network of Partnership Schools to identify challenges faced and progress made each year. By returning UPDATE and a $200 renewal fee, the district renews membership in NNPS and continues to receive benefits and services.

4. Help each participating school meet the five requirements for Partnership Schools.
   Schools in the National Network of Partnership Schools are required to:
   a) Create or identify an Action Team for Partnerships.
   b) Use the framework of six types of involvement to plan a program of partnerships.
   c) Identify an annual budget for the work and activities of each school’s Action Team.
   d) Allocate time for an initial day-long team training workshop, and at least one hour per month for team meetings.
   e) Complete the annual UPDATE survey to renew school membership.

If you cannot answer YES to these four requirements, please postpone returning this form until the conditions can be met.

HOW MANY SCHOOLS WILL YOU ASSIST ON PARTNERSHIPS?
One goal of the National Network of Partnership Schools is to help district leaders assist all schools to develop comprehensive programs of school, family, and community partnerships. In some districts, all elementary, middle, and high schools are assisted at once. In other districts, progress is incremental, with each FTE district-level facilitator assisting from 15 to 30 schools.

How many schools in your district will be assisted to create effective Action Teams for Partnerships over the next three years?

Year 1: _____ elementary sch _____ middle sch _____ high sch _____ other sch
Year 2: _____ elementary sch _____ middle sch _____ high sch _____ other sch
Year 3: _____ elementary sch _____ middle sch _____ high sch _____ other sch
   _____ TOTAL elementary _____ TOTAL middle _____ TOTAL high _____ TOTAL other

PLEASE FILL IN THE NUMBERS TO SHOW HOW SCHOOLS IN THE DISTRICT WILL BE FACILITATED.

In year 1 (200_ - 200__ sch year): _____ FTE district facilitator(s) will work with _____ schools on partnerships.
Please help us understand where your district is starting from in its work on partnerships.

POLICIES ON PARTNERSHIPS
Check (✓) one on each line.

Does your DISTRICT have a formal written policy about involving families? ☐ * ☐
* If YES, please attach a copy of the district policy to this form.

Is there a DISTRICT advisory council that includes parents? ☐ ☐

Does your STATE have a formal written policy about involving families? ☐ ☐

Does every school have a School Council, Improvement Team, or other decision-making unit? ☐ ☐
   If YES, do parents serve on every School Council/Improvement Team? ☐ ☐

Does every school write an annual school improvement plan? ☐ ☐
   If YES, are these plans routinely collected and monitored by the district? ☐ ☐

Does your DISTRICT presently have professional staff members who assist all schools to develop their partnership programs? ☐ ☐

DISTRICT AND STATE ASSISTANCE FOR SCHOOLS
Districts and state departments of education are at different starting points in assisting schools with partnerships. Please check (✓) if your district, state, or neither presently conducts the following activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff development or workshops for schools on partnerships</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Neither</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small grants for school projects to improve partnerships</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissemination of information to all schools on effective practices of family and community involvement</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition and/or rewards for good partnerships</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletters or surveys for all families on school matters</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other district or state assistance on partnerships (please describe)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUALITY OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
How would you rate the quality of your schools’ programs of partnership, on average? Check (✓) one on each line.

In this DISTRICT at this time:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality of family and community involvement plans and activities in our elementary schools</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Weak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of family and community involvement plans and activities in our middle schools</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of family and community involvement plans and activities in our high schools</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of business partnerships in most schools</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of activities with other community groups or agencies</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District’s commitment to improve schools’ partnership programs</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School leaders’ commitment to improve partnership programs</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How did you learn about the National Network of Partnership Schools?

☐ In an article or book
☐ At a conference or workshop
☐ From a colleague
☐ On the Internet (www.partnershipschools.org)
☐ From a state leader
☐ Other (describe) ______________________________
Why is your district joining the National Network? Please check the top THREE reasons.

This district wants to improve:

☐ How schools plan and implement partnerships  ☐ Student attendance
☐ How schools link partnerships to school goals  ☐ Student academic test scores and grades
☐ Family input to district decisions  ☐ Homework completion
☐ The number of families involved at each school  ☐ Student behavior and discipline
☐ Other main goal (describe) _______________________________________________________________

Think ahead three years. How might your district’s partnership program be different from today? Give two examples how your district wants to change and improve its program of family and community involvement over the next three years.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

APPROVAL AND SUPPORT BY SUPERINTENDENT (REQUIRED)

I have reviewed and discussed this membership form with the Key Contact named above. I will support this district’s work with the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins University to help our schools develop and maintain strong, goal-oriented programs of school, family, and community partnerships.

_________________________  ____________________________  _____________
Superintendent’s Signature    Superintendent’s Name (please print)       Date

MEMBERSHIP FORM and PAYMENT

The processing fee for a district (LEA, area, or cluster) to join the National Network of Partnership Schools is $400. Upon receipt of this district’s membership form, the Key Contact to NNPS will receive a comprehensive handbook; monthly e-briefs from an NNPS Facilitator; information on training workshops; on-call consultations with NNPS by telephone, e-mail, and website; annual collections of best practices; and other benefits and services.

Method of payment:

☐ Check  Make check for $400 payable to Johns Hopkins University. Mail check with this form.
☐ Purchase Order  Include a hard copy. PO # ___________________ Vendor: Johns Hopkins University

If you have any questions, please call Marsha D. Greenfeld at 410-516-4193.

Mail this membership form and payment to:

Dr. Joyce L. Epstein
Director, National Network of Partnership Schools
Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships
Johns Hopkins University
2701 N. Charles Street, Suite 300
Baltimore, MD 21218

OR, FAX all 4 pages of this membership form with a copy of the Purchase Order to 410-516-8890.

PLEASE KEEP A COPY OF THIS MEMBERSHIP FORM FOR YOUR RECORDS.

THANK YOU!
To: District Key Contacts to the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS)

From: Dr. Joyce L. Epstein, Director

Re: Establishing your District’s “network” of schools to work with NNPS

DISTRICT and SCHOOL Membership Forms for NNPS

We are delighted that your district is planning to join the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins University. There are 3 easy steps to start your district and schools on the path to improving school, family, and community partnerships.

1. SEND your DISTRICT MEMBERSHIP FORM to NNPS. (Download from the website, www.partnershipschools.org, in the section Join NNPS) Upon receipt of the district’s membership form and the $400 professional development/processing fee, NNPS will send you a Handbook, certificate of membership, and other materials and information. Then, you will receive a call from an NNPS Facilitator to discuss your questions and plans for organizing your district’s and schools’ partnership programs.

2. DOWNLOAD THE SCHOOL MEMBERSHIP FORM (also at www.partnershipschools.org, in the section Join NNPS). Distribute copies to all schools that will join your district’s local network and NNPS. Download information on the components of the NNPS School Model and other useful sections of the website that you think will help school leaders learn more about NNPS (e.g., Letter of Invitation and list of Benefits and Services in the section Join NNPS and the six types of involvement in the section on the NNPS School Model).

3. GUIDE YOUR SCHOOLS to submit their membership forms and professional development/processing fees to NNPS. Each school must send the membership form and $400 professional development/processing fee to NNPS. Each school and you, as leader for partnerships, should keep copies of the schools’ membership forms. This will enable you to assist each school to make progress in improving its partnership program over time.

- Note: Some district leaders pay for schools’ initial fees to give a clear message that it is important for all schools to organize a research-based, goal oriented partnership program.

Upon receipt of the School Membership Forms, NNPS will send each school a copy of School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action, Second Edition, certificate of membership, newsletters, training and evaluation opportunities, calls for best practices, and other information throughout the year. The schools also will be linked to an NNPS Facilitator for monthly e-briefs and to address questions.

NEXT STEP The next step is to provide a One-Day Team-Training Workshop to all schools that joined NNPS. Give a call to an NNPS Senior Program Facilitator to discuss how to proceed.

Marsha Greenfeld   410-516-4193   mgreenfeld@jhu.edu
Darcy Hutchins    410-516-8893   dutchins@jhu.edu
Brenda Thomas     410-516-8819   bthomas@jhu.edu

We welcome your district and schools to NNPS!