


## NNPS AWARENESS SESSION

Research-Based Strategies for Excellent Programs  
of Family and Community Engagement

**SPRING TERM**  
January - June  
Prepare for 2026-27 School Year

January 22, 2026  
2-4 p.m. (EST)

Joyce L. Epstein, Co-Director, NNPS  
Steven B. Sheldon, Co-Director, NNPS  
Brenda G. Thomas, Senior Facilitator



NATIONAL NETWORK OF  
Partnership Schools  
JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

*Working Together for Student Success*

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## MEET the NNPS Staff

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Co-Director NNPS  
Professor of Education

**Brenda G. Thomas**  
Senior Program Facilitator

**Steven B. Sheldon**  
Co-Director NNPS  
Associate Professor of Education

**With assistance from:**

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Grants & Contracts Analyst, School of Education

**Zhe Zhao**  
NNPS Coordinator

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## Who is Here?

**State, SFEC, Organization, and District  
LEADERS FOR PARTNERSHIPS**

*NNPS Professional Development Partners  
and their Co-Leaders and Colleagues*

<p><b>Arkansas</b></p> <p><b>California</b></p> <p><b>Connecticut</b></p> <p><b>Louisiana</b></p> <p><b>Maine</b></p>	<p><b>New Hampshire</b></p> <p><b>New Jersey</b></p> <p><b>New York</b></p> <p><b>Ohio – plus Ohio, Ohio</b></p> <p><b>South Carolina</b></p> <p><b>Washington</b></p>
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## LOGISTICS

In the **CHAT**, please sign in with your **name & location**.

- Use the **CHAT** for your questions and comments.
- **MUTE** your mic and **TURN OFF** your video. When you volunteer with your ideas or questions, please turn these on.
- **This session will be recorded** and shared in *Leadership Line*.
- **REMEMBER**—As an NNPS Partner, YOU can ask questions or request resources at **ANY TIME**—[nnps@jhu.edu](mailto:nnps@jhu.edu).

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**BY THE END OF THIS WORKSHOP**  
you will know and be able to explain. . .

Not only **THAT** partnerships are important.  
Not only **WHAT** is needed in an excellent partnership program?

But also **HOW** to organize high-quality and effective **programs**.  
and ... **HOW** to **customize programs** to engage all families with diverse backgrounds.

We must think in new ways about leadership for partnerships at the state, region, district, and school levels.

★ Who is "WE?"

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\*\*\* NNPS Agenda \*\*\*

**Strengthen state, region, and district leadership for partnerships.**

- Studies confirm that strong leaders for partnerships are **KEY** for guiding all schools to develop excellent and equitable programs of family and community engagement.
- NNPS workshops and resources will help YOU guide all schools to welcome all families in ways that boost student success in school.
- We conduct NNPS workshops—fall and spring—because:
  - Leaders leave; new leaders and new partners are added.
  - Student and family populations change—every year.
  - It is hard to absorb everything at once.

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Why is it important to engage families and the community in children's education?

Research shows that:

- Students with involved parents – regardless of income or background – do better in school.
- Partnership programs may increase student achievement, improve attendance and behavior.
- When partnership practices are **GOAL-LINKED**, family engagement can increase student learning and success.



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Why is it important for DISTRICTS to have LEADERS for PARTNERSHIPS?

Research shows that:

When Leaders for Partnerships provide research-based workshops and facilitate their schools' Action Teams for Partnerships, the schools:

- Have higher quality partnership programs
- Address more challenges to involve more families, including those who are often "hard to reach."

Source: Epstein & Sheldon, 2016; Epstein, Galindo, & Sheldon, 2012. .

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Everyone wants EXCELLENT and SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS and STUDENTS.

How will we reach these goals?  
Theoretical Model: Overlapping Spheres of Influence



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DEFINITION

**THEN**  
(OLD way...  
it USED to be...)

**NOW**  
(BETTER way—  
research-based...  
NOW we say...)

Parent involvement

School, family, and community partnerships

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RESPONSIBILITY

**THEN**

Up to parents

Organized by one person or just a few

**NOW**

Shared responsibility

Part of school and classroom organization

Organized by an Action Team for Partnerships

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Action Team for Partnerships (ATP)

EACH school-based team has at least...

- ✓ 2-3 teachers
- ✓ 2-3 parents/family members
- ✓ Principal
- ✓ 1-2 students at the high school level

Schools may add:

- ✓ Administrator, school counselor, PTA or PTO representative, nurse, parent liaison, community partner, or others.

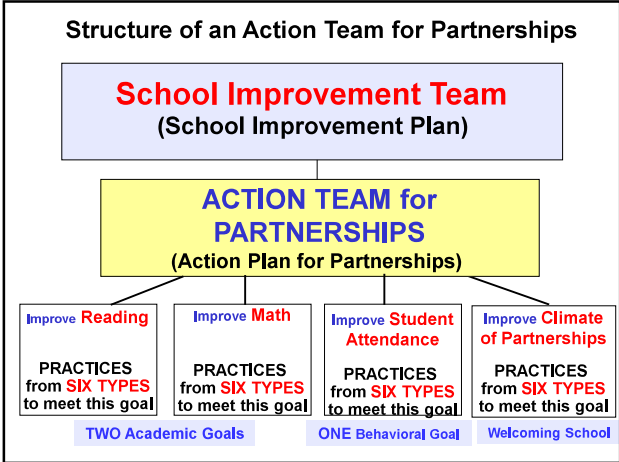
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**What does an Action Team for Partnerships do?**  
**ATP MEMBERS work together to . . .**

- Review school goals. Select:
  - 2 academic goals
  - 1 behavioral goal
  - 1 goal for a welcoming school climate.
- Write a One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships with activities that contribute to these 4 goals (NNPS template/plan),
- Implement and evaluate the quality of activities, outreach to families, responses, and results.
- Continually improve partnership plans, program, and practices.

**ALERT! PLAN AHEAD! FEBRUARY 26!**  
**NNPS SCHOOL TEAM TRAINING**  
 District leaders bring their schools' ATPs to this workshop!

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**PROGRAM DESIGN**

<u>THEN</u>	<u>NOW</u>
Incidental or accidental	Part of comprehensive school improvement
Off to the side	Goal-Linked
	Framework of 6 types of involvement

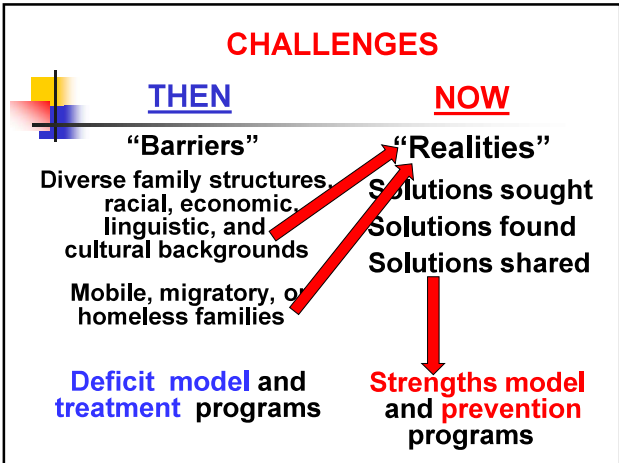
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**Solve Challenges to Engage ALL Families**

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**IMPLEMENTATION**

<u>THEN</u>	<u>NOW</u>
PreK-K	All grades, PreK-12
Separate groups of parents	All groups united + contributing: Special Education, Title I, PTA or PTO, others
Isolated activities	Sense of community

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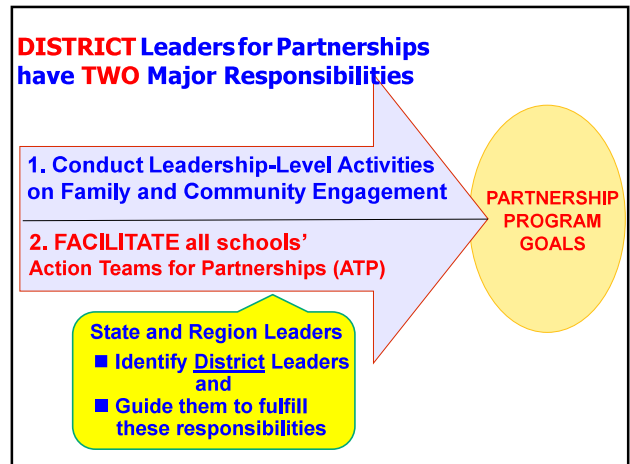
**Strengthen  
YOUR LEADERSHIP  
for Partnerships**

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**IMPLEMENTATION**

<u>THEN</u>	<u>NOW</u>
School-by-school decisions	Multi-level leaders: <b>School, District</b> <b>Region, State,</b> <b>Organization,</b> <b>and Federal Roles</b>
	Implement <b>official policies</b> on family involvement
	<b>A "Leadership Ladder"</b>

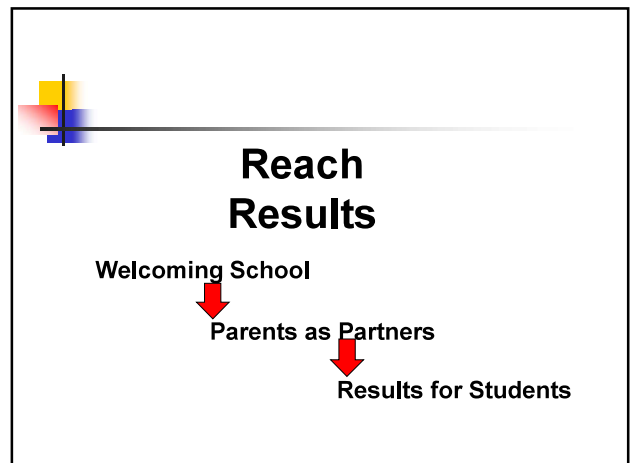
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<b>RESULTS</b>	
<u>THEN</u>	<u>NOW</u>
Parent outcomes	Link practices to student outcomes... achievement, attendance, other measures of success
Public relations	Ensure a welcoming school for all partners
A few parent leaders	

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## Action Plan for Partnerships

### Linked to Goals for Student Success

Each school's Action Plan for Partnerships is based on the goals in its own *School Improvement Plan*.

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**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EXAMPLE**  
for a One-Year Action Plan to **IMPROVE READING ACHIEVEMENT**

**READING GOAL** 

**TYPE 1** Workshop for parents on best ways to read stories aloud with young children

**TYPE 2** Parent-teacher-student conferences on reading goals and reading progress

**TYPE 3** Reading-partner volunteers, guest readers of favorite stories, and other read-with-me activities

**TYPE 4** Family Reading Night—students demonstrate reading strategies and activities to conduct with parents at home

**TYPE 5** PTA or PTO support for a family room with information on reading, book swaps, and other reading activities

**TYPE 6** Donations from business partners of books for classrooms, school library, and for children to take home

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MORE IDEAS at all school levels? See NNPS books of Promising Partnership Practices at [www.partnershipschoools.org](http://www.partnershipschoools.org).

See the NNPS manual: *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition*, Corwin Press, 2019.

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## Evaluate Results

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<b>EVALUATION</b>	
<u>THEN</u>	<u>NOW</u>
Minimal or Optional	Essential
For “compliance”	Quality and progress of programs
	Outreach to engage all families
	Results for students

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<b>NETWORKING</b>	
<u>THEN</u>	<u>NOW</u>
Each school worked alone—unaware of others	Success stories are shared
	Schools learn from each other

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<b>BUDGET\$ for PARTNERSHIP\$</b>	
<u>THEN</u>	<u>NOW</u>
Not well allocated	<b>\$\$</b> Program development
Fragmented spending	Goal-linked activities in Action Plans

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<b>EQUITY ISSUES</b>	
<u>THEN</u>	<u>NOW</u>
Label <b>HAVEs and HAVE NOTs</b>	<b>ACTION to involve all families</b> at home, school, or in the community
“Blame game” if parents are not “visible” at school	Communicate in languages parents understand

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**SUMMARY**

In this session we discussed many changes from the “old way” to a “new and better way” of organizing more effective programs of family and community engagement.

Definition  
All Grade Levels  
**ACTION TEAM**  
Framework- 6 Types  
**ANNUAL ACTION PLAN**  
LINK to SCHOOL GOALS for Student learning and behavior  
“LEADERSHIP LADDER” – Shared Leadership  
**EQUITY— Engage ALL Families**  
Budgeting  
**EVALUATION**  
Networking  
**RESULTS for STUDENTS**

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Definition  
All Grade Levels  
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Framework- 6 Types  
**ANNUAL ACTION PLAN**  
LINK to SCHOOL GOALS for student learning and behavior  
“LEADERSHIP LADDER” STATE, DISTRICT, SCHOOL  
**EQUITY— Engage ALL Families**  
Budgeting  
**EVALUATION**  
Networking  
**RESULTS for STUDENTS**

**THINK-QUICK ACTIVITY**  
In the **CHAT BOX** write your idea:  
**WHICH CHANGE** from **THEN** to **NOW** is **most important** for improving **YOUR** program of family and community engagement?  
And **WHY?**

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**A network can help!** **NNPS at Johns Hopkins University is YOUR NETWORK of NETWORKS**  
**YOU will establish YOUR Network of Partnership Schools.**

- NNPS provides research-based tools, training, and publications.
- NNPS offers “on-call” technical assistance by phone, email, and website.
- NNPS conducts quarterly support sessions (Let’s Talk...) and quarterly knowledge-building sessions (Let’s Learn...).
- NNPS tools (e.g., Action Plan for Partnerships) will help you meet ESSA and Title I requirements for parent and family engagement.
- National Spotlight: *Leadership Line*, the NNPS newsletter, provides recordings of all NNPS sessions, and gives national recognition to YOUR work on partnerships.




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**NNPS PUBLICATIONS**

<p>Corwin Press 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2019</p> <p>SCHOOL, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS YOUR HANDBOOK FOR ACTION FOURTH EDITION JOYCE L. EPSTEIN AND ASSOCIATES</p>	<p>Corwin Press 2009</p> <p>PRINCIPALS Matter A Guide to School, Family, and Community Partnerships Marci G. Sanders • Steven B. Sheldon</p>	<p>Taylor and Francis 2012</p> <p>Multicultural Partnerships Involve All Families JOYCE L. EPSTEIN AND STEVEN B. SHELDON</p>
<p>Taylor and Francis 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2015</p> <p>Family Reading Night Nancy Kachner • Heidi S. Goodall • Janet Sparks</p>	<p>Taylor &amp; Francis 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 2023</p> <p>SCHOOL, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS Preparing Educators and Improving Schools Third Edition JOYCE L. EPSTEIN AND STEVEN B. SHELDON</p>	

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**MORE NNPS PUBLICATIONS**

<p>FROM NNPS 2023 E-Book</p>  <p><b>PROMISING PARTNERSHIP PRACTICES</b></p> <p>An annual collection from the members of the National Network of Partnership Schools Johns Hopkins University</p> <p><b>2023</b></p> <p>Edited by Brenda G. Thomas, Joyce L. Epstein, and Dr. Sheldon</p> <p>EXPLORE 10+ Years of Promising Partnership Practices at <a href="http://www.partnershipschools.org">www.partnershipschools.org</a></p>	<p>FROM NNPS (18 Booklets)</p>  <p><b>SAMPLERS</b> Summary of Research &amp; Sample Engagement Activities</p> <p>READING, MATH SCIENCE, WRITING ARTS, HEALTH, ATTENDANCE, BEHAVIOR, HOMEWORK, TRANSITIONS, FATHERS COLLEGE and CAREERS, PRESCHOOLS, MIDDLE SCHOOLS, HIGH SCHOOLS GRANDPARENTS, SUMMER LEARNING, TESTS &amp; ASSESSMENTS</p>	<p>FROM NNPS</p>  <p><b>TIPS</b> Interactive Homework</p> <p>Elem Literacy K-3 Math K-5 Middle Grades Language Arts 6-8 Science 6-8 Math 6-8</p> <p>See TIPS RESOURCES on the NNPS website</p>
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**NEXT STEPS with NNPS**

**February 3 – Let’s Talk about Partnerships**  
Meet each other, share best practices, identify emerging challenges, and discuss solutions.

**February 12 – Leadership Institute**  
State, Region, and District Leaders for Partnerships invite YOUR colleagues, new leaders, staff.

★ **February 26 – School Team Training**  
YOU MUST IDENTIFY the SCHOOLS that will attend this workshop.  
Have your SCHOOLS form their ATPs, Each school’s ATP will meet AS A TEAM to work together at this workshop.

YOU may use an NNPS “RSVP” (registration form) to learn WHICH SCHOOLS and which ATP MEMBERS will attend the NNPS Team Training.

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**Q & A**

**In the CHAT or Raise Your Hand:**

What questions do you have about the **OLD way** vs. the **NEW way** to strengthen your program of family and community engagement?

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**Instant Feedback**  
**ALL Attendees**

*Before you leave . . .*

Click the **LINK** in the CHAT to complete a quick survey of YOUR feedback on this session.

Thank you!

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**For more information**  
[www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org)

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