

type 2

Communicating to improve partnerships for student success



NATIONAL NETWORK OF
Partnership Schools
JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

Please make copies of Type 2 for all members of your Action Team, Leadership Team, Improvement Team, and other interested partners!

Fall, 2004 No. 17

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NNPS Partnership Award Winners Show How to Develop Excellent Programs

Three schools, six districts, one organization, and one state department of education are winners of the NNPS 2004 Partnership Awards. For the first time, nine of the award winners received “Special Recognition” and a prize of \$500 for exceptional programs and sustained progress. All winners received a plaque and one free registration to a future NNPS conference. The award winners, from diverse communities in California, Georgia, Minnesota, Ohio, and Washington, were recognized for excellent goal-oriented programs of school, family, and community partnerships (see team photos, pp. 6-7). The following are a few features of the award-winning programs that may assist other schools, districts, organizations, and states to improve their leadership and programs.

Partnership School Awards

Excellent school programs fulfilled two major expectations: (1) create a welcoming school and (2) involve families and the community to support student success. **Highlands Elementary School** in Naperville, IL, worked collaboratively with its parent organization and made families welcome with activities such as a New Parent Coffee for incoming parents of kindergarteners, Dad’s Breakfast, and a Volunteer Data Base. The school’s Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) linked involvement to student achievement through Family Math, Reading Workshops, Math Backpacks, a Family Art Night, and other activities.

Lowndes Middle School in Valdosta, GA, welcomed families at Move Forward with Fitness, Wonderful Wednesdays, and Parents to Lunch. The ATP focused family involvement on student achievement in the Wonderful World of Math, Accelerating Reading, Math-a-Thon, and Parents Assuring Student Success (PASS).

At **Roosevelt Elementary School** in Saint Paul, MN, Hmong, Latino, African American, and other families were welcomed at the Open

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NNPS Members Collaborate on Special Focus Studies

NNPS districts and schools have agreed to work with NNPS researchers on two “Special Focus” studies to learn more about district leadership on partnerships and the effects of interactive homework on student achievement in math, science, and reading/literacy.

Howard and Cecil counties in Maryland are partnering with NNPS research scientist Dr. Mavis Sanders on a three-year study of district leadership for school, family, and community partnerships. NNPS and its districts want to learn more about how district leadership grows over time and how district leaders influence the quality of schools’ partnership programs. Dr. Sanders will seek additional districts in diverse locations to complete the study over the next two years.

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Issues and Insights

Joyce L. Epstein
Director

Emerging Issues in NCLB: Understanding School-Parent Compacts

Q: What is a School-Parent Compact?

A. It is your One-Year Action Plan!

Many NNPS members have asked questions about NCLB's requirements for family and community involvement in Section 1118. One confusing term that we must understand is the school-parent compact. Just what is a compact?

Is it a Pledge?

Some schools interpret the school-parent compact as a pledge, which recognizes that parents, teachers, students, and administrators will work together to help students succeed. Often, parents are asked to sign pledges to be good partners in their children's education. A pledge is a symbolic communication that calls attention to the importance of partnerships. It may be included as one Type 2-Communicating activity in a school's One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships, but it is not a compact. If a pledge is used, and many Title I schools collect pledges annually, it should be signed by teachers, parents, and students—not by parents alone. You can find guidelines and a sample set of pledges in the NNPS *Handbook for Action, Second Edition* on pages 122-126.

Is it a Plan?

Some schools interpret the school-parent compact as a plan for partnerships. In fact, NCLB is very clear that a school-parent compact is a detailed plan that outlines how educators and parents will work together to support student achievement. NCLB specifies that a compact outlines "the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the state's high standards." NCLB also gives examples of activities for the six types of involvement to illustrate the content of a well-planned partnership program.

Why has the term "compact" been confusing? Many schools have used pledges for so long that educators are not aware of the current definition of a school-parent compact in Section 1118. It may be easier to collect pledges than to write a full plan with a clear schedule of activities, but NCLB is very clear—a school-parent compact is a comprehensive plan for partnerships linked to school goals for student achievement and success.

NNPS Takes the Lead on School-Parent Compacts

School teams and district and state leaders in NNPS know that the annual One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships is the school-parent compact. With input from all families, each school's Action Team for Partnerships writes an annual plan that outlines the schedule of activities for family and community involvement linked to school goals for student success. Members of the team and others in the school share responsibility for implementing involvement activities that help students improve reading and writing skills, math skills and scores, attendance, behavior, or other school goals. Other actions are implemented to sustain a welcoming environment for all educators, students, and families. You can find a template for a goal-linked, annual action plan that will serve as your school-parent compact in the NNPS *Handbook for Action, Second Edition* on pages 349-352.

NOTE: An earlier version of this article appeared as: Epstein, J. L. (2004). How middle schools can meet NCLB requirements for family involvement. *Middle Ground*, 8(1):14-17. Examples of activities were included from Collinwood Computech Middle/High School, Cleveland, OH; Franklin D. Roosevelt Middle School, Cleveland, OH; Thurmont Middle School, Thurmont, MD; Madison Junior High, Naperville, IL; Richard E. Byrd Middle School, Sun Valley, CA; and Lowndes Middle School, Valdosta, GA.

NNPS Partnership Award Winners for the 2003-04 School Year

(Continued from page 1)

House Before School Starts, Family Breakfasts, YMCA Swim and Gym Night, and Second Cup of Coffee—a monthly open discussion for parents and staff. Parents helped boost student achievement through a Reading at Home Program, Raising Readers Book Fair, Guest Writers, and more. The school's leaders attributed double-digit gains in reading and math achievement test scores to good teaching *and* family and community involvement.

Partnership District Awards

Award-winning districts addressed two major expectations: (1) conduct district-level leadership activities and (2) assist schools to develop effective, goal-linked partnership programs. District leaders increased the number of schools working on partnerships. For example, **Cleveland** scaled up its local network to include over 100 schools, which also are linked to NNPS. Similarly, **Saint Paul, District B** and **District F** (now Districts 2 and 4) in LAUSD, and **Seattle**—all large districts—expanded their local networks to help more schools develop their partnership programs.

By working with others across departments, district leaders extended and improved their partnership programs. For example, **Saint Paul's** leaders worked with colleagues in Title I, ELL, Special Education, Indian Education, and others to conduct parent workshops and community forums. They also enlisted foreign language newspapers, radio, and TV stations to provide information to families about schools.

Districts B and **F** received technical assistance from **Families In Schools**, a Partnership Organization Award winner, to provide programs such as *Read with Me/Lea Conmigo*, an early at-home reading program, and

Going On To (GOT) College, an early awareness program for planning post-secondary education.

All district award winners helped schools build their capacities to develop and implement partnership programs. In large districts like **Cleveland**, facilitators assisted clusters of schools to create ATPs, write annual goal-linked action plans, and evaluate progress. Leaders in **Seattle** and the other award-winning districts provided schools' ATPs with training, monthly meetings to share best practices, regular e-mail communications, and other technical assistance.

School and district award winners aligned their One-Year Action Plans for Partnerships to school goals for student success. In **Districts B** and **F**, plans for partnership were linked to the *Single School Plan (SSP)*; in **Saint Paul** to the *School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP)*; in **Cleveland** to the schools' *Academic Achievement Plan (AAP)*; in **Seattle** to the *School Transformation Plan (STP)*; and in **Naperville** to the *School Improvement Plan*. By appending One-Year Action Plans to schools' improvement plans, award winners address the NCLB requirement to conduct programs of family and community involvement that contribute to student success.

Partnership State Award

At the state level, collaboration multiplied efforts and actions. Partnership State Award winner, **California State Department of Education**, worked with many organizations to reach districts and schools. State leaders also connected with colleagues in about 20 departments (e.g., Title I, Homeless Education, Gifted and Talented Education, and Safe and Drug Free Schools) to identify how family

Making Homework Family-Friendly

The start of a new school year inevitably generates discussions about homework—at school, at home, and in the media. What can teachers do to make homework more family-friendly? Two strategies include monitoring the amount of time students spend on homework and communicating clearly in homework assignments.

Homework Time

The National PTA and National Education Association recommend that children in kindergarten through second grade spend 10–20 minutes each school day on homework; children in grades 3–6 should spend 30–60 minutes a day. Time recommendations for middle and high school students vary by subject, particularly with the increased number of long-term projects. Some researchers suggest their homework not exceed 2–3 hours per night. Unfortunately, some students spend more or less time on homework than recommended. Time spent on homework can create stress for families even though teachers may not intend for it to do so.

Teacher Reflections: Consider polling the students in your class(es) about how much time each spent on a particular homework assignment. Compare their reports to your estimate of how long the assignment should take. Talk with the students who spent more or less time than expected on the assignment to resolve any questions or concerns. Coordinate which teachers assign homework on a given night to avoid too much homework.

Homework Communications

In addition to homework's instructional purposes, assignments also serve as a communication tool. Teachers may use homework as a way to

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Meeting the Challenge

Steven B. Sheldon
Director of Research

Working with Families and Communities to Develop Student Scientists

Developing students' science skills such as prediction, hypothesis testing, and inferential reasoning is an important goal for educators and schools. International comparisons of science knowledge and skills place U.S. students among the lowest achieving in industrialized nations. These comparisons, and the impending reality that students' achievement test scores in science will soon be used as an indicator of successful or failing schools (e.g., No Child Left Behind Act), have made teaching students science a challenge all schools must face. In *Promising Partnership Practices 2004*¹, schools share innovative ways students and families work on science together, as well as ways they create community partnerships to enrich the science experiences of students and their families.

Science in Action

One of the most common science family involvement activities schools plan is a family night, where children and their families come to school to practice and conduct curriculum-related skills and projects. In Buffalo, NY, Southside Elementary School took a different approach to their science family night by adding an element of investigation. Faculty and staff hosted Science Mystery Night, during which teams of students and family members used critical thinking, lab skills, and science knowledge to solve mysteries. School staff developed two different cases, one for the younger students and a more difficult case for the older students. At the end of the evening, teams presented their evidence and explained how the facts helped them solve the mysteries.

Working with the Community

Some NNPS schools work with the community to host events that increase student and family exposure to science. Valley View Elementary School and Carl F. Shuler Middle School in Cleveland, OH, collaborated with their local science center to

increase students' knowledge and enjoyment of science. Partnering with the Great Lakes Science Center, these schools arranged for students and their families to receive free entrance to the Science Center on a Saturday. Families rotated through different exhibits and watched an OMNI-MAX film. On that same day, the Science Center hosted an engineer expo where students and their families could ask professionals about careers that incorporate math and science.

Stanley Makowski Early Childhood Center in Buffalo, NY, worked with the Buffalo Museum of Science to support their goal of teaching science using a hands-on approach. The museum's education department and scientists trained teachers in the exhibits so that they could help host the school's annual "Start with Success" event at the museum. Students and family members who attended the event explored interactive museum exhibits, enjoyed refreshments, and learned about community resources available to them. In addition, families received free, one-year memberships to the Buffalo Museum of Science so that families could enjoy exploring science together throughout the year.

Student science achievement is more likely when children explore their world and uncover the principals of science in their everyday lives. With the help of families and community partners, schools create opportunities for students to solve problems with science, see how science can be part of a career, or simply learn how our world functions. As science educators create innovative ways to present scientific principles to students, they should consider how family and community involvement can support student scientists.

¹ Salinas, K C. & Jansorn, N. R. (2004). *Promising Partnership Practices: The 7th Annual Collection from the Members of the National Network of Partnership Schools*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University.

Elementary School Report

Answers to Members' Frequently Asked Questions on the *UPDATE* Survey

NNPS members complete *UPDATE* to renew membership and provide important information about program development. The comment section of *UPDATE* encourages two-way communication between NNPS members and staff, but the large number of school members prohibits individual responses. The most frequently asked questions can be answered in this newsletter, however, so keep reading to see what's on members' minds.

Involving More Parents

The most frequently asked question on 2004 *UPDATE* focused on how to involve more parents. Fortunately, the most important step in addressing this question has already been taken—join NNPS. Take other important steps by following NNPS guidelines: ensure several parents are members of your Action Team for Partnerships (ATP); write a One-Year Action Plan linked to school goals that lists parent ATP members as leaders of specific activities, but not as the only people responsible for implementing those activities; and recruit family members who are not ATP members to help with each partnership practice listed in the action plan.

Other suggestions to involve more families include: determine through surveys, informal conversations, and other ways if families feel welcome in the school. If they do not, make the changes that will create a family-friendly environment for *all* families. Broaden the definition of volunteers to include work anywhere, anytime for the students, and match volunteers' interests, talents, and availability with classroom and school needs. More parents will be involved in their children's education when they feel positive about the school,

their ability to contribute to students' learning; and the purposefulness of the partnership activities the school plans.

Finding Funds

The second most frequently asked question can be summed up in three words: Where's the money? Not surprisingly, NNPS school members want to secure more funds for their comprehensive partnership programs. For Title I schools, the first step is to find out how the district is allocating its funds that must be spent on parent involvement. Is your school receiving the money it is due for parent involvement under NCLB requirements? If the answer is "no," talk with someone in the district Title I office to see how funds for involvement can be obtained. If the answer is "yes," or if your school is not Title I, think about how your community can help support your partnership program.

Often the best route to receive community support is to solicit in-kind donations. Restaurants and grocery stores can donate refreshments for meetings, celebrations, and other activities. Book stores might donate gift certificates as reading program incentives. Printers may offer their services when you need to produce a brochure, event program, or other written materials. The list goes on, but the point remains the same: it is often more productive and satisfying for all involved to focus on in-kind donations rather than cash.

If you have exhausted all of the likely resources and the ATP still needs money, consider writing a grant proposal for a local foundation. Many grant opportunities have geographic stipulations, because the organizations or foundations want to invest in their

own backyard. Determine exactly what the ATP wants and for what purpose, and write a clear and concise proposal, including how the organization's support will contribute to the betterment of the school and to student success. Submit the grant proposal, and keep trying until the ATP receives the funds it needs.

Your ATP completes *UPDATE* once a year, but you may ask questions any time. E-mail NNPS staff at nmps@csos.jhu.edu. Our goal is to provide the information you need to build and sustain comprehensive partnership programs linked to student success.

Members Collaborate on Special Focus Studies

(Continued from page 1)

Hamilton County Public Schools in Chattanooga, TN are working with NNPS' Dr. Frances Van Voorhis on a two-year study of the effects of TIPS Interactive Math Homework on elementary school students in grades 3 and 4. This is the first multi-year study of the TIPS process and will show whether family involvement on homework from one grade level to the next measurably affects student achievement, attitudes, and success in math.

During this school year, NNPS districts and schools will be invited to join other special focus studies. All partners are provided stipends for the additional data collections and receive targeted reports on the results of the research in their locations. The TIPS studies also provide free professional development for teachers and ongoing facilitation during the study period. (See the call for partners for studies of TIPS Science and Language Arts in the middle grades, page 11.)

2004 Partnership Award Winners

Highlands Elementary School*



Row 1: Suzanne Jorstad and Susan Stuckey (Principal). Row 2: Anna Fattore, Kim McCue, Judy Neace, Becky Fox, Diane White, Jessica Jozwiak, Kris Bykerk, Lisa Trychta, Jane Wernette, Debbie Whang (NNPS Key Contact), Eric Nelson, Amy Vanderveen (NNPS Key Contact) and Ann Vitek.

Lowndes Middle School*



Row 1: Becky Young, Bria McFarland, Samuel Clemons (Principal), Eve Cheatham, Sarah Webb, and Lewis Cureton. Row 2: Ann Abel, Ashley Dickert, Jacqueline Crawford (NNPS Key Contact), Anissa Wiseman, Gwen Burgman, Michelle Adams, Tonya Phillips, and Cheryl Acree. Row 3: Johnetta Henry, Kim Williams, Matt Faircloth, and Eric Cureton.

Roosevelt Elementary School*



Row 1: Dona Synstegard, Maria Castro (Principal), Doris McCarty, and Cecilia Fogarty. Row 2: Yia Thao, Josephine Elizondo, Debra Pridgen, Cara Crawford, Christine Cardinal (NNPS Key Contact), Dorothy Eaglefeather, and Kao Her. Not Pictured: Monica Plaster.

Cleveland Municipal School District



Row 1: Dr. Theresa W. Yeldell (NNPS Key Contact), Crystal Davis, Bertha Banks, and Dr. Dorothy Hendricks-Sterling. Row 2: Belinda Harris, Danesha Gardner, Kariel Austin, Carmen Colon, Judy Simpson, and Melanie Powell-Brazil.

Local District B, LAUSD*

(New Local District 2)



Row: Beatriz Gutierrez, Charlotte, Castagnola (NNPS Key Contact), and Ana Aranda. Row 2: Monica Carazo, Susana Martinez, Sue Shannon (Superintendent), Mari-anela Sardelich, Marvin Silver, and Laura Gonzalez.

Local District F, LAUSD*

(New Local District 4)



Row 1: Dr. Eve Sherman, Elaine Kinoshita, Richard Alonzo (Superintendent), Dr. Rosa Maria Hernandez, and Diane Ramirez. Row 2: Mary Kurzeka, Rocio Arriaga, Angie Cardenas, Virginia Lampson, Linda Ariyasu (NNPS Key Contact), Maria Gonzalez, and Bob Bilovsky.

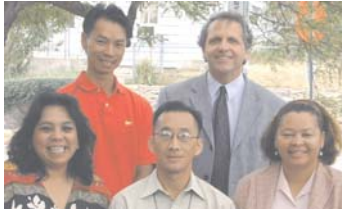
*Special Recognition

Naperville Community Unit School District 203*



Linda Gross, Debbie Shipley, Jim Caudill, Kitty Murphy, Patti McIntire, Dr. Alan Leis (Superintendent), Karen Carrier, Lenore Johnson, Jane Wernette, Dagmar Porcelli, Sheila Sarovich, Tom Paulsen, Paul Schmidt, Mike Van Harlingen, Terri Stevens, Mike Jaensch and Pat Todd. Taking the Picture: Nina M. Menis (NNPS Key Contact).

Saint Paul Public Schools*



Row 1: Sylvia Perez, Lao Lee and Anna Young. Row 2: Kao Her, and Arty Dorman (NNPS Key Contact). Not Pictured: Sharon Briggs.

Seattle Public Schools*



Sarah Tenney-Espinosa, Lin Carlson, Thelma Payne, Raj Manhas (Superintendent) and Adie Simmons (NNPS Key Contact).

Families In Schools*



Row 1: Mark Sullano, Lucille Ignacio, Maria Casillas (President), and Mina Arteaga. Row 2: Jose Cisneros, Mayra Martinez, Susana Bonis, Ruth Yoon (NNPS Key Contact), Pilar Buelna, and Barry Peterson.

Congratulations Award Winners!

Award winners received:

- A plaque;
- One free registration for an NNPS Leadership Development Conference; and
- National recognition in the education media and on the NNPS Web site.
- Special Recognition award winners also received \$500.

See full program summaries of award winners at www.partnershipschools.org, "In the Spotlight."

California Department of Education



Row 1: Gloria Guzman-Walker, Frank Uribe, Carmen Delgado-Contreras, Carol Lee Tolbert, John Wedemeyer, Jeana Preston, Anita Royston, Richard Braun, Gini Natali, and Myra Young. Row 2: Anne Just, Geno Flores, Carol Dickson (NNPS Key Contact), Jack O'Connell (State Superintendent), and Howie DeLane (NNPS Key Contact).

Photo Layout: Kenyatta Williams

Leadership Line

Seattle School District Uses Evaluation to Strengthen Partnership Programs

Seattle Public Schools' Family Partnerships (FP) Office worked with evaluation specialists to develop several tools to evaluate the progress of its school and district programs to create quality partnerships with parents and the community. "For the first time, we have been able to show hard data about the Family Partnerships Project as required by Seattle Public Schools and the City of Seattle," explained Adie Simmons, Project Manager.

The FP Office focused its evaluation on measuring how well it has increased the capacity of schools to enhance partnerships. They measured:

- Improvement of each school's Action Team for Partnerships' work plan over three years;
- Number of quality family events held by the schools, which use the Six Types of Involvement; and
- Number of schools that implemented outreach strategies for uninvolved parents.

To measure each school's improvement in work plans, the FP Office created a rubric that assesses the quality and alignment of the projected parent involvement activities. To measure the quality of school events and outreach efforts to uninvolved parents, the FP Office developed an activity log form, which the schools were required to complete and submit for each partnership activity. The information collected by the evaluation tools was entered into a database so that district leaders could produce collective and individual school progress reports. Additionally, the FP Office designed a narrative evaluation tool to assess and share progress during mid-year review meetings held with each principal and the Action Team for Partnerships.

Twenty-two elementary and secondary schools in their third project year reported data through May 2004. These schools held 262 partnership events, of which 89 were ongoing activities such as English as a Second Language classes for parents. Approx-

imately 18,500 family members were served by the 173 single-time events. Thirty-four percent of these events targeted bilingual families specifically, while the majority of events targeted all families. The data showed frequent use of translation and interpretation services to ensure family attendance at events. Almost 80% of events were linked to schools' academic goals. From the data, the district could distinguish strong efforts to link partnership activities to academic goals and multiple efforts to include all families in these activities.

The collection of quantitative and qualitative data has served as the basis for program planning. According to Simmons, the program evaluation results "enable us to refine and define the project better." The data have substantiated beliefs that the Seattle Family Partnerships Project is a worthwhile investment.

This article is adapted from the 2004 Partnership District Award application submitted by Seattle Public Schools to NNPS.

California Builds Partnerships to Offer Trainings to Schools and Districts

California Department of Education (CDE), through its Title I Policy and Partnerships Office, has collaborated with multiple partners to offer training on school, family, and community partnerships to LEAs, schools, and other organizations. CDE contracted with the California Parent Center, a Parent Information Resource Center, to create a curriculum based on the NNPS approach to partnerships and to pilot the curriculum in a series of trainings. "Using Parent Involvement to Increase Student Success and Academic Achievement" is a two-day training that presents the NNPS

model with grade specific information.

Over 200 people, including parents, teachers, paraprofessionals, principals, LEA administrators, and organization representatives, have participated in the four pilot trainings since April 2004. Currently, ten trainings are planned for 2004-05, in addition to the eleven regional trainings the CDE Title I Office intends to sponsor throughout the state.

The series of trainings, conducted by the California Parent Center, represent a collaborative partnership among the Center, the CDE, the California State PTA, the Southern California Comprehensive Assis-

tance Center, and various directors from the Regional System of District and School Support. Presenters have included practitioners currently employed at LEAs or schools. "Each of the partners by and of itself did not have the necessary resources to produce the trainings," explained Carol Dickson, the California State Key Contact to NNPS. "This series of trainings in school, family, and community partnerships is a testimonial to the strong linkages and teamwork of the partners involved."

This article is adapted from the 2004 Partnership State Award application submitted by the California Department of Education to NNPS.

Middle and High School Report

Teenagers Rate Parent-Led Book Clubs a Success

“Way more fun than doing a book report,” said one student at Glenmary School in Peace River, Alberta, Canada about the seventh and eighth grade book clubs. Glenmary’s Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) started the book clubs two years ago in response to increasingly complex reading tasks on required tests and low parent satisfaction with the amount of reading children do in their free time. The ATP also developed the book clubs to help support the school improvement goal of increasing reading comprehension.

Book Club Structure

Seventh and eighth grade language arts students had the choice of participating in a book club in lieu of completing a traditional book report. Together, teachers and interested students selected books for the clubs, and the ATP bought six to eight copies of each. The cost was approximately \$500 to buy the books—a one time expense, since the books will be redistributed to future book clubs.

Groups of four to six students chose one of the available books to read during their free time and discuss at weekly meetings. Each group met with a parent or community mentor a total of three to five times, depending on the length and the complexity of the book. For the final meeting, a local pizzeria provided free refreshments, and the group participated in a fun activity of their choice in the gym. Most of the groups held their meetings in the school during after-school or evening hours, and one group met at the public library.

The outcome of the book clubs was positive for everyone. The 50 students who participated had an opportunity to read and discuss books with peers in a supportive environ-

ment. Parents liked seeing their children read during their free time. The employer of one parent mentor was so impressed he gave each book club member a gift certificate to the local book store.

Book Club Improvements

Building on the success of the book clubs, the ATP will consider the following strategies to expand the program this year:

- Require each group to make a final presentation about their book to their language arts teacher and class.
- Contact the local bookstore to support the book clubs with books, incentives, or meeting space.
- Organize self-directed reading groups that select and discuss books on their own in a setting of their own choosing.
- Suggest students join the adult book clubs that operate at the public library.
- Try a “Book and a Movie Club,” where the last meeting could be used to watch a movie based on the book.
- Recruit more parent and community mentors so that all interested students can join a book club.

Glenmary’s book clubs address seventh and eighth grade students’ increasing independence, parents’ desire to see their teenagers read more for pleasure, and the school’s goal to improve student reading comprehension. With this well-planned program, the ATP focused their efforts on student achievement in ways that made all participants happy to be involved.

Adapted from *Promising Partnership Practices 2004*, National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University.

NNPS Award Winners

(Continued from page 3)

involvement weaves through state programs for school improvement.

Will Your Program Be an NNPS Award Winner?

The 2004 Partnership Award winners have more examples and information to help your school, district, organization, or state improve its program. Read their full stories at www.partnershipschoools.org, in the section “In the Spotlight.” Plan now to apply for a 2005 Partnership Award next spring!

Family-Friendly Homework

(Continued from page 3)

communicate with parents about what their children are learning or may assign projects requiring parent-child discussions. When homework is used for these purposes, teachers must communicate in ways that both students and their families understand. Teachers should also be clear about student and family responsibilities in completing homework. When roles are unclear, families may assume too much responsibility and students too little.

Teacher Reflections: How might you improve your homework communications with parents so that they know more about what their children are learning and how to support student learning at home? Consider implementing the Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) Interactive Homework Process as a way to encourage more frequent family involvement in student learning.

By respecting student and family time and roles in the homework process, teachers send strong messages that family involvement is a critical and valued piece of children’s education.

Van Voorhis, F. L. (2004). Reflecting on the homework ritual: Assignments and designs. *Theory Into Practice*, 43(3), 205-212.

Our Growing Network

New Members in NNPS since February 2004

SCHOOLS (128 new members) ★ Adlai Stevenson Elementary School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Albert B. Hart Middle School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Alfred A. Benesch (Cleveland, OH) ★ Artemus Ward (Cleveland, OH) ★ Astoria Park Elementary School (Tallahassee, FL) ★ Audubon School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Ballentine Elementary School (Irmo, SC) ★ Bothwell Middle School (Marquette, MI) ★ Bountiful High School (Bountiful, UT) ★ Brooklawn Elementary (Cleveland, OH) ★ Buckeye Woodland School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Carl F. Shuler Middle School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Central Academy (Ann Arbor, MI) ★ Chapin Elementary School (Chapin, SC) ★ Charles A. Mooney (Cleveland, OH) ★ Charles Dickens Elementary (Cleveland, OH) ★ Cheney Academy (Ypsilanti, MI) ★ Chestertown Middle School (Chestertown, MD) ★ Clark Elementary School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Columbus Elementary School (Columbus, NM) ★ Commonwealth Avenue Elementary School (Los Angeles, CA) ★ Cory Elementary School (Romulus, MI) ★ Covert Elementary School (Covert, MI) ★ Covert Middle/High School (Covert, MI) ★ Deep Run Elementary (Elkridge, MD) ★ Dike Montessori (Cleveland, OH) ★ Dr. Samuel L. Banks High School (Baltimore, MD) ★ Dutch Fork Elementary School (Irmo, SC) ★ East Clark (Cleveland, OH) ★ East Middle School (Warren, OH) ★ Emerson Elementary School (Warren, OH) ★ Empire CompuTech (Cleveland, OH) ★ Euclid Park (Cleveland, OH) ★ Family Enrichment Center (Kaysville, UT) ★ Food and Finance High School (New York, NY) ★ Foundations For The Future Charter Academy (Calgary, Alberta, Canada) ★ Gaithersburg Elementary (Gaithersburg, MD) ★ Gaithersburg High School (Gaithersburg, MD) ★ Galena Middle School (Galena, MD) ★ Garfield Elementary School (Warren, OH) ★ General Smallwood Middle School (Indian Head, MD) ★ Germantown Elementary School (Germantown, MD) ★ Giddings Elementary (Cleveland, OH) ★ H. Barbara Booker Montessori Center (Cleveland, OH) ★ H.B. Turner Middle School (Warren, OH) ★ H.E. Corley Elementary School (Irmo, SC) ★ Harbison West Elementary School (Columbia, SC) ★ Harding High School (St. Paul, MN) ★ Health Careers Center (Cleveland, OH) ★ Henry Ford Elementary School (Ypsilanti, MI) ★ Henry H. Alden Elementary School (Warren, OH) ★ Henry Highland Garnett Elementary School (Chestertown, MD) ★ Henry J. Kaiser Elementary School (Ypsilanti, MI) ★ High Tech Academy at Cuyahoga Community College (Cleveland, OH) ★ Holmes Elementary School (Ypsilanti, MI) ★ Horace Mann Elementary School (Warren, OH) ★ Houston Elementary School (Talladega, AL) ★ Huntington High School Law/Business Magnet (Shreveport, LA) ★ Hurlock Elementary School (Hurlock, MD) ★ Hyde Leadership Public Charter School (Washington, DC) ★ Irmo Elementary School (Irmo, SC) ★ J.P. McCaskey East High School (Lancaster, PA) ★ James S. Rickards High School (Tallahassee, FL) ★ Jane Addams (Cleveland, OH) ★ Jefferson Elementary School (Warren, OH) ★ Jesse Owens Academy (Cleveland, OH) ★ John D. Rockefeller (Cleveland, OH) ★ John Marshall High School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Joseph M. Gallagher (Cleveland, OH) ★ Kenneth W. Clement (Cleveland, OH) ★ Kent County High School (Worton, MD) ★ Kentucky Elementary School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Kettering Elementary School (Ypsilanti, MI) ★ Laird Avenue Elementary School (Warren, OH) ★ Lake Murray Elementary School (Chapin, SC) ★ Latin American Montessori Bilingual Public Charter School (Washington, DC) ★ Leaphart Elementary School (Columbia, SC) ★ Lincoln Elementary School (Anoka, MN) ★ Lincoln Elementary School (Warren, OH) ★ Lincoln-West High School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Longfellow Elementary (Fostoria, OH) ★ Luis Munoz Marin Middle School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Luther Memorial School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Maritime Academy Charter School (Philadelphia, PA) ★ Martin Luther King, Jr. School for Law & Municipal Careers (Cleveland, OH) ★ McCulloch Elementary (Jackson, MI) ★ Miles Park Elementary School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Morris Bye Elementary (Coon Rapids, MN) ★ Nathan Hale Middle School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Nursery Road Elementary School (Columbia, SC) ★ Option Complex at Margaret A. Ireland (Cleveland, OH) ★ Orchard Elementary School of Science (Cleveland, OH) ★ P.S. 222 Q-Firefighter Christopher A. Santora School (Jackson Heights, NY) ★ Prosperity Heights Elementary School (St. Paul, MN) ★ R.G. Jones (Cleveland, OH) ★ River Springs Elementary (Irmo, SC) ★ Riverside School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Riverview Specialty School for Math & Environmental Science (Brooklyn Park, MN) ★ Robert Fulton Elementary School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Romulus Middle School (Romulus, MI) ★ Scranton Elementary School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Secrest Elementary School (Warren, OH) ★ Seven Oaks Elementary School (Columbia, SC) ★ Sierra Park School (Los Angeles, CA) ★ South High School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Success Tech Academy (Cleveland, OH) ★ Sunbeam School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Sunset Elementary School (Sunset, UT) ★ Thomas Jefferson (Cleveland, OH) ★ Tremont Elementary School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Tri-Community PCS (Washington, DC) ★ Union City Elementary School (Union City, MI) ★ Union City High School (Union City, MI) ★ Union Elementary School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Vanderbilt Area School (Vanderbilt, MI) ★ Warren Western Middle School (Warren, OH) ★ Watterson-Lake School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Waverly Elementary School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Wheaton Woods Elementary School (Rockville, MD) ★ White House Place Primary Center (Los Angeles, CA) ★ Wick Elementary School (Romulus, MI) ★ William Floyd Elementary School (Shirley, NY) ★ Willow Elementary School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Willow Run High School (Ypsilanti, MI) ★ Willow Run Middle (Ypsilanti, MI) ★ Wilson Middle School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Woodland Hills Elementary School (Cleveland, OH) ★ Worton Elementary School (Worton, MD) ★

DISTRICTS (13 new members) ★ Boise Independent School District (Boise, ID) ★ Covert Public Schools (Covert, MI) ★ Detroit Public Schools (Detroit, MI) ★ Kent County Public Schools (Chestertown, MD) ★ Milan Area Schools (Milan, MI) ★ Narragansett School System (Narragansett, RI) ★ Newburgh Enlarged City School District (Newburgh, NY) ★ Saline Area Schools (Saline, MI) ★ School District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties (Ballentine, SC) ★ Union City Community Schools (Union City, MI) ★ Warren City Schools (Warren, OH) ★ Whitmore Lake Public Schools (Whitmore, MI) ★ Willow Run Community Schools (Ypsilanti, MI) ★

ORGANIZATION/UNIVERSITY PARTNERS (7 new members) ★ Families Together in NYS Inc. (Hamburg, NY) ★ Family Literacy Center, Inc. (Kansas City, MO) ★ Public Charter Schools Center for Student Support Services (Washington, DC) ★ The Ball Foundation (Glen Ellyn, IL) ★ Universite de Quebec a Trois-Riveres (Trois-Rivieres, Quebec, Canada) ★ Washtenaw Intermediate School District (Ann Arbor, MI) ★ West 40 ISC No. 2 (LaGrange Park, IL) ★

Current Active Membership in the National Network of Partnership Schools as of September 10, 2004

Schools: 997 Districts: 108 States: 17 Organizations: 70

Scientifically-Based Evidence of the Effects of Partnership Programs

Researchers and policy leaders agree that we always must strive to improve the methods used to study the effects of family involvement on student outcomes. In an effort to strengthen the quality of research on the effects of school, family, and community partnership programs on student outcomes, NNPS conducted a study that investigated whether or not schools working on partnerships have students who perform better on standardized tests and attend school more regularly than schools that are not working on partnerships.

Sixty-nine NNPS elementary schools in Ohio were compared to a matched sample of 69 Ohio schools that were not NNPS members. Using data from *UPDATE* and the Ohio Department of Education's Web site, the NNPS and comparison schools were matched according to school size in 2001, the percentage of 4th graders proficient in reading and math in 2000, and student attendance in 2000.

Comparing Schools

Overall, NNPS schools were similar to schools in the comparison group. Compared to the matched group of 69 Ohio elementary schools, NNPS

schools had slightly lower rates of daily attendance in 2000 (94.64% vs. 95.28%) and slightly lower percentages of school funds spent on pupil support staff such as nurses, librarians, and counselors (8.87% vs. 10.93%).

Program Effects on Students

After controlling for prior achievement and the percentage of funds allocated for pupil support, analyses showed that, in 2001, students in NNPS schools scored at the same level as schools in the comparison group on reading, math, and science achievement tests. After controlling for prior attendance and pupil support, NNPS schools improved their rates of attendance significantly more than did schools in the comparison group.

Further investigation identified program characteristics most likely to lead to improved student attendance. Controlling for prior attendance, school size, and whether or not the school received Title I funding, analyses showed that schools with higher quality partnership programs were more likely to experience improved student attendance from one year to the next. Analyses also showed that the more schools worked to meet

challenges of family involvement the more likely they were to experience improved student attendance.

Conclusions

This study shows that school efforts to organize school, family, and community partnerships can affect student attendance in elementary schools. The impact on attendance is important, because previous research shows that high rates of absenteeism in elementary school increase the risk that a student will drop out of high school. The study also is important because it shows that effective partnership programs need to address the challenges of family and community involvement. To help students succeed, effective partnership programs provide information to families who cannot attend meetings, communicate in languages that all family members can understand, help families work with their children on schoolwork, and strengthen ties to community organizations and resources for students.

Sheldon, S.B. (2004). *Testing the Effects of School, Family, and Community Partnership Programs on Student Outcomes*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association in San Francisco, CA.

Middle Grades TIPS Research Opportunity

Are teachers in your district interested in involving more families in their children's learning? Do you want to use TIPS Interactive Homework in Language Arts and/or Science and learn the results for student achievement?

NNPS invites districts to partner with us on studies of TIPS Science and TIPS Language Arts Interactive Homework in the middle grades. Selected districts and schools will receive:

- Free TIPS training;
- Stipends for district coordinator and teachers; and
- Assistance with TIPS for two years, at no charge

For more information, contact Dr. Frances Van Voorhis at (704) 442-7235 or francesv@csos.jhu.edu.

Congratulations!

The following NNPS members received one free registration to a future NNPS conference in the 2004 *UPDATE* Raffle:

- Allen School, Canton, OH
- Lafayette Parish School System, Lafayette, LA
- Florida Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, Tampa
- Ohio Department of Education

Good things happen when you return *UPDATE* by the June 30th deadline.



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Partnership Calendar

2005

- February:** Invitation to school, district, organization, and state members to apply for the NNPS Partnership Awards for the 2004-05 school year for excellence in programs of partnership.
- March:** Spring issue of *Type 2*.
- March:** Invitation to school, district, and state members to contribute to the National Network's *Promising Partnership Practices 2005*.
- March 17-18:** Leadership Development Conference in Baltimore for school, district, state, and organization leaders to prepare for the 2005-06 school year.
- April 1:** Members will receive 2005 *UPDATE* in the mail. Due June 30 to renew NNPS membership for the 2005-06 school year.
- May 6:** Promising partnership practices from members due for the 2005 collection.
- June 30:** 2005 *UPDATE* must be returned to the National Network to renew membership for the 2005-06 school year. NNPS will waive annual membership fees for all members who return *UPDATE*. Members who return *UPDATE* by the deadline will be entered into a raffle for free registration to an NNPS Leadership Development Conference.
- June 30:** Applications due for *Partnership School Awards*, *Partnership District Awards*, *Partnership Organization Awards*, and *Partnership State Awards* for the 2004-05 school year.

NNPS Welcomes New Staff to Assist Members

Cecilia Martin, Senior Program Facilitator, joins NNPS to assist schools, districts, states, and organizations across the country to strengthen and sustain goal-oriented partnership programs. She is an expert communicator and will be able to help new and experienced NNPS members take the next best steps in program development. Cecilia has teaching and facilitation experience in the Baltimore City Public School System and Baltimore City Community College. She can be reached at 410-516-6793 or cmartin@csos.jhu.edu.

Brenda Thomas, Maryland Director of Partnership Program Development, joined NNPS and The Family Works, a Maryland Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC). She will assist district leaders across the state of Maryland to help their schools organize, implement, and improve programs of school, family, and community partnerships. Brenda was a Coordinator of Parental Involvement in Baltimore City Public Schools and has experience as a teacher and facilitator. She can be reached at 410-516-8819 or btthomas@csos.jhu.edu.

Q Are you receiving E-Brief—NNPS' monthly communication with all members?

A If not and you would like to, please e-mail nnps@csos.jhu.edu with your name and your school, district, state or organization's name.