PROMISING PARTNERSHIP PRACTICES

An annual collection from the members of the

National Network of Partnership Schools

Johns Hopkins University

2016

Edited by

Brenda G. Thomas, Marsha D. Greenfeld, R. Tyler Ames, and Joyce L. Epstein

PROMISING PARTNERSHIP PRACTICES

An annual collection from the members of the

National Network of Partnership Schools

Johns Hopkins University

2016

Edited by

Brenda G. Thomas, Marsha D. Greenfeld, R. Tyler Ames, and Joyce L. Epstein

Copyright © 2016
Baltimore, Maryand: National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS)
at Johns Hopkins University

All rights reserved. The use of this document is authorized only for educators, local school sites, and/or noncommercial entities who have purchased the book. Except for that usage, no part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Photo Credits

Thanks to:

Dolby Elementary School, Calcasieu Parish School Board, LA

Emmett O'Brien Technical High School, Connecticut Technical High School System

Francis Howell Middle School, Francis Howell School District, MO

Virgie Robinson Elementary School, Pasco School District, WA

for the photographs of partnership activities in *Promising Partnership Practices 2016*.

Acknowledgement

Thanks to Megumi Hine for her assistance in preparing *Promising Partnership Practices 2016* for publication.

For more information:

National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS)
Johns Hopkins University
2701 N. Charles Street
Suite 300
Baltimore, MD 21218

phone: (410) 516-2318
fax : (410) 516-8890

e-mail: **nnps@jhu.edu**

www.partnershipschools.org

Printed in the United States of America

INTRODUCTION

PROMISING PARTNERSHIP PRACTICES 2016

Joyce L. Epstein, Director
National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS)

Last year, NNPS celebrated its 20th anniversary as a network. We have published annual books of *Promising Partnership Practices* almost as long—starting in 1998. You would think that the accumulated collection of over 1200 activities from schools, districts, states, and organizations would have exhausted creativity and that we would have "seen it all." In fact, this year's book includes many new ideas and new designs for family and community engagement activities that make us smile with pleasure and with pride.

We are pleased and proud to know that creative people on school teams and in leadership offices continue to develop new and better engagement activities. Good partnership work is being done in diverse communities across the country to make schools more welcoming places and to improve student achievement in specific subjects, behavior, health, college and career planning, and other important outcomes.

You will enjoy exploring every section of this book. "Monsters" made an impact this year. See a clever, well-planned *Monster Mash Family Literacy Night* (in Reading), with monster games that helped students demonstrate and practice grade-specific literacy skills. At *Monster Math* students created math monsters that decorated the walls. Math games for each grade level focused on monstrous skills that students must master to pass to meet state standards. Hundreds of families and their students attended these activities.

Math also was the focus of *Mardi Gras Mathness*. At this celebration, everyone enjoyed math games and parents learned how to help students in PreK to Grade 2 practice early math skills. Other schools extended attention to all STEM subjects—science, technology, engineering and math. If you choose to accept this challenge, see *Mission STEMPossible* (in Science). Students and families met many scientists and engineers from the community who conducted fun learning activities and expanded students' career awareness. And, check out *Family STEM Night* (in Other/Multiple Subjects), where high school students showcased their STEM projects and conducted hand-on activities for parents, other students, and community partners.

These are a few of many excellent examples of family and community engagement activities in the book. An underlying theme this year is the central role that *students* play as the main actors in their own education. When students are "in charge" of a partnership activity—showing what they are learning and how they are behaving in school—parents want to attend the event, gain pride in their child's capabilities, and become more comfortable at school and at home as partners in their child's education. See the delightful *WIGS and PIGS* (in Behavior) for how students set their own learning goals, monitor results, and explain these to their parents so that they can support their children's success in school.

In This Collection . . .

All activities come *from* members of NNPS *for* members and others who use the NNPS website to strengthen their partnership programs. From over 100 submissions, the editors of *Promising Partnership Practices 2016* selected 74 activities from 57 schools and 17 districts and organizations. These sites are located in communities across the country—from Connecticut to California and points between, and from one excellent NNPS partner in Scotland. The schools, districts, and organizations serve students and families that are economically, racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse.

Which activities will interest you? Four Tables of Contents (TOC) will help you find goal-linked ideas to strengthen your partnership program.

1. **GOALS FOR PARTNERSHIPS.** Check this TOC for activities that engage family and community partners to improve a school's welcoming climate and to increase students' skills and positive attitudes in reading, math, science, and other or multiple school subjects; improve student behavior, health, multicultural awareness, transitions to new school levels, and plans for college or career.

   See excellent activities from district and organization leaders on how to strengthen leadership on partnerships and school-based programs of family and community engagement.

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

2. **SIX TYPES OF INVOLVEMENT.** This TOC identifies activities that strengthen **parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making,** and **collaborating with the community**. Although each activity is identified with *one* type of involvement, each practice may activate several types of involvement.

3. **SCHOOL AND POLICY LEVELS.** This TOC lists activities from elementary, middle, and high schools. Preschool activities are listed with the elementary level. Remember—many activities implemented at one school level may be used or adapted at other school levels. Also, see activities for district and organization leaders.

4. **CONTRIBUTORS.** This TOC identifies the programs (name of contributor, city/state) that are included in this book. Activities developed in one community (urban, suburban, or rural) may be adapted to meet conditions and interests in other locations.

Also see. . .

NNPS WEBSITE. *Promising Partnership Practices 2016* will be posted on the NNPS website—**www.partnershipschools.org—**in the section **Success Stories.** One print copy is sent to each member site in NNPS. See the Order Form on the website for additional print copies.

NNPS *SAMPLERS*. NNPS *SAMPLERS* provide an easy way to review ten good activities from prior books of *Promising Partnership Practices*. The *Samplers* help schools meet partnership goals in **reading, writing, math, science, health, the arts, homework, attendance, behavior, career awareness/postsecondary planning, transitions to new schools, involving fathers,** and for improving partnership programs in **preschools, middle schools,** and **high schools.** New samplers completed in 2016 have been posted for **involving grandparents** and **family engagement for students' summer learning**. A *Sampler* on engaging families to understand tests and assessments is coming soon. Each *Sampler* includes a one- page summary of results of research on the featured topic. See all *Samplers* in the section Success Stories. See the Order Form for print copies of *Samplers* for easy distribution.

MEMBERS ONLY. NNPS will reinstate the **MEMBERS ONLY** code on the NNPS website for access to prior books of *Promising Partnership Practices* (from 2010 to 2015) and to all *Samplers*.

The **Members Only Code** starting in January 2017 will be **NNPSmem17.** Members will be reminded when the new code is activated in monthly E-Briefs.

National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS)
at Johns Hopkins University

Established by Dr. Joyce L. Epstein and her colleagues at Johns Hopkins University in 1996, the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) provides professional development and on-going technical assistance to strengthen leadership for programs of school, family, and community partnerships. NNPS assists schools, districts, organizations, and state departments of education to develop and sustain research-based partnership programs that contribute to student learning and development.

- Each Partnership School strengthens its program by forming an Action Team for Partnerships (ATP), writing goal-linked partnership plans, and conducting partnership practices using the framework of Six Types of Involvement to engage all families in their children's education in varied and meaningful ways.
- Districts, organizations, and states are guided to develop policies, provide leadership, and directly facilitate schools' ATPs to organize, implement, evaluate, and continually improve their programs of family and community engagement.

All members of NNPS benefit from on-going research at Johns Hopkins University. In annual books of *Promising Partnership Practices*, members share best practices to improve school climate, engage all families, and increase student success in school.

For more information, visit **www.partnershipschools.org**.
To become a member, click on **Join NNPS**.

Contents

1: ACADEMIC GOALS

Reading and Literacy

Bridging the Gap by Reading Everywhere 3
Build-A-Book Around Literacy 4
Comprehension Retention 5
Cultivating a Culture of Reading: Dinner and a Book 6
Dr. Seuss Night—A K-1 Literacy Night 7
Family Literacy 8
Groovy Family Read Night 9
Literacy Game Night 10
Literacy Night at the Museum 11
Monster Mash Family Literacy Night 12
Parents, Me, and Poetry 13

Math

A Day with Dad 14
Academic Egg Hunt 15
Mardi Gras Mathness 16
Math Olympiad: Bring Back the Fun in Math 17
Monster Math Night 18
Together We Tailgate 19

Science

Amistad Community Garden 20
Bring It On—Get It Done: Science Board Workshop 21
Community Connections Create Chemistry (C4) 22
Mission: STEMPossible 23
Robotics Club 24

Other/Multiple Subjects

Family Game Night 25
Familiarizing Families with PARCC 26
Family STEM Night 27
Full S.T.E.A.M. Ahead Engineering Club 28
Goal Sharing STEM Night. 29
Hawthorne Technology University 30
Leadership Binders. 31
Living Wax Museum 32
Milestone Checklist for IEPs. 33
Spring into LEAP 34
Tinkertopia 35

2: NON-ACADEMIC GOALS

Behavior

Community Service Craft Night. 39
Conscious Discipline 40
Man-Up Initiative: Male Mentoring. 41
Rise Above Awards. 42
St. Jude Trike-A-Thon 43
WIGS and PIGS—Their Vision; Our Future. 44

College and Careers

American Education Week 45
Careers, Craftsmanship, and Community in the Classrooms 46
BMA College/Career Fair 47
Honor Ceremony: Exemplary Portfolios. 48

Health and Safety

Healthy Teen 49
Taste of Dower—Iron Chef Night 50

Multicultural Awareness

Latin America Fair 51

Transitions

Family Move-Up Night 52
Graduation Requirements Parent Meetings 53
Ready! for Kindergarten Plus!. 54

3: CLIMATE OF PARTNERSHIP GOALS

Alumni Trade Tour. 57
Communication Calendar. 58
Dads and Drills 59
Family Trivia Night 60
Million Father March 61
Grandparents and the BINGO Connection!. 62
Veteran's Day Breakfast 63
Watson Wonderland. 64

4: DISTRICT AND ORGANIZATION LEADERSHIP

District

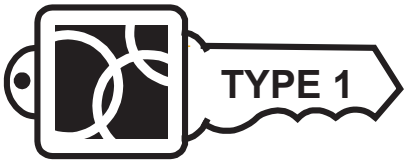
Alvin ISD Book Bus 67
Annual District Calendar and Handbook. 68
Break Bags 69
Celebrating Parental Involvement Accomplishments 70
Community Resource Roundtable. 71
CTHSS Staff Liaison Cluster Meetings 72
Interpreter Training Program 73
Keep It Personal For Student Success 74
Key Contacts and NNPS Facilitator Collaboration 75
NBA Math Hoops. 76
News You Can Use 77
We are a STEM Family. 78

Organization

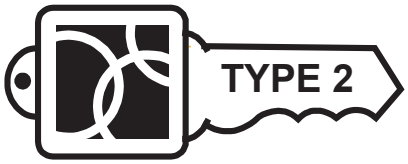
Celebration Time: Sharing Best Practices 79
ESI Family Overnight College Expedition 80
Joining Forces: Parent-Teacher Leadership Training. 81
Learning on The Go with *ReadyRosie* 82
Partnership Schools Scotland (PSS) 83

THE KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

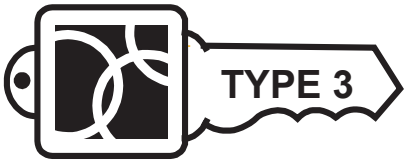
EPSTEIN'S SIX TYPES OF INVOLVEMENT



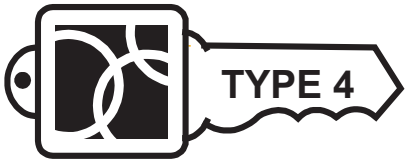
PARENTING: Assist families in understanding child and adolescent development and in setting home conditions that support children as students at each grade level. Assist schools in understanding families.



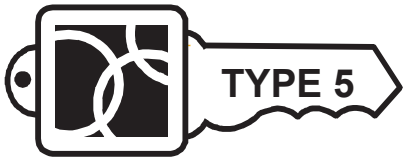
COMMUNICATING: Communicate with families about school programs and student progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications.



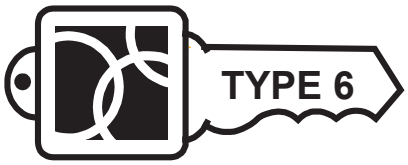
VOLUNTEERING: Improve recruitment, training, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school and in other locations to support students and school programs.



LEARNING AT HOME: Involve families with their children in learning at home, including homework, other curriculum-related activities, and individual course and program decisions.



DECISION MAKING: Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through PTA/PTO, school councils, committees, action teams, and other parent organizations.



COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY: Coordinate community resources and services for students, families, and the school with businesses, agencies, and other groups, and provide services to the community.

© Epstein, J. L., et al., (2009). .*School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action, third edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. See chapter 5.

ACTIVITIES BY TYPE OF INVOLVEMENT

Type 1: Parenting

Build-A-Book Around Literacy 4
Conscious Discipline 40
Cultivating a Culture of Reading: Dinner and a Book 6
Dr. Seuss Night—A K-1 Literacy Night 7
Familiarizing Families with PARCC 26
Healthy Teen 49
Taste of Dower—Iron Chef Night 50

Type 2: Communicating

Communication Calendar 58
Family Move-Up Night 52
Graduation Requirements Parent Meetings 53
Groovy Family Read Night 9
Living Wax Museum 33
Mardi Gras Mathness 16
Milestone Checklist for IEPs 33
Parents, Me, and Poetry 13
Ready! for Kindergarten Plus! 54
Together We Tailgate 19

Type 3: Volunteering

A Day with Dad 14
Academic Egg Hunt 15
Amistad Community Garden 20
Careers, Craftsmanship, and Community in the Classroom 46
Dads and Drills 59
Full S.T.E.A.M. Ahead Engineering Club 28

Type 3:Volunteering, continued

Grandparents and the BINGO Connection!. 62
Honor Ceremony: Exemplary Portfolios. 48
Robotics Club 24
St. Jude Trike-A-Thon 43
Tinkertopia 35
Veteran's Day Breakfast 63

Type 4: Learning at Home

Bring It On—Get It Done: Science Board Workshop 21
Community Connections Create Chemistry (C4). 22
Comprehension Retention 5
Family Literacy 8
Family Game Night 25
Goal Sharing STEM Night. 29
Leadership Binders. 31
Literacy Game Night 10
Monster Mash Family Literacy Night 12
Monster Math Night. 18
Spring into LEAP 34

Type 5: Decision Making

Family Trivia Night 60
Hawthorne Technology University 30
Latin America Fair 51
Mission: STEMPossible 23
Watson Wonderland. 64
WIGS and PIGS—Their Vision; Our Future. 44

Type 6: Collaborating with the Community

Alumni Trade Tour 57
American Education Week 45
BMA College/Career Fair 47
Bridging the Gap by Reading Everywhere 3
Community Service Craft Night 39
Family STEM Night 27
Literacy Night at the Museum 11
Man-Up Initiative: Male Mentoring 41
Math Olympiad: Bring Back the Fun in Math 17
Million Father March 61
Rise Above Awards 42

ACTIVITIES BY LEVEL

Preschool

Conscious Discipline 40
Family Game Night 25
Family Literacy 8
Milestone Checklist for IEPs 33
St. Jude Trike-A-Thon 43

Elementary Grades

A Day with Dad 14
Academic Egg Hunt 15
American Education Week 45
Amistad Community Garden 20
Build-A-Book Around Literacy 4
Careers, Craftsmanship, and Community in the Classroom 46
Community Connections Create Chemistry (C4) 22
Community Service Craft Night 39
Comprehension Retention 5
Dads and Drills 59
Dr. Seuss Night—A K-1 Literacy Night 7
Family Move-Up Night 52
Goal Sharing STEM Night 29
Groovy Family Read Night 9
Hawthorne Technology University 30
Latin America Fair 51
Leadership Binders 31
Literacy Game Night 10
Literacy Night at the Museum 11
Living Wax Museum 32
Mardi Gras Mathness 16
Million Father March 61
Mission: STEMPossible 23

Monster Mash Family Literacy Night 12
Monster Math Night. 18
Ready! for Kindergarten Plus!. 54
Spring into LEAP 34
Taste of Dower—Iron Chef Night 50
Tinkertopia 35
Together We Tailgate 19
Watson Wonderland. 64
WIGS and PIGS—Their Vision; Our Future. 44

Middle Grades

Bridging the Gap by Reading Everywhere 3
Bring It On—Get It Done: Science Board Workshop 21
Communication Calendar. 58
Cultivating a Culture of Reading: Dinner and a Book 6
Familiarizing Families with PARCC 26
Family Trivia Night 60
Full S.T.E.A.M. Ahead Engineering Club 28
Grandparents and the BINGO Connection!. 62
Healthy Teen 49
Parents, Me, and Poetry. 13
Robotics Club 24

High School

Alumni Trade Tour. 57
BMA College/Career Fair 47
Family STEM Night 27
Graduation Requirements Parent Meetings 53
Honor Ceremony: Exemplary Portfolios. 48
Man-Up Initiative: Male Mentoring. 41
Math Olympiad: Bring Back the Fun in Math 17
Rise Above Awards. 42
Veteran's Day Breakfast 63

District

Alvin ISD Book Bus 67
Annual District Calendar and Handbook. 68
Break Bags 69
Celebrating Parental Involvement Accomplishments 70
Community Resource Roundtable. 71
CTHSS Staff Liaison Cluster Meetings 72
Interpreter Training Program 73
Keep It Personal For Student Success 74
Key Contacts and NNPS Facilitator Collaboration 75
NBA Math Hoops. 76
News You Can Use 77
We Are a STEM Family 78

Organization

Celebration Time: Sharing Best Practices 79
ESI Family Overnight College Expedition 80
Joining Forces: Parent-Teacher Leadership Training. 81
Learning on The Go with *ReadyRosie* 82
Partnership Schools Scotland (PSS). 83

ALPHABETICAL INDEX OF CONTRIBUTORS

Alvin Independent School District *Alvin, TX*	**Alvin ISD Book Bus**	**67**
Amistad Elementary School *Kennewick, WA*	**Amistad Community Garden**	**20**
Arden Elementary School *Columbia, SC*	**Family Move-Up Night**	**52**
Barnwell Middle School *St. Charles, MO*	**Robotics Club**	**24**
Bridgeport Military Academy *Bridgeport, CT*	**BMA College/Career Fair**	**47**
Bridgeport School District *Bridgeport, CT*	**Annual District Calendar and Handbook**	**68**
Bridgeport School District *Bridgeport, CT*	**News You Can Use**	**77**
Brooklyn City Schools, Preschool *Brooklyn, OH*	**Conscious Discipline**	**40**
Canyon View Elementary School *Kennewick, WA*	**Monster Math Night**	**18**
Center for Community-based Partnerships, University of Alabama *Tscaloosa, AL*	**Joining Forces: Parent-Teacher Leadership Training**	**81**
Center of Excellence to Prepare Teachers of Children of Poverty, Francis Marion University *Florence, SC*	**Celebration Time: Sharing Best Practices**	**79**
Central Middle School *Eunice, LA*	**Grandparents and the BINGO Connection**	**62**
Chiawana High School *Pasco, WA*	**Family STEM Night**	**27**
Clover Park School District *Lakewood, WA*	**Break Bags**	**69**
Clover Park School District *Lakewood, WA*	**Interpreter Training Program**	**73**
Combre-Fondel Elementary *Lake Charles, LA*	**Million Father March**	**61**
Connecticut Technical High School System *Middletown, CT*	**CTHSS Staff Liaison Cluster Meetings**	**72**
Cuyahoga County Universal Pre-K; Starting Point & Invest in Children *Cleveland, OH*	**Learning on the Go with *ReadyRosie***	**82**
Delmae Elementary School *Florence, SC*	**Living Wax Museum**	**32**
DeQuincy Primary School *DeQuincy, LA*	**Academic Egg Hunt**	**15**

Dolby Elementary School *Lake Charles, LA*	**WIGS and PIGS-Their Vision; Our Future**	**44**
Dower Elementary School *Lakewood, WA*	**Taste of Dower—Iron Chef Night**	**50**
Eastgate Elementary School *Kennewick, WA*	**Community Connections Create Chemistry (C4)**	**22**
Emmett O'Brien Technical High School *Ansonia, CT*	**Alumni Trade Tour**	**57**
Expanded Success Initiative - Office of Postsecondary Readiness *New York, NY*	**ESI Family Overnight College Expedition**	**80**
Forest Park Elementary School *Little Rock, AR*	**Latin America Fair**	**51**
Francis Howell Middle School *St. Charles, MO*	**Family Trivia Night**	**60**
Greenwood Elementary School *Florence, SC*	**Literacy Night at the Museum**	**11**
Gregorio Luperon High School *New York, NY*	**Graduation Requirements Parent Meetings**	**53**
Hawthorne Elementary School *Seattle, WA*	**Hawthorne Technology University**	**30**
Heyward Gibbes Middle School *Coumbia, SC*	**Bridging the Gap by Reading Everywhere**	**3**
High Horizons Magnet School *Bridgeport, CT*	**Literacy Game Night**	**10**
J. C. Lynch Elementary School *Coward, SC*	**Comprehension Retention**	**5**
J. D. Clifton Elementary School *Lake Charles, LA*	**Mardi Gras Mathness**	**16**
J. J. Watson Elementary *Iowa, LA*	**Watson Wonderland**	**64**
John J. Johnson II Elementary School *Lake Charles, LA*	**A Day with Dad**	**14**
John W. Moore Intermediate *Florence, SC*	**Full S.T.E.A.M. Ahead Engineering Club**	**28**
Keewaydin Discovery Center *Kennewick, WA*	**Milestone Checklist for IEPs**	**33**
Kennewick School District *Kennewick, WA*	**Community Resource Roundtable**	**71**
Lincoln Elementary School *Kennewick, WA*	**Dads and Drills**	**59**
Little Rock School District *Little Rock, AR*	**Key Contacts and NNPS Facilitator Collaboration**	**75**
Little Rock School District *Little Rock, AR*	**NBA Math Hoops**	**76**
Louis Stokes Head Start *Cleveland, OH*	**Family Game Night**	**25**
Lucy T. Davis Elementary School *Florence, SC*	**Monster Mash Family Literacy Night**	**12**

Madison School *Bridgeport, CT*	**Build-A-Book Around Literacy**	**4**
Mann Middle School *Lakewood, Washington*	**Bring It On-Get It Done: Science Board Workshop**	**21**
Mark Twain Elementary School *Pasco, WA*	**Careers, Craftsmanship, and Community in the Classroom**	**46**
New Horizons High School *Pasco, WA*	**Rise Above Awards**	**42**
Northeast Elementary School *Opelousas, LA*	**Spring into LEAP**	**34**
Norwich Technical High School *Norwich, CT*	**Honor Ceremony: Exemplary Portfolios**	**48**
Oakbrook Elementary School *Lakewood, WA*	**Tinkertopia**	**35**
Oak Park Elementary School *Lake Charles, LA*	**Leadership Binders**	**31**
Ochoa Middle School *Pasco, WA*	**Communication Calendar**	**58**
Opelousas Junior High School *Opelousas, LA*	**Parents, Me, and Poetry**	**13**
Ouachita Parish School System *West Monroe, LA*	**Celebrating Parental Involvement Accomplishments**	**70**
Park Vista Elementary School *Opelousas, LA*	**American Education Week**	**45**
Parma Preschool *Parma, OH*	**St. Jude Trike-A-Thon**	**43**
Park Middle School *Kennewick, WA*	**Healthy Teen**	**49**
Pasco School District *Pasco, WA*	**Keep It Personal for Student Success**	**74**
Pasco School District *Pasco, WA*	**We Are a STEM Family**	**78**
Platt Technical High School *Milford, CT*	**Veteran's Day Breakfast**	**63**
Rosalind Franklin STEM Elementary School *Pasco, WA*	**Mission: STEMPossible**	**23**
Scottish Parent Teacher Council *Edinburgh, Scotland*	**Partnership Schools Scotland (PSS)**	**83**
South Florence High School *Florence, SC*	**Man-Up Initiative: Male Mentoring**	**41**
Sunset Middle School *Sunset, LA*	**Familiarizing Families with PARCC**	**26**
Theodore Roosevelt School *Bridgeport, CT*	**Community Service Craft Night**	**39**
Tremont Montessori Preschool *Cleveland, OH*	**Family Literacy**	**8**
The School for Human Rights *Brooklyn, NY*	**Math Olympiad: Bring Back the Fun in Math**	**17**

The Urban Assembly School For Applied Math & Science *Bronx, NY*	**Cultivating a Culture of Reading: Dinner and a Book**	**6**
Virgie Robinson Elementary *Pasco, WA*	**Goal Sharing STEM Night**	**29**
Vista Elementary School *Kennewick, WA*	**Dr. Seuss Night--A K-1 Literacy Night**	**7**
Washington Elementary School *Kennewick, WA*	**Ready! for Kindergarten Plus!**	**54**
Westwood Elementary School *Westlake, LA*	**Together We Tailgate**	**19**
W. T. Henning Elementary *Sulphur, LA*	**Groovy Family Read Night**	**9**

1 ACADEMIC GOALS

Practices for Types 1-6 in this section involve families and community partners to help students meet academic goals in reading and literacy, math, science, other academic subjects, or multiple subjects.

BRIDGING THE GAP BY READING EVERYWHERE

HEYWARD GIBBES MIDDLE SCHOOL
COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

When Heyward Gibbes Middle School received a small grant from Francis Marion University for its partnership program, the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP), teachers, and other school leaders knew exactly what they wanted to do. They reviewed the reading data of sixth graders and selected 14 students for an in-depth program to raise the reading proficiency scores of at least 80% of the participants by one full grade level on the STAR reading assessment. This test measures general reading achievement and comprehension, and is a good indicator of how students will do on state reading tests.

Heyward Gibbes developed an intervention to encourage students to read "everywhere"—at school, at home, and in the community. At school, the plan gave students extra time to read on their own and for pleasure, to read with a peer and listen to each other read, and to read in groups. They were guided to show comprehension by preparing and presenting reports and by writing their own journals.

At home, students were given eleven books to extend their family libraries, for parents to read with their child, and to enjoy and discuss books at home. The books were titles from the 2015-16 South Carolina Junior Book Award nominees, Children's Book Award nominees, and several Coretta Scott King Honor Books. They included student favorites such as *Better Off Friends* by Eulberg, *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Woodson, and *Words with Wings* by Grimes.

In the community, students participated in a unique reading activity. They took a bus to a local retirement home where they read to the residents. Students branched out in their reading material as they, mostly, read magazines of interest to the seniors. For example, they read from magazines such as *Reader's Digest Large Print*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Diabetic Living*, and *O, the Oprah Magazine*. The students and seniors discussed the material they read and shared life events.

Reading to seniors was particularly enriching, as it was a safe environment for struggling-but-improving readers. One student reflected on the positive experience, "I had fun. . . I think when I was reading to them, my reading got better and better." Another noted, "[They] enjoy talking to us about their past and I enjoy it very much. The people are kind and fun to be around."

The program solved several key challenges such as providing students with extra reading time at school, providing books for reading at home, and finalizing arrangements of how many students would participate in the community at the retirement home, based on the number of residents.

In the end, all parts of this ambitious program for struggling readers came together. The principal noted that "academically, this project really helped our students develop a stronger love for reading." There also were gains in social skills, as the students learned to have conversations about reading with their teachers, parents, peers, and older adults. The good results were so clear that teachers are thinking about how to expand the small group to encourage reading "everywhere"—at school, at home, and in the community with more students.

Mary Lewis
Curriculum Resource Teacher
mary.lewis@richlandone.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

BUILD-A-BOOK AROUND LITERACY

MADISON SCHOOL
BRIDGEPORT, CT

TYPE 1

READING & LITERACY

During the doldrums of winter, Madison School gave students and parents something to get excited about. The Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) and teachers were inspired to combine a literacy night with the Build-a-Bear theme to encourage creative play. With its own design, Madison School (which includes grades K-3), conducted an interactive and hands-on literacy activity called Build-a-Book. Over 50 parents attended to hear about literacy learning in the primary grades and how to help their children enjoy reading at home. As many students attended with their parents to share reading and literacy activities.

After sharing dinner, parents and children went to different sessions. Parents were helped to see how literacy is part of everyone's life. The workshop leader shared a childhood memory concerning literacy. Then, parents were asked to "turn and talk" to a neighbor to discuss one of their childhood experiences with literacy. The literacy memory could be anything from a special book, a song, prayers, or even letter games like "I Spy" played in the car. These stories helped parents understand the importance of reading and literacy skills for youngsters.

After the turn-and-talk activity, small groups were formed of those who had talked with each other. They planned and presented one or two of the literacy traditions that they had discussed as pairs. The literacy coach pointed out the common—and important—pattern that family members are often the child's first teachers of early language and reading skills. Learning to read begins at home and families play a role in instilling the love of reading in their children.

Following the introductory exercise, parents learned more about the four critical building blocks of early literacy: oral language, letter knowledge, phonological awareness, and the concept of print. These link to children's reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. The workshop leader helped parents see how they could apply this information to make reading an enjoyable habit at home. Ideas included fun activities as simple as talking with children about books, stories, and songs; reading informational text on maps, charts, schedules, and recipes; enabling children to see parents and other family members reading newspapers, magazines, shopping lists, books; and enjoying chapter books with older students, and picture books and books without words with young children.

Children moved from their own literacy activity to join their parents and family partners to work together to Build-a-Book. Like stuffing a bear or dinosaur, children and parents were about to fill a book. The workshop facilitator reminded attendees that stories have a beginning, middle, and end. The literacy coach linked Build-a-Book to the discussion that parents had about a childhood memory of a literacy event. After time to write, students were invited to share their stories. The books and extra kits were taken home to Build-a-Book with siblings and relatives. Said one child, "These books are cute. I'm going to make one with my sister."

Overall, the interactive activity provided good information, conversations of parents with other parents, and a shared reading product by children with parents. Children and parents were motivated to make reading a family focus.

Ellie Goncalves and Eve Balistiere
Home School Coordinator and
Literacy Coach
hgoncalves@bridgeportedu.net
ebalistiere@bridgeportedu.net

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

COMPREHENSION RETENTION

J. C. LYNCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
COWARD, SOUTH CAROLINA

J. C. Lynch Elementary School received a small grant from Francis Marion University's Center of Excellence to strengthen its Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) and its plans for family and community engagement. With the grant and Title I funds, the school purchased several sets of primary and intermediate *VersaTiles* in reading from the ETA Hand2Mind company. *VersaTiles* hands-on reading games ask students to answer questions by placing answer tiles in the right spot on a game frame. The colors on the tiles result in a unique design that shows the student whether the answers were correct. This self-checking feature can be used at school or at home to practice reading, spelling, phonics, and other literacy skills.

J.C. Lynch's Action Team for Partnership (ATP) and Title I committees worked together to plan a family night, Comprehension Retention, using *VersaTiles* at all grade levels. About 75 parents and about 125 students attended this unique family reading night.

The committee members also prepared resource packets for parents and students to borrow the *VersaTiles* to use at home. Parents could check out the packets for a week or up to a month to use at home. In the packets of tiles for specific reading skills, there was a letter to parents, directions for how to use the tiles, a few activity sheets with answer keys, a monthly parent signature calendar, and a short survey for parents to obtain their observations and reactions about the activities.

At Comprehension Retention, families and students were given instructions on how to use the *VersaTiles* and an opportunity to play various reading games focused on primary or intermediate grade level reading skills. In addition, there were packets in the school's Parent Center and teachers had packets in the classroom for small group instruction. One parent commented on the value of the "good activities that let me know how to help my child with reading."

Lynch Elementary School also incorporated these materials into other activities at school, including the Spring Padre Academia—family nights focused primarily on helping Hispanic parents and students learn to speak and read English. This group of parents was given one to two activities to work on each week with the *VersaTiles*. Each week the activities were changed and the skills advanced.

The materials were available to all students and all parents, but the committee targeted struggling readers who scored below the twenty-fifth percentile on the fall *Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)* state test. Teachers reported that the children involved with the activities showed at least one year's academic growth in reading, on average, on the spring assessment of the MAP. The school also reported a lower average rate of discipline referrals for the participating group, and an increase in student attendance.

The parents were given many ways to easily involve themselves in their children's education and reinforce the instruction in a way that did not require parents to "teach" reading. The teachers also enjoyed using *VersaTiles* as another way to provide small-group instruction in their classrooms. One teacher rated the activities as "hands-on, easy, and fun while increasing achievement."

Dr. Cutina Powell Barrineau
Assistant Principal
cbarrineau@fsd3.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF READING: DINNER AND A BOOK

THE URBAN ASSEMBLY SCHOOL FOR
APPLIED MATH & SCIENCE
BRONX, NEW YORK

TYPE 1

READING & LITERACY

To improve home reading habits of its middle school students, the Urban Assembly School for Applied Math & Science (AMS) put reading for pleasure in a spotlight with an elegant workshop called Dinner and a Book. The school serves grades 6 through 12, but this event was aimed at the middle grades—6, 7, and 8. The Action Team for Partnerships and the humanities teachers wanted to strengthen the "reading culture" in the middle grades. Parents and students were invited to come to the school for dinner at 5 p.m. to start a the well-planned activity that celebrated reading. After dinner, parents and students dispersed to different classrooms to attend teacher-led workshops.

The event was empowering for the teachers who creatively developed their topics and presentations. Teachers modeled how to make time for reading at home, and how parents and students could talk about the books and other material that they read for fun. They discussed how the *Degrees of Reading Power (DRP)* tests measure students' reading comprehension. They reviewed the many literacy skills covered on state tests.

All workshops were designed to encourage parents and students to ask questions. Attendees learned and practiced different techniques and tools. The activities were not designed to ask parents to "teach" reading, but to support the school's commitment to helping students read more to strengthen their reading skills and attitudes.

The dinner and workshops provided 30 parents and over 100 students with useful information about literacy. Parents enthusiastically rated workshops as "very helpful." Students who attended could win new books to take home.

Students and parents learned about various technologies that they could use at home to support reading. They also saw, first hand, that reading was celebrated by teachers, parents, and by high school students who came to help with the event.

This was the school's first reading night. The planners faced the common challenge of how to encourage parents and student to attend. They knew that the goal was important—to increase reading for pleasure. They also knew it was important to organize the event well, send invitations home, and have incentives to attract busy parents. The organizers collected RSVPs to know how many parents and students planned to attend. Teachers connected with students to encourage attendance. Teachers knew that the more they were involved, the more their students and parents would participate. If run again, AMS will add community partners, such as the local public library to the featured resources, and will schedule the school's book fair to coincide with the workshops for parents and students.

At the end of the evening everyone gathered in a large group for a raffle with great prizes—Nooks, books, and gift cards. Dinner and a Book was supported by a grant from the Expanded Success Initiative (ESI) that guides the school with its program.

AMS believes that there is an important connection between students' reading at home and the growth of reading abilities that affect student success in all subjects. Dinner and a Book made these connections more real to students and their parents.

Ingrid Chung
Assistant Principal
ichung@amsbronx.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

DR. SEUSS NIGHT – A K-1 LITERACY NIGHT

VISTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
KENNEWICK, WASHINGTON

Dr. Seuss made an appearance at Vista Elementary School's literacy night for students in kindergarten and grade 1 and their parents. He bore a suspicious resemblance to the school principal! Nevertheless, the celebrity was very welcome. Rumor had it that Dr. Seuss wanted to help Vista's Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) and teachers celebrate his birthday with students and parents at a family literacy night. The goal was to help parents of the youngest students learn about the school's literacy curriculum and the tools that would enable them to support their children's literacy learning.

The ATP's subcommittee for this event met three times to plan all components. They wanted to increase parent attendance over previous years. They decided that having a theme would be fun and help students and families remember to attend. Celebrating Dr. Seuss's birthday and Read Across America Day seemed to be a good idea. Said the ATP team, "We also liked the idea of creating an easy game to support children's foundational reading skills at each grade level." The kindergarten teachers selected a consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) bingo activity and the first grade teachers chose a Sight Word Go-Fish game. Teachers introduced the games in class so that students could "teach" their families how to play at Dr. Seuss Night and at home.

Dr. Seuss showed up early to greet everyone at the front door and guide them down the hall where dinner was served, donated by the school's community partner, Little Caesars Pizza. Over 250 parents and their 93 children attended. They ate picnic style. Then parents went to the library with the school's reading specialist to learn about the school's reading program, goals for kindergarten and first grade, and strategies they can use at home, in the car, and on walks. The information was presented in English with Spanish translation via headsets. A representative from Mid-Columbia Libraries discussed reading resources for families that were available on the library's website. Parents could sign up for library cards, if desired. Then, parents picked out a free book for their child that was donated through a local reading foundation.

Meanwhile, students were in their classrooms playing the literacy game with their teacher. Parents met their children, learned the games, and then took their child to the gym for Dr. Seuss to read aloud one of his stories. After the read aloud, families were thanked for attending with a box of food from 2nd Harvest—a local foodbank. This community partner brought 1200 pounds of food to distribute. Food for thought and good for families—both much appreciated.

The ATP and teachers believe the high attendance was due to the theme, the food, free books for children, and good advertising. Vista publicized Dr. Seuss Night for several weeks with flyers, the school reader board, Facebook, Remind101, and stickers-on-students as a final reminder on the day of the event.

In all, it was a fun time where parents gained ideas for helping students with early literacy learning at home, students played literacy games, and everyone met Dr. Seuss. One parent effused, "I flippin loved it!" That is high praise.

Meghan Paeschke
Teacher
meghan.paeschke@ksd.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

FAMILY LITERACY

TREMONT MONTESSORI PRESCHOOL
CLEVELAND, OHIO

Pizza Hut's long-standing program, *Book It,* aims to build students' love of reading by encouraging schools to guide children to read for pleasure at home some minutes every night. When they complete their school's plan for reading, children earn a free personal pizza. The program was designed for all school levels, starting in kindergarten. Tremont Montessori Preschool decided to enroll in *Book It* and extended the program to benefit students. Preschool students love to read and they love pizza. That is a good combination for literacy learning.

The preschool and its partners (Cleveland State University and its Cleveland Schools Book Fund and the Cleveland Public Library) set a goal to develop students' literacy skills to prepare them for kindergarten. They also wanted to encourage parents to become and remain involved in their children's literacy learning. All partners had activities to enable parents to enjoy reading and literacy activities with their young children.

A parent on the school's Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) works for the Cleveland Public Library. She sent the school a copy of the library's monthly literacy calendar. The ATP shared each monthly calendar with all students' parents via e-mail and in print form. It includes daily literacy and reading-related activities that parents can conduct with their children at home. If the activities were conducted and dated, parents could send the completed calendar in for a coupon for a free pizza as part of *Book It*.

Then, Tremont Montessori went one step further. Its partner, Cleveland State University, works with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District to provide quality books for classrooms and professional development for teachers via the Cleveland Schools Book Fund. The Fund offers on-line books by age level that students can listen to at home. After hearing a story, young children draw a picture of a favorite part and can receive a copy of that book for their home library.

The team at Tremont Montessori Preschool integrated this opportunity into its family engagement initiative. Links were sent to every parent with instructions on how to listen on line, have the child draw a picture, and earn a book. Children brought their pictures to school. These were sent to Cleveland State University. In addition, several "reports" were completed by all children in the classroom to ensure that all children could earn a book to take home.

The ATP chose timely books about a holiday, a favorite author, or classroom units. For example, all children earned a copy of *Martin's Big Words* after studying Martin Luther King Jr. in class. The school did so well that they earned a bonus of a live production of *Where the Wild Things Are*. Parents were invited for this production and all children received a copy of the book for their home library.

Although not all schools have this kind of book-giving partnership, all schools can support reading and earn pizzas through *Book It,* and all schools can involve parents in early literacy learning. There also are many free resources in all communities at the public library and by finding business and community partners who would like to donate books for children's home libraries.

Susan Conrad
Teacher
susan.conrad@clevelandmetroschools.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

GROOVY FAMILY READ NIGHT

W. T. HENNING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
SULPHUR, LOUISIANA

Not a school to shy away from lofty goals, Henning Elementary School set a target for children to read 29,000 books during the school year. With just over 400 students, this was a formidable challenge that made reading a central focus at the school. In support of the goal, the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) and reading teachers designed a "groovy" reading night. Attendees were encouraged to attend wearing their grooviest attire. The reading night introduced the big reading goal to families and community partners as something that was "outta sight"—meaning "great," not out of the question.

The school's annual family night aimed to show how reading was, indeed, groovy. A "fab" flyer of flowers and fun fonts was distributed to each student for the family. Invitations also were sent by phone, on the school's marquee, on the website, and in the newsletter. Local businesses donated food and paper products for dinner. They were publicly thanked in the school newsletter and on the marquee. All of these efforts and combining the family night with the school's Book Fair increased attendance compared to the past.

The Book Fair was one station that all students and families visited. A timer encouraged everyone to rotate to a new activity in 10 minute intervals. The quick rotations ensured that everyone would experience all of the stations.

Other stations offered a variety of reading and literacy activities throughout the building. One spot featured a local guest author who told stories, read original work, and conducted a book signing. Another station featured writing and craft activities for students to do with a parent (e.g., decorating book covers, creating bookmarks, writing new endings to stories). A different location enabled students and parents to read together and take Accelerated Reading tests. This helped parents understand the school's reading program and how 29,000 books was an attainable goal as students read book after book. Another station featured Book Bingo, where students and parents could play Bingo games to win books to take home. One student was sure of his opinion, "Book Bingo was the best!"

At all stations throughout the night, the goal for students to read 29,000 books was spotlighted. The emphases made the ambitious goal clear to parents, who could, then, discuss progress with their children throughout the school year. In keeping with the theme, the ATP and teachers called for "peace, love, and books"—no argument about these goals.

Parents gave feedback on exit surveys including their favorite activities and suggestions for improvements. The comments suggested an overall positive reaction. The staff concluded, "Because our parents felt welcomed and valued, we believe we have opened an avenue of trust we could not have experienced without this practice."

Future reading nights will change the groovy theme, but all reading nights aim to help students and parents find their reading groove. It should be noted that students made the goal of reading 29,000 books last year. This result was definitely "outta sight" a la the 1970s. In today's parlance, Henning's students reading totals were "off the charts!" At any point in time, Henning's focus on reading was very cool.

Sue Gaudet
Lead Teacher
sue.gaudet@cpsb.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

LITERACY GAME NIGHT

HIGH HORIZONS MAGNET SCHOOL
BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT

TYPE 4

READING & LITERACY

Students work hard at High Horizons Magnet School—an intra-district magnet of over 400 students focused on reading and language arts. The students know that reading and literacy skills can be fun. In the past, Literacy Night emphasized providing parents with information about the school and state tests. The administrators, teachers, and Action Team for Partnership (ATP) knew that a Literacy Game Night would be more enjoyable where parents and children worked together on some fun activities linked to grade level reading skills. Parents still could gain good ideas and information, and students would see that the parents enjoyed reading with them.

Games at different reading levels included *Sight Word Fishing, Sight Word Twister, Scattegories, Bananagrams,* and *Wheel of Fortune*. There also was session on *Smarter Balanced Assessments* for all families and students in grades 3-8 to help them understand and prepare for the state reading/literacy test. Each game was in a separate room, facilitated by two teachers. Each game was set for a reasonable length of time, making it possible to encourage everyone's participation. At the end of each session, families moved to a new game of their choice. A raffle ticket was earned by participants in each game room. Raffle prizes were drawn at the end of the evening. On an exit evaluation, one mother gave the school full points for all activities at Literacy Game Night, and commented that the best thing was "playing with my child and getting to know some of the families of her friends at school."

The good night was made possible by good planning. Games were selected and decisions were made about setting them up in specific rooms. Those with technical components were tested.

For example, the literacy coach worked with the computer teacher to ensure that SMARTboards were working effectively and compatibly with the game technology. Multimedia game versions of *The Wheel of Fortune* and *Scattegories* were shared by teachers within the school. *The Sight Word Fishing Game* was enhanced by an inexpensive inflatable pool.

Notices home, posters at school, e-mail messages, and phone calls encouraged parents to attend. Literacy Game Night was scheduled for the same night as a Parent Advisory Committee meeting so that parents would not have to leave home on two weeknights, and to boost attendance. The PAC members also volunteered to assist with Game Night.

The day before the event, a map of the school building was distributed to the teachers, identifying the specific game rooms. Members of the National Junior Honor Society delivered game materials and directions to teachers. Staff members and parent volunteers set up the cafeteria and the table of raffle prizes.

About 75 parents and about 60 students attended with many teachers and administrators. Families were able to eat dinner and enjoy reading, spelling, and thinking about words with their children. Teachers met many parents and joined in the fun by encouraging students to think critically and creatively. Teachers brought their own children to Literacy Game Night to strengthen the idea that High Horizons really is a family.

Francine Carbone and Christine Neary
Principal and Literacy Coach
cneary@bridgeportedu.net

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

LITERACY NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

GREENWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Taking a page out of Hollywood's book, the Florence County Museum came to life for families of Greenwood Elementary who spent a night at the museum. Literacy Night at the Museum brought parents and students together for fun and learning starting with a scavenger hunt focused on museum exhibits. Activities transitioned to eating pizza dinner in the courtyard and selecting a free book for children to take home. Literacy Night concluded with a surprise lottery for other prizes. The goal was to empower parents with knowledge of available literacy resources at the museum and in the community. As a bonus, the museum's location made it easy to add a focus for families on the local history of the city.

Literacy Night at the Museum was inspired by past events that made use of the city's public library. This time, the museum was selected to better accommodate a large crowd. That was important, as this year more than 300 parents and 500 children attended. A newspaper reporter on the scene accurately noted, "What a great turn out!" This was the result of multi-advertising using flyers, phone calls, the school marquee, posters, and morning announcements.

The museum was buzzing with excitement as parents and their children perused paintings in search of answers to six questions in the scavenger hunt. The questions ranged from general questions, such as "In the Focus Gallery, which painting did you like best?" to factual questions on local history, such as "What was the first public school in Florence?"

After families completed the scavenger hunt, children exchanged a completed scavenger hunt form for a free book of their choice. Families were invited to a pizza dinner donated by a few local city council members.

Parents could talk with community representatives from Barnes and Noble, the Florence Area Literary Council, the local public library, and the school district. All of these contacts provided information about free summer programs or services focused on children's reading at all grade levels. A good number of families took advantage of speaking with these representatives or picking up their information. Said one parent, "I knew we had a museum, but I had not visited and didn't realize how beautiful it was and all it had to offer. This is definitely something [our family] will revisit this summer."

To top off the evening, the Cat in the Hat and Thing 1 and Thing 2 made an appearance in the spirit of Dr. Seuss's Birthday and Read Across America Week. Children and families could take photos with these guests, and they helped give out raffle prizes.

The museum waived its fee for the school, although the school had to help with a few things, such as security. The only costs were for the books that children took home—a good literacy investment, and the raffle prizes—a good spirit investment (total about $1200). The Museum manager observed, "It's wonderful to see this many parents and children come out for this event and to see them work together on the scavenger hunt. We've had many people approach us that this was their first time visiting."

Angela Newman Haddle
Interventionist
anewman@fsd1.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

MONSTER MASH FAMILY LITERACY NIGHT

LUCY T. DAVIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA

TYPE 4

READING & LITERACY

Reading is so much fun, it will give you *goosebumps!* Lucy T. Davis Elementary School recognized the urgency in promoting reading skills and attitudes. The Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) and reading teachers transformed the school into an extraordinary place where imaginary—but friendly—monsters to encourage literacy learning at the Monster Mash Family Literacy Night. The school wanted to showcase reading skills and strategies in a family-friendly way. Each family received a copy of a Monster Mash passport, which they took for stamps to six of ten reading-related stations.

The ten stations were:

Go Away Big, Green Monster, where teachers read aloud the picture book of the same name, a monster puppet acted, and students created a monster snack.

Smash the Monster, where students used a monster-swatter to mash monster sight words that were called by the teacher.

Roll a Monster, where students rolled dice with sight words on the faces, read and discussed the words with a parents and drew a monster.

Feed the Monster, where students fed words into the mouth of a monster on the SMART board.

SMART Response Clickers, where students and parents used clickers to answer questions that teachers posted on the projector.

SMART Tables, where students and families played word games by dragging answers around the surface of the table.

Chatterpix iPad App, where students shared their photos and used monster voices to send parents silly greetings, playful messages, creative cards, or fancy book reports.

Computer Lab/Compass Odyssey, where students and parents solved problems by using reading passages, videos, and animations.

Comic Strip Creator, where students and parent used a computer program to draw and caption their own cartoons.

Boggle, where students spelled words with a parent using letters on Boggle cards.

There were many other things going on. Monster juice was served with a spaghetti dinner. Baby pictures of teachers and teachers' favorite children's books were in the library. At the simultaneous Monster Scholastic Book Fair, families could buy books and children could take a chance to win a Monster Bucket filled with picture books and reading materials. The 4th graders sang to add to the festivities. Parents collected tips on how to encourage discussions about reading by asking their children good questions, playing word games, reading aloud, using new reading apps, and more. Each student received a prize of "book worms" for their participation.

The school advertised the event with flyers in weekly folders, newsletter reminders sent home, the school website, phone calls, and on the marquis outside the school. Monsters appeared on posters in the hallway and on the entrance doors of the school. Over 200 parents, as many students, and over 50 teachers and administrators attended. The cost of the event was $450, but did not include the expense of the book give away, since the books were donated by Scholastic.

Monster Mash Family Literacy Night encouraged parents to read and talk about reading with their monsters at home. A common question from schools is: How can we get more parents to attend important events? Davis Elementary had one answer: Plan a monstrously good reading night that demonstrates everyone's commitment to supporting students' success in school!

Brittany (Lauren) Moore-Wilson Wilson
LTD Literacy Coach
Lauren.Moore-Wilson@fsd1.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

PARENTS, ME, AND POETRY

OPELOUSAS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA

Parents sat intrigued in the open air courtyard as their middle grade students performed original poetry over the microphone. The school year was coming to an end and the warm summer air put everyone at ease. Opelousas Junior High, a school of mainly African American students, teamed up with a local artist who kept the courtyard for private parties. The artist agreed to let the school use the space for Parents, Me, and Poetry.

Students worked in their English class to bring figurative language into their writing. Although all students participated in poetry writing as part of language arts classes, the students in the Poetry and Drama Club took on the extra challenge of a public performance. This included 12 students who worked for two months on their poems or other pieces for presentation—writing, rewriting, polishing, and practicing. They worked with English Language Arts teachers at lunch, before school, and of course, at the after school Club. Some students met with specialists about the use of the voice in a presentation.

The teacher reported, "Students spend considerable time exploring figurative language to best express their thoughts. In doing so, their writing improved and they gained confidence in expressing themselves. They no longer felt 'different' after hearing their peers express some of the same issues."

As students shared their poems and insights, parents gained new or better understanding of the things their teens thought about and/or struggled with. Community members, too, were invited to the presentation to get a glimpse of a teen's world that extended beyond superficial media images. One community member was so impressed as to suggest that the experience be repeated as a monthly open teen mic night for the whole city.

The students' poetry or dramatic reading included true poems, short stories, and narratives, or whatever medium best expressed their creativity. To add some fun to the night, the sponsoring teacher gave students a 25 question internet survey the week before the event. Using the responses to create student profiles, she introduced each student in a random order. Instead of using their names in the introduction, she described the student and his/her interests. The students recognized themselves in the descriptions and took the stage when described.

Parents were invited in a private letter to participate at the event with a poem of their own, if they chose to do so. They were asked to write about a shared experience with their child that would open a conversation about the meaning of the remembrance. It was an interesting idea, but only one parent elected to participate.

This low-cost way to feature students' work clearly contributed to students' understanding of themselves as creative individuals. Parents, Me, and Poetry also addressed a school improvement goal to involve parents in students' academic life and in the appreciation of the arts. Parents were duly impressed. One explained, "Thank you for putting this together. I have never seen my child do anything like this." A member of the school board was surprised by the quality of the work: "Students wrote these poems themselves?!" The students were very proud of themselves—with good reason.

Lana Green
Teacher
LEG3821@slp.k12.la.us

TYPE 2

READING & LITERACY

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

A DAY WITH DAD

JOHN J. JOHNSON II ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA

TYPE 3

MATH

The Man of Steel's logo was borrowed by Johnson Elementary School and refashioned from the famous red and yellow "S" to the word "DAD." The logo fit well on a flyer inviting dads to school for A Day with Dad. The activity focused on math skills and math games. It ran from 9 to 10 a.m. to accommodate most work schedules and to maximize attendance.

About 50 dads attended to see how math games help students (grade K to 2) practice basic skills and can be fun for all players. Best of all? All of the games at each grade level were based on a standard deck of playing cards. This ensured that all games could be played to practice math skills at home. For example, cards were dealt evenly between the game participants. Aces counted as one and face cards as ten.

Games with this structure included:

Highest Card Wins: Also known as War, each player turns over the top card and the highest card wins that round. In the event of a tie (a war), each player turns over an additional card and the winner takes the round. This game helps students practice number recognition, number value, and greater than and less than.

Addition Double War: Each player turns over two cards at a time. They add the value (or count the total "pips") on their two cards and the largest sum wins the round. This may involve formal addition or just counting pips, depending on the grade level. Variations include using subtraction, or, in later grades, multiplication, or turning over three cards for addition.

Card Sorting: As a group or individually, students can sort cards by color, suit, or number.

Greater or Less Than: Students receive a hand of cards numbered 1-10. They select a "secret card" and place it face down. The second player pulls a card from the remaining 9 cards in the first player's hand. The first player tells if the drawn card is greater or less than the secret card. This pattern continues until the second player can guess the value of the secret card.

Addition Memory: The deck is placed face down between players. Player 1 turns over a pair of cards and solves to find the sum. The same player turns over a second pair of cards. If the sums match, Player 1 keeps the four cards and takes another turn. If the sums do not match, they are flipped face down and the next player has a turn. Play continues until no more matches can be made. Variations include matching numbers, colors, odds, or evens.

All dads received a Super Dad button to wear, provided by the PTO. The dads and students could, optionally, attend the school's health fair. By combining the two events, attendance for both increased. The school health fair, which provided information about dental and medical health as well as nutrition, was provided by health fair sponsors.

Dads left with many ideas about how to reinforce basic math skills at home. The descriptions of all games could be sent home with students for all dads, whether they were able to attend the event at school or not.

Anya Miller
Assistant Principal
anya.miller@cpsb.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

ACADEMIC EGG HUNT

DEQUINCY PRIMARY SCHOOL
DEQUINCY, LOUISIANA

One day each year, the Easter Bunny takes the lead at DeQuincy Primary School for students from grades K to 2. Before spring break, the school welcomes all students and their parents to the field behind the school where Mr. Bunny deposited hundreds of mathematical eggs the night before. Mr. Bunny roped off sections of the field for each grade level.

Inside each plastic egg was a math problem. The teachers had worked together to create grade-appropriate math problems (with no repeats) and put the problems in each egg. There were enough eggs for each students to collect 5 eggs.

Once the eggs were found, they had to be cracked—literally and academically. The students took their eggs to a teacher-manned table for their grade level. With their parents and help from the teacher (as needed), the children solved their math problems. Parents helped by letting their child show them how they did each problem. In that way, parents learned something about their child's grade level skills in math.

After children ran to find the eggs and completed the math problems, they were rewarded with some candy and prizes that Mr. Bunny left at grade-specific reward tables. They traded in their completed math problems for prizes or sweets. All students who attended and the teachers earned "jeans passes" that permitted jeans to be worn to school the next day.

After the egg hunt and math problem solving, the gym teacher conducted various spring games with all attendees.

About 75 parents and their children participated. They completed an evaluation of the activity with ideas for improvement. Many parents noted that they liked working with their student when it was time to solve math problems. The friendly event promoted networking between teachers and parents, and between among parents at each grade level. A teacher noted, "This was a new idea for a family math event. I loved seeing the children show their parents how they solved all kinds of problem and reap the rewards."

The plan to invite Mr. Bunny to leave the egg-cellent math eggs was raised at a school faculty meeting. With all math teachers in agreement and ready to provide the math problems for their grade levels, the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) and other volunteers publicized the Academic Egg Hunt to invite all partners—parents, students, teachers, community members and others—to attend. An informative flyer was sent home, the school messenger was used to call all parents, and an announcement was printed in the DeQuincy News.

Adjustments were needed for the plans. First, the hunt was rescheduled due to delayed delivery of some of the supplies. Second, a bad weather forecast for the selected date required using a rain date. Parents were notified of the change of dates by the school messenger system and with notes sent home.

Mr. Bunny has a return visit scheduled for next year. He has promised to stay long enough for students to take photos with him. Who knew that the Easter Bunny was into math?

TYPE 3

MATH

Amanda Guerrero
Principal
amanda.guerrero@cpsb.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

MARDI GRAS MATHNESS

J. D. CLIFTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA

TYPE 2

MATH

Mardi Gras exists in Louisiana as it exists nowhere else. It is a true cultural phenomenon. J. D. Clifton Elementary saw an opportunity to piggyback on the local celebration by turning Mardi Gras Madness to Mardi Gras Mathness! Turnout was high—about 100 parents and community members, over 300 students, and more than 40 teachers participated. Mardi Gras beads and candy, donated by community members, staff, and parents, were in abundant supply.

Parents came to the school to join students, teachers, administrators, and community volunteers in playing math games. The games addressed math standards that are measured on state and other tests at each grade level. These included games for number recognition, number matching, number patterns, estimation, fractions, probability, and basic arithmetic.

Teachers knew that students could practice basic math skills while playing games. The students at all grade levels (Pre-K to 2) were valuable resources for their parents. They showed parents how they are building new math skills. Parents saw how to reinforce math at home using simple games and activities. Student and parent interactions were very positive. Everyone was so engaged, they had to be reminded that it was time to go home.

Many parents attended because they wanted information on the new math curriculum and tests their children take. They also wanted to know how to help at home. They learned that specific games could be used to make math enjoyable and not distressing to both parent and child. One parent said, "I am better equipped to help my children at home."

The attendees also enjoyed an extra treat. *Krewe Gumbo De Yaya*, a Mardi Gras float and parade group, came to school in costume to demonstrate their parade dances. They brought true Louisiana culture to Mardi Gras Mathness.

Teachers loved Mardi Gras Mathness! because they were able to develop a positive, relaxed rapport with families, and show how people could love math learning the same way they love to read. The Action Team for Partnerships (ATP), PTO, math teachers, administrators, and others participated in planning the day and decorating the gym. All were pleased with the results.

J.D. Clifton has a history of celebrating the culture of Louisiana throughout the schoolyear. On another occasion, the school hosted Louisiana Family Fun Day. This was a celebratory event that showcased crawfish races, face painting, number-cake walk, duck ring toss, estimation, stuff the boudin (local sausage), arts and crafts, sack race, watermelon roll, and a train ride. The food for Fun Day was distinctly Cajun, as local vendors and the school's community partners donated jambalaya and sausages, along with typical treats such as snow cones, popcorn, and cotton candy. The food and activities were free and families also gained information about health and safety. Footage was aired on local news stations as an example of outstanding participation from parents and community.

Sometimes, a Fun Day helps define a school as a place that is welcoming to all partners in education. Sometimes, Louisiana's unique culture provides a base on which to build students' math skills and family engagement in math. Both the message of welcome and support for math help increase student success in school.

Pamela Bell
Principal
pamela.bell@cpsb.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

MATH OLYMPIAD: BRING BACK THE FUN IN MATH

THE SCHOOL FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

Schools that set a clear academic goal build awareness, and spirit to attain it. The School for Human Rights set a goal for 85% of its ninth graders to score at 80 or higher on the major Algebra 1 assessment on the State Regents Exams. The Action Team for Partnership (ATP) recognized the importance of this priority and knew that students would have to work hard to reach the goal. The ATP and math teachers organized an the Math Olympiad with two aims: inspire and excite the ninth grade students about learning and mastering Algebra and engage all partners in education—teachers, parents, community members, and the students, themselves—to take steps to assist and encourage ninth graders to make the goal a reality.

At the ATP's biweekly meetings and at teachers' common planning time, the organizers ironed out the logistics of the Math Olympiad. A free resource, called Kahoot, which enables students to compete on quizzes, was selected as the technology for conducting the Olympiad.

The approach required attention to make it possible for teachers to present the math problems, for teams of students to compete, and for others to see the action. The school's custodians helped by setting up the auditorium stage. The technology department stepped in to provide the Smart Board that displayed the math questions and possible answers. The tech group also set up devices used by teams of students at each table to respond digitally to the math questions.

Tenth and eleventh grade teams (who had already taken Algebra 1) were matched with ninth grade teams and allowed to tutor them during lunch. Some parents helped students practice their skills at home.

The ATP team reached out to community organizations that provided valuable support. Brooklyn College offered judges; Expanded Success Initiative (ESI) funded the event and provided trophies for participants. The Parent Coordinator on the ATP reached out to parents via mailings, telephone calls, and at PTA meetings to inform them about the Olympiad and to invite them to attend.

At the Olympiad, the 90 students in grade 9 were divided in teams of 6. Algebra problems were presented, posted by computer, and scored for speed and accuracy. The audience of parents and 10th and 11th grade students was energized. Organizing the event as a game show ignited the students' competitive nature and their rarely-expressed enthusiasm for Algebra!

The games were fiercely contested in a friendly way. The audience cheered for their classmates. Students demonstrated two critical math skills—fluency and accuracy in problem solving. One student remarked, "It makes me want to be up there with my friends participating."

In the year of world's summer Olympics, the Math Olympiad was a great idea at the School for Human Rights. One parent in attendance remarked about the students' spirit, "It brought kids together, working as a unit to accomplish a singular goal." The jury is still out about whether the Olympiad measurably affected math scores on the New York Regents Exams. At this writing, one thing is certain—the school community remained focused throughout the school year on the importance of learning and passing Algebra 1.

Denise Jennings
Assistant Principal
DJennin@school.nyc.gov

TYPE 6

MATH

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

MONSTER MATH NIGHT

CANYON VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
KENNEWICK, WASHINGTON

TYPE 4

MATH

Some people think of math as a "monster." Others see that monsters can be used to help children enjoy math. Canyon View Elementary serves students in kindergarten to grade 5 serves mainly white and Hispanic students, with over 70% eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The Action Team for Partnerships and math teachers thought about their goals for student success in math and for family engagement in academic subjects. They knew that many students thought math was "hard" and not so interesting.

They knew that many students loved monsters. So, they planned to bring the two together to prove that math and monsters could both be conquered. Beat the monsters! See math as fun! Save the day!

Invitations in Spanish and English went home to all families. Notices were placed on the reader-board in front of the school, and morning announcements encouraged students to come with a parent.

At Monster Math Night, math monsters created by the students decorated the walls of the cafeteria. Math games set up for each grade level focused on particular "monster" skills linked to math standards and required basic skills. A collection of school math games supplemented the games linked to the theme. This created a busy math scene for students and parents. In the games they played, students showed their parents how they solved problems focused on adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing, geometry, math Bingo, and early algebra. "I like playing games on the iPads," said one student who found the digital games.

A group of Math Avengers put on a skit to show how they vanquished monster math problems. The Avengers also circulated to talk with parents, students, and teachers. They helped students use math monster combat skills. Students answered the Math Avengers questions and won treats when they answered correctly. Students who needed help figuring out a problem were assisted to the right answer and, then, received a treat. One student was particularly jazzed, "Monster Math Nigh is the coolest. I just beat my teacher at a dice game. Did you see Math Man? This is so fun."

The Parent Teacher Organization set up a kitchen and sold food and drinks as a fund raiser to assist teachers with math materials and for other important purposes. To jog math minds, there also were jars of candy for students at each grade level to use estimation skills, with prizes for the closest guesses.

Throughout the evening, students practiced math as they demonstrated their skills in math games played with their teachers and their parents. Parents learned a lot about how math was taught at each grade level, and experienced how math games could be played at home to help students master basic math skills. Teachers met many parents they had not known before. Parents met other parents who had also been confused about math. Monster Math brought people together. About 130 parents, as many students, many teachers and some community partners attended, bringing almost 300 together to see how math was not really monstrous at all.

Karyn Jamison
Teacher and ATP Chair
Karyn.jamison@ksd.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

TOGETHER WE TAILGATE

WESTWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
WESTLAKE, LOUISIANA

Industrial expansion in the small town of Westlake, Louisiana caused a change in school boundaries. The community's two K-5 elementary schools became one K-2 school and one 3-5 school. Westwood elementary, the K-2 school, wanted to bring together its parents, students, families, teachers, and community partners to create one school family. And, they wanted to invite the other school to join in—to create one school community.

There was another purpose for tailgating. The Action Team for Partnerships, teachers, and administrators wanted everyone to know that the school was serious about student learning, with a long-term focus on math.

The Westwood ATP and others expanded a previously successful activity, Together We Tailgate. This math night with a football theme brings people together, stresses partnerships, and focuses on students doing math to practice skills and demonstrate math approaches for their parents. This time, all students in the elementary grades from the two reconstituted schools and their families were invited to the math Tailgate—a party with a purpose.

Students created posters to advertise the event throughout the community. Each school sent home notices, and used the school web pages, electronic school signs, and Facebook pages to invite families. The city took note. Said one city councilman, "It shows the value we place on our youth and their future."

In the fall, at the time of other tailgate parties, the football game theme was linked to math activities at each grade level. Students could visit the booths to play all games. As a show of support, cheerleaders from the local middle school performed and led cheers. Cheerleaders from the high school provided face painting booths. The high school Drum Corps performed. Both middle and high school football players wore their jerseys and mingled with students throughout the night. Local business and community members provided pizza and drinks for all. "All" meant over 1000 parents, over 850 students, almost 100 teachers and administrators, and 100 others from the community. Now, that is a coming together!

Elementary students who participated in math activities at the tailgate booths received trinkets and goodies from each tailgating party. The students also were eligible for a grand prize drawing—a football signed by all the players and the coach of the high school team.

Together We Tailgate took a good deal of planning and collaborative work, starting when the schools were reconfigured. The goal at Westwood was clear—teachers and administrators wanted to maintain the strong family and community engagement built over many years. Yet, they realized that families could have children split between the two schools. Parents had to feel welcome as partners in both locations. Some teachers had been reassigned and needed to feel that they were part of their new school and their shared community. One parent whose children were in both schools said, "This is such a great idea. It has been nice watching my older kids have fun working on math problems with my younger kids."

It was remarkable that all of the collaborators—math teachers across the grades, parents and students from both schools, cheerleaders, football players, the elementary and high school bands, and many community supporters—came together exactly as intended.

Janice "Sissy" Elliott
Teacher
sissy.elliott@cpsb.org

TYPE 2

MATH

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

AMISTAD COMMUNITY GARDEN

AMISTAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
KENNEWICK, WASHINGTON

TYPE 3

SCIENCE

To improve students' awareness of the connection of school skills with real-world applications and to increase family engagement, Amistad Elementary School created the Amistad Community Garden. The garden is a place where teachers can help students use math skills (e.g., measurement, fractions, number sense), science concepts (e.g., plant development and cycles, soil knowledge), and language arts activities (e.g., observations, poems, stories).

The large and useful garden was a big project, but the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP), teachers, and administrators believed it had real value, in part because many of the school's families are farm workers. However, many of these families live in apartments and do not have gardens of their own. The goal was to use the garden as a way to connect the school and community, to increase family and community engagement at the school, and to increase parents' interactions with students at home on skills and attitudes they were learning in the classroom.

All of the conditions were ripe. Spring was right around the corner and Amistad had an area that was perfect for a garden project. The school's community partner at the Kennewick Kiwanis Club was interested in working with students, educators, and parents on a new project. The school started to move forward with the help of third grade bilingual students. With good plans in place, Kiwanis helped procure the necessary items—plants, soil, and wood.

Then, the building phase began. Parents were asked to help, with hopes of increasing the involvement of fathers with students about the garden. Despite the busy spring schedule for parents who do farm work, a good turnout of 18 fathers and 5 mothers came to assist the school to prepare the garden. Everyone had a job to do on Building Day. Some parents helped children assemble garden beds, while others tilled the soil. A few served as "scarecrows." Students helped supervise, guide, and help the parents to ensure that the garden was developed and planted according to their plans.

Math was involved as students verified the measurements of the garden beds and their layout in the space. Once the beds were ready, the students helped plant their "starts" that they had begun as seeds in their science class.

All partners—students, teachers, parents, and community—will continue to collaborate on chores such as weeding and caring for plants. In the summer, summer school students will take over. All partners hope to reap the rewards of the fruit, vegetables, and herbs that were planted.

The garden cost around $250 in materials for the wood, plants, and soil. Some donations were received from the local nursery and from the Kennewick Kiwanis Club.

Students immediately made connections between problems to solve in the garden with things they were learning in math and science class. Teachers will continue to build these connections as the garden grows. Parents also were aware of the importance of students learning from the garden. One parent noted, "This is a great way to teach kids about where food really comes from."

Nadia Magallon
Teacher
nadia.magallon@ksd.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

BRING IT ON—GET IT DONE: SCIENCE BOARD WORKSHOP

MANN MIDDLE SCHOOL
LAKEWOOD, WASHINGTON

The school science fair can be stressful for students and for parents. It demands parents have some time and knowledge of how to help their children, and, sometimes requires financial resources for the project and display. Parents on Mann Middle School's Action Team for Partnership (ATP) shared these concerns with the rest of the ATP. As a result, the ATP and science teachers designed a family night, Bring it On—Get it Done, to ease parents' and students' stress about the science fair. The workshop was a family gathering for students to complete the display that explained the conduct and results of their project for the science fair.

The goal was to make it easy for students' to proceed with their projects. They brought their journal and science fair folder to produce the display of their project and results. One parent who was in the military expressed appreciation for the help: "We've been to a lot of schools but we've never had help on the science fair project before, so this is great."

With school funds and a small grant, the school purchased 400 tri-fold boards, card stock for letters, glue sticks, construction paper, and science fair board header labels (i.e., hypothesis, procedure, materials, safety concerns, variables, data analysis, graph, conclusions) for students to use. The students also had access to resources such as paper cutters, scissors, rulers, computers and printers. The computers and printers were key because many of the school's families did not have access to a printer at home.

Students were required to come with a parent/guardian. There were 115 parents and 125 students at the productive workshop to complete the science fair presentation. Students and their families were invited to work in large spaces throughout the school, including cafeteria tables. Parents helped by die-cutting letters that all students could use on their boards. Music was played to create a welcoming environment and pizza and water were provided for dinner. One parent commented on the busy group: "I can't believe this many parents and students are working on science fair projects and no one is crying!" A roving photographer took photos of the scientists and their family partners.

Because of the opportunity of Bring it On—Get it Done, the quality of the students' presentations about their projects was much higher than in the past. One lesson learned was that the students needed more die-cut letters. Who knew that the letter "u" was required in so many science project titles?

Administrators at the building were surprised at how quickly word spread in the community about the successful activity. Some parents called the school the day after the event and said that they wished they had attended. They wanted to know if there was another scheduled workshop. The principal was very pleased: "From a building perspective we are always looking for a win-win. When students' needs are met and support for parents is provided, it strengthens our family engagement program and increases student achievement." The Science Board Workshop will be held again next year because of its overwhelming popularity.

Holly Bocchi
Family, Community Partnership Coordinator
hbocchi@cloverpark.k12.wa.us

TYPE 4

SCIENCE

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS CREATE CHEMISTRY (C4)

EASTGATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
KENNEWICK, WASHINGTON

TYPE 4

SCIENCE

The first science fair at Eastgate Elementary School took a different approach from most science fairs. The ATP and science teachers were not sure if students had a good understanding of how to plan and conduct an individual project or if students' families were comfortable with discussing, monitoring, or helping their child with an experiment and presentation.

Rather than ask all students to complete their projects at home, each teacher planned to conduct a science fair project as a class. A topic was selected, but students had to come up with questions and procedures, type them up, and present the findings to a judge. Depending on the grade level and project problem, teachers provided access to ideas, background research, materials, and time for students to work. Teachers also taught scientific procedures so that the students were learning how to be scientists. They guided the class to create a display board summarizing the project for the fair. Students were responsible for the presentations to judges. In most cases, the classroom was the science "lab" and the student scientists worked together.

Some variations also were allowed. Along with the whole-class projects, some students worked in small groups or individually. Fifth grade students who wanted to go beyond the class topic could participate in an after school science club to develop and conduct individual and partner projects. The club met for 90 minutes once a week for ten weeks. In some cases, students with different abilities and talents worked together. For example, the teacher for the club observed two girls who were best friends working together on a science project. One girl was a high performing student and the other struggled with most academic tasks. Both succeeded as partners on the inquiry-based science project. The high achiever was stretched by taking responsibility to evaluate the data. The struggling student grew by taking responsibility to organize and write the project report.

The 21st Century After-School Coordinator contacted parents to encourage them to attend and participate in the school's science fair. Because the after-school program has regularly scheduled family nights, she was able to collaborate with the ATP and science teachers to increase the number of parents attending the science fair. The after-school staff also helped set-up, run activities, and clean up after the fair.

Eastgate also worked with a high school science teacher who came to the elementary school with several advanced high school students to serve as judges for the science fair. Additional community involvement came as a local museum attended the science fair and provided hands-on activities for students and their families.

The poster boards that summarized each class's findings were displayed in hallways around the school in time for parent-teacher conferences. As families moved through the building, many took the time to stop and read the boards. One family wondered about the results of one of the experiments. Instead of closing their minds, they caught the spirit of inquiry and announced that they were going to go home that night and do the experiment as a family.

The district's program called *Kudos* recognized Eastgate's approach to the science fair as an outstanding project.

Koren Burling
Teacher
koren.burling@ksd.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

MISSION: STEMPOSSIBLE

ROSALIND FRANKLIN STEM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PASCO, WASHINGTON

Rosalind Franklin STEM Elementary's mission, which the school chose to accept, was to bring together its students, their families and friends, and the science community for an evening of exploring science, careers, and fun. The Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) and science teachers invited parents to attend the science night with their children. Invitations and reminders were sent using flyers, social media, and the district newsletter. Mission: STEMPossible was accomplished with great success as about 100 parents and family members brought their children back to the building for the evening event.

STEM is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. The national focus aims to encourage students to take basic and advanced courses in these subjects and consider related careers. Many programs seek to integrate the STEM subjects rather than treating each letter as a separate interest. At Franklin, the program aims to focus on STEM opportunities within the science community.

A fifth grade teacher was Commander for Mission: STEMPossible, with help from family, community, ATP, PTO, staff, and student partners. She gathered 40 local presenters from across various science companies such as Energy Northwest, PUD, Health Care Sciences, and from different scientific fields such as engineering, computer science, weather forecasting, and health. The presenters were asked to bring a hands-on activity related to their fields for the students and to be ready to answer questions from students and families.

Planning this event took several months. The mission commander and helpers communicated with the presenters, coordinated student science project displays, planned the space needed for the presenters, ordered supplies and refreshments, and advertised the event.

At STEMPossible, students' science fair projects were displayed. The presenters were stationed throughout the school to meet students and families, and to conduct hands-on activity to explore science ideas and careers. The benefits of meeting with scientists and exchanging information far outweighed the costs. Students, parents, and staff were excited about how much science they had learned in one night. They reported an increase in their understanding and awareness of the many interesting science careers in the community.

Staff at Franklin were able to build on that excitement with additional lessons in the classroom. The opportunity for this type of ongoing building of curiosity and engagement with ideas and community experts opens many paths for students as they go through their school years and on to careers. These ideas and areas of study become familiar and attainable for all.

The presenters agreed that they were energized by the high interest of the families and students. This made them happy to spend time at the school and share their work. After Mission: STEMPossible, students discussed how many kinds of science-related jobs and careers were in their community. Some occupations that they did not consider before—such as being a weatherman—were particularly interesting. They could not decide which one they liked best. Of course, in the elementary grades career awareness is far more important than a career decision.

Valerie Adams
ATP Co-Chair
vadams@psd1.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

ROBOTICS CLUB

BARNWELL MIDDLE SCHOOL
ST. CHARLES, MISSOURI

TYPE 3

SCIENCE

Eight years ago a parent approached Barnwell Middle School with the idea of starting a Robotics Club. His children were interested in robotics and he was willing to help out. The club started with 8 students and the parent coach. Now, the club has 70 students (including 25 girls) and 19 parent coaches who lead the way. Barnwell's club has set a trend in the district and brought recognition to the school.

There are several types of robotics competitions for schools. Barnwell Middle chose to compete in the FIRST LEGO League (FLL) which is a combination of FIRST robotics and LEGO robotics. *FIRST (***F**or **I**nspiration and **R**ecognition of **S**cience and **T**echnology) is a national organization that aims to inspire students to be confident learners and science and technology leaders who pursue STEM classes, courses, and careers. The FIRST LEGO League guides students on engineering and computer programming skills to build and operate small robots using LEGO kits and materials.

In the Robotics Club, students start the school year with a specific challenge (e.g., build a robot to navigate a maze to pick up red balls and leave blue balls alone). During the year, students brainstorm and test ways to build a robot to complete the task, and, if in competition, beat other robotic clubs at the same school level. There is not one "right" answer, but there are "best solutions" for speed, agility, and strength that can win rewards. Winning designs can move from local to national to international competitions. There are about 1,000 FLL Robotics teams in Missouri. A team from Barnwell Middle recently won the FLL eastern Missouri state championship and advanced to the world competition.

Students in the Robotics Club like to compete. They know that they must learn to work as a team, conduct research, act professionally, and engineer an effective solution to each year's robotics problem.

Parents of the students in the Robotics Club serve as coaches or volunteers to help students at presentations and competitions. They also may volunteer for the Robotics booth at Barnwell's Family Fun Night or Robotics Trivia Night, which is a fundraiser for the club. One parent reflected, "It has been a true honor and privilege to work with the Barnwell Robotics program and Mrs. T. She has made my journey with the program an enjoyable one. The club also is praised by parents of children with special needs for helping their youngsters develop better social skills with peers.

Robotics requires costly materials. Each team (usually 2 people) need between $500-$700 for materials (e.g., EV3 Lego brick, motors, sensors, wheels, extra parts) and registration fees for competitions. Barnwell conducts fundraising activities, finds donors, and rewards sponsors by putting the company logo on the back of the club shirts.

Robotics offers serious learning opportunities in the middle grades. One student shared his experiences: "Middle school has been the best 3 years of my life because I joined the Robotics Club. . .. I have learned so much ..., made great friends on my team, had a great coach, and an awesome sponsor, Mrs. T., who's there for us all the time."

Heather Tomicich
Gifted Education Specialist/Robotics Club Sponsor
heather.tomicich@fhsdschools.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

FAMILY GAME NIGHT

LOUIS STOKES HEAD START
CLEVELAND, OHIO

Some parents worry that all their children do at preschool is play. The Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) and other educators at Lewis Stokes Head Start wanted to help parents understand that their children (3-5 years old) learn through play—real and imaginary. They also learn by manipulating new materials and by interacting with others around them.

The parents on the ATP helped by thinking of the kinds of activities that families like to do. The teachers on the team helped by developing ways to connect the activities to Common Core State Standards at the preschool level. The community representative on the ATP, who is an assistant children's librarian, provided informational resources on children's literacy development for the parents at the activity.

The result of these collaborations was Family Game Night, which focused on the way students develop thinking and academic skills through play. Several parents and staff were recruited by the team to volunteer to help at the event. Flyers were disseminated to every family and posted throughout the building. Parents also received a friendly text message as a final reminder inviting them to come out and have fun playing learning games with their child.

Parents and students came to the auditorium where different stations presented the games. These were: Bowling to develop gross motor skills and math; Dominos for math learning; Bean Bag Toss, which developed spatial awareness; Musical Chairs for listening skills and group participation; Animal Charades for creative cognitive development; ABC Bingo for language and literacy development; and Legos/Magnatiles/Puzzles to develop fine motor skills.

Families were introduced to the different activity stations, which were labeled with a poster of the name of the game and learning goal. The only rule was that parent and child participation was required. One student was overheard asking, "Mom, can we go bowling again like we did at school?"

All members of the ATP, along with the recruited volunteers, were leaders of the activity stations. They were prepared to help parents and children play the game and understand what skills were being practiced and learned. Plus, the activities were fun.

Families rotated in and out of each activity and completed a short poll on what they enjoyed and what they suggested for the next iteration of the event. One parent responded with a question, "When will we be having Family Game Night again?"

The ATP also focused on follow-up learning. Parents received information on how to play the games at home. For example, old cereal boxes and a ball created the bowling game; socks and a laundry basket could become the bean bag toss game; popsicle sticks and glue opened options for counting, making shapes, and making up stories about the shapes they created; and so on.

Over 30 families and 35 children attended, along with 10 teachers. As parents and staff laughed and interacted with children and each other, the program of school and family partnerships was stronger at the end of the night than at the beginning.

Thelma Bizzell
Administrator
tbizzell@ceogc.org

TYPE 4

OTHER/MULTIPLE SUBJECTS

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

FAMILIARIZING FAMILIES WITH PARCC

SUNSET MIDDLE SCHOOL
SUNSET, LOUISIANA

TYPE 1

OTHER/MULTIPLE SUBJECTS

Confused about what students' standardized test data actually mean? You are not alone. Most families are not sure how to interpret test results. The Action Team for Partnerships (ATP), teachers, and parents at Sunset Middle School in the St. Landry School District in Louisiana set to work to help all parents and students understand test scores. The school includes grades 5-8 with a racially diverse student body.

To support the school improvement goal of working with parents as partners, the partnership team has conducted meetings for parents about student data for several years. This year's meeting focused explicitly on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) tests that measure students' progress on learning standards in English Language Arts and Math at each grade level. This was Sunset Middle School's first year receiving results on the PARCC assessments, which made it imperative to guide parents in analyzing the reports they receive on their own child's scores and summaries of data on the school as a whole.

To encourage parents to attend the workshop, the partnership team conducted a broad advertising campaign with flyers sent home and posted in the community and messages on cell phones through the Remind101 service. The invitations outlined the main topic for understanding PARCC scores, and noted that refreshments and door prizes would be provided.

The workshop for parents entitled, "Getting Families Familiar with PARCC Student Results" was held in the fall when test scores were available. About 75 parents, 50 students, and 25 teachers attended (approximately 1 in 7 school families). Students who attended with a parent were rewarded with a free dress day. This was a good start for familiarizing students' parents to a new test program.

The group was greeted by the school's parent educator and the principal discussed current testing procedures in Louisiana. She provided background information on testing, educational goals for Louisiana students, and an overview of the PARCC assessment.

With well-prepared information, attendees were guided through a sample report of the PARCC test scores. Then, they were divided into small groups to review their own child's score report. Teachers and administrators circulated among the groups to answer parents' questions and provide assistance, as needed. One teacher saw the light bulb go on for the parents, "I loved seeing the look on parent's faces when we explained all of the different areas on which students are tested." Parents echoed the emerging understanding. In a typical reaction, one parent expressed how she moved from knowing very little about PARCC to feeling informed, "Things sure have changed since I was in school. I'm so glad we attended [the meeting]. Now, I finally understand what all of these numbers mean."

Parents were urged to take the information home and to review it with their children. Middle grade students benefit when parents understand testing and can discuss the results that are reported in a complex report. Parents benefit, too, by understanding their child's academic strengths and areas that need more attention during the school year.

Monica Singleton
Parent Educator
MLS0556@slp.k12.la.us

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

FAMILY STEM NIGHT

CHIAWANA HIGH SCHOOL
PASCO, WASHINGTON

The clarion call has sounded across the country for high school graduates who pursue advanced education on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM subjects). The U.S. Department of Education released a fact sheet reporting that employment in STEM occupations will increase by 17% between 2010 and 2020. This is of special importance for Hispanic students in U. S. high schools. Reports indicate that in 2010, people with Hispanic/Latino backgrounds accounted for about 16% of the population in the U. S., but only about 8% of all degrees and certificates in STEM fields were awarded to Hispanics. Further, although roughly 20% of the nation's youth are Hispanic, less than 2% of the STEM workforce is Hispanic.

Chiawana High School heard the call for STEM education. At the large high school of 2,500 students, about 70% are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. About 65% of students are Hispanic, but the school is very diverse with 15 primary languages spoken in students' homes.

The ATP, teachers, and students realized that STEM is everywhere—all around us—and an important part of what we do. Three years ago, the school initiated a sequence of STEM courses for students. Students' classwork work in science, technology, engineering and math in grades 9 through 12 is linked to state standards, and focuses on college and career readiness for advanced education and training in these fields. This year the Action Team for Partnerships and STEP teachers implemented Family STEM Night to show families and the community what their teens have been working on throughout the year.

Family STEM Night was held in the late spring. The planners selected a date and optimal time for parents to participate (5:30-7:30 p.m.). They used post cards, district media, automatic phone calls, the school's reader board, e-mail, and website to publicize the event to parents and local businesses. Students also helped to get the word out. Over 50 parents and community partners attended, along with 75 students and several teachers.

Students in the STEM program at the school have a 3-hour block of instructional time each day in Science, English, and Career and Technical Training. At Family STEM Night, students conducted hands-on activities in math, science, and engineering to show parents, other students, and community partners what they are learning. The students also presented their STEM projects. Feedback was positive, such as: "What a great way to showcase the students' work and make them feel proud of what they have accomplished."

The students had a great time sharing what they love to do with the rest of the school, their parents, and the community. Students in the STEM program elected to be there. This created an atmosphere of student buy-in, which resulted in fewer behavioral problems for teachers. It is expected that these students will continue in the program until they graduate from high school—many with on-going interests in STEM education and occupations.

Bryan Meredith
Vice Principal
bmeredith@psd1.org

TYPE 6

OTHER/MULTIPLE SUBJECTS

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

FULL S.T.E.A.M. AHEAD ENGINEERING CLUB

JOHN W. MOORE INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL
FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA

TYPE 3

OTHER/MULTIPLE SUBJECTS

The mission statement for the Engineering Club at John W. Moore Intermediate School in Florence District One in South Carolina was written by the 5th and 6th grade students in the club. The mission of the Full S.T.E.A.M. Ahead Engineering Club reflected students' expectations—"to reinforce math and science skills, promote critical thinking and creativity, and teach students to become lifelong problem solvers."

STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (adding Art to the STEM subjects). The school had clubs for these topics of interest, but was missing a club for E-Engineering. It was time to go full-STEAM ahead.

Indeed, the students petitioned for the creation on an engineering club. A local civil engineer on the district's list of mentors volunteered to lend his expertise for the club. He was supported by five teachers who attended to help manage the large club membership of about 40 students.

The club gave students a chance to learn about solving real-world problems without the fear of wrong answers. In engineering, there may not be one "correct" answer, only the search for best solutions. This approach energized teachers and students, alike.

Parents also were an integral part of the club. They pledged support for the budding engineers by attending workshops, working with their children at home on take-home projects, sending materials to the meetings for those who could not afford them, photographing events to present to the whole school, and providing transportation home late in the afternoon on club meeting days. Several parents reported that the students' take-home projects were the most fun they've had in working with their children at home.

The club was well planned. One teacher worked with the school's curriculum coordinator and reading coach to identify the math skills that the students in the club needed to master. They focused on measurement and data analysis at both the fifth and sixth grade levels, and tailored engineering tasks to focus on these concepts. They expect that math scores on the state test, *Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)* will increase for these students and that the students will meet targeted improvement levels in math.

In support of the club and the high interest of its advisor, teachers, and students, the school received a grant from the Center of Excellence at Francis Marion University to pay for several workshops and for an awards ceremony at the end of the year, with medals and refreshments for students, teachers, parents, and community partners. A local newspaper picked up on the school's Twitter reports and wrote a story about the club's exciting projects.

The engineer-advisor assessed the year's work, "I believe the students benefited by working alone, in teams, and with their families on fun projects in science and engineering. When there are "no right answers," students can identify a problem, try to solve it, and if the solution does not work, start over. They learned the benefits of putting a plan together first."

Kay McSwain
Science Lab Teacher
Carol Schweitz
Principal
cschweitz.fsd1.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

GOAL SHARING STEM NIGHT

VIRGIE ROBINSON ELEMENTARY
PASCO, WASHINGTON

Educators know that goals for student learning have been set at the state, district, building, and classroom levels. Joining in step, students were given the chance to set their own goals for their work and progress in several subjects. Teachers and the ATP at Virgie Robinson understand that if students set their own goals and review them often, they will be more likely to attend to their lessons, projects, and homework. Students who set their own goals are likely to be motivated to attain them and feel a sense of accomplishment. A school-wide focus for all students to set achievement goals also strengthens school unity.

Based on research by Dr. John Hattie on "visible learning," teachers set to work helping students understand their own test scores and other data. They believed that students could use the information to set goals and targets for incremental progress and that they could achieve good results. This placed the student as an active learner. Students were given individual goal-setting folders to organize their goals and to keep them handy. In the spirit of "visible learning," teachers also began to use walls of classrooms and hallways to display students' work and non-sensitive data.

The individual folders were updated by each student throughout the year. Students were taught to monitor their progress by creating charts and graphs. Three times a year (October, January, and April), the school conducted Goal Sharing STEM Night. Teachers attended these evenings to meet and talk with parents and answer questions, but the students were in charge of leading the conference and walking their parents through their goal folders. In the classroom, each student showed their own parent their goals and graphs and discussed what they were learning.

Sometimes Goal Sharing Night was paired with other family engagement events and activities. For example, for one event there also were STEM stations in the gym and cafeteria with experiments and activities for students and parents. This included a health awareness station with a model of the digestion system that students and parents could walk through.

Classrooms competed to see which one drew in the most parents. There were raffles and other prizes for parents and students, including a pizza party for the class with highest parent attendance. When students finished conducting the conference with their parents, they visited a candy jar estimation table and bicycle raffle—both very popular locations. To maximize the effect, the candy jars, bicycles, and other prizes were displayed for a week before the conference night.

The ATP, teachers, and parents learned that students were, indeed, able to set good goals and explain their work. The students were proud of their successes. Interestingly, teachers increased their confidence about their students' abilities to take charge of their own learning. As the research on visible learning suggests, students learn more when teachers "see learning through the eyes of students." Teachers, students, and parents believe that the goal-setting folders and related processes contributed to students' higher scores on the *Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA),* and other tests.

Luke Spilles
4th Grade Teacher
lspilles@psd1.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

HAWTHORNE TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY

HAWTHORNE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

TYPE 5

OTHER/MULTIPLE SUBJECTS

Hawthorne Elementary School is in one of the nation's most diverse zip codes. There are over 15 different languages spoken in students' homes, and more than one third of the students are English Language Learners. As teachers begin to use digital tools in class and open options for students to use technologies to complete their homework, many parents have asked for computer training for themselves. At the school's focus group for parents, they asked for workshops on how to help and monitor their children on simple things such as using the internet and on complex computer tasks such as using Microsoft Office.

Hawthorne's partnership leaders reached out to the Seattle Public Library and found that there were basic computer classes for adults. After a small pilot program, a full course was offered in the fall and spring of the 2015-16 school year. The parents also needed child care to attend classes. The school reached out and found that the local YMCA would be happy to provide free child care during the course times.

Classes at Hawthorne Technology University were held for two hours, once a week, for six weeks. The fall course covered computer basics, internet, Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, and how to use the websites of the Seattle Public Library and the Seattle Public Schools. The next session covered more computer and search engine basics, homework help websites, word processing and keyboarding, Power Point presentations, and understanding the Seattle Public Library's catalog. One instructor was impressed with the parents' good progress, "The parents are very ambitious and adventurous in learning new programs and websites for their own skills development and to help out their children on their homework assignments. [They] showed great enthusiasm and teamwork in creating their PowerPoint slides on how to make *pozole* (Mexican stew)."

Based on parent feedback the next course also will cover topics such as iPad use, social media, internet security, job training, creating a resume and cover letter, and finding resources for research projects. The Seattle Public Library plans more classes in parents' native languages. Some parents were so committed to learning that they wanted classes to continue in the summer. "I just got comfortable using a computer," said one. "I'm sad that there are no more classes."

The Seattle Public Library considered the courses a huge success and reported this in the *Washington Library Association Journal*. A library instructor explained, "We are not only bridging the digital divide with our ethnic communities, but we also are building trust and empowering [parents]. to reach the kids. "

The teachers and partnership leaders at Hawthorne also thought the program was a success. The English Language Learner (ELL) department leader said, "[Some] parents made arrangements with their employers to ensure that they could attend each class session. . .to benefit themselves and their children." Because the classes were taught at the elementary school where their children attended, parents became comfortable being in the building. Teachers noticed that more parents initiated conversations with them and with other parents, and stayed to participate in other school activities.

Melissa Mak
ELL Teacher
mbmak@seattleschools.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

LEADERSHIP BINDERS

OAK PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA

Oak Park Elementary School's ATP and teachers think students should learn to be responsible for their actions and own their successes and shortcomings. They want students to know that every day counts in school for academic progress, and that positive behavior adds up day by day. The school serves mainly African American students, and all students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. To help students focus on plans and progress, the school gave each student a Leadership Binder with calendars and charts to keep track of their academic grades, attendance, and behavior.

For example, on the chart for behavior data, students record their own behavior daily. Teachers check the students' ratings daily and parents check weekly. In this way, everyone works together to keep students on a positive path to success. The binders make it easier for teachers and parents to communicate with each other at parent-teacher conferences and between those meetings. It is no coincidence that parental involvement increased at Oak Park Elementary after implementing this program.

The binder's materials (calendar and charts for conduct data, grades data, attendance and behavior data) were developed by a district curriculum coordinator, with input from teachers, the PTO, and parents. The materials were produced at no cost to the school by the district's print shop.

The binders were compiled in time for all students to receive one at the start of school. The content and use of the binders were demonstrated for parents at the first open house and during other family nights. At first, the rollout was slow until everyone—teachers, students, and parents—understood how the use of data meant more continuous progress for all students.

Because the students tracked their own progress, they recognized there were "just results, no excuses," as one administrator noted. The students were becoming leaders of their own learning. The binders also facilitated productive discussions between students and their parents. Students let their parents know why they were performing a certain way or why their actions were causing issues in the classroom. Parents easily tracked grade improvements, assessment scores, and reports of good conduct. The transparency afforded by the Leadership Binders made it easier for students to own up to their conduct because they were recoding the data—not the teacher. One parent agreed, "This is awesome!"

There were several "lessons learned" about Leadership Binders. One was the need to have a subcommittee to orient students and parents who moved into the school after the start of the school year. Teachers also recognized the need to print materials marked for each month to reinforce the fact that data would be collected for the entire school year.

The Leadership Binders have worked well at Oak Park Elementary, in part because teachers were determined to turn leadership for learning over to the students. The binders are not a "novelty," but a way for students to see that they are responsible leaders and learners at school, and that this responsibility will prepare them for the future.

Andrea Conner
Assistant Principal
Andrea.conner@cpsb.org

TYPE 4

OTHER/MULTIPLE SUBJECTS

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

LIVING WAX MUSEUM

DELMAE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA

TYPE 2

OTHER/MULTIPLE SUBJECTS

Delmae Elementary School set an ambitious goal—to identify and eliminate reading deficiencies for all third graders by the end of the year. Knowing that end-of-year state test scores are reported after the end of the year, teachers administered pre-tests for diagnostic purposes in the fall and winter. The idea was to adapt instruction during the school year, using the early test results to select needed learning activities for all students.

The fall and winter pre-tests revealed that many third graders still needed extra help with reading skills to reach minimum standards on the state test. Teachers kept working to develop remedial and enriching activities to help students master critical reading skills. The urgent situation required innovative thinking. Drawing from project-based learning efforts already happening in the school, the ATP and reading teachers developed the Living Wax Museum to encourage reading, writing, and creative thinking and to increase parental engagement with students on learning.

The third grade teachers designed a project for students to conduct research on South Carolina History. Each student chose a famous South Carolinian to study. They were to report why the person was famous, what his/her history was like, and a few tidbits of information that would not be known by the average student or member of the public. The students' research was to be conducted over a period of time in class, at the school computer lab, and at home. Teachers provided printed information for students who did not have easy access to the internet at home. Alternatively, the school building remained open until 6 p. m. daily to enable students to use the school's computers after hours.

After completing the research, each student designed a costume to represent his or her famous person to wear at the Living Wax Museum held one day after school. As wax figures, students stood still until a parent, community member, or school staff came by to push a button beside them that would "bring them to life." When their button was pushed, each student recited information about themselves as if they were the famous person.

Students benefitted from this activity in several ways. They selected a topic that was meaningful to them. They combined reading, writing, and social study skills to complete the research. The students and parents collaborated to design the costume for their famous person. This winning combination is expected to increase reading scores on *Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)* for the year.

The Living Wax Museum also increased family engagement in students' education. Over 100 of the school's 136 third grade students participated in the project, and over 300 of their family, friends, and community members came to hear the students' reports. One parent sent a note after the event, "Just wanted to extend a thank you for all the hard work you [teachers] did for the wax museum! All the kids did awesome!" Positive reviews were not limited to students and parents. One of the living famous South Carolinians reached out after seeing a video of his portrayal on Facebook posted by the student's family. The famous South Carolinian applauded, "Well done, my man!"

Ginger A. Baggette
Curriculum Coordinator
jgbaggette@fsd1.org
Julie Shealy
3rd Grade Lead Teacher

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

MILESTONE CHECKLIST FOR IEPS

KEEWAYDIN DISCOVERY CENTER
KENNEWICK, WASHINGTON

Keewaydin Discovery Center is a special education preschool for children with disabilities from birth to age 5. The teachers at KDC are always working to improve their teaching practices to foster the education of their students and the involvement of all parents.

As a part of the school program, each child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Each child is evaluated to determine the specially-designed instruction that will advance their skills and behavior. Goals are written for each child to measure progress on cognitive, social, adaptive, fine and gross motor, and communication skills over the school year. Keewaydin's approach to IEPs changed from previously stating general goals such as making one year's progress in one year's time (e.g., from 2-year old to 3-year old skills and abilities). Now, each IEP sets specific and personal goals for learning and development. A child's program also may include services from a speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, school psychologist, nurse, or other administrator.

Parents had asked KDC for more clarity about what were typical 2-year-old or 3-year old skills. As a result, teachers researched and created a developmental checklist that outlines the sequence of skills that children will learn from birth to age 5 by attending KDC. With the checklist, parents can more easily support the development that is being fostered at school. Parents also were asked to signal the teachers when they see their child demonstrate the targeted skills. This, in turn, helps teachers know that progress was being made and that the child was ready for the next step in learning and development.

Parents receive the checklists and a questionnaire prior to each IEP meeting to give their views on their child's progress on each milestone for learning and behavior. This process gives parents an active role as a partner with teachers at the IEP meetings. Each parent reviews their student's IEP with the teacher. Teachers complete a formal assessment of attainments and update the checklist of skills for the next school period. As the parents leave the meeting, they are given a folder with a copy of the updated IEP and the developmental checklist, along with the teacher's name, e-mail address, and phone number. For Spanish-speaking families, the milestones were translated into Spanish.

Changing the IEP process to be more specific and more inclusive of parents' observations and ideas cost under $500. The checklists reflect research on preschool children with various disabilities and the sequential nature of their development. The teachers took time to study developmental patterns and polish the checklists so that they would be clear to teachers and to parents and reflect developmentally appropriate milestones for students with different needs. The goal was to expand—not restrict—how teachers or parents worked with their children to help them progress step by step on basic skills.

KDC bases its programs on a whole-child approach, which includes attention to student health, safety, level of engagement, level of support, and appropriate academic rigor to challenge each student. KDC has combined a good theory with good teaching practice and good partnerships with parents to increase the short-term and long-term success of its students.

Becca Anderson
Principal
becca.anderson@ksd.org
Pam Hamon
ATP Chair
pamela.hamon@ksd.org

TYPE 2

OTHER/MULTIPLE SUBJECTS

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

SPRING INTO LEAP

NORTHEAST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA

TYPE 4

OTHER/MULTIPLE SUBJECTS

High-stakes testing is a charged subject, but, like it or not, the tests are true to their word—they are high stakes. School funding, public perception of school quality, and targeted areas for school improvement are all connected to test scores. Northeast Elementary School knows that students should be well prepared to take the state tests that are important for them and for their school. Good preparation breeds confidence and success. Northeast Elementary also knows that it is important to empower families to understand and support the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) tests that their children take.

The ATP, teachers, and administrators at Northeast invited parents and students to school for an information session—Spring into LEAP—to learn the basics of the annual spring tests and how to help their children at home. Teachers in grades 3-6 shared sample questions from past English Language Arts and Math tests with the group to show the content that had been covered in class and the kinds of questions and formats that students were likely to encounter.

Parents and students were asked to review one problem each day so that the student could practice a skill taught in class. Parents were able to use some of the test taking tips they learned at the information session. It was expected that by talking over the sample problems and showing a parent how they do their work, students would gain confidence about their readiness to take the tests. The principal told parents that if they were uncertain about the content of a question or ran out of samples to share with their child, they could call or meet with teachers during their planning period.

The information session at school was well attended by almost 200 parents and as many students. This can be attributed to two things. First, the topic was of inherent interest to families and students, who really want to do their best on tests. Second, advertising for the meeting was extensive, including the usual communications from school to home and advertising Spring into LEAP on the radio. Parents were encouraged to invite other parents to the event. Those in attendance were encouraged to share the information and take home materials with parents who were not able to attend.

Teachers reported that their students were benefitting academically and behaviorally by practicing skills in class and at home. The impact of extra practice was evident on students' weekly assessments and daily work in class. The extra practice at home reassured many students, who were calm and confident on test day. Parents also felt calmer about the tests their children were taking. One parent had been anxious about the high stakes linked to the state tests, but felt better after the information session at school. She said, "My mind is at ease after attending this workshop."

Stacie Mickens
Parent Educator
sdm3687@slp.k12.la.us
Daphne Guillory
Principal
Dag2610@slp.k12.la.us

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

TINKERTOPIA

OAKBROOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
LAKEWOOD, WASHINGTON

Open here. Cut here. Glue here. Color here. Stand back and you've just created an amazing and original piece of art. This scenario was appealing to teachers at Oakbrook Elementary School. Adopting an idea from a local business, Oakbrook created an environment that encouraged students to create original art. They called the program Tinkertopia, named after a "creative reuse center" in the state of Washington that sells recycled materials and gives artists space to make art.

Oakbrook asked all parents, students, and teachers to keep their eyes open for recyclable material that could be donated to the school. Over six weeks, students and parents brought in many items, and the school used a budget of $250 to purchase additional interesting and less common materials. All items were sorted and stored in the art classroom, which may have looked like a junk heap to casual observers. To the keen eye, the art room became an artist's haven. Earth Day became the time to focus on art.

All art classes had one lesson about their Carbon Footprint and about well-known artists who use recycled materials as the basis for their work. Then, the next week, each class had 60 minutes to create their work. Each student could select up to 8 items from the many bins of materials for their project. Students selected from such things as cardboard, plastic, cloth, wood, metal, and small unique recycled items (e.g., bottle caps). Students then worked at their tables with a resource caddy of scissors, tape, and brads that they could use. Several parents volunteered to work in the art room to assist with advanced procedures such as using garage tools, sewing machines, and glue guns.

The feelings of everyone were summed well by one teacher who said, "I just love to watch them create something!" Students took their artwork home on the same day that they made it. Some students were challenged by the limited time period. They wanted more time to imagine their creation. These students were allowed to collect the materials they needed and finish the project at home.

As they returned to their home classrooms, the students showed their teachers their art. Some students struggled to talk about the meaning of their work or the story behind it. Some had a hard time explaining why they were creating art with recycled materials. In response, the art and music teachers took time to remind students of lessons they learned about their carbon foot print. The point of the activity became clear.

Tintertopia was a fun way for students to think about the environment—how they impact it, and how it affects them. They were given a chance to make original, imaginative art that was not prescribed in any way. It also engaged all parents and many members of the community. Over 100 contributed recycled "stuff" that became children's art. Commenting on this, one community member said, "This opened the welcome sign for parents to come in because all families at all income levels could participate."

Sheri Warrick
Principal
swarrick@cloverpark.k12.wa.us

TYPE 3

OTHER/MULTIPLE SUBJECTS

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

2 NON-ACADEMIC GOALS

Practices for Types 1-6 in this section involve families and community partners to help students meet non-academic goals for positive behavior, post-secondary education and career planning, health and safety, multicultural awareness, and successful transitions.

COMMUNITY SERVICE CRAFT NIGHT

THEODORE ROOSEVELT SCHOOL
BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT

A hospital can be a dreary place, but thoughtful gifts and friendly support can help someone feel better. Theodore Roosevelt School's Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) and other teachers, students, and parents conducted a project to provide a lift to hospital patients by warming their hearts with hand-crafted blankets. Roosevelt is a Title I school attended by students with diverse racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds.

The 2nd graders generated the idea for a crafts project, which evolved into a well-planned all school Community Service Craft Night. Parents, students, and teachers made blankets to cheer up and comfort children who had to spend time in Bridgeport Hospital. The partnership coordinator thought that a craft night would strengthen character, introduce new hobby skills, and spark school spirit by providing a service to the community. Students might learn about the joy of giving to others at the same time they have fun with crafts.

The school sent out fliers to parents, including an RSVP to help the planners prepare and purchase enough materials for everyone to be active blanket makers. Over 20 families participated. An administrator greeted the attendees to welcome them to the school and explain the importance of community services and kindness toward others. Teachers attended the activity, too, to meet families, encourage students, work alongside all of the participants, and develop the community project.

The material for colorful fleece blankets and dinners were purchased with Title I funds and monies from prior fundraising activities. Overall, Community Service Craft Night cost about $390.

As parents sewed blankets with their students many also talked about the challenges associated with some of the hospital stays that they and the children experienced. Students understood and were pleased to learn that they could do something to make someone feel better at a time that is filled with anxieties. The parents found, in crafting, another great way to spend time with their children and with other families in the school community. The group expressed interest in continuing school projects for community service.

Patients at Bridgeport Hospital were recipients of the good will and good work of Roosevelt School's project. A group of students and adults took a bus to the hospital to deliver the blankets. For many reasons of health and privacy, they were not able to meet the patients in person. They delivered the blankets to the hospital administrators, who were appreciative of the project. Patients responded with "Thank You" notes to the students, parents, and teachers at the school.

The Child Life specialist at the hospital said, "I am so honored to be able to give the fleece blankets to the patients. It makes me even happier to be able to tell the story of where the blankets came from." Most importantly, students felt good that they and their school were creating good will in the community and charming blankets to help patients who were experiencing some difficult times.

Carlotta Allen
Home School Coordinator
callen@bridgeportedu.net

TYPE 6

BEHAVIOR

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE

BROOKLYN CITY SCHOOLS-PRESCHOOL
BROOKLYN, OHIO

TYPE 1

BEHAVIOR

When new teachers joined Brooklyn City Schools-Preschool for the 2015-16 school year, they learned about Conscious Discipline. This program focuses on helping students demonstrate positive behavior such as helping, sharing, taking turns, asking for guidance from adults, and solving problems. Teachers also take positive corrective actions if students demonstrate inappropriate behavior or come into conflict with peers. Before school started, a representative for the program conducted a half-day professional development session for the whole staff, complete with videos and practice sessions. With this training, everyone at the school was equipped to use consistent Conscious Discipline language when the students arrived.

School leaders also wanted to share knowledge about Conscious Discipline with parents. The Action Team for Partnerships, teachers, and a Conscious Discipline representative planned a workshop for parents to learn about the self-regulation and problem-solving strategies their children were following at school. The goal was to enable parents to feel comfortable using the same language and strategies at home.

Six weeks before the workshop, parents were notified of the meeting and that dinner and child care would be provided. At the workshop, families had dinner in the cafeteria and then split into two groups. Students were treated to special activities in their classrooms and parents went to the media center to see a PowerPoint presentation on the purpose of Conscious Discipline and to learn strategies used in school that could be used or adapted at home.

Specifically, parents heard about how a child's brain works when not in a calm state and about breathing strategies that children use to calm down when they are upset. Parents asked questions and were provided individualized strategies to address struggles at home. The workshop immediately helped parents feel more connected to what was happening at school.

By collaborating at the start of the school year, both teachers and parents gained a solid understanding of the principles of Conscious Discipline. They are working to maintain a calm, consistent demeanor when addressing students' social and emotional needs. As a bonus result, parents were more comfortable about visiting the school and talking with teachers.

As the school year progressed, teachers reported seeing "huge gains" in students' abilities to self-regulate and problem solve in the classroom. The workshop for parents helped strengthen the connection between school and home about student behavior and may have contributed to the positive changes that teachers observed.

The partnership between the school and its families not only provided parents with information and resources, but also reinforced the school's view that parents and family members were part of the school community. Later in the school year, the ATP and teachers wanted to add some fun to this partnership. As part of a classroom gingerbread unit, they hosted a Grandparents' Gingerbread Gathering during the day and a Gingerbread Social in the evening for parents. Children heard and retold the story *Gingerbread Man*. Over 150 parents and grandparents of the 55 students participated in making gingerbread from a recipe, baking and enjoying cookies, and decorating paper gingerbread houses.

By fostering a climate of family and community engagement, Brooklyn City Schools-Preschool aimed to increase parents' readiness to consider new strategies to improve the behavior of young children. The initial actions were recognized by district leaders, who are exploring ways to implement these ideas in elementary schools throughout the district.

Courtney Seman
Early Childhood Intervention Specialist
courtney.seman@brooklyn.k12.oh.us

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

MAN-UP INITIATIVE: MALE MENTORING

SOUTH FLORENCE HIGH SCHOOL
FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA

South Florence High School set a goal to improve the lives of male students who were at risk of failing. Based on their grades, discipline, attendance, and/or personal situations at home, about 75 students were paired with male mentors. The mentors for each group were selected by the students, were school staff, or were volunteers from the community. The program, said one student, "got men to come into our lives when our own fathers were absent."

Three groups were formed that focused on academic progress, life skills, or behavior. Students could participate in some or all three groups to help themselves get back on track for graduation from high school.

The Diligent Pupils of Character program enabled about 35 students to meet one-on-one with their mentors once every three weeks to check on their grades and academic progress. Students were urged to maintain an 80 per cent average grade in all classes. Mentors discussed specific strategies and tips for success in the classroom, and urged students to set and attain goals for academic performance.

The second group, South Florence Strong, helped students focus on life skills, including small things (e.g., tying a necktie, changing a tire) and big things (e.g., preparing for a job interview, applying to college). Many of the students in this program had been suspended from school. The mentors brought all participants together for a group meeting, once a week for one hour. Guest speakers discussed important events and decisions in students' lives.

The third group of students met weekly to talk with the school's behavior health counselor.

At three points during the year, all students and mentors in the three Man-Up groups met for breakfast in the school library. This allowed all students and mentors to meet, connect, and discuss important challenges and successes in the last period. Other special events were conducted such as providing tickets to a University of South Carolina basketball game.

The program was supported by grants from Francis Marion University's Center of Excellence, the PTSA, and other donors, totaling about $2000. The mentors were not paid, but the assistant principal and coordinator of the initiative said, "The . . . feeling that one gets from sponsoring events like these and working with children in this capacity is the most rewarding part." Parents supported their student's attendance at meetings with mentors and were proud of the youngster's accomplishments.

The initiative gave young men time to stop, think, and talk about the things that are most important to them. One student explained that the program "gives us a different mindset so I think about things now before I do them." Not all students in the Man-Up Initiative were successful on all aspects of the program, but many, previously at risk, qualified for the school's honor roll, received full athletic scholarships to continue their education after high school, or had limited disciplinary referrals after joining the program. Most of the participants passed the majority of their classes. One student explained the success when he stated that the program "keeps me out of trouble."

John Cedrick Kennedy
Assistant Principal
cedrick.kennedy@fsd1.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

RISE ABOVE AWARDS

NEW HORIZONS HIGH SCHOOL
PASCO, WASHINGTON

TYPE 6

BEHAVIOR

Dale Carnegie's classic book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People,* suggests that people can change others more quickly with praise than with criticism. The educators at New Horizons High School are activating this principle. The Action Team for Partnerships (ATP), teachers, and administrators wanted to change the school climate by encouraging and rewarding students' positive behavior and accomplishments and by welcoming parents as partners in their children's education.

New Horizons is an alternative and innovative high school serving students who need a new path to success. Its program includes academic preparation for all students, career and technical education, and services for teen parents. About one quarter of the 275 students are English Language Learners. About 80% of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The population is mainly Hispanic, but there also are students with diverse backgrounds.

To build a positive school climate and reduce disciplinary problems, the Action Team for Partnership (ATP) focused on the school's behavior code that aims for Respect, Integrity, Safety, and Excellence (RISE). The RISE-ing Above Award program aimed to publicly honor students who exemplified these values.

At the start of the school year, teachers, administrators, and staff were told about the program. At the end of each quarter, teachers filled out a form to nominate a student to receive the award for improved behavior, attendance, academic improvement, perseverance, leadership, courage, or selfless service. The ATP read through the nominations and selected five students each quarter who received awards. The selected students and their families were invited to an evening Awards Ceremony and dessert social.

Each Award Ceremony is conducted in the gym, shortly after the end of each quarter. The floricultural class creates center pieces for the tables and string lights decorate the room. A community partner (Partners in Educating All Kids-PEAK) donates the desserts that are served buffet style. PEAK donations and school funds of about $600 pay for plaques, trophies, and certificates.

A program is distributed to all attendees with the names and photos of the honored students. The principal serves as emcee for the evening. Each student is called up to receive the award and have their picture taken with the nominating teacher. The teacher reads the nomination aloud so that everyone is aware of the good work and good deeds that are being recognized.

The public recognition goes far with the students and parents. Said one student, "I'm glad my mom could come and be proud of me." The recognition also extends parents' understanding of their own teens. One parent commented, "This kid is just on a roll. . .. He's an all-star." The ATP expects that as more families attend the award ceremonies, they also will attend other meetings and events at the school.

The students in this alternative high school need to construct a positive view of themselves as capable people who can do great things. With RISE-ing Above Awards, the ATP and teachers believe they are seeing the school climate shift towards one of positive behavior. Additionally the school reports that students have begun to regard academic success and good character as noble, linked, and attainable goals.

Jessie Kurtz and Carol Travis
Teachers and ATP Co-Chairs
jkurtz@psd1.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

ST. JUDE TRIKE-A-THON

PARMA PRESCHOOL
PARMA, OHIO

One of the most talked about events at Parma Preschool is the St. Jude Trike-a-Thon that the school has held for the last 10 years. It was introduced when a member of the school's first Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) learned that her daughter had been diagnosed with cancer. Today, her healthy daughter is in middle school, but the Trike-a-Thon continues. Parma's children, families, and community friends raise funds for the children at the St. Jude Research Hospital, where patients' treatment, travel, housing, and food are covered by donations, and do not depend on a family's ability to pay.

The event also helps Parma Preschool focus on all students' health and wellness. Teachers noticed that some children were not eating healthy, staying active, or going outside. Teachers have worked with families to focus on social and emotional development, which also affects learning. When children are healthy, happy, and thinking of others beside themselves, they feel more confident about learning and they are more likely to effectively solve school and other problems. Parma's young students especially like the idea of helping others. One parent reported, "I was surprised to see how seriously [my son] took his participation in the [Trike-a-Thon]. He told our whole family how he was 'helping sick kids.'"

To plan the Trike-a-Thon, administrators, teachers, the ATP, and others at Parma reviewed photos and video of past events. They distributed a survey to families to learn how (and how much) they wanted to be involved. When decisions were made, ATP members distributed fliers to families and community partners, made calls to local community leaders (e.g., city mayor, police), and spread news of the event on Facebook, the school's website, and other social media.

Combined with the fall open house, students invited families to visit their classroom, meet their teachers, and enjoy refreshments. The children brought their trikes and bikes to participate in the school's Trike-a-Thon. They checked in, showed their bikes and helmets to ensure they were safe, turned in donations collected for St. Jude's in the past week, and then rode their bikes around a track that parents made using cones and caution tape. One student was impressed, "We met a real policeman and he checked my bike."

While students participated in the Trike-a-Thon, families watched their children demonstrate bike safety, took photos, and talked with the local police officer who attended to represent the city. In all, the school raised $1,200 for St. Jude Research Hospital.

This activity was particularly successful because the school served mainly new families who were unfamiliar with previous Trike-a-Thons. Some will return next year to help the event run smoothly.

Parma Preschool is one of more than 4000 schools that conduct a St. Jude Trike-a-Thon, using guidelines on the organization's website. The ATP and teachers did not make the fund raising activity into a competition between classes or families. It was more important to focus on everyone working together to help other children and to encourage Parma's students to enjoy exercise on bikes and trikes.

Kim Surniak
Director
Parmapreschool@yahoo.com

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

WIGS AND PIGS—THEIR VISION; OUR FUTURE

DOLBY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA

TYPE 5

BEHAVIOR

Early in the school year, Dolby Elementary School held WIGS and PIGS Night to give families a chance to tour the school building and learn how their children set Wildly Important Goals (WIGS) and Personal Improvement Goals (PIGS). In the last year, students had been introduced to the process for setting and explaining their own goals for learning and behavior and for reviewing progress each week. In the new school year, the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP), teachers, and administrators wanted to sharpen the process with students and enable parents to be partners in WIGS and PIGS, and apply the goal-setting process at home.

Goal setting is at the heart of a good school. As a Lighthouse School, Dolby uses data to monitor attendance, grades, behavior, district common assessments, and formal assessments. WIGS and PIGS supports this approach by bringing students in as active planners and data users. Dolby also is a *Leader in Me* school that holds that every child has individual gifts for leadership and is responsible for their own academic success. Students learn that they are capable leaders in critical thinking, goal setting, listening and speaking, self-directed learning, making presentations, and working in groups.

At the event for parents, students shared their own WIGS and PIGS, and explained how, in the classroom, students had accountability partners to help them monitor their progress in attaining their goals. Teachers also discussed easy ways that parents and children could use the process at home to set goals, monitor results, and redesign or redirect goals that go off track. Parents were impressed with the process and with the importance of personal learning goals.

There were important challenges to solve before conducting WIGS and PIGS Night. First, new faculty members and young students or students new to the school had to fully understand the process so they could explain it to their parents. Teachers helped students practice what they would say in their short presentations to parents. On an in-service day, new and veteran teachers reviewed the *Leader in Me* expectations and how WIGS and PIGS strengthened that approach. Grade level lead teachers also guided teachers with this project. The ATP identified community partners who provided door prizes and refreshments for the evening.

Teachers knew that parents could be partners in students' goal setting at school by helping students feel personal success when they met their own learning goals. WIGS and PIGS Night extended this partnership by discussing how to apply goal-setting practices at home. This is a win-win agenda. And, photos show that many students, teachers, and parents got to wear great wigs!

Parents offered positive feedback about the WIGS and PIGS process and students' explanations. Many parents of Pre-K students were amazed that their children understood the importance of goal setting. A parent of a 5th grader was pleased that her son was able to lead a group discussion about goal setting. All parents were happy to learn how to support their children's school goals and how to use similar approaches to guide their children on goal setting at home.

Julie Ortego
Assistant Principal
Julie.ortego2@cpsb.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK

PARK VISTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA

Over the years, Park Vista Elementary School's celebration of American Education Week grew from a simple flag raising ceremony to a full week of fun-filled activities, with a particular focus on extending students' career awareness. At the start of each school year, members of the Action Team for Partnership (ATP) brainstormed ideas for activities and requirements for the day-to-day agenda for the week. With a subcommittee and blueprint in place, different members of the ATP took responsibility for the planned activities.

Preparations proceeded systematically for the week in November. This included advertising, using the *Remind* texting system to invite all parents and family members to participate, make them feel welcome, and keep them informed about the dates and specific activities. Invitations were sent to community leaders, volunteers and supporters who help the school or individual teachers, and to the school's retired teachers.

Plans also included options to change activities in the event of inclement weather and identifying speakers who agreed to participate in special activities on designated days and nights. By gaining administrative support, starting early, and sharing tasks, the ATP, teachers, administrators, and many helpers made sure that American Education Week was a success.

For example, on Monday, student 4-H leaders read quotes over the intercom. On Tuesday, the school held a flag raising ceremony in the front of the school building and then filed into the school to listen to a guest speaker. On Wednesday, students dressed up according to the career of their choice (but with rules of no jeans, pajamas, short skirts, or sports jerseys).

On Thursday, parents, teachers, and students met each other at an evening social in the school cafeteria. This was a "munch and mingle" meeting, with food provided by the school. Attendees said the pledge of allegiance, listened to a presentation on a topic of interest, recognized the student of the year and the winner of the "American Education Week" essay contest, and heard about advances in education from a representative of the school board.

To cap off the week, on Friday, each class had a parent or two come to speak about their careers. Staff were asked to wear college alumni colors. The entire week was financed for just under $500—mostly donations and school funds.

The event was (and always is) a big hit with over 800 students and over 500 parents and family members. Parents were pleased with the roles that their children played during the week in all activities. They also appreciated that some invited speakers were from within the Park Vista family and others were from the wider community. The speakers shared many different careers to alert students that they had many options as they considered their futures.

During American Education Week, Park Vista took many opportunities to honor parents, volunteers, and community supporters for all that they do for the children, the teachers, and the school, both physically and financially. This was an event that increased parent and community involvement and brought partners in education together to celebrate their shared mission to work with and for the children.

Kathy Chachere
Teacher
kdc5929@slp.k12.la.us

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

CAREERS, CRAFTSMANSHIP, AND COMMUNITY IN THE CLASSROOM

MARK TWAIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PASCO, WASHINGTON

It is a common question that children are asked: "What do you want to be when you grow up?" At first, students' answers are limited—doctor, teacher, fireman. But, with good career awareness programs, children's thoughts change and their options grow. Mark Twain Elementary School is helping students think broadly about a wide array of interests and careers. The school's principal said that he knew the school was on the right track when he heard that students were genuinely excited to learn about careers linked to their interests such as playing in a military band and careers in dog training.

Mark Twain is attended by more than 60% Hispanic students of which about half are English Language Learners. Over 80% of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

The goal to increase students' career awareness was connected to another goal at the school to involve more fathers in the educational process. To extend the school's established Watch D.O.G.S. program (Dads of Great Students), the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP), teachers, principal, and others developed a strong career awareness activity: Careers, Craftsmanship, and Community in the Classroom. Dads and other father figures were invited to share information about their jobs, special craft skills, or hobbies, and answer students' questions. Community partners also were invited to participate.

Mark Twain Elementary knows that the presence of fathers is important to the school and for the success of more students. When dads and other male role models come to the school as partners to describe their jobs and other interests, the children—boys and girls—listen and learn. Dads are a natural resource for opening students' minds to more and different career options.

The fathers were recruited a month before the day of presentations. A flyer was sent home with all children that invited dads and father figures to come to a meeting to learn how they might participate. Anyone with a conflicting schedule could e-mail or call the event leader.

On the scheduled day, each presenter was given 30 minutes to present their experiences and answer students' questions in one or two classrooms. The classroom discussions included questions about the skills needed to do certain jobs and the education or training that was required.

Some presenters did more, by getting students involved in an activity related to their job or hobby. One teacher reported, "The students were engaged and excited to be able to participate in different fitness activities that the Fitness Boot Camp Trainer had them do."

No doubt the curious and responsive youngsters helped the presenters come away with a positive experience. Thank you notes were sent to each presenter and one responded, "Thank YOU! This was the most fun I've had in a long time. And the kids were so polite. Would it be okay if I came back another time?"

The school plans to extend the activity to two days by adding an important element—one day will feature mothers and their diverse careers.

Lee Delamora
Teacher
Ldelamora@psd1.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

BMA COLLEGE/CAREER FAIR

BRIDGEPORT MILITARY ACADEMY
BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT

Bridgeport Military Academy (BMA) opened three years ago with the mission to instruct and inspire students to develop a strong commitment to servicing "others above self" in their school, family, and community and to prepare academically for leadership roles and professional careers. The high school is known as a First Responder school offering training in Police, Fire, Emergency Medical, Homeland Security, and Military Sciences. The school serves nearly 300 cadets in grades 9-11 (adding a new grade level each year through grade 12). Students are mainly African American and Hispanic, nearly all of whom qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. All students at the magnet school are expected to work hard and show dedication. They are offered hands-on learning activities in CPR, first aid, FEMA courses, 911 communication, and other activities in partnership with local police, fire, security, military, and other community departments.

Last fall the PTSO president announced the need to support and increase family engagement to encourage students to achieve their full potential. The school's Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) decided to host a college and career fair, which would engage parents and community partners and help students learn more about pathways to follow. Although the school focuses on the careers of first responders, students at BMA—like students in all high schools—wonder about identifying their interests and options for a job or profession and the education and training required.

ATP members planned details for the Fair, lined up guest speakers, planned for refreshments, and advertised widely to invite parents to the College/Career Fair. Flyers and messages on the school's phone system reached every student's home with dates and details about the Fair. It took time and coordination to engage many organizations to participate, and to plan a program of presentations and conversations. It also was necessary to check in prior to the event to remind participants about their agreement.

Each presenter was welcomed and placed at an individual table. Representatives were from the Air Force Academy, Housatonic Community College, Norwalk Community College, Johnson & Whales, Mitchell College, the University of Connecticut, Yale, the Air Force, the Army, the Coast Guard, the Marines, the Navy, an EMS unit, and the Police and Fire departments. Some made formal presentations to the whole group. All talked with individual students and parents, and many came with pens or pamphlets to give to families.

The goal was two-fold: (1) expose students to career options so that they would see how courses at the school could help prepare them for life after high school, and (2) to involve parents at school and in discussions with their teens about high school, college, and/or career training. About 50 students and as many parents listened to and spoke with the presenters about their careers and how they prepared for the work they do.

Parents agreed with the principal that the evening was successful. The ATP also saw that with an important engagement activity, they could increase the involvement of parents at the school and with their students.

Rosemarie Dizenzo
Home School Coordinator
Rdizenzo@bridgeportedu.net

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

HONOR CEREMONY: EXEMPLARY PORTFOLIOS

NORWICH TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL
NORWICH, CONNECTICUT

Norwich Technical high school is a regional high school that focuses on graduating students who not only are equipped with academic skills, but also with readily employable trade skills. Students come from over 24 towns to attend the school, in part because of its history of preparing its graduates for their future. One helpful activity is that all graduating seniors must compile a portfolio to showcase their work and accomplishments that will help them stand out in a job interview. Last year, Norwich added a twist to the process. Students who completed their portfolios on an early deadline would be considered for awards for Exemplary Portfolios that honored the students and their families.

Students' portfolios include a cover page, awards earned in or out of school, trade performance reviews, report cards, select pieces of writing from their four years in high school, pictures from their trades showcasing their strengths, and a full resume. A committee reviewed all components of the portfolios submitted for exemplary status. Sixteen award winners were selected, regardless of students' academic standing. Although several of the strongest portfolios were from academically strong students, other award recipients put together compelling and exemplary portfolios that would serve them well on the job market, in preparing college applications, or in applying for scholarships.

The students applied for the honor of the school's recognition of their good work. They understood that the portfolio requirement enabled all students to create a personal record of individual excellence, and that the early submission of a strong portfolio would demonstrate effective time management on a graduation requirement. The students did not know that there was a formal ceremony planned for those earning the award. The Action Team for Partnerships (ATP), principal, teachers, and other school leaders planned a breakfast ceremony for exemplary portfolio status students and their families. A formal invitation was sent in the mail, designed and printed by the graphics department.

Breakfast was prepared by the school's culinary department and served as a buffet in the school's restaurant. The students and their families were greeted by the principal and other administrators, the portfolio instructor, and the director of student services. After breakfast, each student was called by name and presented a pin to wear on their graduation robes. Family Engagement Committee members were on hand to photograph the event and post pictures to the school website.

Students and families enjoyed the recognition. Said one student speaking on behalf of several of the honored students, "We had no idea it would be so nice. It was an honor to be recognized for [our] achievements, as a lot of time, energy, and hard work went into the whole process. [Our] parents/families were able to be publicly proud of the level of excellence we had demonstrated and were honored that the school would recognize the efforts with both a formal breakfast and speeches by the administration. [We] plan on wearing our pins on the graduation robes. It was really a surprise to get them."

Lauri Kenniston, Krys Konow,
and Jaime Miller
Assistant Principal, Family Engagement Member,
and Family Engagement Chairperson
jaime.miller@ct.gov

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

HEALTHY TEEN

PARK MIDDLE SCHOOL
KENNEWICK, WASHINGTON

When Park Middle School experienced the tragic suicide death of one of its 8th grade students, leaders knew it was time to talk about student health with all students and their parents. The Action Team for Partnerships (ATP), teachers, counselors, and administrators designed Healthy Teen—a series of discussions on aspects of health that, ultimately, reached over 400 parents and over 860 students.

In October, Red Ribbon Week called attention to need to prevent drug abuse, sponsored by the annual National Red Ribbon Campaign. For over 30 years, Red Ribbon has guided millions of people around the world to better understand the kind of destruction caused by the illegal use of drugs. Today, the Red Ribbon Campaign serves as a catalyst to mobilize communities to educate youth and encourage participation in activities that teach drug abuse prevention.

Red Ribbon week was celebrated by all Park students. Students were encouraged to "take the pledge" to not use illegal drugs or alcohol by signing a large banner now hanging in the cafeteria. The school linked School Spirit Week with Red Ribbon Week. For example, on Sock it to Drugs Day students and staff came to school wearing crazy or mismatched socks. Every classroom door was decorated with a large paper red ribbon. All staff wore red ribbons attached to their ID badges.

The accompanying Family Night was well attended by more than 200. This included a pizza dinner with a questionnaire at the tables to prompt families to think about drug abuse prevention. There was a drug and alcohol awareness video, a presentation entitled on How to Talk to Your Kids about Drugs, a DEA officer presentation about drug and alcohol offenses and legal outcomes, and a question and answer session.

In February, the series focused on physical health. Fun activities were planned to involve the whole family and that could be incorporated in daily life with little effort. The PE teacher organized the activities. A sports medicine teacher presented information on the connections of physical activities, a healthy brain, and the importance of sleep.

Community partner Tri-Cities Community Health presented information about nutrition, as families were served a sub sandwich, baked chips, and bottled water. Another community partner provided fresh fruit smoothies for dessert. A local food bank conducted a short nutrition survey and sent families home with boxes of food that included fresh fruits and vegetables.

In May, No More Stigma helped the school participate in Mental Health Awareness month. This included videos of school counselors talking about mental health. The intervention specialist created videos on what "stigma" means in society.

At the family night in May, several community agencies presented information on mental health. Families chose two sessions from the following: Domestic Violence Services presented "Healthy Relationships." Park's Intervention Specialist presented on "Trauma and Resilience" on the effects of trauma on children and how to deal with the aftermath. Recovery and Wellness Center of Eastern Washington talked about eating disorders and how to get help. Youth Suicide Prevention discussed teen stressors and warning signs of cries for help. The Support, Advocacy, and Resource Center presented on technology safety, privacy, and avoiding on-line dangers.

Camille Renteria
Librarian and ATP Co-Chair
camille.renteria@ksd.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

TASTE OF DOWER—IRON CHEF NIGHT

DOWER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
LAKEWOOD, WASHINGTON

TYPE 1

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Iron Chef Night at Dower Elementary School was a challenge to plan, a challenge to conduct, and worth the effort. The Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) and many collaborating teachers developed easy-to-make, healthy recipes that elementary school students could prepare using only equipment available to most families living under the poverty line in the U. S. Only cost effective ingredients were allowed in the recipes, particularly items that are included in the Friday Backpack Program distributed by the local food bank. Along with typical invitations and notices, fifth grade Student Council members promoted the event with posters, and local high school students also volunteered to help.

A menu of healthy, tasty foods Introducing students to easy, low-budget recipes came together as. The result was a "raging success," according to the school's partner at Washington State University. The Iron Chef menu included appetizers, salads, main entrees, desserts, and beverages. Specifically, students learned to make Fruit Salsa with Chips; Hummus Dip with Veggies; Pickit Salad; Carrot Jicama Salad; Tuna Salad; Tortilla Sandwiches; Fruity Rollups; Vanilla Frosting Cookies; and Strawberry Banana Smoothies.

At Iron Chef Night, ten cooking stations were set up around the gym, cafeteria, and stage. The stations consisted of a table covered in butcher paper with a recipe card and all ingredients. Parents could stand behind their children and take photos while the youngsters combined ingredients to cook the dish. Some cutting and washing was accomplished ahead of time by the school kitchen staff, but other items were left for the child-chefs to prepare with appropriate tools. Parents were impressed with the abilities of their student chefs, and the good food that resulted. This included some new tastes—such as hummus and jicama—that children actually said they liked.

Families signed in for the evening and found a place setting at one of the tables. Staff greeted everyone, provided an overview of the evening, and guided hand washing. Students were given the menu and decided where they would begin cooking. They rotated through as many stations as they had time, but did not have to make all recipes. The idea was that they and their families would enjoy eating what they cooked.

Ingredients for about 65 students and 35 parents cost about $400. This was supplemented by Washington State University's Square Foot Nutrition Program which provided kitchen utensils, equipment, and some of the recipes. They also attended the event and brought posters about safe cooking and preparation. Door prizes related to cooking were donated by WSU, including cooking magazines and kitchen utensils. A few volunteers from the community also attended who came and helped prepare recipes with students at the stations.

Students fed their stomachs, but also their minds. They used reading and math skills to read recipes and measure ingredients. They practiced good school behavior as they waited their turns at the various stations, and learned patience in following instructions and working with teams of other students. They learned about healthy foods that tasted good. All families took home copies of all recipes.

Jennifer Moore
Principal
jjmoore@cloverpark.k12.wa.us

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

LATIN AMERICA FAIR

FOREST PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

Students in all grades at Forest Park Elementary, Pre-K to Grade 5, have Spanish language classes that enrich the curriculum and increase students' cultural awareness. The Spanish teacher visits each class each week to introduce students to the language and Latin culture, using games and various teaching technologies. One interesting thing about the addition of Spanish to the curriculum is that the school's parents and PTA identified the need for early Spanish classes, and the PTA pays the salary of the Spanish teacher.

Students' skills and interests were showcased in an end-of-year Latin America Fair—the culmination of the year's instruction. This enabled students to learn from those in other grade levels. Parents were invited to see the benefits of the program by their child's teacher and by notices in the local paper.

The festive Fair, held outdoors, included 16 booths representing different countries in Latin America. Each class was assigned one country. Teachers guided students to learn about and share information about the geography, history, culture, and food of the assigned country. Students created tri-fold boards to present information and illustrations about the country. They facilitated their booths in 15 minute shifts.

Students worked in groups, dressed in native costumes, and gave 2-minute presentations about their country to their visitors. The students were, in fact, "tour guides" who reported information and helped other students learn something interesting about the country. The class studying Argentina also learned a native dance to present at the Fair.

One parent who volunteered to assist reported, "Our Latin America Fair was very successful in promoting cultural understanding. The children gained great knowledge and had a lot of fun too."

Students and parents attending received a "passport" that was stamped after they visited each booth. This was a fun souvenir that also kept account of students' travels. Community partners served as judges of the content and quality of each booth, with prizes to recognize excellent efforts.

The Fair ran all day and for one hour after school for parents who could not make it during the school day. Parents also pitched in to help set up and take down the booths, and some volunteered to help the younger children. In all, it was a good experience for parents, who like to see their children interacting and learning at the same time. It also was a good opportunity for parents to meet and talk with teachers and with other parents. The PTA supported the Fair's expenses of $50 for various materials.

One student summed it up, "We learned a lot about the Spanish culture." The ATP and teachers conducted a full evaluation of how well the school reached its organizational and content goals for the Fair and how to improve the activity in the future. They assessed more than fifteen factors including learning outcomes for students, outreach and participation of parents, reactions of teachers, parents, and students, and the logistics of organizing the complex Fair. They concluded that the Fair was a potent learning tool for students, who will continue to learn the Spanish language and the geography and culture of Latin America.

Virginia Yeatman
Teacher and Parental Involvement Representative
virginia.yeatman@lrsd.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

FAMILY MOVE-UP NIGHT

ARDEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

As summer winds down, kids around the country get butterflies in their stomach thinking about the new school year. What will it bring? What will the teacher be like? Will it be fun? Students at Arden Elementary School are a step ahead of most students because they have a good idea about the answers to those questions, thanks to the school's Move-Up Night at the end of last school year. Parents, too, gathered information to prepare their children for the next grade level.

About 150 students and their parents came to school to meet their next teachers. This greatly increases comfort and familiarity for the children and lays the groundwork for on-going partnerships of parents and teachers.

Move-Up Night started with a large group meeting of all the teachers and all attendees. School administrators, teachers, and members of the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) shared information about the school and its Title I program. Several community partners described resources or services for students and families, including summer programs. Parents asked questions about upcoming events and school programs.

In the next segment, teachers for each grade were introduced to the full group. Then, parents and children moved to their assigned new classrooms for individual presentations. Teachers welcomed their new students and parents and explained what the new grade level would bring. The teachers' Power Point presentations were about 30 minutes, prepared ahead of time, and approved by the principal. Mainly, teachers described the learning goals for their grade level, homework policies, expectations for student behavior, and participation in class. Some provided a list of suggested school supplies. Teachers also summarized their information in a pamphlet that parents could take home.

Parents and children could stay to ask questions and talk with their new teacher. Parents with children in different grades had time to visit another teacher or take a copy of that teacher's pamphlet.

There was strong buy-in from teachers for Move-Up Night because they saw the value of meeting with their prospective students and families. The event coincided with the school's Move-Up Days program, when students spend two days with their teachers at the next grade level. Move-Up Days and Move-Up Night require the principal and other school leaders to plan—in advance—which students will be placed in teachers' classes for the next school year. If this can be done, many benefits follow.

The key to high parent turnout in most instances is good advertising. For Move-Up Night, this included fliers that went home, automated phone calls to each family, and reminders. Announcements at school called on the students to remind their parents to attend Move-Up Night.

The principal was happy with all parts of the Move-Up program, knowing that the personal connections of children and parents with the next teacher could be very helpful for student success in school. By sharing the goals and curriculum of the next grade, teachers provided parents with important information that often remains a mystery until after the start of the new school year. The forward looking agenda also reinforced the schools commitment to strong partnerships of home, school, and community.

Wanda Turner
Teacher
wanda.turner@richlandone.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS PARENT MEETINGS

GREGORIO LUPERON HIGH SCHOOL
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Gregorio Luperon High School is aware of the importance of strong partnerships with students' parents and families. The Action Team for Partnerships (ATP), administrators, counselors, and teachers have worked hard to communicate with all parents about events at school, opportunities for their teens' education, and the extra academic help and enrichment programs that are available. The school's leaders also knew that they could do even more to "give [parents] tools to advocate for their children's academic and postsecondary goals."

Luperon High serves 100% newly-arrived Spanish-speaking immigrant students, all of whom are learning English as teenagers and over 90% receive free or reduced-price lunch. The students are highly motivated, knowing that to graduate from high school they must attend regularly, do well to be promoted to the next grade, and complete grade 12 with plans for the future. However, many were not passing all of the required courses for graduation.

If students enter 10th or 11th grade missing key courses and credits, they are at risk of dropping out of high school. Students who are in this position benefit by having parents and other family and community partners who can guide them to continue in school and get back on track to graduation. At Luperon, many parents new to the country were unaware of the risky patterns emerging in their children's records. They were unfamiliar with the data on transcripts and report cards and how to address—not just accept—course failures in order to plan more successful paths forward. The assistant principal realized, "Sometimes we take for granted that people know how to [read a transcript], but the reality is that most don't, and that can spell danger for the success of their students."

The ATP, teachers, counselors, and administrators planned a series of meetings to help parents and students, together, interpret student transcripts and turn the information into an action plan for passing required courses. One challenge was getting parents to the meetings. The planners reached out via flyers, master phone alerts, personalized phone calls, texts, and e-mails. They also directed messages at the students, asking them to remind their parents to attend the meetings with them.

To help correct some negative views, the planners of Graduation Requirements Parent Meetings advertised the series by sharing true stories of the school's students who, with parents' support, made plans and progress by understanding the transcript and making appropriate plans for course and credit recovery. About 50 parents and 50 students participated.

By focusing on their own child's transcript and graduation requirements at the first meeting, parents took a more positive view of the roles they could play in discussing plans and guiding their children. Parents helped students identify a few priorities for the next year and the kinds of conversations they wanted to have with their counselors. One student saw the point of the activities saying, "I wish I learned this earlier. There's a lot of complicated things going on in the transcripts, but now I think I know how to look at them…to make sure I [graduate on time]. I think it'll help me in college as well."

Jaya Bharne
AP Supervision
jbharne@schools.nyc.gov

TYPE 2

TRANSITIONS

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

READY! FOR KINDERGARTEN PLUS!

WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
KENNEWICK, WASHINGTON

Ready! For Kindergarten is a national program to help students master skills for success in kindergarten. The national program started over a decade ago in the Kennewick School District. In three classes each year, parents learn and practice age-appropriate academic and social skills that reinforce what children are learning in preschool. The goal is that by age 5, students master 26 skills that help them start and stay on grade level when they enter in kindergarten. See https://www.readyforkindergarten.org/about-us.

Washington Elementary serves a diverse student population with close to 20% bilingual students and nearly 80% of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The teachers and Action Team for Partnerships identified a need to strengthen the engagement of parents with the READY! For Kindergarten program by adding and adapting some materials.

To prepare for this, all members of the school staff attended two workshops to adapt and extend the content of the program's materials for four-year-old preschoolers and to make the program applicable to five- and six-year olds in kindergarten. Most importantly, teachers aligned all materials with Common Core State Standards to ensure that students would be on grade level with strong skills. Specific needs of parents at the school, including a large number of Spanish speakers, were woven in the adaptations to the program materials. All materials were translated into Spanish. Take home bags of all materials were prepared for parents who participated in the training workshops.

Preschool and kindergarten teachers worked with the ATP. Teachers personally invited parents to attend, especially parents of students who still needed to master the targeted skills. They followed up with phone calls, reminders, and reminder stickers-on-students to stress the importance of attending the Ready! classes. Child care was provided by one of the school's community partners. The teachers believe that their personal connections were essential. Nearly 50 parents attended during the year.

Parents were excited that they were learning how to help their children at home and that they received the resources to conduct all activities. The total cost to the school for the resources was just under $150. As one parent said, "This was a great opportunity! I am using the tools I got in the classes and really see how they are helping my son at school and at home."

READY! For Kindergarten Plus at Washington Elementary School set goals to enable parents to help their children master skills for success through kindergarten. Teachers reported that, previously, by late fall, more than one third of kindergarten students began to fall behind in literacy and math. By giving parents the tools they need to reinforce basic skills in enjoyable, interactive, and tested ways, teachers expected students would meet or exceed kindergarten standards ready to start first grade. Pre- and post-test scores were collected on a district assessment for 24 children whose parents were in the fall workshop sessions and who used Spanish and English versions of the Ready! For Kindergarten Plus materials with their children. All 24 children showed large gains on these tests from fall to spring. Tests in later grades will measure whether students sustain grade level skills.

Chenoa Meagher
Teacher
chenoa.meagher@ksd.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

3 CLIMATE OF PARTNERSHIP

Practices for Types 1-6 in this section involve families and community partners to help create a welcoming, family-friendly school. These practices aim to reach out to involve all families and the community.

ALUMNI TRADE TOUR

EMMETT O'BRIEN TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL
ANSONIA, CONNECTICUT

What do you do when you get something new? Show all your friends, of course! Emmett O'Brien Technical High School recently completed a major building renovation and invited its curious alumni to come take a tour. This high school provides education and training on many trades. Every alumni called one of the specialties "home."

Current students' parents were asked to contact EOB graduates they knew about this event. Said one teacher, "I was shocked to see how many alumni from long ago showed up to see the shops." About 200 community members and alumni attended, along with about 80 parents, 100 current students, and many educators.

Alumni were met by one of four student greeters, who escorted them to the cafeteria. There, other students guided the alumni to fill out questionnaires with their name, e-mail, year of graduation, what shop they graduated from, what they are doing now, if are they working in their trade, the title of their current job, and permission to enter the information in an alumni database to stay in touch with the school. A bottle of water and postcard saying "Thank You" were given to each alumni.

Guided tours were conducted by 15 pairs of student guides. They took visitors through the new trade wing with 21st century technology and machinery. At the end of the tour, the alumni returned to the cafeteria to refresh with coffee and pastries that were prepared by the students in the Culinary Department.

Many students worked behind the scenes on the set up, in the kitchen, at the refreshment table, and by being generally helpful with handouts and postcards. The interactions of students and alumni led one student to say, "It was such fun and so interesting to hear their stories about when they were in school." Another student who was actively networking remarked, "Some of these guys are so successful already." Still another came away impressed by his own school: "I couldn't believe how many past students told me how lucky I am to be at this school."

The alumni also networked with each other before the event by spreading the word on Facebook and Twitter. They tweeted and posted items and pictures during the school tours. Some alumni credited the use of social media for an immediate response. They came to the school when they saw their friends' Instagram posts that very evening.

The tours were held early enough after school that many teachers stayed to attend and late enough for alumni to come after work. After about an hour and a half for tours, two alumni basketball games were held for males and females. Admission to the game was $5.00 for adults and $3.00 for students. The gym sold out. The basketball coaches said, "Our event was a crazy success and I think the trade tours helped get the alumni here."

School tours are planned to occur every year for the first 5 years after the full remodeling, with the academic wing still to be completed. Alumni basketball games will continue even beyond that. The assistant principal summed things up: "It was such a successful evening and I believe everyone felt welcome and appreciated."

Cecilia Sheppard
Teacher and ATP Co-Chair
Cecilia.sheppard@ct.gov

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

COMMUNICATION CALENDAR

OCHOA MIDDLE SCHOOL
PASCO, WASHINGTON

The cornerstone of an effective Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) is good communication among members and with all parents in a school. Communications can be enhanced by a tool that helps people know when meetings are scheduled, when they promised to volunteer, and when special activities will be conducted that they want to attend.

At Ochoa Middle School, the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) developed a simple, informative one-page calendar that outlines the year's major engagement activities. One purpose was to help volunteers keep track of when they signed up to help at school. Another purpose was to inform new teachers and other staff about the work of the ATP and the year's schedule of meetings and activities in which they would participate.

The ATP knew that most people prefer to review a short document than read and unpack a 4-page, detailed, action plan. The Ochoa calendar, in English and Spanish, is a table organized in rows by the months of the year. For each month, columns running across the table outline the dates and times of meeting for parents, meetings for staff, leadership meetings, and three parent information nights. Additional columns list key family and community engagement activities (e.g., open house, career day, fall and spring conference days when special magnets to encourage students to read at home are distributed, and other scheduled activities).

One teacher confirmed, "I rely on the calendar now to know what I'm supposed to be doing. Thanks—it's a lot easier." " Muchas gracias," said another.

Below the table is a list of names and titles of all ATP members and the names of members of committees that assist the ATP in planning and conducting specific activities. This maximizes communications between and among ATP and members of committees. It also is good information for all parents at the school who could contact any one of those listed with their questions, suggestions, or concerns.

Volunteers can sign up to assist with activities listed on the table. Their names and tasks they will conduct are, then, incorporated on the table so that all people working on a particular activity know the other volunteers with whom they will work.

On the back of the calendar are full descriptions of the specific tasks for each activity, which help volunteers know what they will be doing. For example, for Parent Information Nights, the back of the calendar lists the volunteers' tasks (i.e., greet families, take care of sign in, set up a-v equipment/media, organize child care for young children, and work with the 2nd Harvest community organization that supplies food for parents to take home.).

The calendar is e-mailed to each volunteer a week before a specific event or activity to remind them of their promised participation. It requires a quick e-reply to acknowledge receipt of the notice, but does not burden people by requiring a detailed response.

Last year, as the months progressed, the ATP and volunteers at Ochoa relied on the calendar as a quick reference to scheduled activities. This communication tool kept them connected to the school and to each other.

Linda Williams
Teacher and ATP Co-Chair
lwilliams@psd1.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

DADS AND DRILLS

LINCOLN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
KENNEWICK, WASHINGTON

Leaders at Lincoln Elementary School knew that parents' presence at the school can have a profound effect on children. Further, research indicates that the involvement of fathers and father figures adds an extra influence on children's learning, behavior, and commitment to school. The Action Team for Partnerships (ATP), principal, and teachers at Lincoln wanted to encourage more fathers and father figures to spend some time at school and add a bit of excitement to students' school days.

They developed Dads and Drills, scheduled four times during the year in October, January, March, and May. With the repeat schedule, families could find time to put at least one of the days on their calendars. Although named to attract "dads," all adults in children's lives—male and female—were invited to participate. Reminders were plentiful in the school newsletter, on flyers, and on the school marquee. The 4th and 5th graders decorated the gym with motivational slogans to encouraging participation. About 50 parents or other family figures attended each event, along with their students, teachers, and others.

The "drills" were stations or locations for physical fitness and academic skill building activities. The fitness activities were developed with a personal trainer from the community. He and his assistant designed some of the stations and they brought special equipment to the school for some Dads and Drills.

Different activities were scheduled on the four days to keep things interesting for students and repeat attendees.

Fitness stations included a balance of races, organized games (e.g., basketball), balance activities, juggling (with the principal), speed stacking, and fun skills (e.g., hula hoops). Academic activities challenged students with grade-appropriate basic skill-building, such as reading sight words and producing math facts combined with wall climbing.

Some activities were so popular that they were included in all fitness sessions. Other activities varied from time to time. There also was one station for students and adults to gather information on healthy practices. For example, Dentistry for Kids and Benton Franklin Health District participated and shared useful information on maintaining good health.

Some stations were set up the night before. Or, the ATP co-chairs and volunteers came early to set up other stations. Volunteers also helped out to conduct relay races and scooter races so that everyone could participate. The school paid for some equipment and materials with a gift certificate earned from the National Walk and Bile to School Day in October.

Dads and Drills began at 8 a.m., before the start of school. Students and their dads, moms, grandparents, and other caregivers went through stations that interested them at their own pace. If parents had to leave for work, students could continue for the full scheduled time.

Many attendees invested themselves with enthusiasm. One student asserted, "I'm going to beat my dad on the scooters. I'm super fast." After 25 minutes for a workout, participants were given water bottles and snack bars. The gym teacher, then, had a short time to prepare for the school day.

On Dads and Drills days, the mix of exercise, academic brain-jogging, and a snack proved to be an energizing way to start the day.

Denise Hogg and Jacki Moore
ELL Specialist and LAP Specialist
denise.hogg@ksd.org
jacki.moore@ksd.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

FAMILY TRIVIA NIGHT

FRANCIS HOWELL MIDDLE SCHOOL
ST. CHARLES, MISSOURI

Francis Howell Middle School (FHMS) understands the importance of getting all families involved in the school and in their children's education to improve students' behavior and performance. The school conducts some activities that involve parents during the school day, but not all parents can make that schedule. The Family and Community Engagement (FACE) team varies activities in its One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships to include some evening activities.

The FACE team developed the family-focused Trivia Night. In the St. Louis area, trivia nights of categories and questions are popular fundraisers for many organizations. At FHMS, with students in grades 6-8, the team designed a game of six categories each with eight questions that were appropriate for the middle grades. Topics included Star Wars, pop music, pop culture, Kool-Aid flavors, and more.

A typical trivia night raises money by having participants pay an entry fee to attend and bid on silent auction items. At FHMS, the goal of Family Trivia Night was free family involvement raising (not fundraising). Over 300 parents, students, and staff turned out for an evening of fun and games. Small raffle baskets were available with purchase of a $1 raffle ticket. Proceeds from the raffle went directly to a fund for new iPads for the school.

A parent volunteer served as chairperson for Family Trivia Night, along with two parent co-leaders. They guided a committee to work on various aspects of the evening, including deve;p[omg the trivia questions, coordinating parent and student volunteers, advertising the event, and collecting donations from community businesses for game and raffle prizes.

Outreach included Facebook, Twitter, Remind, and district tools e-News and Peach Jar. The committee sent invitations to families and students in surrounding schools to encourage attendance by those coming to FHMS next year. The coordinating committee worked closely with others at school to secure the location and make sure the building and its resources were treated with respect.

One key to a successful event is to get students involved and excited about attending with their parents. FACE promoted this by encouraging student participation. Students were recruited to help set up room, collect answer sheets during the event, and coordinate food and drink sales that were run by student groups. They learned how to account for funds that matched the ticket sales.

All profits from food and drink sales went to the Character Council and Where Everyone Belongs (WEB) student leadership groups. Indeed, students were applying their learnings from the Core Ethical Values of Responsibility and Honesty that guides the character education classes at the school.

Another attraction was having the principal, Dr. Ted Huff, as the emcee for the night and vice-principal, Dr. Patti Lee, as a co-event coordinator. Parents had many opportunities to get to interact with these leaders in a relaxed environment and learn more about their strong support for all students at the school.

The cost of Family Trivia Night was low, but the benefits to students, staff, and families were anything but trivial. The evening promoted academics, fellowship, fair play, and community.

Dr. Ted Huff and Julie Oppermann
Principal and Action Team Chair
Ted.huff@fhsdschools.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

MILLION FATHER MARCH

COMBRE-FONDEL ELEMENTARY
LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA

The Million Father March enables men to show their commitment to children's education on the first day of school and throughout the year. At Combre-Fondel Elementary, men from the community (including some students' fathers and father figures) arrived on campus and lined up in two columns outside the school. They greeted students with fist bumps, high fives, and encouraging words. It made the students feel special, as one student explained, "I felt so important to see that everyone was here to greet me on the first day of school"

Combre-Fondel Elementary is among the city's poorest neighborhoods. The men who greeted students encouraged them to do their absolute best in school. They offered tips on how to have a positive school year. Some assisted school staff to accompany students to their classrooms. The school's Curriculum Coordinator praised the new experience for students, "It was such an honor to have so many men willing to dedicate their time to our students. . . The energy was high and the smiles on the students' faces were priceless."

After students were settled in their classrooms, the men were invited to breakfast, funded by several of the school's community partners. The Million Father March, now a national program in several hundred communities, is more than a one day show of support. It is at least a one-year commitment to advance students' education. With an invitation from the principal or other leader, each group decides on its agenda that includes volunteering or mentoring students.

The principal assessed the project, "This was an exceptional opportunity to get men from the community into our school to participate in the academic lives of our students. We now have over 75 active men on our campus. Last year we had fewer than 5." The group at Combre-Fondel pledged to work with the school throughout the year. The principal invited them to all school events.

The students were surprised and delighted by the participation of men on the first day of school, and with the roles they played thereafter to encourage good work at school. Over 50 parents and more than 100 community partners were involved in the project.

One event during the year that encouraged parents' active engagement was the school's Career Fair, which spotlights information and ideas about long-term planning for students' future education and training. The students were the featured participants. They discussed their interests and potential career goals with their parents prior to the career fair. They dressed in the style of an interesting career.

At the fair, students visited with many professionals for 3-minute overviews of their careers and the work they do. Several volunteers in the Million Man March project made presentations. One student said, "I was shocked to hear a male cosmetologist. I only thought women did hair. His profession is an art ...I may be interested in one day. You have to go to school for it, but you don't have to go to college."

Career awareness extends students' options and reinforces the importance of working hard to graduate from high school with plans for the future. Clearly, parents and community partners are critical for the long-term success of students.

Mildred Smith
Principal
Mildred.smith@cpsb.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

GRANDPARENTS AND THE BINGO CONNECTION!

CENTRAL MIDDLE SCHOOL
EUNICE, LOUISIANA

It was a "grand" sunny Saturday at Central Middle School where students' parents, grandmothers, grandfathers, and even some great-grandparents gathered for an afternoon of good old-fashioned BINGO. The activity served a few purposes. It provided an opportunity for grandparents to have fun with their grandkids and network with one another and with teachers. It also helped the school raise funds to update the school library/media center. Central Middle School serves students in grades 5 and 6, with over 85% eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Everyone wore big smiles throughout the afternoon in the school's cafeteria. Popcorn was the snack of the day. Each student who brought a grandparent was awarded a casual dress coupon and SONIC gift certificate. Grandparents participated in a short survey that asked three questions about what they love about their grandchild, things that make you proud of him/her, and their hopes for their grandchild's future.

Students were given their grandparents' questionnaires as a "homework assignment." They addressed three questions about the best quality of their grandparent, things they will do to make their grandparent proud of them, and an activity they enjoy doing with their grandparent. This meaningful writing assignment was returned to their teacher. It was another part of a day that strengthened students' connections with their families.

For the games, some students worked side by side with their grandparents on BINGO cards. Some shared a card with a grandparent. The principal observed, "How wonderful it is to see that kid smiling so big and enjoying some quality time with his grandpa."

Over 200 people participated, including students, parents, and grands. Central Middle School considered the turnout a great success. The leaders publicized the activity on flyers, which found their way all around town. They also invited parents and grandparents on the school website, in the local newspaper, and in news briefs that were sent home with each student.

The school's Action Team for Partnership (ATP), principal, teachers and others brainstormed about how they might conduct an activity to include all generations of their students' families. BINGO came to mind as one way that people of all ages felt comfortable participating. The principal reflected on the central place grandparents have in the family. She saw the students' forbears as "the ultimate family foundation" for influencing student success in school.

In sum, the activity was a positive experience for all attendees. Even later in the year, teachers noticed an increased presence of parents and caregivers on campus. At the end of the year, a survey of parents found that they felt very welcome at Central Middle School. This should be unremarkable, but is not the case a many middle schools.

Local organizations donated their BINGO equipment for the school to use for the day. Faculty and staff donated baked goods, which also served as prizes. Volunteers from the school and community took charge of the sign-in process, tickets, door prizes, concession stand, set-up, and clean-up. The school's Title I paraprofessional was the "resident BINGO guru." She noted that many of the grandparents came dressed up for a special event—which it was for everyone involved.

Ranolviaun A. Landry
Principal
Ral7307@slp.k12.la.us

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

VETERAN'S DAY BREAKFAST

PLATT TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL
MILFORD, CONNECTICUT

It was said by several writers in different ways that *we sleep safely at night because rough men stand ready to visit violence on those who would harm us*. The sacrifices of service men and women are not always given the attention that they deserve. Platt Technical High School aimed to right this wrong. They reached out to the brave men and women in their own families who served in the military, and invited them to a breakfast held in their honor. One veteran said simply, "Thanks very much for remembering all of us."

The school, which provides specialized technical education and training, serves students from 23 towns and 51 middle schools. The Action Team for Partnerships (ATP), administrators, and teachers know that it is important—and a challenge—to bring students, parents, and other family members together at the school or in learning activities that can be conducted at home. For this activity, announcements were made on the Morning News Show and using the ALL CALL system to reach all families. Social studies teachers distributed a flyer for students to take home.

The special breakfast grew from a classroom assignment in one social studies class where students were asked to interview witnesses of historical events. Because of the popularity of the assignment, the school decided to involve the entire student body by asking each student about living family members who were veterans. Staff also were invited to participate. Parents were alerted to the project and asked to inform students about family members who served in one of the branches of the military.

The General Education Department Head collected all information and designed a Wall of Honor dedicated to the living veterans. The Wall consisted of flags honoring all branches of the military. It was covered in stars that listed the veteran with the information collected: name, rank, branch of service, locations, years served, and relation to a student or faculty member. School officials consulted experienced military personnel for accuracy of the order and abbreviations of rank titles.

From this activity, many students completed important writing activities. All students learned about the military branches, the system of ranks and specializations, and gained historical knowledge about the country's involvement in international conflicts.

Invitations were sent to each veteran to attend the breakfast on Veteran's Day. The Culinary Department provided the catering. Each veteran was accompanied by the student or staff member to whom they were related. After breakfast, the veterans attended a school-wide assembly with approximately 800 students. The colors were posted and retired. A local military band—the 102nd Army Band in the National Guard—provided the music. The veterans were publicly recognized and thanked for their service in speeches delivered by a state senator and other state representatives.

It was a touching remembrance for many who sacrificed much for the public's right to stay free. One student's parent captured the emotion as she wrote, "Thank you, again, for the invitation for my father, my daughter's grandfather, to attend the Veteran's Day Breakfast. My dad is a recent widower . . . and I'm sure that this activity was a little joy to brighten up his day."

Mary Benjamin
General Education Department Head
Mary.Benjamin@ct.gov

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

WATSON WONDERLAND

J. J. WATSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
IOWA, LOUISIANA

Sometimes a small activity takes on a larger purpose. At J. J. Watson, a rural school for students PreK-5, its school-wide holiday event grew from a classroom writing project. In its final form, all families were invited to participate in fun activities based school skills in different subjects. The event was broadly publicized at school and beyond. Even the marquee at the city hall advertised it. The holiday was shared by 80 students and about 175 parents, grandparents, and other caregivers.

Watson Wonderland aimed to celebrate the holiday season with many and varied stations.

Toy Donation: Toys in good condition could be donated in the library. All donating students received a pass to wear jeans in school for a day.

Christmas Games: A variety of games were available from Reindeer Ring Toss to Santa's Cookies Bean Bag Toss. Prizes were available.

Letters to Santa: Yep, letters written at this station were delivered to the big man, himself.

Christmas Frames: Craft supplies were available for making a picture frame to display the picture of themselves with Santa.

Reindeer Food Mix: Students got to create a snack using a Ziploc bag and optional ingredients including oats.

Ornaments: Participants received a magic scratch ornament to create their own artistic designs.

The Sounds of Christmas: What would a holiday celebration be without a station for Christmas music?

Winter Art Contest: Students could create an original masterpiece, and, with parents' permission, these were submitted to a local art competition.

Candy Cane Craft: Students at this station were given kits of beads to create candy canes, which were then donated to the veteran's association.

Christmas Cards: Students were given a blank Christmas tree card and envelope to compose and decorate. The cards were sent to a local nursing home.

Christmas Pictures: Parents could take pictures of the family in front of a winter backdrop using their own camera or phone. Santa was on hand for anyone who wanted to invite him into join their holiday pictures.

Christmas Story Time: Students and parents relaxed to listen to a story, while they ate refreshments.

Students received punch cards at the entrance to Watson Wonderland along with a brown paper bag to collect things as they rotated through the stations that interested them. Parents were given a map of the activities. One parent remarked, "This was my favorite activity of the year."

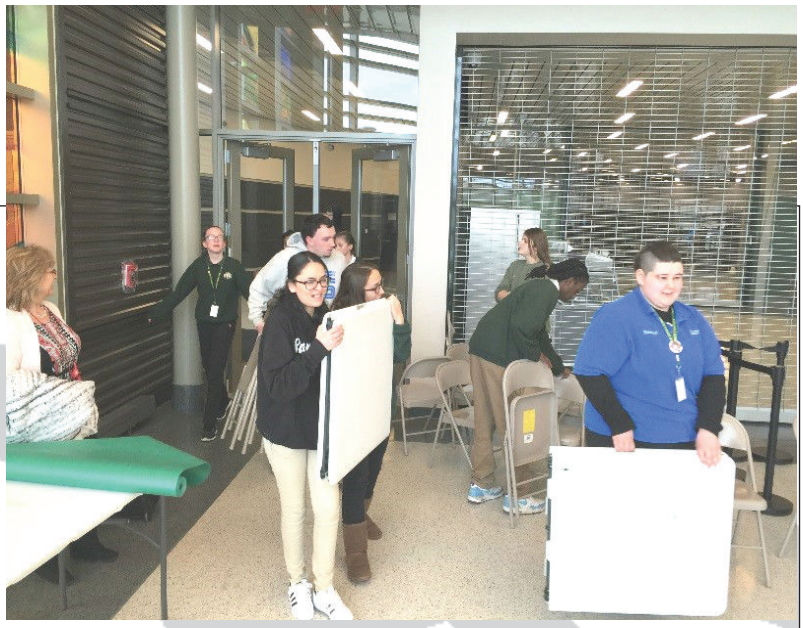
Refreshments included hot dogs, drinks, chips, hot chocolate, and baked goods. The school's Yearbook Staff recorded the activities. Everyone could find something interesting to create, enjoy, and donate to cheer others. One student agreed, "I liked all of the things that we got to do."

The cross-curricular events involved writing, reading, spatial skills, the arts, philanthropy, and just plain fun. One parent was grateful for the Wonderland, "We appreciate the school setting aside time for us to spend as a family."

Stacie L. Reed
Assistant Principal
Stacie.reed2@cpsb.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

4 DISTRICT & ORGANIZATION LEADERSHIP



Practices in this section help facilitators in districts, organizations, and states strengthen leadership and assist schools in developing effective programs of school, family, and community partnerships.

ALVIN ISD BOOK BUS

ALVIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
ALVIN, TX

Summer reading loss may occur if students put down their books for vacation. The summer slide in reading skills mostly affects struggling students, who are less likely to read for pleasure. When reading skills slide back during the summer, students need remedial work when school starts to get back on the right track. This further limits their growth and progress.

In Alvin ISD, the district Leader for Partnerships was aware of these reading risks and wanted to bring summer reading for fun and learning to students' neighborhoods. Not all students have books at home or time with parents or transportation to go to a public library. The leaders hoped the Alvin ISD Book Bus would keep more students reading and learning all summer. In addition, the Book Bus would keep school staff talking with parents at every bus stop.

With the Superintendent's support, the district's Family Engagement Coordinator created the Book Bus Committee with many colleagues. The Alvin ISD Education Foundation was an instrumental partner with a donation for phase one of this project. The Department of Federal and Special Programs provided funds to pay staff salaries during the summer and to equip the bus with iPad minis, laptops, award winning books, and other academic supplies for students to use when they visited the bus.

Many colleagues helped this project. Alvin ISD's Maintenance Department picked up 14,000 books donated during a book drive at schools. District librarians sorted and catalogued the books for the Book Bus. The Transportation Department provided an unused, but safe, bus that was renovated by students at the Career and Technology Center. The Communications Department designed art for the outside of the bus and for advertising materials.

Students across the district suggested and voted for the name of this program. The development of this project was a social media phenomenon on Facebook and Twitter. TV Channel 13 reported the debut of the Book Bus. During the last week of school, flyers were sent home with students' report cards that showed where and when the Book Bus would stop in all neighborhoods.

This summer, the Book Bus will visit 12 neighborhoods and community parks where Alvin's students live. At each stop, students will be able to check out their favorite books. A librarian will be available to read stories and facilitate other academic activities, such as literacy games and crafts. Bilingual books and bilingual staff will be available. At this writing (June), over 1500 students and 300 parents came to the bus stops for books.

The collaboration of so many district leaders, departments, teachers, librarians, students, parents, and community organizations was amazing. It is clear that everyone is invested in the success of this project to contribute to the success of Alvin's students. As the President of the Board of Trustees stated, "Today was a very exciting day for Alvin ISD, because we all got to see the start of a reading program that shows the commitment that the district has made to provide excellent programs and opportunities for our students to reach their full potential." In this district it is clear that all stakeholders have taken up the fight to prevent summer reading loss.

Ana Pasarella
Parent Involvement Coordinator
apasarella@alvinisd.net

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

ANNUAL DISTRICT CALENDAR AND HANDBOOK

BRIDGEPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT
BRIDGEPORT, CT

Hope means something good can happen.
Do you want to do something? Go for it.
Have hope and you can do something incredible.
(Nariya, 2nd grader)

In Bridgeport School District, the Leader for Partnerships hoped to improve communications between school and home to reach a goal for good partnerships in the district's improvement plan. She also wanted to spotlight students' creative work, while providing families and community members with information about their schools and the district. Bridgeport serves over 20,000 students—mainly African American and Latino—just about all whom receive free or reduce-price lunch. Across schools, the families speak over 70 languages at home.

Supported by the Superintendent and with the approval of the Board of Education, the Leader for Partnerships began to conduct the collaborative work needed to create a useful tool. The 12-month calendar for the school year (August – July) included 10 pages of district information such as department contacts, Board of Education Policies, community resources, a vision/mission statement, and other important information for parents. Each month's calendar was accompanied by a page of about six in-color examples of students' art work and poetry.

The Leader for Partnerships reached out to all administrators for schedules and events to include in the calendar. For example, the Health Director provided critical information about students' required immunizations and deadlines. The Guidance Director included high school graduation requirements, college fairs to help students plan for the future, and FASFA deadlines for seniors applying to college. The Assistant Superintendent included dates and timelines for the magnet school lottery. The Board of Education, Parent Leaders, and other groups included their meeting schedules and planned events. The Adult Education Director included topics, registration, and class schedules for parents. Art teachers supplied wonderful work by their students. The Poetry on Wheels program provided students' poems.

The result was a handsome, colorful, sturdy 12-month calendar that is now the "talk of the town"—a useful tool for teachers, families, students, and the community. A copy went to every family. As one parent said, "I love the calendar! What a great idea. I have it on my refrigerator." Another parent echoed the praise, "I don't have to call the school now to ask about students' days off!" Teachers and staff members across the district also displayed their copies in their offices and classrooms.

Going forward, the team expects it will take less time to revise and update the Calendar and Handbook. The district office will share future calendars with community partners, such as doctors' offices and clinics, to encourage them to schedule chidlren's appointments that do not conflict with school activities. The planners look forward to enjoying new art work and poetry from students each year.

Knazier, a 7th grader, shared his views:

Life is just a game–but you have to take it serious.
Life can make you sad, mad, glad and delirious.
Life can also be fun. I know that from experience.
At life you only get one and it's a great experience!

Sharing information in the Annual District Calendar and Handbook made life easier for parents and teachers and enriched each life with the art and poetry of Bridgeport's students.

Dolores M. Mason
District Facilitator and Key Contact to NNPS
dmason@bridgeportedu.net

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

BREAK BAGS

CLOVER PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT
LAKEWOOD, WA

District leaders in Clover Park knew that many students' families relied on the district's nutritional program to provide breakfast and lunch to their children. Of the district's 12,000 students, over 70% receive free or reduced-price meals. The district works with local food banks to provide Friday Packs with food for students and families to use on weekends. District leaders for partnerships were concerned that some students could go hungry when school closed for extended breaks—Thanksgiving, Winter, and Spring. The District's Family & Community Partnership Coordinator (FCPC), the director of the Emergency Food Network (EFN), and representatives from area churches and service clubs in the community met to talk about this reality.

Little Church on the Prairie in Clover Park provided food baskets for Thanksgiving to children and their families for about 20 years. The EFN added funds to the church's budget to ensure that food was provided for several days. By combining and reallocating budgets, the committee of many partners developed Break Bag to help more families have food that would not spoil during three school vacations.

There were many challenges to solve. The District FCPC communicated with school counselors, secretaries, Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs), and Communities in Schools Site Coordinators to identify students who might need Break Bags during vacations. The committee of partners bought bags that were sturdy enough to hold 20-30 pounds of food each time, including seasonal fresh produce such as potatoes, onions, and apples, and staples such as canned goods, cereal, peanut butter, protein or snack bars, oatmeal, rice, and beans.

Each bag included a note in English and Spanish for students to return the bag to school in exchange for an activity or coloring book. The bags were, then, returned to the EFN for reuse on the next school break.

Break Bags is coordinated and managed by the District FCPS, with help from many partners. At the EFN warehouse, volunteers stuffed the bags on the Saturday before each break. Other volunteers (including soldiers from the local military base, district bus drivers, and JROTC students from the high school) loaded bags into cars or trucks for delivery to each participating school.

The EFN, Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club, and a church paid for the food, which costs about $7.00 per bag. Last year, about 1,000 Break Bags were distributed 3 times a year to 27 schools (ranging from 5 to 130 bags per school, depending on need).

Sometimes family members came to pick up the bags at school. Usually, children took the bags home on the bus. For younger children, the Break Bags were divided into smaller units to reduce the weight. Elementary school students were happy to bring food home to help their families. Although middle and high school students worked without fanfare, the district leaders noted that among older students "no bags were ever left on the bus or unwanted."

As the Executive Director of EFN said, "Many working families with children do not have access to food banks due to their work hours when food banks are open and/or lack of transportation. For these children the answer is a Break Bag."

Holly Bocchi
Family and Community Partnership Coordinator
hbocchi@cloverpark.k12.wa.us

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

CELEBRATING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

OUACHITA PARISH SCHOOL SYSTEM
WEST MONROE, LA

Ouachita Parish School System's Title I leaders used the last meeting of the year to help district leaders and partnership teams from all schools see that they had much to celebrate. Each school presented a display, PowerPoint, or summary of one of their best family engagement activities for the year. Other schools made notes to adopt or adapt the activity in their schools. Several attendees noted that this was their favorite meeting of the year because it helped them gather good ideas and appreciate the hard work of others. Here are two examples from schools that presented their practices at the end-of-year celebration. The two activities illustrate the good planning and welcoming spirit that typify work being done to increase family and community engagement in Ouachita's schools.

Frozen Family Night. Crosley Elementary's Preschool and Kindergarten conducted *Frozen Family Night* to get students and their parents thinking warmly about math. The gym became a winter wonderland with snowflakes hanging everywhere and characters from *Frozen* all around. Children came dressed as their favorite characters. With their families, they visited many math games including Olaf's Snowball Toss to identify numbers. At I Like Warm Hugs and Hot Chocolate, students used marshmallows to match numbers. At Mitten Measure, children measured their parents using yarn and mittens. They sequenced patterns at Chillin' with Patterns and practiced adding and subtracting by moving bears in and out of a cave for hibernation. The clever titles captured everyone's attention and made PreK and Kindergarten math skills fun for everyone.

A card, stamped at each station, earned students a box of winter-themed dominoes and a list of math activities to do at home. Students took their picture with Elsa who came from the movie for the evening. With over 200 parents and students attending, math kept everyone warm in the winter.

Open House with a Twist. Riser Middle School's Open House with a Twist featured students' extracurricular activities. Research suggests that students increase their attachment to school by participating in extracurricular activities that build interests and talents. The Partnership Action Team combined this evening with the 2nd Report Card Pick Up to encourage parents' attendance.

The middle school students were "in charge" and in the spotlight as they shared the work they did in their extracurricular classes. In the gym, cheerleaders and the school band opened the Open House with a lively performance. Each extracurricular class prepared a table where students reported their activities. For example, The Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) class displayed scrap books on their activities for the year. The Family and Consumer Science (FACS) class passed out samples of their latest cookie cake. The Art class displayed student work and the National Junior Honor Society presented their volunteer accomplishments.

Teachers hosted tables by grade level to deliver report cards. Community groups had tables to distribute information useful to parents and students. Visitors could help themselves to popcorn and drinks.

This activity enabled students to describe how their extracurricular choices extended learning, talent development, and community service. As an added bonus, the "grown up" accomplishments of the students helped families new to the school understand the importance of the transition from elementary to middle school.

Janice Comeaux
Title I Supervisor
jcomeaux@opsb.net

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

COMMUNITY RESOURCE ROUNDTABLE

KENNEWICK SCHOOL DISTRICT
KENNEWICK, WA

The Community Resource Roundtable—aka Resource Fair Meets Speed Dating—was designed by the innovative and spirited Leaders for Partnerships in the Kennewick School District. Some say this was a "match made in heaven."

District leaders wanted to link 17 school-based Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) with useful resources in the community. Rather than a "wander-around-fair," the leaders set up the event a la "speed dating." Each school's team had a short, focused conversation with each agency in attendance. This enabled school teams to meet and talk with potential community partners they would not have met otherwise.

The Community Resource Roundtable was part of a whole-day retreat that the district leaders conduct for ATP Chairs each year. The retreat is designed to build the leadership of ATP Chairs and to help them gather information and ideas from other teams about best practices that may be used or adapted in their school's next One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships.

One District Leader was in charge of recruiting community agencies to participate. She created and distributed a flyer and attended community coalition meetings. She maintained a list of interested community partners and gave them contact information for the ATP chairs. About 35 community and business partners participated.

District leaders worked with the ATPs and with representatives from the community agencies. Based on the work of Dr. Mavis Sanders in NNPS (see Chapter 1.2 in the NNPS *Handbook for Action, 3rd Edition*), the district leaders brainstormed with ATP chairpersons about how different types of community partners can enrich the engagement activities in the schools' One-Year Action Plans.

They also talked with the community partners about the schools' goals for student learning and how the community partner's resources might help produce results for the schools, students, and/or families.

The ATP Chairpersons were given tote bags to collect useful information from community partners that they could share with their whole teams. Kennewick's district leaders spoke at several community coalition meetings about the Resource Roundtable and what they hoped the speed dates would produce for their schools and families.

District leaders prepared the room so that participants could move smoothly from one short meeting to the next, but still have privacy for their conversations. A time keeper was in the middle of the room to alert participants to move on to the next table after each 4-minute chat.

The "dating" portion of the event lasted 90 minutes, with about 30 minutes for ATP Chairs to follow up with agencies that were the best "match" for a school or where the ATP Chair wanted more information. At the end of the 2-hour session, district leaders debriefed the activity. The ATP chairs were totally energized by the event, one teacher exclaimed, "It was amazing! Everyone in one spot without having to make a million phone calls -- perfect! We now know who to contact and what would work best for our school."

They say that there is such a thing as "love at first sight." For many schools and community partners, the arranged meetings at the Community Resource Roundtable proved the point.

Kelly Bolson, Annabell Gonzalez, and Sarah Del Toro
District Parent Involvement Coordinators
Kelly.bolson@ksd.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

CTHSS STAFF LIAISON CLUSTER MEETINGS

CONNECTICUT TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL SYSTEM
MIDDLETOWN, CT

District leaders in the Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS) have several unique challenges. The 17 technical high schools in this district are spread out across the state. Each school receives students from 18 to 25 towns. Each high school conducts a "dual" curriculum for students to meet state standards for a high school diploma, and business and industry standards in a specific trade.

Each school has an Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) and each team writes a One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships to communicate with students' parents. The ATPs and district leaders know that, despite difficulties due to the wide attendance areas, high school students' families and community partners are important for helping students succeed each year in school, graduate from high school on time, and make plans for the future.

The District Leaders for Partnerships know that ATPs from all schools benefit by coming together periodically to share best practices, solve challenges, and improve outreach to students' parents and community partners. This year, the leaders revised how they conducted cluster meetings. They invited staff liaisons from each school's ATP to attend the meetings during the year. The liaisons met with the district leaders and with each other at these meetings. Then, they took the information and ideas back to the ATPs at their own schools. In this way, the ATP Co-Chairs and team members did not have to be released from their school assignments to travel across the state for meetings with the District Leaders for Partnerships.

A typical cluster meeting agenda included a brief update from the district leaders on new information, research, or policies. The rest of the time was devoted to the needs of the staff liaisons and the ATPs at their schools. Topics included the liaisons' responsibilities; how to continue to increase the involvement of more families in different ways at school, at home and in the community; reports on the schools' different approaches to Evening of the Arts Nights; how to recruit, train, and engage students as members of the high school teams; and other topics.

Liaisons accepted the new responsibility to share ideas from the cluster meetings with their ATPs. The liaisons assessed the value of each cluster meeting. Comments were overwhelmingly positive, with high marks for the small group format that permitted focused conversations. The district leaders also benefitted from the meetings. They were able to hear about the good things each school was doing to advance its program of family and community engagement and to hear about and discuss challenges arising at each school without having to travel across the state to visit each site.

Mostly, the liaisons became more expert and useful members of their ATPs. They collected ideas for saving time and money and for promoting more effective activities of family and community engagement at their schools.

At the last cluster meeting of the year, the liaisons selected topics for the agenda of the first cluster meeting of the next school year—helping others with planning and budgeting documents. Their enthusiasm and progress was reinforced by the Connecticut Governors Proclamation of May 11th as *CTHSS Family Engagement Day*—quite an honor for this unique and dedicated district and its schools.

Jill Dymczk
Family Engagement District Coordinator
jill.dymczk@ct.gov

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

INTERPRETER TRAINING PROGRAM

CLOVER PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT
LAKEWOOD, WA

Many districts and schools across the country face the challenge of communicating with families who speak languages other than English at home. The U.S. Census Bureau reported that there are 382 languages spoken in this country. They are classified in 39 major language families, with 10 common language groups for students who are English Language Learners (ELL).

In Clover Park School District, families speak about 60 languages at home. District leaders know that when parents are left out of school and family communications, they cannot support their students' work and progress. By contrast, when parents are part of conversations with teachers, they can voice their opinions and support their children as students. The district wanted to solve the challenge of communicating with all parents in languages they can understand so that they could be partners with teachers in their children's education.

Clover Park developed a solution to this challenge. As one principal praised, "Using our own parents as interpreters provides a level of trust and comfort for our parents [and] staff. We can now. . .meet the needs of our parents and teachers communicating at virtually any time." The homegrown Interpreter Training Program was developed when an external translation service ended. Although volunteers at some schools could help, the district wanted all schools to have trained, available interpreters, and to honor parents' time and talent by paying them for their service. They also wanted to follow the ethics of interpreting: confidentiality, accuracy, completeness, professionalism, and maintaining cultural consciousness.

The district partnered with the Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD) to provide six-hour training sessions twice a year, near the time for parent-teacher conferences, for anyone interested in becoming an interpreter for the district. PSESD also helped pay for these services, including the cost of fingerprinting.

Schools' Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) and staff advertised the program with flyers, on the district website, and in the community. They gave special attention to recruiting bilingual and multilingual family members. Most schools needed interpreters for parents speaking Spanish, but the district also wanted to have Korean, French, Russian, Ukrainian, Japanese, and Vietnamese interpreters to assist as needed. After they complete the training session and fingerprinting, interpreters may apply to work in other classified jobs in the district.

Requests for interpreters are handled by the district's Family and Community Partnership Coordinator. She stated, "This program has proven to be incredibly empowering for our interpreters and their families. They have become much more knowledgeable of the education system, [which also] helps their own children become more successful in school. We look to our interpreters as key communicators in their own neighborhoods and with their own families."

The pool of qualified interpreters is growing. The program is cost effective and is a "win-win" for everyone involved. The interpreters earn some income. They make connections and can network with other parents in the district. The non-English speaking families gain an advocate who helps them communicate with their child's teacher. The teachers are able to talk with all students' families, which helps the students, too. One excellent feature of the Clover Park design is that this year's monolingual parents may be next year's bilingual interpreters.

Holly Bocchi
Family and Community Partnership Coordinator
hbocchi@cloverpark.k12.wa.us

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

KEEP IT PERSONAL FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

PASCO SCHOOL DISTRICT
PASCO, WA

It's been said that you get what you ask for. In Pasco School District, the Leaders for Partnerships set a goal to intentionally and personally reach out to parents who participated in classes and projects at the Parent Education Center (PEC). The leaders knew it was important to tell these parents about the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) at their child's school, and how they could become involved with the ATP.

The PEC shares space with the School and Family Partnerships Program whose leaders facilitate all schools' ATPs. This proximity makes it possible for the two programs to work together to meet and talk with parents about participating in their child's education. With face-to-face connections with parents, the leaders aim to increase the number of parents who attend meetings and activities, and who become active members of the ATP at their child's school. The Special Programs Coordinator also is located at the same building. She asks home visitors to talk with the parents they meet about the ATP at their child's school and how to be involved.

For example, PEC staff and the Leaders for Partnerships talk with parents who attend classes in English as a Second Language (ESL). They describe, in Spanish, why the district has its own ATP for parents to participate in framing district-level decisions, and why each school has an ATP to engage parents in their own child's education.

The PEC also posts the monthly calendars from all schools' ATPs in English and Spanish to help parents check meeting schedules (dates, times, and locations) and engagement activities at their own child's school. The district leaders encourage ATPs to keep their calendars up to date, and to add or change information as needed.

The Center's ESL instructor also collaborates by asking parents in her classes who attended an ATP meeting at their child's school to tell other parents how the meetings helped them understand school programs and their child's learning. As one parent shared, "It is essential to be involved in our children's academic future and a good way is by attending the [school's] monthly ATP meetings. We can share our ideas and suggestions to improve the school setting." This message was more powerful coming from another parent than from a staff member.

District leaders also share information with parents about guest speakers who are scheduled at the PEC, at a school, or in the community. ATP Chairpersons may take this information back to their own schools to share with all parents and staff. Some invite speakers on popular subjects to come to talk to parents at the school.

At school-based ATP meetings, the personal attention to parents continues. For example, some ATP members welcome and sit with new parents and translate information as needed.

District Leaders for Partnerships keep their eyes open for opportunities to talk, one-on-one, with parents, other family members, and community partners to encourage them to become active partners with the ATPs at children's schools. The personal touch may be the best way to help parents understand that they have a voice in improving programs to increase their own child's success in school.

Esmeralda Magaňa-Valencia
Parent Engagement Coordinator
emagana@psd1.org
Lorraine Landon
Special Programs Coordinator
llandon@psd1.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

KEY CONTACTS AND NNPS FACILITATOR COLLABORATION

LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT
LITTLE ROCK, AR

It has long been recognized that, "Everything seems impossible until it's done." That sums up how the Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) at about 50 schools in the Little Rock School District (LRSD) felt about completing the NNPS end-of-year UPDATE evaluation of progress. They were not sure they had time to submit one of their best practices for consideration in the NNPS annual collection of *Promising Partnership Practices* or apply for an NNPS *Partnership School Award*.

The Leader for Partnerships knew that the schools were making good progress on family and community engagement. She wanted the ATPs to evaluate their efforts and share their good work with schools across the country. She also knew that the NNPS processes for networking and reporting good work were not difficult. But, the schools needed some information and encouragement to participate. She reached out to NNPS Facilitators at the "home base" at Johns Hopkins University for technical assistance to help solve this challenge.

The Facilitators arranged to talk directly to the school ATPs about these important components of partnership program development—evaluation, networking, and recognition of good work. They wanted to clarify the NNPS components and alleviate concerns that were limiting schools' participation. The district leader arranged a phone conference call with NNPS as an agenda item at a meeting of ATP Chairpersons. Together, they solved another challenge so that the NNPS Facilitators stayed late in the Eastern Time Zone to match the after-school meeting time in Little Rock in the Central Time Zone.

Having been in Little Rock to conduct workshops on partnerships, the NNPS Facilitators had an understanding of the good work being done at the district level and in the schools. They encouraged the ATPs to understand that, as leaders for partnerships, they had a responsibility to complete annual assessments of progress and share best practices that other schools in NNPS could use or adapt.

The Facilitators outlined the relatively easy process of submitting NNPS questionnaires for consideration in the annual books of *Promising Partnership Practices*. They described how applications are reviewed for selection in the next book, and how applications for *Partnership Awards* are reviewed and rated. They also praised past submissions from schools in Little Rock that had been published. They answered questions from the schools' representatives. One member of an ATP agreed, "This activity really helped me to understand how to successfully submit a PPP. I was happy that my school was selected to be included in the 2015 publication."

After this discussion, the District Leader for Partnerships asked the ATPs to present short summaries of some of their schools' activities that might be good candidates to submit to the next NNPS book. Six schools had activities in *Promising Partnership Practices 2015*.

LRSD leaders were glad to see school ATPs change their attitude from fear of submitting their work to understanding the components of partnership program development. The District Leader for Partnerships acknowledged the importance of personal attention from NNPS by phone, Skype, or as a webinar for helping schools gain confidence about reporting progress and best practices as active members of the Network.

Kaye Rainey
Specialist/Coordinator-Parent Involvement
kaye.rainey@lrsd.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

NBA MATH HOOPS

LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT
LITTLE ROCK, AR

A coach will tell the team, "You must work for results, not hope for them!" In Little Rock School District (LRSD), the Leader for Partnerships was asked by the Director of Math and a Math Lead Teacher to collaborate on an engagement activity to increase students' math skills and attitudes about math. They planned a "full court press" that combined math with basketball.

The district office teamed up with a community partner, Learn Fresh Education Co., to use its board game, *NBA Math Hoops*, to help students practice and master basic math skills by linking virtual basketball shots with arithmetic and statistics. LRSD leaders wanted to test the power of the game to interest students and to engage families in supporting students in math. They hosted four Saturday sessions for students in grade 3 to 8 and their parents.

Flyers were provided to schools' ATPs to distribute to parents. Advertisements also were placed on the school district's website and e-mails were sent to parents. The question was whether the games would help them improve their scores on state math tests.

The board game worked like a basketball game with teams competing to win the game. A kick-off activity was hosted by the District Parent Involvement Office and staff from the Learn Fresh Company. Participants were greeted and provided information about playing *NBA Math Hoops*. Math skills involved adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing numbers; solving problems in a set time period; using spinners to determine 2-point and 3-point scores; and focusing on statistics to keep track of players' total points from field goals, free throws, rebounds, and assists.

Parents and students competed in four 2-hour sessions on Saturdays from February to May. Each family was provided with a *NBA Math Hoops* board game that they also could use at home.

A final championship game was held in a middle school gym with 16 teams of students and parents. All competitors were given an *NBA Math Hoops* Championship T-shirt and a certificate of participation. As one parent cheered, "I enjoyed attending this activity with my child. It was a great learning process. I think my child's math skills increased during this activity."

NBA Math Hoops was a team effort to plan and conduct the practice sessions and championship games for parents and students. Learn Fresh provided the materials for the games and prizes. Staff stipends were covered by Title I funds for parental involvement. After each session, everyone enjoyed lunch from Chick-fil-A, which also provided a gift card for participants to use at their restaurants. Prizes from Learn Fresh included 6 NBA Memphis Grizzlies tickets for two lucky families, NBA jerseys, and community gift cards. Child care was available for younger children.

The participating families enjoyed the experience. Students practiced and became more adept at basic math skills. Practice and confidence help students on math skills, but test scores will be monitored to see if they indicate a measurable impact of the game. The district leaders reviewed its pilot test of the NBA Hoops game and recognized that the games could be organized at elementary and middle schools to increase the participation of many parents and students.

Kaye Rainey
Specialist/Coordinator-Parent Involvement
kaye.rainey@lrsd.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

NEWS YOU CAN USE

BRIDGEPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT
BRIDGEPORT, CT

The Leader for Partnerships in Bridgeport set a goal to work with other district and school administrators and with parent and community leaders to collect and report news that could be and should be shared throughout the district. In a busy district like Bridgeport, there are many good news stories that are known only by a few. The improved *BPS Parent News and Updates* covers topics of interest in English and in Spanish. Parents can read the newsletter online at https://www.bridgeportedu.com/Parents/ParentInfo.html. Hard copies are provided to parent leaders at their monthly meetings and are available for parents who prefer print copies.

Parents, teachers, and the community are interested in district-doings, school programs, and student success. The Bridgeport newsletter includes some familiar topics that are repeated each month, and timely topics that will surprise and delight readers. Common sections include Attendance Achievements, Principals Matter, Dates to Remember, Construction Updates, Promising Practices, and Monthly Menus for elementary and secondary schools. Timely and unique additions include such things as Year in Review and Summer Reading Lists in June. Each month's newsletter also features stories and pictures from a different school.

District leaders believe that some results may be attributed to the news reported from month to month. For example, there may be a link between reports in the section on Attendance Achievement and an increase in students' Average Daily Attendance. The newsletter reports attendance statistics by school. Students, teachers, and parents wanted to see their school featured as one of the best. Also, schools with students with perfect attendance each month are listed and all of these students are entered into a lottery. The first student chosen serves as Superintendent-for-a-Day. Other students in the lottery are assigned other leadership roles such as principal, assistant principal, or guidance counselor for a day. All students with perfect attendance receive a certificate for their attendance achievement. Now, that is news of interest to everyone and may promote better attendance.

One month, the featured high school reported its Science Fair and students' projects, the number of books read by students, and other important awards including Inspiration Awards for Civic Leadership, School Leadership, and Teacher Excellence. Without timely coverage, no one outside of that school would know about the positive work of its students. Also, by having a list of district activities, individual schools can plan events with parents that do not conflict with those sponsored by the district.

According to one parent, "The [district] newsletter is really colorful. I like the monthly reminders and updates." Administrators and teachers also welcomed the opportunity to spotlight their partnership programs and practices, and their students' achievements. One teacher reported, "I like that the newsletter looks different every month. The news that is shared is always a welcome surprise!"

Everyone agrees that good things are happening in most schools, but, often, they are kept secret and not celebrated by other teachers, families, students, and the community. The *BPS Parent News and Updates* spotlights good work and many "happenings" so that more members of the Bridgeport community know about and take pride in the schools and their students.

Dolores M. Mason
District Facilitator and Key Contact to NNPS
dmason@bridgeportedu.net

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

WE ARE A STEM FAMILY

PASCO SCHOOL DISTRICT
PASCO, WA

Pasco School District is working to advance students' science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. This is an important topic because the local economy is based on STEM-related occupations in energy, conservation, agriculture, technological research, engineering design, and national defense.

Over the past two years, the district opened five STEM elementary schools and identified a STEM director to advance this agenda in all 21 schools in the district. The STEM director is working with Pasco's Leaders for Partnerships to increase communications with parents about STEM programs in their children's schools. To promote this agenda, these leaders conducted a session, We are a STEM Family, at a meeting for ATP Chairpersons. With new information, the ATPs at each school could inform their own students' parents about the district's STEM mission and their school-based programs. The STEM director also attended individual school ATP meetings as a guest speaker on the subject.

A Family Engineering Fun Night was conducted at the district office. Students and parents in the elementary and middle grades unleashed their creative energies to design engineering projects together. The main goal was for ATP chairpersons from all schools to see how to organize and conduct similar events for more families and students at their own schools.

Pasco's STEM initiative is enriched by key partners, such as Hanford, a former nuclear production complex located in neighboring Richland, WA. Hanford contractors have partnered with schools at many Family Science Nights. The Mid-Columbia STEM Education Collaboratory and the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory participated in the district's Family Engineering Fun Night with workshops and captivating demonstrations.

District professional development funds supported the session for ATPs and purchased books on *Family Engineering* for every school in English and Spanish (e.g., see http://www.family-engineering.org/store/). A small grant for STEM program development was used to compile a box of resource materials that schools could borrow for school-based Family Engineering Nights.

By spring, seven schools conducted a Family Engineering Night. Students conducted projects such as building towers or skyscrapers and creating catapults or launchers. One favorite activity was Mining with Chocolate Chip Cookies. Families had to "excavate" the chips from soft and crispy cookies without damaging the cookies, as miners must do when mining precious stones.

Pasco Leaders for Partnerships plan to continue STEM ice breakers at every Cluster Meeting to continue to give ATP chairpersons ideas they can use at their own team meetings and with parents and students at their schools. The best way to reach many parent about STEM is for ATPs to include exciting and well-planned STEM-events in their One-Year Action Plans for Partnership. One ATP Chairperson who also is the parent of Pasco students noted, "Now, I see that we use engineering in so many areas of our lives. When [my children] say they want to become engineers, I can ask them, 'What type of engineer exactly would you like to become—computer, electrical, mechanical, or some other?' " It is clear that the district and schools see family and community partnerships as a way to boost students' immediate interests in STEM subjects and long-term options for engineers in the local job market.

Esmeralda Magaňa-Valencia
Parent Engagement Coordinator
emagana@psd1.org
Lorraine Landon
Special Programs Coordinator
llandon@psd1.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

CELEBRATION TIME: SHARING BEST PRACTICES

CENTER OF EXCELLENCE TO PREPARE TEACHERS OF CHILDREN OF POVERTY
FRANCIS MARION UNIVERSITY, FLORENCE, SC

Celebrate what you want to see more of! These words rang true to the leaders of the Center of Excellence (COE) at Francis Marion University. COE serves four districts and about 80 NNPS member schools. Following years of end-of-year breakfasts for NNPS districts and schools to share best practices and learn from each other, this year's Celebration Time welcomed teachers and administrators from four more districts interested in knowing more about COE and NNPS, and about the kinds of partnership activities that were being conducted around the state. Invitations also were extended to the new Director of Family and Community Engagement at the SC Department of Education and Coordinator of Council Services for the SC School Improvement Council.

The goals were for Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) in the COE cohort to 1) network, share their best practices, and gather new ideas for use in their own schools; 2) recognize schools' hard work and accomplishments; and 3) encourage schools to submit their best practices for the new edition of the NNPS book of *Promising Partnership Practices 2016*. One teacher happily shared, "We got so many ideas today that we can use next year at our school."

The theme for Celebration Time was "*Every family is a different kind of flower, and all together make this world a beautiful garden.*" There was a Poster Gallery Walk to review activities. Seven schools that earned COE Family and Community Outreach Project Awards described their funded projects using videos, posters, or PowerPoint presentations. Ten more schools made short presentations on a best practice in their programs. The Associate Director of COE recognized all schools whose work was in the NNPS 2015 collection of best practices and awarded each of them a $100 prize from COE.

Participants received a certificate for Professional Development hours. They also could meet with COE staff for assistance on their next One-Year Action Plans for Partnership or for their submission to the new book of *Promising Partnership Practices*.

The Associate Director of COE reflected, "Although this activity required considerable planning, our schools really enjoy and benefit from what they learn. For example, after hearing about the Red Tie Club for at-risk boys, a different school started the White Pearl Club for girls. After hearing about one school's Literacy Night at the Library, another school created Literacy Night at the Museum."

Over the years, students benefitted from practices presented at the Celebration. For example one school reported on its Engineering Club, Full S.T.E.A.M Ahead, which was started with funds from the grant received from COE. Three projects focused on increasing students' reading skills. Another school helped students, parents, and teachers learn more about Asian culture at its Asian Experience Ball. Parents also benefitted from COE-sponsored projects. One school shared the Two for Me project, which recruited many volunteers for 2 hours. Another school used resources to provide reading materials in the native languages of its ESOL families.

A district leader commented, "I am so impressed with the work that everyone is doing to get parents more involved." COE plans to continue to assist districts and schools in South Carolina and to connect them to NNPS for on-going support and national networking.

Markey Bee
Associate Director and School, Family, Community Liaison
mbee@fmarion.edu

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

ESI FAMILY OVERNIGHT COLLEGE EXPEDITION

EXPANDED SUCCESS INITIATIVE – OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY READINESS
NEW YORK, NY

Expanded Success Initiative (ESI) is a project with the New York City Department of Education to improve college and career readiness of African American and Latino male students. ESI's goal is to help schools establish a safe and supportive environment for all students. Part of the agenda is to increase family and community engagement so that students have multiple sources of positive support to guide them through high school.

ESI started its work with NNPS with three high schools. Each school has an Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) and an action plan to engage families and community partners on academic and behavioral outcomes, including postsecondary planning. ESI also helps the three schools network to learn from each other about effective projects and practices that help families and teens plan for postsecondary education and training.

This year, one initiative was the ESI Family Overnight College Expedition to give families with low incomes a real experience with the college planning and selection process. ESI counselors and school staff knew that it was a challenge to engage parents with students on college planning and decision making. Many parents expressed a desire for their child to attend college, but were reluctant to permit their child to go away from home. Many of the students would be the first in their families to attend college.

ESI leaders planned an expedition for students and their families, supported by a grant for the purpose. Working with a trip consultant, ESI selected four colleges in a 4-hour radius of New York City. These included public and private institutions and a historically black institution, with tours planned in English and Spanish. If there were no grants to cover costs, most high schools could conduct day visits to local 2-year and 4-year colleges.

The ATPs at the three ESI schools recommended which students and families to invite. Two schools also sent their ATP chairpersons on the expedition. Over two days, the young men and their families toured the four campuses. They sat in on information sessions, financial aid sessions, and specially-constructed panels of male students. They collected information from the colleges in a tote bag. At each location, they also visited places of interest, including the Martin Luther King Memorial and Lincoln Memorial, in Washington, DC.

The group scheduled time for family lunches and dinners for cross-generational learning, bonding, and discussions. At the end of the expedition, ESI surveyed all participants to assess students' readiness to attend college and families' willingness to send their child to college. The surveys also asked about the support the families would need to follow their choices.

This was a powerful, transformative activity for the participants. The 31 male students spoke with admissions counselors, financial aid officers, and current students at each college. They and their families sat in lecture halls, visited dorm rooms, and ate in campus dining halls. This trip made the college planning process more real and less frightening. The surveys revealed that the parents and students planned to visit more college locations and could, now, envision their student attending college out of state. They needed more information on financial requirements and available aid to make the option a reality.

Camille Kinlock
Associate Director and
Director of School Support
ckinlock@schools.nyc.gov

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

JOINING FORCES: PARENT-TEACHER LEADERSHIP TRAINING

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY-BASED PARTNERSHIPS—UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA TUSCALOOSA, AL

The Center for Community-Based Partnerships (CCPB) at the University of Alabama initiated the Parent-Teacher Leadership Academy (PTLA). The CCPB conducts various academies with workshop sessions to increase the knowledge and skills of parents and teachers in Alabama's elementary schools. The goal is to help them take leadership roles in developing more effective programs of family engagement to improve the school climate and student academic outcomes.

At first, CCPB conducted the Elementary Parents Leadership Academy (EPLA) for parents only. Over the years, about 300 parents completed the program and went on to contribute over 7,000 hours of leadership as volunteers or activity organizers in their children's schools. The next group will include 53 participants from 20 schools located in five districts.

CCPB also initiated the Teacher Leadership Academy (TLA) to help elementary school teachers strengthen their leadership skills on many aspects of school improvement, including family and community engagement. Participants in the parent and teacher academies requested joint training—the PTLA—so they could meet and work together on the family engagement agenda.

The evolution of the academies from separate sessions to joint sessions recognized the need to help the essential partners in children's education to work better together. The joint session of the PTLA included 24 parents from 18 schools and 38 teachers from the same schools and a few additional schools.

CCPB facilitators asked parents and teachers to suggest topics of interest that would help them address important issues in their own schools. Last year, the combined group enjoyed dinner provided by the University and then attended informative presentations by school board members, school administrators, and a former Alabama Teacher of the Year on productive family and community engagement. Then, the teachers and parents from the same schools met and worked together on plans for improving family and community engagement at their own schools.

The parents and teachers benefitted from the information and from networking. They discussed ideas from their separate and joint sessions and considered how to integrate the information to improve partnerships and students' academic and behavioral outcomes. They created personal connections that they could continue back home. As one parent said, "We started a wonderful dialogue that we had not been able to do before." A teacher agreed that the interactions created a base for building better partnerships: "[The sessions] gave me a different perspective on parent-teacher-community relationships. It made me question myself and my interactions with parents, and how I can make these interactions better."

CCPB surveyed all attendees for feedback on the content and organization of the joint teacher-parent session. Teachers and parents "strongly agreed" that the joint session increased parent and teacher comfort with each other and helped them start viable plans for improving family engagement at their schools.

Sometimes, progress is made with simple steps. The PTLA enabled teachers and parents to meet, talk together, share contact information, and start improvement plans. Teachers identified parents who were willing to take leadership roles to engage other parents in partnership activities at their schools. This was a first step for organizing effective programs of family and community engagement to increase student success in school. Of course, "step one" is required for "step two" to follow.

Blake Berryhill, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
bberryhill@ches.ua.edu

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

LEARNING ON THE GO WITH *READYROSIE*

CUYAHOGA COUNTY UNIVERSAL PRE-KINDERGARTEN–STARTING POINT AND INVEST IN CHILDREN CLEVELAND, OH

Each year, the leaders of Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) in Cleveland's Starting Point and Invest in Children programs choose a theme to guide the work of more than thirty preschools that are members of NNPS. The schools conduct innovative activities for families to help their preschool students build basic skills to prepare for a successful transition to kindergarten.

UPK leaders learned about *ReadyRosie* technology and selected *Learning on the Go* as the theme for the year to increase family engagement in children's early education. One goal of *ReadyRosie* is to alert families to opportunities to help children learn new skills *anywhere* and *at any time*.

ReadyRosie is a subscription-based, online program that provides daily activities in English or Spanish in text and videos for parents to conduct language and math learning opportunities with their children wherever they may be. The interactions help preschoolers build vocabulary, ask questions, use complex sentences, and give their own opinions.

The Director of Invest in Children raised funds to implement *ReadyRosie* in UPK schools. She invited the creator of *ReadyRosie* to introduce the program at the UPK Staff Orientation before school started. Each school was given information and training, including handouts to orient parents to participate with their children. At monthly staff meetings, UPK staff members were updated with additional information. The UPK Communications Manager created a spreadsheet for schools to collect data to see how children progressed through the year and how families were engaged.

The Family Engagement Coordinator attended meetings of schools' Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) to address emerging questions about *ReadyRosie*. Teachers also used some *ReadyRosie* activities in their classrooms and communicated with parents about how to reinforce these practices with their children at home.

One challenge in low-income communities was collecting current e-mail addresses or cell phone numbers from families so that they could receive *ReadyRosie* communications. Another challenge was how to provide ideas in traditional forms if families did not have online connections. At the same time, the UPK Director noted, "We have so many parents who are addicted to their devices and technology, let's use it to our advantage."

UPK teachers and administrators encouraged family members to use the *ReadyRosie* videos with their children. The short 2-minute videos illustrate "real-world" parent-child interactions at home, in the park, grocery store, and other common locations. For example, one video guides parents to have fun with vocabulary and math at the grocery store by talking with the child about "more vs. less" by weighing different fruit. Another video guides a parent help the child count out 10 snacks and place them by 2s on a plate. The parent asks the child to close his eyes and eats 3 snacks. Then, the child must tell how many snacks were eaten. It's math that also requires language skills—and is funny and fun. One child said to her parent before bedtime, "We have to do the video before I go to sleep."

UPK is working to complete its data collection and to secure funds to continue *ReadyRosie*. This project is showing that parents respond eagerly when they are guided to conduct easy and useful activities for their children to learn wherever they go.

Catherine Thomas
Family Engagement Coordinator
catherine.thomas@starting-point.org

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools

PARTNERSHIP SCHOOLS SCOTLAND (PSS)

SCOTTISH PARENT TEACHER COUNCIL
EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND

Scottish Parent Teacher Council (SPTC) is a national membership organization for parent groups in Scottish schools. It is expanding its services to facilitate the Partnership Schools Scotland (PSS) model. PSS has two main goals—help educators and parents work together to improve schools and increase student success.

SPTC and its supporter, Skills Development Scotland, recognized that in addition to the longstanding work of providing direct services to parents, SPTC could assist more families by guiding schools to organize partnership programs using NNPS approaches. The new focus extended attention from parent representatives on school councils to enabling schools to engage all students' parents and community partners in ways that improved student learning and development.

Some actions were adapted for the Scottish context. For example, in the absence of school districts like those in the U. S., SPTC acts "like a district" by providing professional development and on-going support to help schools improve practices of family and community engagement.

SPTC leaders attended an NNPS Leadership Institute to learn to organize leadership activities and use and adapt NNPS structures and processes with schools in Scotland. SPTC wrote a 5-year leadership plan for PSS, starting with three primary and three secondary schools in three regions—Angus, Glasgow, and Edinburgh—with plans to scale up the number of PSS schools each year.

Some goals are the same for schools in Scotland as for all schools in NNPS. SPTC guides its schools to form an Action Team for Partnerships (ATP), plan goal-linked practices to engage all families, and share best practices. Schools will evaluate progress and challenges each year and write the next plan.

This year, schools in Scotland conducted some creative activities. A primary school in the Angus region worked with family and community partners to redesign its outdoor space for student learning in numeracy, with follow-up math activities that students and parents could do at home. Another school in Angus engaged families in helping students make successful transitions and adjustments to a new school.

In the Glasgow region, one school focused on nutrition, food choices, and cooking together. An activity called *Big Cook, Little Cook* for families and children was so popular that it became an on-going after-school program. In the Edinburgh region, a primary school focused on health and wellness with a smoke-free zone on the playground and information for parents and children.

Other schools are conducting activities for family engagement in literacy and community partnerships to improve experiences of secondary school students.

School teams reported that the NNPS framework and basic tasks helped them involve more families. SPTC has a helpful website, sends e-communications to schools, and uses a phone helpline to continually assist its schools. Schools share best practices on the website http://www.sptc.info/partnership-schools-scotland/. SPTC's advisors include representatives from the Scottish Government, businesses, area school officials, professional organizations, and teacher unions.

SPTC's activities support the *Scottish Parental Involvement Act* passed in 2006 by the Scottish Parliament. Leaders noted, "Over time, PSS should fundamentally change the way families, schools, and communities relate to each other. We expect that this approach will remove many barriers and recognize that everyone has something of value to contribute to children's education."

Eileen Prior, Executive Director
eileen@sptc.info
Eleanor Coner, Partnership Dvlpmnt Officer
eleanor@sptc.info

©2016 National Network of Partnership Schools