**NNPS Annual Report** Shows Progress on Basic Program Components and the Importance of Evaluations

The 2014 **NNPS Annual Reports** summarize results of analyses of **UPDATE** data from 409 schools and 39 districts. The data indicate that members of NNPS are hard at work on “the basics” for organizing research-based programs. They are making progress on evaluations and other advanced topics to improve their programs of family and community engagement.

**DATA FROM DISTRICTS**

District Leaders for Partnerships reported helping over 700 schools’ Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) in the 2013-14 school year in diverse communities across the country. This work resulted in the involvement of an estimated 136,000 families to improve the school climate and to increase student success in school.

**Diverse Communities.** NNPS districts were in large cities (26%), small cities (26%), suburban communities (34%), and rural areas (14%). They ranged in size from 1 school to over 150 schools, with families who spoke an average of 45 languages at home. Across districts, an average of 59% of students were eligible for free or reduced-price meals. The diversity in demographics is a continuing strength in NNPS for learning about the essential elements that improve partnership programs in all communities and the unique needs of particular programs.

Districts varied in the amount of time they worked with NNPS. About 10% joined in the past year, whereas others have been members of the network for up to 18 years.

Newer members were likely to be in planning or early stages of program development; experienced leaders were likely to report good, very good, and excellent partnership programs, overall.

*(Continued on page 6)*

**NNPS at 20! Network Will Mark its 20th Year**

Twenty years ago, Joyce Epstein published an article, “School/Family/Community Partnerships: Caring for the Children We Share” in *Phi Delta Kappan* (May 1995). The article summarized the results of many studies that she and colleagues conducted starting in 1981 at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, and with district and state leaders. She also took a look ahead, stating:

“I am establishing a national network of *Partnership 2000 Schools* ...[for]... state, district, and other leaders who are responsible for helping their elementary, middle, and high schools implement programs of school, family, and community partnerships by the year 2000 (p. 711).

About 200 schools, 30 districts, and 7 state departments of education replied that they were ready to use research-based approaches to help schools organize more productive partnerships programs. The network was called *Partnership 2000* because Epstein and her colleagues thought that this would be a short project.

*(Continued on page 10)*
Top 10 Reasons to Join NNPS

What are the **TOP 10** reasons educators join NNPS? How will NNPS help you improve your program of school, family, and community partnerships?

**#10. You want a proven approach to family and community engagement based on strong theory and extensive research.**

Educators are asked to use evidence-based interventions for school improvement. NNPS is theory-driven and research-based. The theory of *overlapping spheres of influence* asserts that students do better in school when home, school, and community communicate and collaborate at every grade level. The NNPS research-generated Framework of Six Types of Involvement shows how to engage all families in different ways and in different locations. Scores of studies confirm that NNPS strategies enable leaders to plan, implement, evaluate and continually improve their partnership programs in schools, districts, states, and organizations.

**#9. You want professional development that is clear, useful, and easy to move from workshop to action.**

NNPS conferences, institutes, and workshops translate research to practice with good information, useful tools, active learning, and materials that can be customized for different grade levels and for YOUR population of students and families.

**#8. You want a program that has been field tested in locations like yours.**

NNPS is in its 19th school year as a national network. Over the years, hundreds of districts and thousands of schools have used and benefited from the NNPS manual: *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action*, now in its 3rd edition (2009). The *Handbook* includes a CD with PowerPoint presentations and hands-on activities in English and Spanish for school-based Action Teams for Partnerships. Members of NNPS are in urban, rural, and suburban locations, and serve families with diverse socioeconomic, racial, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. They have shown that locations—like YOURS—can lead and succeed in partnership program development.

**#7. You want to strengthen teamwork and shared leadership for partnerships.**

The Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) at the school level and dedicated leadership in districts, states, and organizations are at the heart of the NNPS approach. Studies show that one person cannot conduct a comprehensive, sustainable program of family and community engagement. Teamwork by educators, parents, community partners, and students is needed to represent the word “partnership” and to continually improve family and community engagement over time.

**#6. You want to use research-based approaches, but also want flexible components to customize your program for your location.**

Educators reject rigid programs that leave no room to meet local needs and conditions. It is true that every site is different from the next. NNPS developed a purposeful mix of research-based requirements *and* flexible components. This ensures that YOU will implement (a) essential elements for a well-organized partnership program and (b) locally-designed practices to engage YOUR families and communities.
5. **You want to conduct partnership programs that contribute to student success—not involvement for involvement sake.**

NNPS guides all sites to establish *goal-linked* programs that ensure a welcoming school climate and that engage all families and the community in ways that are directly linked to goals in each school improvement plan. Partnership programs should be a regular and expected component of good school organization and expert district and state leadership. With the focus on students, family and community connections help improve student achievement, attendance, behavior, high school graduation, and other indicators of success in school.

4. **You want to fulfill YOUR state, district, and/or school policy, mission, and strategic plan for family and community engagement.**

Policies should be enacted. Strategic plans should be implemented. Most states, districts, and schools set goals for family engagement and community partnerships, but then put these expectations “on the back burner.” Federal education policy (e.g., Title I) also outlines goals for parent and family engagement. NNPS makes it possible for YOU to enact these policies and celebrate progress on partnerships.

3. **You want a responsive “home base” to inspire your work on partnerships.**

NNPS has been recognized as a unique and excellent resource for on-going professional development, and technical assistance for high-quality partnership programs at all policy levels. On-going research ensures new knowledge to keep improving policy and practice. NNPS Facilitators at Johns Hopkins University have one major goal—to strengthen YOUR leadership and expertise on goal-linked partnerships. They are easy to reach for information and advice by phone, e-mail, and Skype. NNPS conferences and workshops have been acclaimed for providing superior training and materials that are immediately useful in YOUR location. Annual books of *Promising Partnership Practices* share best practices and NNPS Partnership Awards shine a national spotlight on the good work of schools, districts, states, and organizations in this network.

2. **You want a thrifty way to strengthen programs of school, family, and community partnerships.**

Funds are always tight in schools, districts, and states. NNPS offers a thrifty way to build leadership and establish partnership programs to engage all families and community partners in children's education. For one low membership fee, NNPS provides research-based books, materials, and on-going, on-call assistance to all members. PLUS, NNPS pays a matching fee every year to continue service to every site so that we learn from each other. PLUS, NNPS conducts an annual evaluation at the end of each school year to ensure that each site has data about its work and progress, and for data-based discussions about ways to improve its program in the next school year.

1. **You want to improve your partnership programs. You know you should. And, now, you can.**

The number one reason to join NNPS is to increase student success in school with more equitable, goal-linked family and community engagement. Join hundreds of districts, schools, organizations, and states that use NNPS resources to keep improving their partnership programs. Their “can do” spirit inspires NNPS to continue developing research-based approaches that will enable YOU to strengthen leadership, engage all families, create productive community connections, and increase student success in school.

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NNPS will start its 20th year in the fall of 2015. You are invited to attend this anniversary!

**Leadership Development Conference**

November 5-6, 2015.

Register now. Be an “Early Bird.”

YOUR participation will make this a bigger and better celebration!
Meeting the Challenge

Steven B. Sheldon
Director of Research

Ease the Transition to a New School

The only way to involve all families in their children’s education is to understand the challenges families face in interacting with teachers and administrators. In particular, families who do not speak English at home may feel distant and disconnected from the school. They may have difficulty communicating with teachers and other school personnel.

In the Annual NNPS Report on 2014 UPDATE data from over 400 schools, we found that about one quarter of the Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) reported that at least 25% of their families spoke a language other than English at home. Even more schools served at least 10% of linguistically diverse families. The data indicated that some activities were more widespread and more effective than others. Figure 1 shows that nearly all (90%) of ATPs translated information and invitations into different languages (column 1) and considered that an effective practice. Many ATPs (over 70%) reported that that teachers assigned some homework for students to involve their family members in whatever language was spoken at home.

By contrast, columns 2 and 4 in Figure 1 show that fewer ATPs conducted activities that connected non-English speaking families to others who spoke the same language or held events celebrating the school’s multicultural and diverse populations. About 40% of schools did not conduct these activities, but those that did reported that these were effective ways for engaging more and different families. School-based ATPs were least likely to conduct language classes for parents (column 3), leaving this activity to district leaders (see this in the NNPS Annual Report on 2014 data from districts).

Many schools in NNPS are working to meet the challenge of engaging diverse families in their children’s education to increase student success. For example, in Promising Partnership Practices 2014, Vinal Technical High School, in Middletown, CT, designed and implemented Vamos a la Universidad (We Are Going to College) for Latino students and their families to learn more about options for post-secondary education. Students and parents met with college representatives and students from around the state to talk about how to get financial aid and what college life is like for Latino students.

In Kennewick, WA, the ATP at Westgate Elementary School wanted its diverse families to feel comfortable about joining activities and, ultimately, serving on school boards.

Figure 1
Evaluation of outreach activities at schools with over 10% of families that speak a language other than English at home.

(Continued on page 10)
Middle and High Schools?  

Middle and high schools are different from elementary schools. They are, usually bigger buildings with more students and more teachers. Programs are, usually, departmentalized so that teachers specialize in specific subjects and teach many students each day—often 100 or more. Secondary school educators ask: How can we involve the families of so many students? Parents ask: How can we understand this complex program?

In NNPS, many middle and high schools are taking important steps to address these very real questions. The NNPS Annual Report on 2014 UPDATE data from schools shows that over 100 secondary schools last year were working hard—not far behind elementary schools—in organizing their partnership programs. The middle and high schools in NNPS are planning and implementing age-appropriate and goal-linked activities to engage all families in ways that support student success in school.

The following Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) in middle and high schools in NNPS are striving to engage parents and to work with teachers and other staff members in good activities in their One-Year Action Plans for Partnerships. Read more about all of these activities in Promising Partnership Practices 2014.

Resources for Parents, K-12

The ATP at Bell City School in Lake Charles, LA developed a library in the Family Resource Center to provide its students’ parents in grades PK-12 with information about child and adolescent development. After the ATP, teachers, counselors, and others reviewed a list of 100 books for parents, the top choices were purchased with $500 of Title I funds. Topics included single parenting, children’s attention disorders, understanding and preventing bullying, becoming an involved parent, increasing students’ self-esteem, and others of interest to parents. High school students organized the books by title/topic and built shelves for this library. The ATP keeps a log of which titles are borrowed most frequently, which may guide future purchases.

Parent Forum on Adolescence

The Parent Involvement Team (PIT), teachers, and staff at Francis Howell Middle School, St. Charles, MO, hosted a roundtable—Discussion By and For Parents of Early Adolescents. Led by a professional counselor, the discussion offered parents a safe place to share their experiences and questions about common parenting concerns. More than 30 parents attended the discussion, and over 100 more asked for the notes to be sent to them by e-mail. In addition to gaining information on some key concepts in the psychology of adolescence, parents discussed the importance of setting boundaries, consistent parenting, and other topics on which parents could help other parents through the middle grades.

Teen Parents in High School

Concerned that teen mothers, teen fathers, and expecting teens were struggling to attend class and graduate from high school on time, Hall High School in Little Rock, AR designed Cradle Love—a lunchtime informational clinic sponsored by community partners. The school improvement plan included goals to improve students’ health and to increase family involvement to improve student attendance, achievement, behavior, and on-time graduation. Cradle Love aimed to educate teen parents and their parents on how to stay in school while raising a child, how to deal with stress, and how grandparents may be valuable partners in the education of the teen parents and their grandchildren. At the meeting community partners presented information on breast feeding, peer counseling, contraception, mental health, and college scholarships for teen parents. They described available resources such as day care vouchers and free books for babies. The high school demonstrated national leadership by being forthright on the topic of school attendance by teen parents.

Preparing for College

Going to college is an adventure. Students must transition successfully from high school to college—a Academically, socially, and emotionally. The School, Family, and Community Partnerships (SFCP) team at Naperville North High School in Naperville, IL partnered with the high school’s guidance department and recent alumni on College Transitions: I Got Into College—Now What?—an informational evening for juniors, seniors, and their parents. The goal was to address topics that derail some seniors as they enter college, including social and emotional adjustments required in college life. The school’s alumni, now in college, used smartphones to record short videos of themselves to share college experiences and advice. These were compiled as one-minute clips in a 20-minute humorous and informative

(Continued on page 10)
NNPS Annual Report Shows Progress on Basic Program Components and the Importance of Evaluations

(Continued from page 1)

**Basic Leadership Actions.** NNPS guides district Leaders for Partnerships to conduct district-level activities to advance family and community engagement and to directly facilitate schools’ Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) so they can work with their own students’ families. The Leadership Scale showed that about 90% of district leaders reviewed policy, planned budgets, conducted workshops for parents, and disseminated information to schools on best practices. Over 70% wrote their own annual leadership plans, met with the Superintendent on partnership programs, and connected with colleagues to increase attention to the importance of partnership program development.

The Facilitation Scale showed that district leaders averaged 11 of 18 activities to help school ATPs increase their capacities to plan, implement, and improve school-based partnership programs. Over 70% guided ATPs to write annual action plans, collected the plans for responsive monitoring, met with principals on program development, and conducted other facilitative activities. This guidance is at the heart of the NNPS model for shared leadership at the district level and with capable school-based teams.

**Emphasis on Evaluation.** District Leaders for Partnerships who evaluated their district and schools’ partnership programs were significantly more likely to have stronger partnership programs, overall. In 2014, 87% of the district leaders reported emphasizing evaluations, including using the UPDATE survey as one way to measure quality and progress. The Emphasis on Evaluation Scale was associated with other indicators of program quality, creating a constellation of variables that contribute to district leadership for partnerships (see Table 1).

The table shows that district leaders who evaluated their own and their schools’ partnership programs also reported fuller leadership plans, more active facilitation of school ATPs, greater attention to solving challenges to engage all families, and more support from district and school colleagues for improving partnerships. Districts that were members of NNPS for more years were more likely to evaluate their programs.

Table 1 also shows that the demographics of the districts in NNPS were not significantly related to an emphasis on evaluation. This finding (confirmed over many years) indicates that all districts—whether in urban, rural, or suburban communities serving economically and linguistically diverse students and families—can establish, evaluate, and sustain high-quality partnership programs.

**DATA FROM SCHOOLS**

The 409 schools reporting UPDATE data in 2014 were located in diverse communities in 20 states. The sample included 70% elementary schools; 15% middle grades schools, and 13% high schools (with a few other grade organizations). A large majority of schools (87%) received Title I funds. The diverse students across schools averaged 43% White (non-Hispanic); 32% African American; 19% Latino/Hispanic; 3% Asian; and 3% other backgrounds. The distribution of racial and linguistic backgrounds ranged widely by school.

**Core components.** Elementary, middle, and high schools reported high implementation of basic NNPS program components, averaging 4.9 of six core structures and processes. At or near 90% of schools in NNPS had Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs), wrote action plans, and engaged families in activities for the six types of involvement linked to goals in their own school improvement plans.

Schools have room to improve other aspects of program implementation. More ATPs need to meet at least monthly; and more would be helped by a committee structure for subgroups to conduct specific involvement activities.

**Principal and District Support.** Elementary and secondary schools in NNPS acknowledged strong support from their principals for work on partnerships. Figure 1 reports ways that principals are supporting their ATPs. Although more elementary school principals support ATPs than do secondary school principals, on average, 80% or more ATPs at all grade levels reported that the principal presented a vision and goals for good partnerships, publicized partnership activities, attended involvement events, and encouraged teachers.

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**Table 1. Constellation of Variables Associated with Districts’ Emphasis on Evaluating Partnership Programs, 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Demographics of Districts</strong></th>
<th><strong>Essential Elements of Program Quality</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban Location</td>
<td>% Free or Reduced Price Meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Program Quality</td>
<td>Leadership at District Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.609***</td>
<td>.441**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2014 District UPDATE, 39 Districts. Zero-order correlations

*** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05, 1 p<.10. NS= Not significant.
and parents to participate. Other analyses indicated that schools with stronger support from the principal and stronger partnership programs were more likely to have larger percentages of all teachers who supported and conducted family and community engagement activities. The data confirm the results of prior NNPS studies that document the importance of the principal’s support for high-quality, sustainable partnership programs.

Over 90% of schools’ ATPs reported that their district leaders supported and guided their teams’ work on partnerships by disseminating information about partnerships and recognizing schools for strong partnership practices. The schools’ data confirmed reports varied from 0-10% up to nearly 100% of linguistically-diverse families. Schools in large cities reported the highest percentages and rural schools reporting the lowest percentages of families who did not speak English at home.

One interesting pattern in the data showed that, on average, schools with over 25% of linguistically-diverse families implemented more and different activities than did other schools. Over 90% of schools with a significant number of language-diverse families reported it was a little or very effective to translate memos and other information sent home in the language of the families and to help these families interpret and complete school forms. It makes sense that schools with many families who are on the right path by establishing the basic structures and processes for well-planned, goal-linked partnership programs. District leaders and school teams are working together to meet important challenges to engage all students families, create a positive school climate, and increase student success in school.

Even the best programs can keep improving. The emphasis on evaluation by an increasing number of districts and schools should help them identify aspects of their programs that could be improved to engage all families in their children’s education. NNPS will continue to encourage schools, districts, states, and organizations to review and discuss their own and national UPDATE data to use patterns of results to guide improvements in the next school year.

The UPDATE data also show that NNPS guidelines, materials, and ongoing technical assistance are enabling districts in highly diverse communities and schools at all grade levels to use research-based structures and processes to strengthen their programs of family and community engagement linked to goals for student learning and success in school.

References
See the full Annual Reports on 2014 data from districts and schools at www.partnershipschools.org in the section Research and Evaluation.


Engaging Linguistically Diverse Families. Each year, UPDATE explores one new topic along with longitudinal measures that are monitored over time. In 2014, NNPS used a 7-item scale to explore how schools were engaging families who spoke languages other than English at home. Schools speak many languages would do more and better than did schools where this was less of a challenge. However, it is clear that all schools are beginning to address this important challenge for engaging all students’ families. (See more about this topic in the column Meeting the Challenge, p. 4.)

SUMMARY

What do the 2014 UPDATE data tell us? Most districts and schools in NNPS...
Our Growing Network
New Members in NNPS since September 30, 2014

SCHOOLS (69 new members) ★ Fairview Junior High (Alvin, TX) ★ Hood-Case Elementary (Alvin, TX) ★ R. L. Stevenson (Alvin, TX) ★ Promenade Elementary School (Corona, CA) ★ Allen Orrenmaa Elementary School (Riverside, CA) ★ La Granada Elementary School (Riverside, CA) ★ Terrace Elementary School (Riverside, CA) ★ Wells Middle School (Riverside, CA) ★ Alvin Junior High School (Alvin, TX) ★ LeSueur-Henderson Middle/High School (LeSueur, MN) ★ Custer Elementary School (Lakewood, WA) ★ Columbus Middle School (Canoga, CA) ★ Limerick Elementary School (Canoga, CA) ★ Franklin D. Roosevelt Pre-K-8 Academy (Cleveland, OH) ★ 20th Street Elementary School (Los Angeles, CA) ★ 42nd Street Elementary (Los Angeles, CA) ★ 59th Street Elementary (Los Angeles, CA) ★ Budlong Elementary (Los Angeles, CA) ★ Commonwealth Elementary School (Los Angeles, CA) ★ Compton Avenue Elementary (Los Angeles, CA) ★ Garfield High School (Los Angeles, CA) ★ Marina Del Rey Middle School (Los Angeles, CA) ★ San Pascual Elementary School (Los Angeles, CA) ★ Virginia Road Elementary (Los Angeles, CA) ★ Webster Middle School (Los Angeles, CA) ★ West Vernon Avenue Elementary (Los Angeles, CA) ★ Western Elementary School (Los Angeles, CA) ★ Maywood Elementary (Maywood, CA) ★ Strathern Elementary (North Hollywood, CA) ★ Michelle Obama Elementary (Panorama City, CA) ★ STEAM at Legacy High School (South Gate, CA) ★ Kittridge Elementary School (Valley Glen, CA) ★ Banning High School (Wilmington, CA) ★ Mercedes High School (Merced, TX) ★ Port Isabel High School (Port Isabel, TX) ★ San Benito High School (San Benito, TX) ★ Weslaco High School (Weslaco, TX) ★ Rainer Beach High School (Seattle, WA) ★ James S. Rickards High School (Tallahassee, FL) ★ Lincoln High School and Humanities/communications (Dallas, TX) ★ Joseph J. Rhoads Learning Center (Dallas, TX) ★ Charles Rice Learning Center (Dallas, TX) ★ Madison (Dallas, TX) ★ Billy Earl Dade (Dallas, TX) Paul L. Dunbar Learning Center (Dallas, TX) ★ Oran M Roberts (Dallas, TX) ★ Martin Luther King Jr. Learning Center (Dallas, TX) ★ South Oak Cliff High School (Dallas, TX) ★ Boude Storey Middle School (Dallas, TX) ★ Sarah Zumwalt Middle School (Dallas, TX) ★ W. W. Bushman (Dallas, TX) ★ H. I. Holland @ Lisbon ES (Dallas, TX) ★ Dr. Barbara Jordan Elementary School (Dallas, TX) ★ Clara Oliver Elementary School (Dallas, TX) ★ Elisha M. Pease Elementary (Dallas, TX) ★ Thomas L Marsalis Elementary School (Dallas, TX) ★ Clinton P. Russell Elementary (Dallas, TX) ★ Robert L. Thornton Elementary School (Dallas, TX) ★ Whitney W. Young Elementary (Dallas, TX) ★ Heritage Academy of Science and Technology (Minneapolis, MN) ★ Badger Mountain Elementary School (Richland, WA) ★ Jason Lee Elementary (Richland, WA) ★ Jefferson Elementary School (Richland, WA) ★ Marcus Whitman Elementary School (Richland, WA) ★ Lewis and Clark Elementary School (Richland, WA) ★ Tapseal Elementary School (West Richland, WA) ★ William Wiley Elementary School (West Richland, WA) ★ Enterprise Middle School (West Richland, WA) ★ Sacajawea Elementary School (Richland, WA)

DISTRICTS (9 new members) ★ LAUSD- ESC South (Los Angeles, CA) ★ LAUSD- ESC East (Los Angeles, CA) ★ LAUSD- ISIC (Los Angeles, CA) ★ LAUSD- PACE Unit/ESC West (Los Angeles, CA) ★ LAUSD- PCSB (Los Angeles, CA) ★ LAUSD- ESC (Los Angeles, CA) ★ Newburgh Enlarged City School District (Newburgh, NY) ★ Mountain View School District (El Monte, CA) ★ Charleroi Area School District (Charleroi, PA)

ORGANIZATIONS/UNIVERSITY PARTNERS (4 new members) ★ American Psychological Association (Washington, DC) ★ Alameda County Office of Education (Heyward, CA) ★ Partners for Education (Berea, KY) ★ Impact Parent Involvement Training Company (Rochester, NY)

Current Active Membership in the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) as of

April 1, 2015

Schools: 595  Districts: 61  States: 13  Organizations: 31
**Elementary School Report**

**Evaluation Leads to Continual Improvement**

These statements are well known to educators: *What gets measured gets done! Measurement leads to improvement. If you don’t measure, you won’t know where you are or where you aim to go.*

Similar watchwords guide business, medicine, and research in all fields. In education, the importance of assessing progress is most often applied to testing students (e.g., on formative and summative tests and measures, on standardized and classroom assessments). Just about every school measures student progress in reading, math, science, writing, and other subjects to gauge whether the curriculum is effective, instruction is engaging, and students are progressing well or need extra attention.

NNPS knows that the same truisms apply to improving programs of school, family, and community partnerships. Evaluations are critical for the continual improvement of goal-linked programs of family and community engagement. With good measures of program development, schools, districts, states, and organizations in NNPS can continually improve outreach to involve more families and community partners in activities to improve the school climate and to increase students’ academic and behavioral success in school.

Every year, school-based Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) evaluate major components of their partnership programs on the annual NNPS UPDATE surveys (see summary on p. 1 of this issue). NNPS also offers other tools to help schools identify and assess the quality of the family and community engagement activities that they implement each year (See chapter 9 in *School, Family, and Community Partnerships, Your Handbook for Action, 3rd Edition, 2009*).

There also are ways to link family and community partnership activities to common school evaluations to support student learning. *Promising Partnership Practices 2014* included examples of how some ATPs use evaluations to engage families and community partners in ways that (1) contribute to the quality of schools’ partnership programs and (2) increase student achievement.

**Evaluate to Improve the Plan for Partnerships**

The ATP at *Vista Elementary School* in Kennewick, WA realized many parents’ voices were missing when drafting their One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships. To rectify this, the team administered a survey to assess parents’ current involvement experiences and their requests for future engagement—*Surveys for Success: Using Parent Input to Inform Action*. The ATP distributed the survey at a popular school event, collected many parents’ views and expectations, and improved the One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships for the next school year.

**Evaluate to Increase Reading for Pleasure**

To increase the amount of reading for pleasure that students do at home, the ATP at *Moss Bluff Elementary School* in Lake Charles, LA conducted an *Accelerated Reading Carnival*. Accelerated Reading (AR) is a computer-based curriculum that helps teachers manage and monitor children’s reading for pleasure at school and at home. Based on test scores, teachers set individual goals for the minutes each student should read for fun every day. Parents monitor and sign their child’s reading log each week, which opens opportunities for parent-child conversations about books and reading. The annual Carnival celebrates the documented progress students make in reading for pleasure with fun and reading-related activities.

**Use Evaluations to Create Community Partnerships on Reading**

When tests showed that some third graders at *Delmae Elementary School* in Florence, SC needed extra help on reading skills, the school’s ATP and reading teachers leveraged community resources and technology for a solution—*Skype Sessions for Individualized Learning*. They partnered with teacher candidates at Francis Marion University. The future teachers in an elementary reading methods course provided Delmae’s third grade students with weekly one-on-one tutoring sessions in Skype video chats. Eighteen students received personalized instruction over the winter months. By spring, Measures of Academic Performance (MAP) tests showed that all but one student met grade level reading requirements. Here, community partnerships + evaluation = student success.

**Set Goals, Measure, and Record Progress**

At *Rowena Chess Elementary School* in Pasco, WA, each student set personal goals in reading, math, behavior, and attendance for periods of time throughout the school year. The students recorded their progress on each goal in charts and graphs. The school’s ATP hosted...
NNPS at 20!

(Continued from page 1)

They wanted to learn about challenges that arose when educators and families in diverse communities apply evidence-based structures and process and, at the same time, need to customize plans and practices to meet local conditions, populations, and goals for students.

By 1999, it was clear that the network had to change its name to National Network of Partnerships Schools (NNPS) because more schools, districts, states, and organizations wanted to improve their partnership programs. The team at Johns Hopkins University revised its agenda to combine research, professional development, and strategies to “scale up” goal-linked family and community engagement with an open invitation for educators to join NNPS.

Over the years, about 4500 schools, 400 districts, 200 organizations, and many states joined NNPS for at least one year. Members receive books, posters, materials, on-going communications from NNPS Facilitators. They have access to an excellent website and many opportunities to gain and share knowledge and skills on partnership program development (see Top 10 reasons to join NNPS in Issues and Insights, p. 2). Active members must evaluate their programs every year and submit data to NNPS for on-going research and development. Presently, about 60 districts, 600 schools, 30 organizations, and several states are actively engaged with NNPS. Others are welcome!

NNPS at 20 is a vital resource for any school, district, state, or organization that is ready to strengthen its program of school, family, and community partnerships for student success in school. At the fall 2015 Leadership Development Conference (November 5-6), NNPS will celebrate its 20th Anniversary. As the 2015-16 school year unfolds, NNPS will feature lessons learned and good work done by leaders and teams in this and other countries.

Meeting the Challenge

(Continued from page 4)

committees. Knowing that the district could not translate all communications in all languages, the ATP mobilized its students to serve as Ambassadors between school and home. In How to Communicate in Over 20 Languages, the school librarian met with students at the start of each month and distributed monthly school calendars with details on upcoming involvement activities. Students were guided to use their home languages to share the calendars, encourage parents to participate, and to post the calendars on the refrigerator.

At Cloverdale Middle School in Little Rock, AR, the ATP wanted to promote family engagement and started by asking parents what they wanted and needed from the school. Parents of English Language Learners (ELL) requested opportunities to learn more about the school, share their cultures with others, and discuss the challenges they faced. In response, Cloverdale hosted Getting to Know Us—a family night where students performed and parents shared stories about growing up in different countries, migrating to Arkansas, and how they supported their child at home. Teachers shared information with families about the school, ELL and other programs, and ways to encourage early adolescents’ learning and success in grades 6, 7, and 8.

There is a persistent and widespread need for educators to address challenges of engaging families who do not speak English. Ignoring this challenge keeps many families at a distance from the school and limits their support for children’s learning at all grade levels. As the NNPS data and these examples show, there are many good ways to engage families from diverse backgrounds in elementary, middle, and high schools.

Middle and High School Report

(Continued from page 5)

video for discussions between parents and students at Now What?

The interesting thing about all of these middle and high school engagement activities is that they were planned and conducted by schools’ ATPs with cooperation from many other partners. At the middle and high school levels, the students—theirtheseluses—must be active participants in partnership activities. In these ways, NNPS middle and high schools are developing effective partnership programs. Others can do the same.

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Elementary School Report

(Continued from page 9)

three Goal Sharing Nights throughout the year for each student to present their folders and evidence of progress to their parents and teachers. Students discussed their plans and records with their parents, and celebrated accomplishments. The ATP believes the activity contributed to students higher test scores.

How is your school using data and evaluations to improve your program of partnerships and to increase student success? Consider submitting your best evaluation practices for consideration in Promising Partnership Practices 2015.

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Leadership Line

Facilitate School ATPs: An Imperative Role for District Leaders

District Leaders for Partnerships in NNPS are asked to fulfill two responsibilities:

• Conduct district-level leadership actions that build a culture of good partnerships throughout the district.

• Facilitate schools’ Action Teams for Partnerships so that every school conducts a goal-linked program of partnerships to engage all of its students’ families in ways that support student success in school.

Leaders for Partnerships are expected to create awareness of the district’s and schools’ partnership programs; align program and policy; share knowledge to improve the quality of partnership programs; guide learning by training schools’ ATPs to develop their site-based partnership programs; celebrate milestones to recognize excellent leaders, projects, and activities; and document progress and evaluate outcomes. They may select many ways to activate these strategies—all of which strengthen district and school partnership programs and practices.

Studies show that when district leaders use these leadership strategies to guide ATPs, the schools improve the quality of their partnership programs. They are more likely to have well-functioning ATPs, write plans for goal-linked engagement activities, and conduct annual evaluations of progress. On 2014 UPDATE surveys, district leaders reported conducting an average of 11 facilitative actions with school ATPs. This indicates that they are working to fulfill the two important responsibilities of leadership and facilitation.

Here are three ways that districts that earned NNPS Partnership Awards in 2014 applied the NNPS leadership strategies to guide school ATPs to strengthen their partnership programs.

Document Progress and Evaluate Outcomes

The District-wide ATP Chair Retreat in Kennewick School District in Washington brought ATP leaders together at the end of the year to reflect on their school’s partnership program and to frame ideas for improving their programs in the next school year. Prior to the retreat, the ATP chairs and co-chairs completed self-evaluations (adapted from neighboring Pasco School District). They identified areas of excellence, leadership skills that improved over the year, and leadership skills that they wanted to strengthen. At the retreat, role-playing activities helped the ATP chairs strengthen those skills. The retreat also provided time to review and improve their schools’ One-Year Action Plans for Partnerships for the next year. Read this story at http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/awards/2014/district/kennewick-district.html

Share Knowledge

District Leaders for Partnerships in Pasco School District in Washington organized Words of Wisdom for experienced ATP Chairs to share their best leadership skills and practices with new team chairs and co-chairs. In Pasco, all schools are members of NNPS and there is a deep pool of experts on partnerships at the district level and across schools. At cluster meetings three times a year, three experienced school ATP Chairpersons at the elementary, middle, and high school levels shared their knowledge, best practices, and lessons learned with the other ATP chairs, co-chairs, and district representatives. “We know that people respond favorably to suggestions made by colleagues and take their ideas to heart,” said one district coordinator. Read this story at http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/ ppp/2014/pdf/PPP_2014_82.pdf

(Also see these approaches in Promising Partnership Practices 2014 and in Type 2 #37).

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2015

April
- Spring issue of Type 2. Sent by E-Alert and available online at www.partnershipschools.org.

April
- Invitation for NNPS members to contribute to Promising Partnership Practices 2015. Due May 15.
  Eligible members will be invited to apply for NNPS Partnership Awards for 2015. Due June 30.

April
- Members will receive 2015 UPDATE via Eblast and Email. Available at www.partnershipschools.org. Follow link from home page. Due June 30.

May 15

June 30
- 2015 UPDATE due to NNPS with $200 fee to renew membership for the 2015-16 school year.

June 30
- Partnership Awards Applications due.

August
  Monthly E-Briefs resume from NNPS facilitators to all members.

September
- Fall issue of Type 2 - #39 via E-Alert and website.

November 5-6
- Leadership Development Conference in Baltimore for new and experienced school, district, state, and organization leaders.
  This professional development conference is the best way to strengthen YOUR programs of school, family, and community partnerships.

  Plan to attend! Celebrate NNPS at 20! - as we start our 20th year as a network to improve goal-linked programs of school, family, and community partnerships!

TIME TO REFLECT, REVIEW, and 🎵“TOOT” YOUR HORN
Evaluate progress! Share the best!

Submit YOUR Best Practice by MAY 15

APPLY for a PARTNERSHIP AWARD by JUNE 30
Spotlight your hard work and progress!
Members in NNPS for 2 years or more may apply.

EVALUATE Program Progress by JUNE 30
Members before December 1, 2014 must return UPDATE and renewal fee to continue for the 15-16 school year.

All forms are on the NNPS Website. Follow links from the home page.
NNPS PAYS A MATCHING FEE to support your membership.