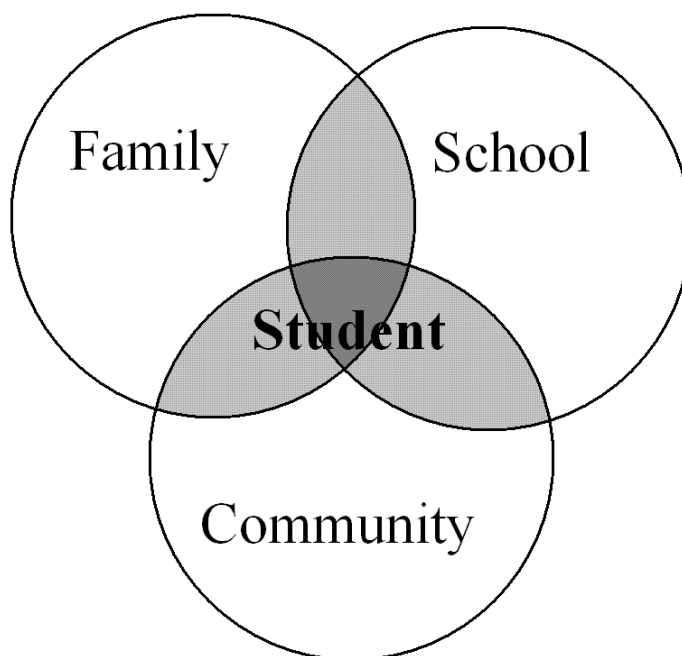


*Family Connections Series*







# *Collaborating with the Community*

## **Action Teams for Partnerships (ATP)**

*A Guide for Improving Student Success Through Partnerships  
of Families, Schools and Communities*



### **School, Family and Community Involvement**

-  1. Parenting
-  2. Communicating
-  3. Volunteering
-  4. Learning at Home
-  5. Decision Making: Action Team for Partnerships
-  6. Collaborating With the Community



**Parents Reaching Out**  
*Your One Stop Resource for a Stronger Family*

**Spring 2009**

Successful models of family involvement honor families by validating and celebrating any level of involvement or contribution they make. These models focus on the assets that families bring to school and community groups.

Partnerships with families will have lasting results when our day to day practices and policies are built on three basic qualities:

- ***Sense of belonging:*** Everyone wants to feel that they belong and families are no different. Families who feel included and respected will then work toward the greater goal of helping others. *Welcome them!*
- ***Competence:*** Families just may have the solution you've been seeking. Recognize their competence as a partner in the teaching-learning cycle. Families learn a lot about their children's needs as they navigate complex systems. They want to learn more. *Offer opportunities for shared learning.*
- ***Usefulness:*** Families have learned countless ways they can assist others to find paths leading to success and independence for their children. *Invite them to share!*

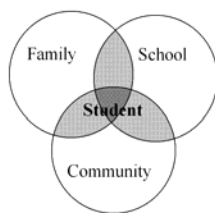
*Please Note: "Parent" and "family" involvement are used as interchangeable references in this book. Both terms include all adults who play an important role in the child's life and who may have responsibility for a child's education, development, and well-being. For some children, "parents" may include grandparents, aunts, uncles, step-parents, and/or guardians.*

# Welcome

Parents Reaching Out is pleased to provide you with our *Family Connections* series. Each book in this collection highlights one of the Six Keys of School, Family, and Community Involvement developed by Dr. Joyce L. Epstein. We hope that these books help families, educators and Action Teams promote and sustain parental involvement in New Mexico's schools. As partners, we can help all children and young adults succeed in school and in life!

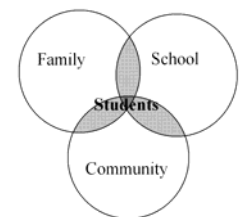
The Epstein Model is a research based process. It offers a flexible framework for meaningful involvement that embraces families as full partners in improving outcomes for all children. This model encourages the efficient use of time, talents and resources to improve results for every student required by No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Families play a key role in decision making through a process called Action Teams for Partnerships (ATP). Action Teams use real facts (data) about *what we know* to carefully plan *what we do* (activities) to achieve school goals for student success.

Dr. Epstein identifies “three spheres of influence” that directly effect student learning and development—family, school and community. When the people in each of these spheres communicate and interact with one another, the spheres have a closer connection and overlap one another. Students are better supported to do their best when these circles of influence come together. Positive and frequent interactions ensure that students receive consistent messages about the importance of school, working hard, thinking creatively, helping one another and staying in school.



**Strong partnerships build trust through shared goals.** As the spheres pull together, our children gain a stronger feeling of security and being cared for while they are encouraged to work hard in the role of student.

**Weak partnerships limit opportunities and resources that help our children become successful adults.** Each sphere sees “their job” as separate from the others. Educators might say, “If the family would just do its job, we could do our job.” Families may say, “I raised this child; now it is your job to educate my child.”



## About This Book

Collaboration with the Community is a process that encourages shared decision making and accountability between not just family and the school, but among members of the community as well. This book is about teamwork that gets results by utilizing all community resources.

In this process, schools and families work together with communities to discover each other's strengths and utilize those strengths to their fullest potential for the sake of all partners. By the end of this book you will understand what collaborating with the community means and why it is needed for our children and youth to succeed in life. You'll discover how to build and organize community partnerships and identify some of the challenges to effective collaboration.

# The Six Keys to Family Involvement

Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement  
Joyce L. Epstein, Ph.D., et. al.,



## **Parenting**

Build on parenting strengths and help families improve parenting skills; understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions that support children as students at each age and grade level. Facilitate support systems and networks to enable families to effectively nurture their children. 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, work, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences school or in other locations to support students and school programs.



## **Learning at Home**

Provide information and ideas to families about how to help their children in learning activities at home or in the community, including homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, planning and linking schoolwork to real life.



## **Decision Making**

Equip parents and other community members with the tools they need to function as advocates, advisors, and decision-makers. Include families and community members as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through PTA/PTO, school councils, committees and other parent organizations.

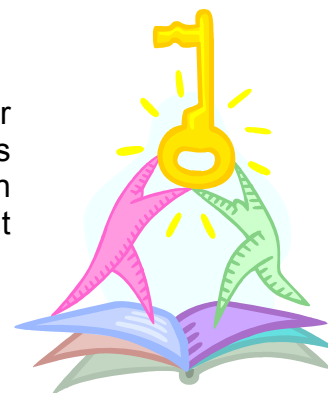


## **Collaborating with the Community**

Identify and coordinate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices and student learning and development. Establish and promote partnerships with individuals and organizations in the community, particularly those that provide support services for children and their families.

Dr Epstein is Director of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships, Principal Research Scientist and Co-Director of the School, Family, and Community Partnership Program of the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR). Her work provides a research framework for partnerships as schools implement the requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

As the New Mexico Parent Information and Resource Center (NM PIRC), Parents Reaching Out believes that Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement and partnerships with families are keys to great schools. As such, types of involvement may also be referred to as keys in the content of this book.



# Look at the BIG Picture for New Mexico Schools

## New Mexico House Bill 212 (2003) Section 27: Advisory School Councils

Section 27. A new section of the Public School Code, Section 22-5-16 NMSA 1978, is enacted to read: "22-5-16. ADVISORY SCHOOL COUNCILS--CREATION--DUTIES.—

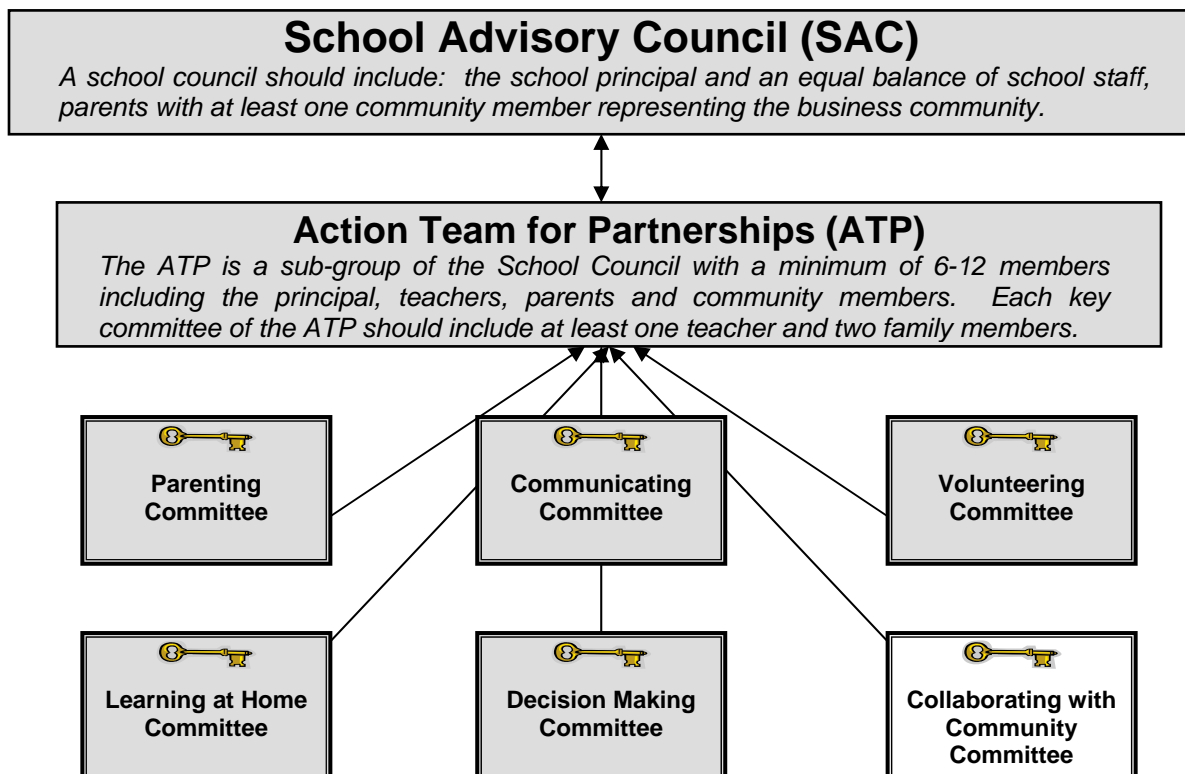
A. Each public school shall create an advisory "school council" to assist the school principal with school-based decision-making and to involve parents in their children's education.

B. A school council shall be created and its membership elected in accordance with local school board rule. School council membership shall reflect an equitable balance between school employees and parents and community members. At least one community member shall represent the business community, if such person is available. The school principal may serve as chairman. The school principal shall be an active member of the school council.

C. The school council shall:

- (1) work with the school principal and give advice, consistent with state and school district rules and policies, on policies relating to instructional issues and curricula and on the public school's proposed and actual budgets;
- (2) develop creative ways to involve parents in the schools;
- (3) where appropriate, coordinate with any existing work force development boards or vocational education advisory councils to connect students and school academic programs to business resources and opportunities; and
- (4) serve as the champion for students in building community support for schools and encouraging greater community participation in the public schools."

As the New Mexico Parent Information and Resource Center (NM PIRC) funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Parents Reaching Out encourages schools to integrate the Action Team for Partnerships process within the activities of the Advisory School Council mandated by HB 212. The diagram shows how this can work in our schools.



## Let's Build Bridges!

Bridges (rather than borders or barriers) can increase students' chances of successfully navigating sometimes divergent settings.

It is essential that we focus on building bridges for students by strengthening relationships and partnerships across systems (home-school-community) and promoting continuity in expectations, goals, and support for learning.

Interactions among partners are collaborative:

- More than simply working together, there is a fundamental restructuring of how individuals and agencies work together.
- Individuals work together as co-equal parties.
- Personal needs are put aside to allow the needs and goals of the group to take precedence.
- All parties believe that the partnership and the anticipated outcomes are worthy of the expenditure of time and energy necessary for its maintenance.
- Resources, power, and responsibilities are shared.

Home/School/Community Collaboration: Connections for Kids  
Susan M. Sheridan, Ph.D. University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2003



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New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) for their continued support and collaboration;

The Center for the Education and Study of Diverse Populations for the use of Working Together: A Toolkit for New Mexico School Communities developed by CESDP and supported by NMPED; and,

New Mexico PTA for their support and partnership as we serve communities across our state.

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*If children are loved,  
they will be loveable.*

*If children are encouraged,  
they will become confident.*

*If children are valued,  
they will learn to value.*

*If children are praised,  
they will become praiseworthy.*

*If children are respected,  
they will reciprocate.*

*If children are taught,  
they will learn.*



*If children are celebrated,  
they will rejuvenate.*

*If children are nurtured,  
they will blossom.*

*If children are healthy,  
the world will survive.*



Geneva Gay, Professor of Education  
University of Washington, Seattle

# The Collaborating with the Community Committee of the Action Team for Partnerships

It takes a whole village to raise a child.

This proverb found in African culture, Native American culture and others in our changing world reminds us that caring networks of people help our children thrive.

*Collaborating with the Community concentrates on the mutual benefits of partnerships among schools, families, community groups, organizations, agencies and individuals. Connecting with resources beyond the school walls strengthens the community (or village) as a whole. Involving community representatives as full-fledged members of the Action Team for Partnerships sends a powerful message that says: “We can do more together to promote continuity in expectations, goals, and support for learning.”*

Community partners are valuable players in the development of children. They have a wide range of skills and knowledge and, just like families, bring resources to the table. Schools need additional resources to successfully educate all students and they also have resources to share with communities. The most effective schools find resources by looking in their own backyard—their own community.

The community beyond our schools includes businesses, non-profits, service agencies, faith-based groups, universities, colleges and individuals. Shared decision making to pool resources will have a positive impact on community services, improve school programs, strengthen family practices and improve outcomes for all children.

## ***The Goals of the Collaborating with the Community Committee***

The primary goal of this committee is to develop strategies that make the best use of every resource for effective schools and strong communities. Activities focus on coordinating resources and services from the community for families, students and the school while providing services to the community. This group must understand the meaning and need for collaborating with others so that their work builds awareness and support for lasting partnerships. The committee should be prepared to:

- Share a common purpose and vision for learning as related to community goals
- Develop a process for shared leadership and decision making that will link schools with diverse organizations and institutions within the community
- Identify, recruit, and engage the participation of diverse community members to foster learning and create positive changes in school and community
- Use strategies to sustain school-community collaborations that value strengths and respect diversity of every stakeholder.
- Support activities to increase communication between school, family and community



## What is Community Collaboration?

Community partnerships are an essential part of the support system that is needed for student success. Let's begin with a few definitions.

### ***What Does "Community" Mean?***

"Community" is rated not only by low or high social or economic qualities, but also by strengths and talents of people and organizations available to support students, families, and schools.

"Community" includes not only families with children in the schools, but also all who are interested in and affected by the quality of education.

"Community" means not only the neighborhoods where students' homes and schools are located, but also other neighborhoods or locations that influence their learning and development.

Source: School, Family, and Community Partnerships by J.L. Epstein et al, 2002 second edition

### ***What is Collaboration?***

Collaboration can mean an informal way of working together or a more formal contractual association. It can be short term agreement focused on a specific project or it can be long term partnership that may address several goals. When individuals and organizations come together for common purpose, they often accomplish more together than they would if they worked separately.

*True collaborations are formed when individuals and groups come together to share leadership, decisions, ownership, vision, and responsibility.* The collaborative process involves building relationships based on a core set of values that include:

- Shared commitment to a common goal;
- Awareness and sensitivity to each partners interests and needs;
- Mutual respect for each partner's strengths, diversity, and resources;
- Trust and confidence in each partner;
- Genuine reliance on each other; and
- Dedication to open communication and collaborative problem solving.

Partners share information, time and whatever else it takes to meet the common goal. Partners must not only be willing to celebrate success, but they must also be willing to help solve problems when times get tough. Collaboration means listening to one another and finding ways to share leadership and decision making.

#### **Basic Principles of Effective Collaboration**

Everyone needs to be treated with dignity and respect.

Everyone needs to be heard.

All of the information needs to be clear for everyone.



# Coming Together

Schools and community organizations may sometimes feel like they are competing for resources. Schools may not understand how the work of a business or agency can help students improve academically. At the same time, families and businesses or community organizations may feel that the school is “keeping them out” with its rigid structure filled with rules and regulations. By coming together to get to know one another, we improve understanding to focus on goals that help children succeed as students and as productive members of the community. Inviting community leaders to join the Action Team for Partnerships promotes new possibilities for everyone.

## **Schools:**

- Become familiar with the organizations that exist in the home community of your school. Who are they? What do they do? How can they help your students, families and staff?
- Invite community groups to participate in or cosponsor school events. The sense of shared responsibility and success can help build lasting relationships.
- Recruit community organizations to be providers of school district trainings. The specialized expertise of community organizations can provide a wealth of professional development opportunities for your staff.
- Offer school space for community events.
- Include community groups in electronic mailing lists to inform them of school events. Keep your neighbors abreast of school events.

## **Community Groups:**

- Learn about the mandates under which schools must operate so that you can better demonstrate how the collaboration will benefit students.
- Attend school meetings. Board meetings are open to the public and can help you gain a solid understanding of issues facing the school.
- Establish relationships with specific key contact people within the school. Do you need to speak with the principal, or is the school social worker the person who most needs access to your services?
- Contact the district office to find out the schedule for formal staff training dates. Schools are often looking to fill a wide variety of content areas.
- Put all of the schools (personalized by key contacts) on your mailing list to keep them informed of your activities.

*Enhancing Service through Effective School/ Community Collaboration*  
E. Mastro and M. Grenz Jalloh, June 2005

Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. It is the ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.

Andrew Carnegie

## Communities as Partners in Education

A child's education is the shared responsibility of the schools, parents and community. Including community partners in schools creates an atmosphere of collaboration, acceptance and unity toward goals for the educational success of all children. Not only does community involvement help improve student achievement, it is also mandated in New Mexico House Bill 212, No Child Left Behind, IDEA and many other laws that call for parent and the community involvement in every school.

**School-community partnerships are not one-sided relationships that only benefit schools.** A true partnership is beneficial to all involved in the process. Collaboration is a continuum. A fully engaged community includes members of all ages and interests who actively participate and agree to carry out particular tasks.

Use the diagram below to determine the level of community partnerships in your school. Think of ways that would strengthen partnerships and move them to the next level.

		Degree of Power Sharing		
		Basic	→	Advanced
Degree of Resource Sharing	Advanced	<b>Cooperating</b> Using resources to assist other agencies.	<b>Coordinating</b> Organizing or combining resources in order to more effectively reach a mutual goal.	<b>Collaborating</b> Collectively applying resources toward problems that lack clear ownership.
		<b>Contributing Resources</b> School and community contribute resources to project or effort; contribution is clearly defined and usually material.	<b>Merging Activities</b> School and community adjust or combine existing programs in order to deliver services more effectively; usually entails on going relationships among partners.	<b>Sharing Program Responsibilities</b> School and community come together as a new entity to provide services or to manage a resource.
		<b>Promoting Others</b> School and community willingly share information about the work and services of others.	<b>Sharing Resources</b> School and community, which use the same goods or service, agree to share costs often defined by a contract.	<b>Creating New Systems or Programs</b> School and community work to create and implement a new model to deliver services or address a public problem.
	Basic	<b>Sharing Information</b> School and community share information on a formal or informal basis.	<b>Joint Projects</b> School and community depend upon each other to produce a specific product or event; generally involves short-term commitments.	<b>Collective Planning</b> School and community develop a collective vision and/or study to identify community assets and for the management of resources to alleviate social problems.

Source: Working Together: A Toolkit for New Mexico School Communities  
 The Center for the Education and Study of Diverse Populations (CESDP)  
 and the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED)

# Getting Started: Three Critical Questions

The Collaborating with the Community committee will need to think about school goals and carefully consider the role of partners in their school. Use questions and activities below to begin discussions and plan strategies for community involvement.

## ***How will partnerships improve outcomes for our students?***

To answer this question, take steps to become familiar with school goals and existing school-community partnerships. Committee members should first take time to:

- Review the goals and objectives in the current Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS) that is required for every school. These goals should drive the activities developed by the committee for the One-Year Action Plan.
- Identify the school improvement goals in the EPSS that could be better met with the support and assistance of community collaborations.
- Brainstorm a “wish list” of services, product donations, or financial support that will help meet these goals.

*Involve the community!* Community surveys may be a starting point, but collaboration requires opportunities that empower potential partners “Town hall” meetings and “getting to know you” activities opens doors that promote partnerships. Community Mapping (page 6) is a great way for all stakeholders identify a wealth of resources.

## ***How do we approach potential partners?***

Once potential partners have been identified through the Community Mapping process, the Collaborating with the Community committee will need a plan for approaching potential partners. Like other committees of the Action Team for Partnerships, each member is an ambassador for the school. Committee members also play a key role in public relations and must be prepared to make contacts by phone, letter and in person.

Before approaching potential partners, it may be useful to create a “public relations kit” with information about your school and the benefits of collaborative partnerships. Schools are nonprofit entities and donation of products or services are tax deductible. Most importantly, prospective partners want to know how their support will improve outcomes for students and benefit the community as a whole. Learn more by reading “Tips for Approaching Potential Partners” on page 16.

## ***How do we maintain partnerships?***

Making your first contacts with potential partners is the easy part. The hardest part of the process of collaborating with the community is nurturing existing and new found partnerships. Everyone can help in some way. Partners want success and need recognition. Show appreciation, recognize the efforts and ask for feedback from every partner. Collaboration is hard work with great rewards. Be creative and be positive. Read about Promising Practices used in other schools on pages 18-20.

The top 3 ingredients for effective collaboration would be . . .  
relationship, relationship, relationship.      McDaniel, Campbell, and Seaburn (1995)

# Community Asset Mapping

Even the smallest communities have resources and strengths. Whether you live in Albuquerque or Columbus, Las Cruces or Shiprock, a process called Community Asset Mapping will help the Collaborating with Community committee support the work of the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP). The activities use an asset-based approach to identify the strengths within a community.

Too often, communities focus on their deficiencies and problems rather than on their assets and resources that can be used to strengthen the community. This section is all about Community Asset Mapping. What it is, how to do it, and why it is so beneficial.

**What is Community Mapping?** Community mapping is a process that identifies what resources are already available within a community, as well as identify what resources are still needed to promote a successful community. Resources can include a wide range of tangible and intangible things. Tangible resources can include school supplies, food donations, clothing, gift certificates, etc. Intangible resources can include services such as volunteering to judge the science fair, space for meetings, etc. Use the Community Mapping process to:

- Identify key components (people, institutions, agencies and organizations) of local communities
- Envision ways to involve the diverse groups of community stakeholders as partners in planning and implementing educational work
- Develop strategies to ensure participation from traditionally under-represented groups in the community
- Identify community expertise and knowledge



**Who Does the Community Mapping?** Any one person or any group can facilitate this process. Tap the strengths within the committee members or invite a service group to share a role in this process. Remember, you are trying to build relationships!

**Why is Community Mapping Important?** Mapping is the first step toward improving a community's knowledge of the resources available to them and their family. To function well, every community has to fully understand, manage and develop its resources.

## ***Community Mapping can help:***

- Schools and communities share goals and problems with respect to children, youth, and families
- Develop cost-effective systems, programs, and services to meet the goals and address the problems of everyone within a community
- Distribute the responsibility and accountability pressures, as well as the rewards and successes, related to improving outcomes to everyone in the community
- Improve effectiveness of schools by coordinating and eventually integrating resources to develop an ongoing system of interventions and services

## What are the Benefits of Community Asset Mapping?

- Identify all the rich resources a community has to offer including the personal strengths of individuals in the community
- Identify gaps in the community and set priorities for filling those gaps related to programs and services
- Identify opportunities for strengthening the community through planning and promoting partnerships

## How Do You Do a Community Asset Mapping?

(Remember, there are many different techniques. There is no right or wrong way!)

Do it in stages. You can start simple and add to the map over time.

1. The first step is to identify all the people, businesses, organizations, and agencies in the community as well as their role, services, talents, etc.
2. Next clarify needs for specific programs, activities, services  
Estimate how many students/families will be involved and include cost for programs, if applicable.
3. Collect and put together contact information for everyone on your list, such as phone numbers and email addresses, etc. Make sure that this information is accessible to everyone in the school and community.



## Evaluating Progress

Evaluation plays an important role in every part of our life. After you have completed the community asset mapping, make it a habit to regularly evaluate the map. You want to take care of your mapping efforts. Maintain accurate information. Regularly review the roster of current active community partners and seek the participation of those who are not already involved. Sustain the resources.

Develop your resources, for instance, you may need to add partners and emerging talents. Corrections and additions are fine as they are a sign of growth. This allows you to step back and take a critical look at the process, the achievement toward your goals, and the impact of your efforts to date. Measuring success in meeting your goals is a constant throughout the mapping process.

Community resource mapping places importance on collaboration. It is an informative experience for many who have no idea how rich and diverse the resources are in their community. It causes people to shift to an asset based view of their community. Meeting the school and postschool needs of youth ultimately depends on the identification, integration, and alignment of services and supports within communities. By building on a community's assets and shared goals, this community resource mapping tool assists community members in their work to achieve and sustain positive outcomes for all youth.

# Community Mapping Exercise

The following three-part exercise and the worksheets on pages 9-11 provide a guide to key activities needed for the community mapping process.

## Part One: Identifying Personal Knowledge, Skills and Assets

When groups and individuals come together to form collaborative partnerships, it is important for each person to explore the gifts, talents, interests and skills they bring to the partnership. These are called *personal assets* and may include:

- **Abilities and interests:** cosmetology, carpentry, gardening, photography, crafts, entertaining, dancing, etc.
- **Expertise:** accounting, foreign languages, local history, computers, healthy behaviors, cultural insights, etc.
- **Outdoor activities and athletics:** hiking, hot-air ballooning, yoga, fly-fishing, astronomy, skiing, team sports, etc.
- **Domestic skills:** baking, canning, quilting, pottery, doll collecting, etc.
- **Social Skills:** public speaking, listening, interviewing, mediation, story telling, event planning, etc.

Note: The information gathered in Part One of Community Mapping will be useful to all members of the Action Team for Partnerships and the School Advisory Council. Sharing this information will expand the capacity to build leadership and tap “hidden resources” within the community.

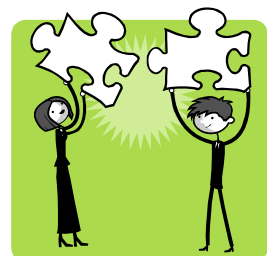
## Part Two: Brainstorm YOUR Knowledge of Community Resources

During this part of the process, each Individual will have the opportunity to broaden their scope and brainstorm community resources that they know. Each person is asked to think of the businesses, organizations, agencies and groups that serve people in the community.

## Part Three: Pool Resources and Plan Strategies for Collaboration

Invite participants to share and compare the resources that they discovered during Part Two activities. The Collaborating with the Community committee shares the results of the brainstorm wish list of donations, services or products needed to meet school goals. Participants also identify school resources (school programs, services, facilities, etc.) that would benefit the community.

Planning collaboration strategies is like working a jigsaw puzzle. Once resources are identified, it's time for the group to plan ways to bring the pieces of the puzzle together in a way that will work for the greater good. It's okay to take small steps. Build relationships. Tackle something easy first. Select short term strategies that will help families, schools and the entire community reach long range goals.



# Part I: Identifying Personal Knowledge, Skills and Assets

## Expertise

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

## Domestic Skills

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

## Abilities and Interests

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Me**

## Outdoor Activities and Athletics

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

## Social Skills

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

## Part II: Brainstorm YOUR Knowledge of Community Resources

Artists and cultural institutions: \_\_\_\_\_

Social services agencies: \_\_\_\_\_

Senior citizen organizations and individuals: \_\_\_\_\_

Libraries and bookstores: \_\_\_\_\_

Higher education opportunities: \_\_\_\_\_

Churches and faith-based organizations: \_\_\_\_\_

Childcare providers: \_\_\_\_\_

Fraternal organizations and clubs: \_\_\_\_\_

Law enforcement offices: \_\_\_\_\_

Media and publication agencies: \_\_\_\_\_

Locally owned and/or large businesses: \_\_\_\_\_

Health providers/centers and services: \_\_\_\_\_

Food services and restaurants: \_\_\_\_\_

Banking and credit institutions: \_\_\_\_\_

Community-based organizations: \_\_\_\_\_

Entertainment groups and offices: \_\_\_\_\_

### Useful Tips:

- Don't just list those businesses that have a "reputation" for giving. Include all potential partners. Maybe some community members and businesses just haven't been asked.
- Persistency is the key to success! Keep trying.
- Remember, a true partnership is about give and take. When approaching a business member, highlight what's in it for them:
  - How will their contribution benefit the children?
  - How will their collaboration gain them recognition?
  - What will the school and families do for them in return?

See page 12 for an activity called "Mapping School Assets". This worksheet will help you begin to identify how the school can "give back" to the community. This worksheet would be helpful to hand to community members you approach for a collaboration.

## Part III: Identifying Community Resources

Types of Community Partners	Examples	Services Provided, Knowledge Base, Skills	Geographic and/or Area Served	Examples for Possible collaboration
<b>Business Corporations</b>	Local businesses, national corporations and franchises			
<b>Universities and Educational Institutions</b>	Colleges, universities, high schools and other educational institutions			
<b>Healthcare Organizations</b>	Hospitals, healthcare centers, mental health facilities, health departments, health foundations and associations			
<b>Government and Military Agencies</b>	Fire departments, police departments, city councils, juvenile justice, other local and state agencies and departments			
<b>Faith-based Organizations</b>	Churches, mosques, synagogues, other religious organizations and charities			
<b>Senior Citizen Organizations</b>	Nursing homes, senior volunteer and service organizations			
<b>Cultural and Recreational Institutions</b>	Zoos, museums, libraries and recreational centers			
<b>Family Advocacy and Support</b>	Non-profits			
<b>Others (including individuals)</b>				

# Mapping School Assets

Community partners must view the school as a rich collection of physical and human resources. The following list of school facilities and assets can help the Collaborating with the Community committee be prepared to answer the question, “What is in it for me?” Use this exercise to identify what *you* can give back to your community partners.

<b>Facilities</b>	Schools are places where community groups can meet. Are there meeting rooms, computer labs, auditoriums and other areas that can be used by community members?
Your assets and resources:	
<b>Materials and Equipment</b>	Even resource-strapped, economically disadvantaged schools have at least some of the following which can be shared with or used in support of various local community groups: computers, copy machines, books, videos and other media materials.
Your assets and resources:	
<b>Purchasing Power</b>	The materials, commodities and services purchased by schools can be directed to initiate, support or expand neighborhood enterprises, including those created by local youth.
Your assets and resources:	
<b>Employment and Training Practices</b>	The school's hiring practices can include local residents. Professional development opportunities can include other educational service providers in the community.
Your assets and resources:	
<b>Courses</b>	Through existing or newly created evening courses, schools can provide education and training for residents or groups who seek to participate in the area's development efforts.
Your assets and resources:	
<b>Teachers</b>	Teachers are a concentrated pool of highly trained adults with critical skills and essential knowledge that can contribute to the efforts of local groups involved in development activities.
Your assets and resources:	
<b>Financial Capacity</b>	Schools have the local power to generate and receive special funds through bond issues and proposals to government agencies, corporations and foundations not usually accessible to other community groups. This special capacity can be an important resource in a community development strategy.
Your assets and resources:	
<b>Youth</b>	Students with ideas, time, energy and motivation can participate in classes, projects and internships, which involve them in the local community development process.
Your assets and resources:	

# Great Ways to Build Lasting Partnerships

Schools should try to partner with a wide range of community partners and businesses. This diversity creates opportunities to fully serve students and families and provides better access to community resources and programs.

Look back at the Community Asset Mapping activities that begin on page 6. Use this as a starting point to see who is already participating and whom you can approach for partnerships. We have adapted and expanded on ideas presented by Joyce Epstein to provide a menu of ways that school Action Teams can involve community partners.

- **Encourage businesses** to adopt policies that support their employees being involved in their child's school. For example, allow them to have time off to attend their child's school events such as:
  - Field trips
  - Family Involvement Day at the Legislative Session
  - Award assemblies for academics or Character Counts
  - Graduations or transition ceremonies
  - Parent conferences, Individualized Education Program (IEP) team meetings, Student Assistance Team (SAT) meetings, etc.
  - "Take Your Child to Work" days
  - Volunteer activities
- **Invite business representatives** to participate on committees that require parental involvement under the No Child Left Behind Act, like the school Action Team for Partnerships
- **Include business representatives** on committees that adopt, revise, or evaluate curricula and budget as required by the NM HB 212 (see page iii)
- **Develop procedures** that identify opportunities and services that encourage schools to be participants in community functions that promote well-being, such as: Health Fairs and Community Clean-Up Days.
- **Use your community as a classroom.** Collaborate with community partners to place students in intern positions, apprenticeships or service learning programs that support curricula or allow for career exploration
- **Invite community members** to serve as members of a panel of judges when their expertise is relevant (Science Fair, essay contest, Spelling Bee, Art Fair, etc.)
- **Get community members** to join parent volunteers in the classroom to try out the same kinds of assignments their kids are being asked to do. Some schools have family math nights, literacy nights and science nights.



- **The students of today are employees of tomorrow.** Invite small “focus” groups of influential people from the community to meet with the principal to share their concerns and ideas about student learning. Questions that these community focus groups could address are:

- “What do we expect from graduates?”
- “What should graduates of our schools know and be able to do?”
- “What evidence would you accept that he or she has achieved those goals?”



- **Ask the local newspaper** to publish a regular column about educational issues.
- **Meet regularly with town or city officials.** Explore ways schools can work together to better meet the needs of students. Look for ways to offer joint outreach services to all students. These services might include:
  - D.A.R.E. Program
  - Junior Police or Fireman Programs
  - Afterschool or recreation center programs
- **Be persistent.** Don’t be discouraged if all your committee members are not participating or enthusiastic in the beginning. Some ways to bring them along is to include them in brainstorming, decision making and action, all of which foster buy in. Also, as you begin to have successes, those who are slow to warm will begin to come along.
- **Foster student participation in community service.** Many school groups such as National Honor Society, Student Council, Future Farmers of America (FFA), have community service requirements for their members.
- **Organize Career Days/Fairs.** Collaborate with community businesses, organizations and agencies to participate at Career Fairs or Career Days. In addition to having booths with information about career options, have each representative give a brief presentation for the students so that they may also ask questions.
- **Student Apprenticeships, Service Learning Programs or Job Shadowing.** All of these opportunities provide students with the opportunity to partner classroom learning with hands on experience. They also provide students with the opportunity to experience what it is like “in the real world” such as how to dress and behave in a work environment. See pages 52-53 for information on Service Learning Programs.



- **Mentoring Programs.** Mentoring programs can accomplish a number of things. The lack of organized youth activities in poor neighborhoods, the rise of single parent homes and families with two working parents have reduced the number of adult role models. Mentoring programs provide these role models to help children develop socially and emotionally. Mentors can help kids learn how to communicate their feelings, relate to their peers and develop relationships with other adults.
- **Part-time Employment.** Some communities have programs that provide part-time employment for students in the community. This offers students the opportunity to work part-time while still going to school.
- **Mock Interviews, Practice Applications and Resumes.** Recruit businesses that are willing to provide students an opportunity to practice the employment process. Have students fill out practice applications and resumes for review and have employers provide feedback to help students improve upon their skills. Conclude the process by having students attend a mock interview with the employer. This will provide them with the opportunity to practice their interview etiquette, such as how to dress, when to arrive and how to answer questions.
- **Guest Speakers.** Have a variety of guest speakers attend the school to talk about different subjects. These can be experts in different fields, small business owners, religious personnel, or individuals who can speak about historical events such as WWII, the first man on the moon, etc.
- **Teacher “Externships”.** Much like a student learning program, teacher externships pair teachers with community partners to allow teachers to gain experience in different areas that they can apply in the classroom.
- **Tutoring.** Establish a community tutoring program. You can base this at the local library or at different school sites. Have high school students tutor primary students and have community members tutor high school students.



# Tips for Approaching Potential Partners

Taking time to develop a standard script is a great way to make sure that everyone is on the same page as they contact potential partners. The script provides a path to follow as you connect with people in the community. It offers prompts to help you to get and give important information as you prepare for face to face meetings. A script may be helpful to those who are uncomfortable making calls to ask for donations or assistance.

The Collaborating with the Community Committee of the ATP can draft a script that is approved by the school principal and membership of the School Advisory Council (SAC). An approved script will promote consistency and send a message from school leadership about the value of community collaboration.



*If you develop and use a script, remember that it only a guide. Try not to sound too robotic when contacting potential partners. Your goal is to build a relationship. You want to sound warm and friendly. If you show enthusiasm for what you were doing, potential partners will catch your enthusiasm and be more inclined to support you. Use these tips reach out to your community by phone, e-mail, letters or meetings.*

- **Get off to a great start by letting them know who you are, what school you represent and where the school is located.** You can also describe the school’s mission and vision for student success. Emphasize the importance of school-family-community partnerships and how their support can improve student achievement.

*“Hello, Mr. Martinez. My name is Maggie and I am calling from ABC Elementary school, which is two blocks north of City Hall on ABC Avenue. The mission of ABC Elementary School, in collaboration with the community, is to provide a safe and challenging environment that will encourage lifelong learning and empower students to become independent, responsible citizens.”*

- **Why** you are calling them? Be clear about your purpose. If are you seeking assistance for a specific event like Math Night or the Science Fair share information about this event or program.

*“We are planning a parental involvement event called Donuts for Dads.”*

- **What** do you want specifically from them? Be clear and direct. Have in mind *what* you want from this community member. If you don’t know, they don’t know. Be direct. Inform them that the donation is tax deductible and that you can provide a letter and/or certificate from the school for their records. For example, if you are calling the local bakery to ask for a donation for the “Donuts for Dads” event, specifically say:

*“We would like to know if you can donate five dozen donuts for this event. Please remember that your contribution is tax deductible.”*

If the business cannot accommodate your request, at least it gives them and you a starting point. They might say, *“We cannot donate five dozen donuts, but how about a dozen donuts and a dozen muffins.”*

- **When** will you pick up donations or when is the date of the event (if they will be providing a service)? Repeat back what they have agreed to do for you to confirm details.

*“I can come by Thursday morning at 8:30 am to pick up the dozen donuts and dozen muffins.”*

- **Where** the event will take place, especially if they will be providing services at the event. If they are donating products, invite them to the event as a sign of appreciation and collaboration.

*“Donuts for Dads will take place on Thursday at 9 am in the ABC Elementary cafeteria. We would love to have you join us for this event.”*

- **How** will you acknowledge their partnership? Will they receive a certificate, an advertisement in the event program or school newsletter or some other honor?

*“We will recognize Martinez Donuts in our monthly school newsletter. I’ll make sure to mail you a copy.”*

- **Thank your partners!** Even if they cannot help you this time. Don’t give up on them either. For your next event, contact them again. Remind them that you have called before and give them another opportunity to help.

*“Thank you, so much Mr. Martinez! Your support will make our Donuts for Dads event a huge success!”*

- **Follow up!** Ask them how and when the best way is to follow up, or provide them a date and time you will follow up.

*“I will be sending you a confirmation letter and a copy of our tax-deductible certificate by Friday. I will call on Monday to follow up and make sure you have received this.”*

*Always personalize your communications.* Before you call take time to do some research. Find out who is the main contact for the business, group or organization. Is it the Business Manager, the Director, or Owner? Familiarize yourself with what they do or what products they sell or the services they provide.



Some businesses must contribute a certain amount each year. Ask those businesses to consider making a contribution to your school on an annual basis as a part of their budget process. Donating or contributing to a tax exempt organization like a school may be an attractive offer for some businesses. Others may be interested in ways to “give back” to their community. Find creative ways to honor the contributions of partners. Certificates, free ads in school newsletters or articles in your local paper, banners on walls in school facilities are small ways to say THANK YOU!

*Develop a Contact List or Partners List.* Documenting vital information about potential and current partners will help the Action Team for Partnerships develop *marketing strategies* to build a strong resource base to support school improvement efforts. Share the list with others who may be contacting the group in the future.

# Promising Practices

*The following activities were planned by the Collaborating with the Community committee of the Action Team for Partnerships in several schools across the country. They are just a few samples of ways that schools and families can involve the community to improve student learning. All these activities were shared with the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS). The NNPS website is a wealth of information. The link is listed in the Web Resources section of this book.*

As the New Mexico Parent Information Resource Center (NMPIRC), Parents Reaching Out is a member of the National Network of Partnership Schools. We strongly recommend that all our partnership districts and schools consider becoming members in order to access valuable information and resources. The New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) also supports school, family and community partnerships as a member of this group.



## Math Night



In Irmo, South Carolina, 600 people visited the same grocery store at the same time. Was a major weather event predicted? No. The families showed up for a fun night of practicing math skills.

The grocery store manager, who was also a member of the School Improvement Council, came up with the idea, wanting to strengthen her collaboration between her company and the school. As a result of the store's sponsorship, the community enjoyed a fun and educational night at no cost.

When the children and families arrived at the store that night, they received clues to solve math problems throughout the aisles of the store. When they were done, they submitted their answers to a store employee and earned a bag of treats donated by the store. The class that had the most students participate also received an ice cream party.



To plan the event, grade level chairs from the school visited the store to ensure that the store could hold such an event. The teachers then toured the store and selected which produce and other grocery items could be used for the clues of the real-life math problems.

All grocery store staff was informed of the event, as well as the store customers the night of the event. The event was publicized in the school newsletter, on the web page, marquee and by word of mouth.

## Annual Neighborhood Bus Tour

To kick off the new school year and reduce first-day jitters, Hermitage Elementary in Virginia Beach, Virginia held a “Neighborhood Bus Tour”. The week before school began, teachers and staff wore school t-shirts and boarded a school bus that made stops in the school’s neighborhoods. They visited parents and children for about 20 minutes at each stop. They passed out school supplies, tickets for raffles and tips for a successful school year. This gave students a chance to meet their new teacher and reconnect with their friends and former teacher. At the end of the visit, the principal drew a winning raffle ticket at each bus stop for a backpack of supplies.



The Action Team for Partnerships sponsored the bus tour as a way to bring the excitement of back-to-school week to parents and students. Giving away supplies also helped parents with school supply costs. The school publicized this event by including a flyer with the annual teacher and room assignment mailing. The event was also posted on the school website. About 100 students and 50 parents participated in the event.

The ATP (Collaborating with the Community committee) made the bus arrangements and worked closely with the schools PTA to order school supplies and seek donations. With many of the school supplies donated, the final cost for the event was \$80, which was covered by the Student Activity Fund.

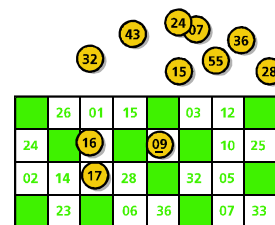
## White Elephant Bingo

In order to bring some excitement to the long winter, Elmwood Elementary in Naperville Illinois planned a Bingo night for the students and parents. But this wasn’t any ordinary bingo. The mayor called the bingo game and there were at least 10 different types of bingo. What was best is that everyone won a prize because the price of admission was a “gently used” age-appropriate item, such as DVD’s, CD’s, board games, books, etc. (hence the White Elephant). These items were then placed on the prize table for others to win.

Tables were marked with the type of bingo and age it was best suited for. Students then selected the game they wanted to play. Some of the types of bingo were “Elmwood Bingo” which was based on the town, Sports Bingo, Harry Potter Bingo and Outer Space Bingo. Many of the types could be played for younger and older children.

The finale for the night was a series of traditional bingo games for all children to participate together. These were the games the Mayor called. Students winning these games received school spirit wear and other new prizes provided by the Action Team for Partnerships. At the end of the evening, students who had not won a prize, got to select one from the remaining prizes on the prize table.

White Elephant Bingo wasn’t only fun, but it supported the school’s reading improvement goal by incorporating kindergarten and first grade sight words into the game. Other games involved elements of math and geography. About 100 children and their parents attended the event. The final price tag for the event was \$70.



## Passport to Possibilities

Multicultural awareness is important component of education. Middle Township High School in Cape May Court House, New Jersey, held the Passport to Possibilities to foster multicultural awareness.

The event brought together musicians, performers and artists and featured cultural booths and ethnic foods. Nearly 500 parents, family members and community members attended the fair. 600 students participated. This event required a good amount of planning and time from the Action Team for Partnerships (Collaborating with the Community committee). Student involvement was also very important and crucial to the fair's success.

The teachers assigned research projects that pertained to cultures that the students completed and presented at various locations throughout the school during the fair. The foreign language and home economics classes prepared food that could be sampled in the "Cultural Café". Students also created artwork for display and prepared and presented dances, and vocal and theatrical presentations.



In keeping with the theme, the students crafted passports that they took from area to area to get stamped during the fair. They later earned extra credit for submitting their passports to their teachers. Another key to the success of this event was the participation of the community. The local museum displayed historical photographs and artifacts. Another community partner held fencing and craft demonstrations and featured theatrical performances in the gym. Performers for the event were enlisted mostly through personal contacts.

The event was publicized in the newspaper, on the radio, by flyer and on the school's phone system. The fair celebrated diversity while involving the community in the educational process. Best of all, there were no costs. Staff and community performers all volunteered. Students supplied projects and food as part of course requirements.

### **Collaboration at Work in New Mexico**

The NM PIRC is a founding member of the New Mexico Family Parent Involvement Advisory Council (FPIAC) that includes all bureaus of the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) in a collaborative relationship a wide variety of stakeholders from across New Mexico that represent families of young children through college age. The FPIAC advises the NMPED on policy and strategies to improve parent involvement in New Mexico schools. Council efforts focus on connecting resources to expand positive opportunities for children, youth and their families. To learn more, visit the Family/Parent Resources page of the NM Public Education Department web site: <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/Parents/index.html>.

# The Benefits of Collaborating with the Community

"People live in communities. But the real importance of "living in community" is that people - and groups of people - develop the ways and means to care for each other, to nurture the talents and leadership that enhance the quality of community life, and to tackle the problems that threaten the community and the opportunities which can help it.

When people do these things, communities become healthy; when they do not, communities deteriorate. Communities that have the ways and means to undertake challenges demonstrate *capacity*. *Measuring Community Capacity Building*, Aspen Institute, 1996

## **Students benefit as they**

- Gain skills and talents from enriched curricular and extracurricular experiences
- Increase knowledge of careers and options for future education and work
- Improve interpersonal and communication skills through interactions with a wide range of people
- Increase self-confidence, value and sense of belonging to the community
- Build positive relationships with adults in the community

## **Families benefit as they**

- Increase knowledge and understanding of local resources and family services
- Enhance opportunities for interactions with other families in community activities
- Gain awareness of community's contributions to school
- Share skills and talents by participating in activities to strengthen the community

## **Educators and other school staff benefit as they**

- Increase knowledge and use of community resources to enrich curriculum and instruction for students
- Gain new skills through connections with mentors, business partners, community volunteers, and others to assist students and enrich teaching practices
- Expand knowledge of referral processes for families and children with needs for specific services

## **Businesses, agencies and other groups in the community benefit as they**

- Gain knowledge and understanding to better serve needs of those who make up the community as a whole
- Form connections with other businesses and prospective future employees
- Develop a greater sense of purpose by contributing their wisdom to activities that improve opportunities for students

# Taking On the Challenges

As with any relationship, there will be challenges as groups collaborate for a common purpose. It's important for schools, families and communities to identify the issues or concerns that might present a challenge. Some of the most challenging areas include:

1. Lack of time and resources
2. Cultural, social, language, and educational differences
3. Lack of support for collaboration on the part of employers, principals, and politicians
4. School or community practices that discourage collaboration or only use traditional practices that are effective for only a certain number of families
5. Lack of information and training to improve understanding about school-family-community collaboration.
6. Unclear or complex process for matching businesses, community volunteers and resources with school goals
7. Turf problems (power struggles) over roles, responsibilities funds, and places for collaborative activities
8. Limited methods to inform all families, students and others about community programs and services
9. Lack of equal opportunities for students and families to obtain services and participate in community programs



## Small Steps to Solving Big Challenges

Sometimes the solutions to problems are right before our eyes and we cannot see them because we are so focused on “the problem”. The information you gather during the Community Mapping process may hold unseen resources or solutions to the challenges every school faces.

Select just one of the challenges listed above and think of one possible solution that would address the problem. Remember small steps are often the “energizer” that everyone needs to achieve big goals. Share your idea with the Collaborating with the Community Committee and the ATP.

My suggestion to help address challenge #\_\_\_ is: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Collaboration is a Team Effort

The Collaborating with the Community committee is one of six groups focused on involvement through the Action Team for Partnerships. Sometimes it may be difficult for committee members to see how their affect each other and the ATP as a whole.

Refer back to the Promising Practice Math Night on page 18. Yes, the Collaborating with the Community took the lead in organizing the event by connecting with the grocery store manager, but the other committees probably played a role in this event.

- The **Communication Committee** helped get the word out. The Communication committee examines the best ways to inform parents of such information.
- The **Volunteering Committee** recruits volunteers. They may have used the information and contact lists developed by the Collaborating with the Community committee book to find volunteers who could sign in families, guide families through the store, answer questions or hand out the treat bags.
- The **Learning at Home Committee** may have developed similar “take home” activities for families to take home at the end of the night to elaborate on the event.
- The **Decision-Making Committee** could have participated in touring the store before the event to decide if the event was possible and would be successful.
- The **Parenting Committee** may have held a workshop for the school’s parents prior to the Math Night in order to refresh their math skills. Using evaluations from the event, this committee may plan follow-up workshops to meet the needs of families who participated in activities.

As schools and communities work through the Action Team for Partnerships to plan activities or evens, it is important that groups consider the resources and the roles of each committee in the process. This will help determine and clarify how committees can support one another to make the activity or event successful. Each committee may not always play a specific role, but they can always lending a helping hand.

**T**ogether

**E**veryone

**A**chieves

**M**ore

# Take Time to Plan for Action

The strengths of Action Teams for Partnerships come from parents, educators, administrators and community members who are willing to take action to improve our schools and provide quality learning experiences for every child. As you read the information, we hope you were thinking about your school community. Use these questions to share your ideas.

**What resources are currently available for collaborating with the community?**

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**What resources or activities could be put in to place to support collaborating with the community?**

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**What are some issues that you think should be addressed by the Collaborating with the Community Action Team for Partnerships?**

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*The next step is up to you. You are part of the team. Share these ideas with others.*

Coming together is a beginning.  
Keeping together is progress.  
Working together is success.  
Henry Ford

# *Action Team for Partnerships*

## *Toolbox*



# No Child Left Behind and Parental Involvement

Across the nation, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has sparked an increased awareness in the value of meaningful parental involvement in public schools. The No Child Left Behind Act became law in 2002 with the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). NCLB calls for improved student achievement based on four principles that provide a framework for teaching and learning. The four guiding principles are accountability for results, local control and flexibility, expanded parental choice, and effective and successful programs that reflect scientifically based research. Most importantly, NCLB specifically requires that schools identify parents as decision makers and meaningfully involve them in their child's education.

*So what is meaningful parental involvement?* Section 1118 of the NCLB Act defines parental involvement as “the participation of parents in regular two-way and meaningful communication that involves student learning and other school activities.” Parental (or family) involvement is much more than names on a sign-in sheet. Just saying “we had families involved in this process” is not a valid measure of quality parental involvement.

To achieve positive and effective partnerships, each partner must play a useful role in the process. No one person can do it alone and there is no single “expert”. It is important for all participants in the process to recognize and acknowledge that every person brings a very unique element to the team. Together, everyone gains new knowledge by asking questions, brainstorming and sharing ideas while working toward a common goal. Creating partnerships lightens the load for all those involved, and help schools meet the requirements of NCLB to improve student outcomes.

*Parental involvement comes in many forms and it is as unique as each of the families that shape a community.* It can be as basic as parent-to-parent conversations on current topics or as involved as organizing your school's Action Team. It is a continual learning process that includes gathering information, tapping resources, knowing about choices and communicating with other parents. Educators and administrators need to know that a simple, yet genuine, invitation to participate is a starting place. Meaningful parental involvement begins when invitations are combined with actions that recognize families as *competent, useful and important members* of the partnership for student success.

Our Action Team for Partnerships Toolbox section includes forms used in the Epstein model to give families, schools and communities a place to begin their journey. Yes, we *want you to write in this book!* We have designed it as a “starter kit” or quick refresher for everyone involved in our children's lives.

You will want to use many resources to find just the right type of plan that fits the needs of your school community. You will find great information in the last section of our book, *Resources for Student Success*. The NM Public Education Department is committed to parent and family involvement. All schools and districts in our state have been provided with *Working Together: School-Family-Community Partnerships, A Toolkit for New Mexico School Communities developed by the Center for Education and Diverse Populations (CESDP)*. Download the toolkit and find other resources at these web sites: [www.cesdp.nmhu.edu](http://www.cesdp.nmhu.edu) and [www.ped.state.nm.us/parents/index.html](http://www.ped.state.nm.us/parents/index.html)

## *Working Smarter—Not Harder*

### **Action Teams for Partnerships**

Schools no longer just teach the 3 R's (readin', 'riting' and 'rithmetic). Our world has changed. Life is more complex. *Schools Cannot Do This Alone*, by James Volmer, highlights federal and state requirements that have been added to the "school's plate" since the 1900's.

#### **Schools Cannot Do This Alone**

America's public schools can be traced back to the year 1640. The Massachusetts Puritans established schools to:

1. Teach basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills, and
2. Cultivate values that serve a democratic society (some history and civics implied).

The creators of these first schools assumed that families and churches bore the major responsibility for raising a child. The responsibility of the school was limited and focused.

#### **From 1900 to 1910, we added**

- nutrition
- immunization, and
- health to the list of school responsibilities

#### **From 1920 to 1940, we added**

- vocational education
- the practical arts
- business education
- speech and drama
- half day kindergarten
- physical education (including organized athletics)
- school lunch programs (We take this for granted today. It was, however, a significant step to shift to the schools the job of feeding America's children 1/3 of their daily meals.)

#### **In the 1950's, we added**

- safety education
- driver's education
- expanded music and art education
- foreign language requirements are strengthened
- sex education introduced (topics escalate through 1990's)

#### **In the 1960's, we added**

- Advanced Placement programs
- consumer education
- career education
- peace education
- leisure education
- recreation education

#### **In the 1970's, the breakup of the American family accelerated, and we added**

- special education (mandated by federal government)
- Title IX programs (greatly expanded athletic programs for girls)
- drug and alcohol abuse education
- Head Start

- parent education
- behavior adjustment classes
- character education
- environment education, and
- school breakfast programs appear (Now, some schools are feeding America's children 2/3 of their daily meals. Sadly, these are the only decent meals some children receive.)

**In the 1980's, the floodgates open, and we added**

- keyboarding and computer education
- global education
- ethnic education
- multicultural/ non-sexist education
- English-as-a-second-language, and bilingual education
- early childhood education
- Jump Start, Early Start, Even Start, and Prime Start
- full day kindergarten
- pre-school programs for children at-risk
- after school programs for children of working parents
- alternative education in all its forms
- stranger/danger education
- anti-smoking education
- sexual abuse prevention education
- health and psychological services are expanded
- child abuse monitoring becomes a legal requirement for all teachers

**And finally, in the 1990's, we have added**

- HIV/AIDS education
- death education
- expanded computer and Internet education
- inclusion
- tech prep and school to work programs
- gang education (in urban centers)
- bus safety education
- bicycle safety education
- gun safety education

***And in most states we have not added a single minute to the school calendar in five decades!*** All of the items added to the list have merit, and all have their ardent supporters. They cannot, however, all be assigned to the schools. The people of each community must come together to answer two essential questions: *What do they want their children to know and be able to do when they graduate? How can the entire community be organized to ensure that all children reach the stated goals?*

***The bottom line: schools cannot do it all.  
Schools cannot raise America's children.***

***The time has come for every school district to organize a community-wide conversation that results in a shared commitment to create public schools that provide a high quality education for all.***

Source: James Volmer and Associates, 2001, <http://jamievollmer.com/>

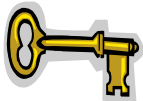
# The Keys to Successful School, Family and Community Partnerships

Use this worksheet to brainstorm activities, strategies and programs that are already happening in your school for each area of Epstein's Six Types of Involvement.



**Parenting**

**Type 1**



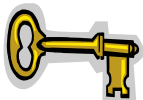
**Communicating**

**Type 2**



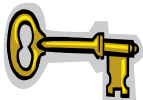
**Volunteering**

**Type 3**



**Learning at Home**

**Type 4**



**Decision Making**

**Type 5**



**Collaborating with the Community**

**Type 6**

Source: School, Family and Community Partnerships by J.L. Epstein, et al., 2002

# Levels of Commitment to School, Family and Community Partnerships

## Can You “C” the Connections?

1. Care
2. Civility / Courtesy
3. Clarity
4. Cooperation
5. Collaboration



1. **Care.** We care about the children and each other at this school. Families feel welcome at the school. Educators feel welcome in the community.
2. **Civility / Courtesy.** We respect each other at this school and recognize our shared responsibilities for children. Teachers and families talk with and listen to each other.
3. **Clarity.** We conduct clear and useful two-way communications about school programs, children’s progress, families’ talents and needs, community activities, and other topics important to families, students the school and the community. Our communications can be understood by all families, and all families are able to communicate easily with teachers and administrators.
4. **Cooperation.** We assist each other and the students. Families, educators, and community members are comfortable working with each other. We work together to improve the school, strengthen families, and ensure student success. We try to solve problems, and we are open to new ideas.
5. **Collaboration.** We maintain a comprehensive program of school, family, and community partnerships. We use an action team approach that enables educators, parents, students, and community members to work together over time to design, implement, and improve activities for the six types of involvement. We work as partners to help students at all grade levels reach important goals. We encourage discussion and debate on important issues. We celebrate progress and continually plan improvements in activities to involve all families.

Source: *School, Family, and Community Partnerships* by J.L. Epstein et al., 2002

# Partnership Practices Inventory

School: \_\_\_\_\_ School District: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Our Action Team for Partnerships needs your help to identify the practices that are working and the areas we need to improve. We will use this information as we develop our Action Plan for this year. Please complete this survey and return it in to our school office by \_\_\_\_\_ .*

Check one:  Parent/Family Member  Student  School Staff  Community/Business/Agency

Are you a member of the school Action Team For Partnership?  Yes  No

*School Staff: Check one box that best describes your role in the school.*

Administrator  Classroom Teacher  Certified Support Staff (Counselor, Librarian, Therapist, etc).

Classified Support Staff (Clerical, Educational Assistant, Cafeteria, Custodial, Transportation, etc.)

**Directions:** Carefully read each statement and think about the statement as it applies to your school. Measure how well the school is accomplishing that statement and give it a rating of Excellent, Good or Poor by placing an X in the proper column. This survey may be used by one or more schools in our school district, please check the school level for your response.

Key 1 Parenting Goal: Help all families establish home environments to support children as students.	Rating			Which Level?		
	Excellent	Good	Poor	Elementary	Mid School	High School
<b>Our School:</b>						
1. Conducts workshops or provides information for parents on child or adolescent development.						
2. Provides families with information, training and assistance to all families who want it or need it, not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school building.						
3. Produces information for families that is clear, useable, and linked to children's success in school.						
4. Asks families about their children's goals, strengths and talents.						
5. Sponsors home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand school and to help schools understand families.						
6. Respects the different cultures represented in our student population.						
7. Our school offers family support programs with parent-to-parent discussions groups.						
8. Our school offers families a free lending library on parenting topics that includes books, videos, CDs, DVDs and other media.						
Comments:						

Key 2 Communicating Goal: Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress.	Rating			Which Level?		
	Excellent	Good	Poor	Elementary	Mid School	High School
<b>Our School:</b>						
1. Reviews the readability, clarity, forma and frequency of all memos, notices and other print and nonprint communications.						
2. Develops communications with parents who do not speak or read English well or need large type.						
3. Provides written communication in the language of the parents and translators as needed.						
4. Has clear two-way channels for communications from home to school and from school to home.						
5. Conducts a formal conference with every parent at least once a year.						
6. Conducts an annual survey for families to share information and concerns about student needs, reactions to school programs, and satisfaction with their involvement in school and at home..						
7. Conducts an orientation for new parents.						
8. Sends home folders of student work weekly or monthly for parent review and comment.						
9. Provides clear information about the curriculum, assessments, achievement levels and report cards.						
10. Contacts families of students having academic or behavior problems in a timely manner to discuss interventions or ways to address the problem.						
11. Develops school's plan and program of family and community involvement with input from educators, parents, and others.						
12. Trains teachers, staff, and principals on the value and utility of family involvement and ways to build positive ties between school and home.						
13. Teachers have easy access to telephones/email to communicate with parents during or after school.						
14. Builds policies that encourage all teachers to communicate frequently with parents about curriculum plans, expectations for homework, and how parents can help.						
15. Produces a regular school newsletter with up-to-date information about the school, special events, organizations, meetings and parenting tips.						
16. We conduct an annual survey for families to provide reactions to school programs and share information and concerns about students.						
Comments:						

<b>Key 3 Volunteering Goal:</b> Recruit and organize parent help and support.	Rating			Which Level?		
	Excellent	Good	Poor	Elementary	Mid School	High School
<b>Our School:</b>						
1. Conduct an annual survey to identify interests, talents and availability of parent volunteers in order to match their skills and talents with school and classroom needs.						
2. Provides a parent or family room for volunteers and family members to work, meet, and access resources about parenting, childcare, tutoring, and related topics.						
3. Creates flexible volunteering opportunities and schedules enabling employed parents to participate.						
4. Schedules school events at different times during the day and evening so that all families can attend.						
5. Reduces barriers to parent participation by providing transportation and child care, and by addressing the needs of English language learners.						
6. Trains volunteers so they use their time productively.						
7. Recognizes volunteers for their time and efforts.						
8. Encourages families and the community to be involved with the school in a variety of ways (assisting in the classroom, giving talks, monitoring halls, leading activities, etc.).						
Comments:						

<b>Key 4 Learning at Home Goal:</b> Provide information to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning.	Rating			Which Level?		
	Excellent	Good	Poor	Elementary	Mid School	High School
<b>Our School:</b>						
1. Provides information to families on how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home.						
2. Provides information to families on required skills in all subjects.						
3. Provides ongoing and specific information to parents on how to assist students with skills that they need to improve.						
4. Makes parents aware of the importance of reading at home, and asks parents to listen to their child read or read aloud with their child.						
5. Assists families in helping students set academic goals and select courses and programs.						
6. Schedules regular interactive homework that requires students to demonstrate and discuss what they are learning with a family member.						
Comments:						

<b>Key 5 Decision Making Goal:</b> Include parents in school decisions to develop leaders and representatives.	Rating			Which Level?		
	Excellent	Good	Poor	Elementary	Mid School	High School
<b>Our School:</b>						
1. Has an active PTA/PTO or other parent organization.						
2. Includes parent representatives are on the school's advisory council, improvement team or other committees.						
3. Has an Action Team for Partnerships to develop a goal-oriented program with practices for all six types of involvement.						
4. Has parent representatives are on district-level advisory councils or committees.						
5. Involves parents in organized, ongoing, and timely ways in planning, reviewing, and improving school programs.						
6. Includes parent leaders from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and other groups in the school.						
7. Deals with conflict openly and respectfully.						
8. Asks involved parents to make contact with parents who are less involved to solicit their ideas and report back to them.						
Comments:						

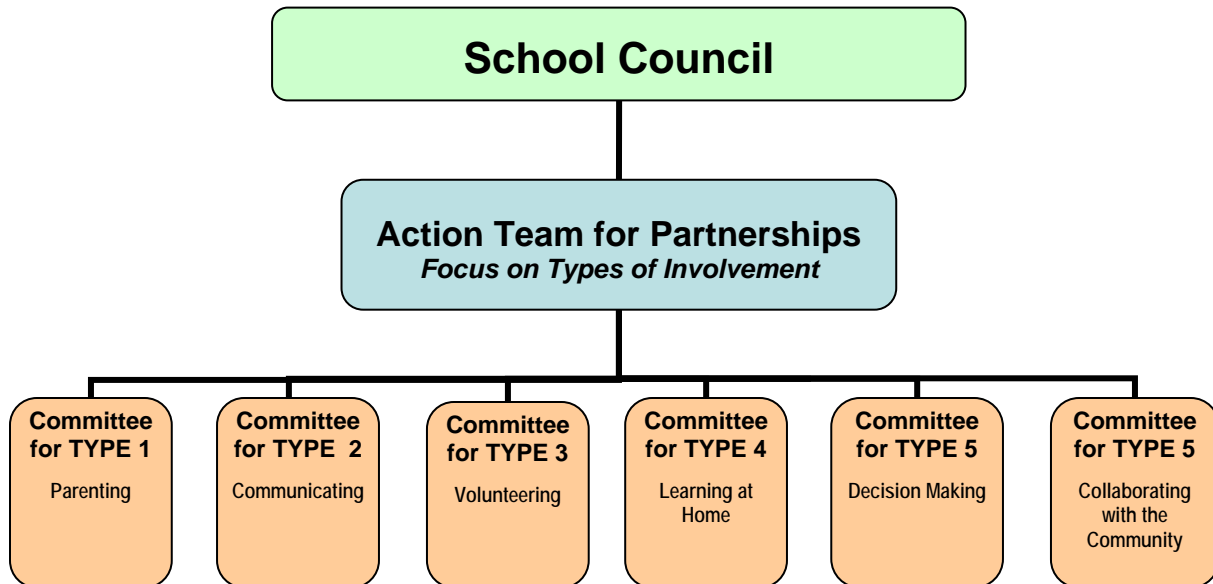
<b>Key 6 Collaborating with the Community Goal:</b> Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.	Rating			Which Level?		
	Excellent	Good	Poor	Elementary	Mid School	High School
<b>Our School:</b>						
1. Provides a resource directory for parents and students with information on community services, programs, and agencies.						
2. Involves families in locating and using community resources.						
3. Works with local businesses, industries, libraries, parks, museums and other organizations on programs to enhance student skills and learning.						
4. Provides "one-stop" shopping for family services through partnerships of school, counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies.						
5. Opens its building for community use after school hours.						
6. Offers after-school programs for students with support from community businesses, agencies, and volunteers.						
7. Solves turf problems of responsibilities, funds, staff, and locations for collaborative activities to occur.						
Comments:						

Adapted from *School, Family, and Community Partnerships* by J.L. Epstein et al, 2002 second edition

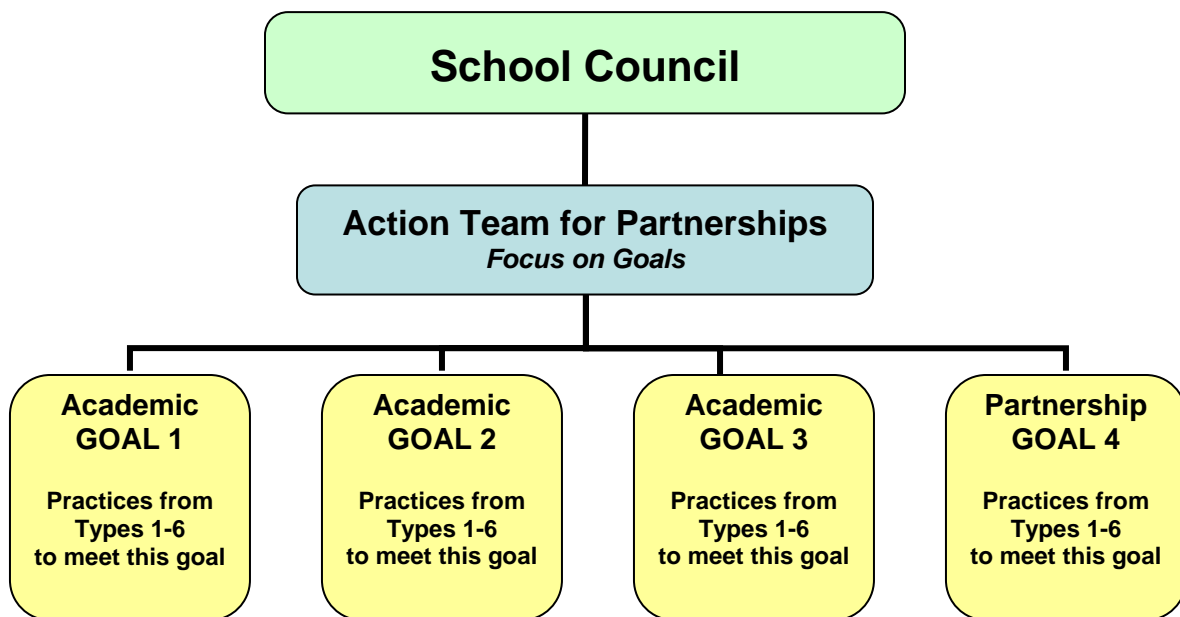
## Action Team for Partnerships Structure

Using the Epstein Model, there are two major ways to organize leadership of school, family and community partnerships. Choosing the partnership structure may depend on school and/or district requirements. In both structures shown below, the Action Team for Partnerships is the action arm of the School Council. *Which structure is the “best fit” for your school community?*

### Types of Involvement Structure



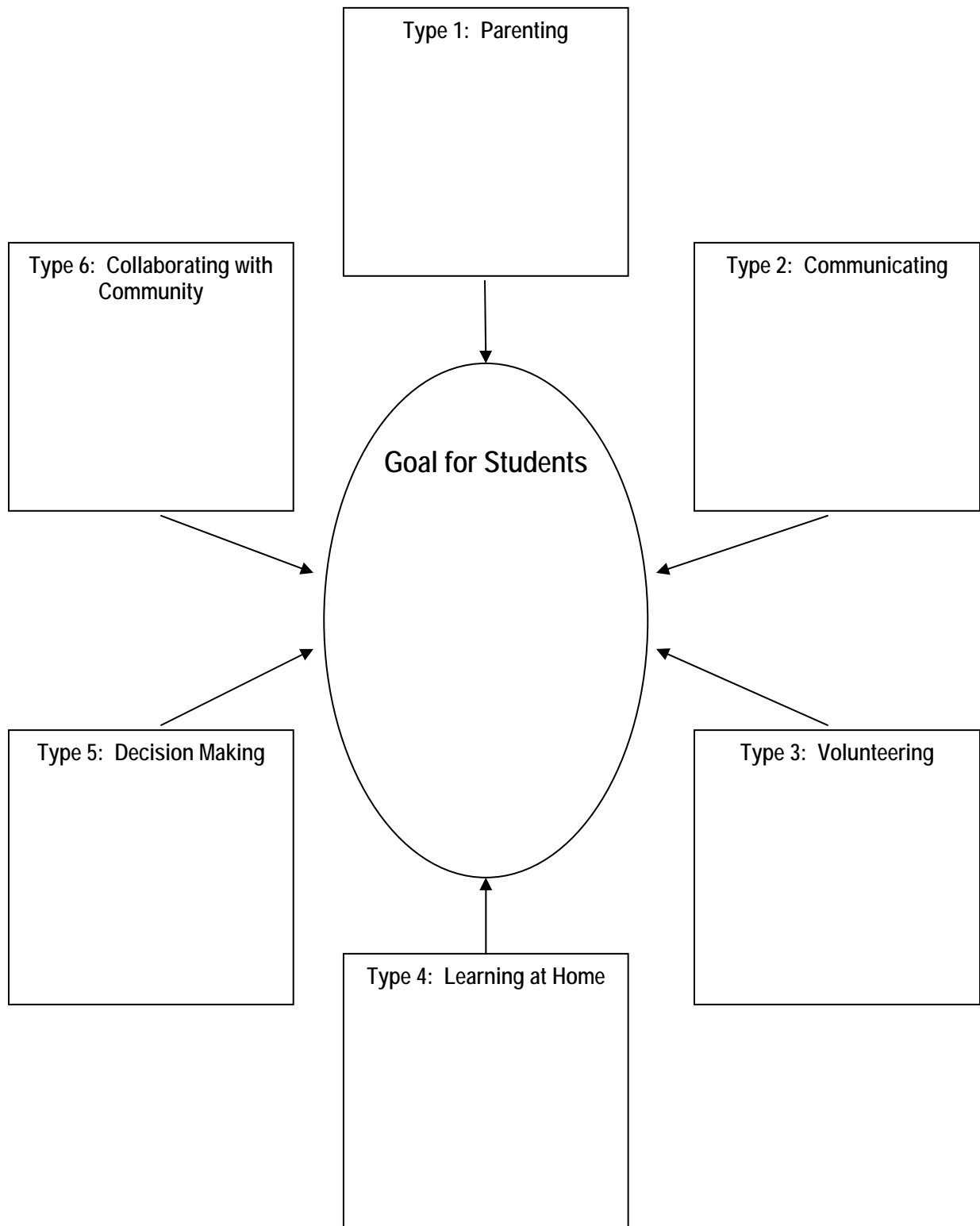
### Goals Structure



Source: *School, Family, and Community Partnerships* by J.L. Epstein et al., 2002

# Six Types of Involvement to Reach School Goals for Students

How might a comprehensive goal-oriented partnership program benefit students at your school. Choose one major goal that your school has set for students. Then, identify specific partnership practices to support that goal.



National Network of Partnership Schools  
Johns Hopkins University

## Planning for Productive Meetings

This checklist includes items to consider for the first meeting and future meetings of your Action Team for Partnerships. This list will be helpful for the first meeting of sub-committees as they are formed.

- ✓ **Introductions:** Take time to allow brief introductions by each member of the team.
- ✓ **Team Building:** Developing relationships is an important part of your first meeting and all future meetings. Many of the resources included in this book offer quick and simple tips that can be used for team building or energizers for your work as a team.
- ✓ **Establish a Communication System and Develop Team Norms:** Avoid any confusion later about meeting times, how to contact members etc. and establish communication guidelines and ground rules early. A good way to begin the team partnership is to plan a group activity focused on setting norms or expectations (see page 38).
  - Create and distribute a team roster to members and other school leaders
  - Set a regular meeting schedule to avoid any confusion
  - Establish the team's ground rules for communicating at and in between meetings
  - Decide how members will inform the team if they are unable to attend a meeting or event
  - Decide how the team will provide minutes and brief absent members
  - Plan the methods that the team will use to keep the whole school and community informed of plans, progress and activities
- ✓ **Determine Leadership/Discuss Responsibilities:** Appoint, elect or use volunteers for:
  - Team chair and co-chair
  - Committee chairs and co-chairs based on the Six Keys in the Epstein Model
  - Recorder to take minutes at each meeting and distribute them to members, including members who could not be present for the meeting. Keep all meeting minutes and other forms in a three-ring notebook so the team will have a record of activities.
  - Liaison to the School Council to report team plans, progress, activities, etc.
  - Liaison to the PTA/PTO to collaborate efforts
  - Promoter to publicize the team's efforts, plans, progress, activities to all teachers, staff, families, community members, etc.
  - Other roles as needed or desired: \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ **Develop the One Year Action Plan:** (This process may take several meetings.) The team needs to gather/review existing information and survey the school community to have accurate data for developing the plan. Team members should be provided with a copy of the school Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS). Remember that the activities and responsibilities can be revised as needed to remain aligned with the goal of the team.
- ✓ **Begin Implementation of Activities.** Allow for time at the first meeting for the team as a whole or committees to immediately begin preparing for the first activity.
  - Select the first activity of the year (Kick Off Event or Information Session for Survey)
  - What needs to be done in preparation? Establish a detailed timeline to remain on task.
  - Who is in charge of overseeing the activity? Who is helping?
  - How will the activity be evaluated?
- ✓ **Set the date, time, place and agenda for the next meeting. Assign Homework!** *Much of the work of the team and committees will take place between formal meetings of the team. Define what needs to be accomplished before the next meeting (who/what/when).*

## Defining How We Work Together: Setting Team Norms

When Establishing Norms, Consider :	Proposed Norm
<b>Time:</b> When do we meet? Will we set beginning and ending time? Will we start and end on time?	
<b>Listening</b> How will we encourage listening? How will we discourage interrupting?	
<b>Confidentiality</b> Will the meetings be open? Will what we say be held in confidence? What can be said after the meeting?	
<b>Decision Making</b> How will we make decisions? Are we an advisory or a decision making body? Will we reach decisions by consensus? How will we deal with conflicts?	
<b>Participation</b> How will we encourage participation? Will we have an attendance policy?	
<b>Expectations</b> What do we expect from members? Are there requirements for participation?	

### Norms of the National Staff Development Council

We will work together as a community that values consensus rather than majority rule.

We will be fully “present” at the meeting by becoming familiar with the materials before we arrive and by being attentive to behaviors, which affect physical and mental engagement.

We will invite and welcome the contribution of every member and listen to each other.

We will be involved to our individual level of comfort. Each of us is responsible for airing disagreements during the meeting rather than carrying those disagreements outside the board room.

We will operate in a collegial and friendly atmosphere.

We will use humor as appropriate to help us work better together.

We will keep confidential discussions, comments, and deliberations.

We will be responsible for examining all points of view before a consensus is accepted.

We will be guided by the NSDC mission statement, which focuses on organization and professional development to enhance success for all students.

Source: National Staff Development Council, [www.nsdcc.org](http://www.nsdcc.org).

## Organizing the Action Team for Partnerships

1. When will the whole team meet? (This should be at least once a month)
  - a. How often? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Date/time: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Place: \_\_\_\_\_
2. How often will sub-committees meet? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How will minutes (whole team and sub-committees) be distributed to all members, (including those who miss meetings) and other key contacts? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How will reports about the team's plans, progress and/or activities be presented to other school groups? Include information such as how often the team will report out, who will report and in what form (meetings, phone messages, written summary/report, newsletter/newspaper articles, school website, etc). Getting the word out keeps everyone up to date and inspires involvement in the activities you plan as a team. Remember to share responsibility.

### Action Team: Sharing Activities and Reporting Our Progress

Groups	How often:	Format	By whom:
School Council			
School Improvement Team, EPSS Team, other School Committees			
PTA/ PTO Organization			
All parents who have children at the school			
The full faculty			
Students			
Community members			
Local media			
Others (list)			

# Action Team Roster

School Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Strengths/ Talents: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Strengths/ Talents: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Strengths/ Talents: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Strengths/ Talents: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Strengths/ Talents: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Add more sheets for more members as needed.

## Action Team Committee Information

<b>Committee Name</b>	<b>Committee Chair and Co-chairs</b> Name/Contact Info	<b>Other Members</b> Name/Contact Info	<b>Meeting Schedule Day/Time/Place</b> Example: Every first Wednesday of the month at 7:30 am—school library
<b>Parenting</b>	1. 2.		
<b>Communicating</b>	1. 2.		
<b>Volunteering</b>	1. 2.		
<b>Learning at Home</b>	1. 2.		
<b>Decision Making</b>	1. 2.		
<b>Collaborating with the Community</b>	1. 2.		

## Action Team: Working Toward Shared Responsibilities

Coordinating Responsibilities	Who Will Do It?	For How Long?
Handling logistics—meeting space, refreshments, etc.		
Organizing team communications and information		
Distributing documents prior to meetings		
Ensuring follow-up on decisions		
Monitoring progress throughout the Collaborative Action Team process		
Monitoring the development and use of the action plan		
Making team materials and resources available		
Facilitating Responsibilities	Who Will Do It?	For How Long?
Leading meetings		
Facilitating discussions		
Ensuring that all members are heard		
Helping to build consensus		
Suggesting alternatives when the team gets stuck		
Summarizing decisions made		
Dealing with conflicts		
Recording Responsibilities	Who Will Do It?	For How Long?
Evaluating how well the team functions collaboratively		
Recording activities and decisions		
Checking the accuracy of records with members		
Communicating information, using a variety of techniques		
Preparing meeting minutes		
Taking notes on flipcharts		

Adapted from Creating Collaborative Action Teams  
Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL)



# Action Team for Partnerships – Annual Review

School Year: \_\_\_\_\_

The Process	Recommendation C = Continue as is N = Need to improve	Comments/Suggestions
<b>Membership</b>		
Are members are composed of teachers, parents, administrators, community members, students, and others?		
Are ATP leaders are useful? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team chair and co-chair</li> <li>• Committee chair and co-chairs</li> <li>• Recorder</li> <li>• Promoter, etc.</li> </ul>		
Are all new members trained in the ATP purpose and process?		
Are new members introduced to the team and oriented on their role and responsibility?		
<b>Schedules</b>		
Did the full ATP meet regularly?		
Did the committees meet enough in order to accomplish activity or event objectives?		
Did the time and place for the meetings work well for most members?		
<b>Organization</b>		
Were the agendas effective and cover important information?		
Were meetings useful and focused on agenda topics/tasks?		
Were minutes distributed in a timely manner to all members, even absent members?		
Were all members valued and encouraged and allowed to share ideas and information at meetings?		

## ATP Annual Review (page 2)

The Process	Recommendation C = Continue as is N = Need to improve	Comments/Suggestions
<b>Program Implementation</b>		
Were activities in one year action plan implemented on schedule?		
Was the ATP budget is adequate?		
Did all team members take responsibility for their duties as related to activities and the team?		
Did embers encourage all teachers, staff, parents, students, community members and others to participate in the activities or attend events or join the team?		
Were individual activities are evaluated for quality soon after they occurred?		
Did the team communicate effectively with other school groups to report plans, progress and include in the partnership, including the school council, PTO/PTA, school board, media, etc.?		
<b>Reflecting on the Overall Outcomes of the Action Team for the Year</b>		
In your opinion, what were the major outcomes (results) of the activities planned by the Action Team this year? Describe specific events or strategies and their effectiveness in reaching the goal(s).		
<b>Planning for the Future</b>		
What is the one way the team could become more effective next year (organizing, recruiting more members, planning activities, communication, strengthening partnerships, evaluating results, etc.)?		



# End of Year Action Team Committee Report

(Prepared by members of each committee and reported to the group as a whole. Each report becomes a part of the Action Team for Partnership Annual Report.) Check the appropriate key for your committee.

Key 1: Parenting

Key 2: Communicating

Key 3: Volunteering

Key 4: Learning at Home

Key 5: Decision Making

Key 6: Collaborating with the Community

Mission of this key: \_\_\_\_\_

Work and responsibilities of this committee:

1. From the one year Action Plan, were the activities listed implemented? Were they helpful for reaching your goal and building partnerships? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Overall, how would you rate the quality of current Key #\_\_ activities specifically at your school?

Weak/Just Starting: Not well developed and needs a great deal of work

Fair: Implemented, but needs improvement and expansion

Good: Well developed and covers all six keys of involvement and addresses the needs of most families at *most* grade levels

Excellent: Well developed and implemented, covers all six keys of involvement and addresses the needs of all families at *all* grade levels

3. Select your committee's most successful event for this year to complete this question.

a. Which activity? \_\_\_\_\_

b. About how many were involved? \_\_\_\_\_ Of those, how many were:

• Families: \_\_\_\_\_

• Teachers: \_\_\_\_\_

• Community Members: \_\_\_\_\_

• School staff: \_\_\_\_\_

• Others: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Which grade levels were involved? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What was the main goal of this activity? How did it support the overall goal? \_\_\_\_\_

6. How well was the activity implemented this year? Was it a new activity or an improved, existing activity? \_\_\_\_\_

7. What results did this activity produce this year for students, families, teachers and the community? How were these results measured or evaluated? \_\_\_\_\_

8. What might be done to make this activity more successful next year? Who was not involved that can be? How can you involve those people? What other aspects can be improved? \_\_\_\_\_

# Notes

*Resources  
for  
Community  
Partnerships*



# New Mexico's Guiding Principles on Family & Parent Involvement

## *A Shared Responsibility*

**WHEREAS**, the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) recognizes that parents and families are a young child's first teachers, are essential to school readiness, and that when children enter school the responsibility for their education is then shared with the school and the entire community; and

**WHEREAS**, the NMPED recognizes that creating positive home, school, health, and community partnerships is essential to carrying out this shared responsibility successfully; and

**WHEREAS**, the NMPED recognizes a clear connection between parent involvement and increased student achievement; and

**WHEREAS**, the NMPED recognizes that the education of children begins at birth. A birth through twenty-one continuum of services requires an alignment of practices and building relationships between families, schools, and communities; and

**WHEREAS**, the NMPED recognizes that in this changing world our children's success will require schools, families, and communities to reinvent how they work together.

**NOW THEREFORE**, the NMPED adopts these principles for key stakeholders in ensuring quality education for all students. NMPED, all local school districts, schools, school personnel and policymakers are encouraged to:

- Value families as equal partners/joint decision makers in the education of our children;
- Listen carefully to the family perspective;
- Make collaborative communication (talking, thinking and planning together) a priority;
- Include social interaction and learning to be respectful of families, language and culture;
- Respect each child and family's individuality and personal circumstances;
- Create high expectations for student academic and social outcomes among all staff and policymakers;
- Engage families and community-based programs as valued partners in the design of efforts to promote school success for all children;
- Acknowledge ALL partners' strengths, capabilities, contributions, and interests;
- Provide ongoing growth and training opportunities necessary for adults responsible for the care and education of children; and
- Design and practice smooth transitions aligning services around each child's needs.

The New Mexico Public Education Department will take steps to foster wider and more substantive family and community involvement by identifying and sharing information with parents and families about effective educational programs. It also will provide information on funding sources for the development, implementation, and evaluation of programs. Further, it will encourage professional development programs on family/school/community involvement for school staff and families. Efforts will be made to connect with families who did not have a positive school experience or for whom English is not their native language.

The New Mexico Public Education Department will continue to support and assist schools and local school systems in developing, implementing, and evaluating policies and programs that involve all parents and families at all grade levels. It will seek to collaborate with community agencies serving children and families to encourage parent and family involvement in the lives of children. These principles complement legislative initiatives regarding family and parent involvement.

Source: New Mexico Public Education Department, Family Parent Memo, April 2008

# Great Ideas for Community Collaborations

## *For Educators*

Take some time to reflect on what you currently do to educate families about community resources. Ask yourself: “What will I do to make sure families are aware of community resources that may support families and children?” Use your ideas to develop a personal plan of action that will help expand community collaborations in your school.

<b>Collaborating with the Community Practices</b>	<b>What Do I Currently Do?</b>	<b>Plans for Improvement</b>
I distribute information about cultural, recreational, academic		
I am aware of and use local businesses and community organizations to enhance student learning and skill development.		
I contribute to the development of after-school, summer and community education programs that utilize the school facility for more than student learning objectives.		
I help bring about partnerships that provide integrated services and help to meet the needs of students.		
I coordinate education and service-related activities that support student interaction and contribution to community development and welfare.		

## For Everyone

### Creating Service Learning Partnerships

Service Learning is not a new idea. It is a concept that emphasizes student learning outside of the classroom. This allows students to integrate personal experience with structured supervision for authentic learning. The National Youth Leadership Council and the Search Institute, funded by W.K. Kellogg Foundation, have identified some valuable outcomes for students who participate in service learning programs: The students:

- Significantly improved sense of being able to make a difference for others
- Increased concern for getting good grades
- Significantly improved sense of duty to help others

The PARR model for service learning lists key components for an effective service learning program or project. To learn more about this model and find out how your school can implement the PARR Model for service learning in your community, visit the National Youth Leadership Council web site: <http://www.nylc.org/>

<b>P</b>	<b>Preparation</b> (School and Community Partner)	Introduce students to the issues or topics that will be interested in the program. Select appropriate projects and provide background information and training. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What does this organization/business/agency provide to the community?</li><li>• What are the skills, information and/or knowledge needed to work with this partner?</li></ul>
<b>A</b>	<b>Action</b> (Students and Community Partner)	Helping others or the community through direct or indirect service. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What new skills or information will students learn from the service learning program?</li><li>• What will the students' contribution or impact on the partner be?</li></ul>
<b>R</b>	<b>Reflection</b>	Look back on the experience. Ask and answer questions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explore future opportunities with this or other partners.</li><li>• How will students use their new found knowledge skills in relation to their education.</li><li>• How will students use their new found knowledge and skill to make a difference or serve the community?</li><li>• Have students keep a journal for themselves, for their teachers (or a grade) and for other students who may enter the program</li><li>• What next? How can you build on the student's new found knowledge and skills?</li></ul>
<b>R</b>	<b>Recognition</b>	Honor what was done. Celebrate accomplishments and make plans and commitments for the future. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How and who will sustain the program?</li><li>• How will students access the program?</li></ul>

Source: National Youth Leadership Council

# Community Service Ideas

One of the many benefits of service learning is that students can select a project that is meaningful to them while helping them to meet curricular objectives. Service projects can be as diverse as the students and as unique as your community. Before students select their project, they should ask themselves what is important to them. What are their interests? How would they like to make a difference? Is there a need for their service and is it possible.

<p><b>Animals</b>          Work at or raise money for a shelter          Match animals in shelters with families          Care for a neighbor's pet          Write to companies protesting animal testing          Make and sell identification tags for pets          Organize a lost animal search group</p>	<p><b>Children</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read to or tutor younger children</li> <li>● Organize a clothing drive for needy children</li> <li>● Visit sick children</li> <li>● Organize a book drive</li> <li>● Organize after-school activities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Citizenship</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Organize a voter registration drive</li> <li>● Support an important piece of legislation</li> <li>● Organize a community poison control campaign</li> <li>● Organize an event that recognizes volunteer efforts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Community Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Beautify a playground</li> <li>● Clean up a stream or arroyo</li> <li>● Paint and repair the homes of senior citizens or low-income residents</li> <li>● Start a petition for necessary traffic signals</li> <li>● Make your neighborhood safer</li> <li>● Paint over graffiti</li> <li>● Write letters requesting road repairs</li> </ul>
<p><b>Elderly</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read to the elderly</li> <li>● Shop for the elderly</li> <li>● Do odd jobs for the elderly</li> <li>● Organize and "adoption" program for lonely elders</li> <li>● Organize and/or teach computer classes for the elderly</li> <li>● Lead an exercise program for the elderly</li> <li>● Rake leaves or shovel snow for the elderly</li> <li>● Volunteer at a nursing home or hospital</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Clean up litter at school or in the community</li> <li>● Organize a recycle drive</li> <li>● Plant trees</li> <li>● Raise money to improve a playground or park, or repair a sidewalk</li> <li>● Grow a school garden</li> <li>● Help a community that has been impacted by a natural disaster</li> </ul>
<p><b>Health/Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create a presentation for how to handle health or crime emergencies</li> <li>● Set up prevention groups to patrol neighborhoods</li> <li>● Organize a bike, roller blade, scooter or car seat safety demonstration</li> <li>● Develop and teach a baby sitting course</li> <li>● Organize a community health fair</li> </ul>	<p><b>Homeless</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Collect food, toiletries or clothing for the homeless</li> <li>● Work at a soup kitchen</li> <li>● Collect and distribute blankets</li> <li>● Collect toys for shelters</li> </ul>
<p><b>Diversity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Organize ethnic awareness days</li> <li>● Tutor people whose second language is English</li> <li>● Encourage sites around town to become wheelchair accessible</li> <li>● Help people with special needs</li> <li>● Develop a peer conflict mediation program</li> </ul>	

## Helping Our Children Prepare for the Future

Parents, educators and community members can support one another to help prepare all children for the future. Use this parent checklist to see how you might be able to make a difference in the life of a child in your community.

In **grades K-5** the focus is on **career awareness**. You can help your child by doing the following:

- Discuss the many employment opportunities available in and outside of your community.
- Display positive attitudes toward work and cooperating with others.
- Show attitudes of respect and appreciation towards workers in all fields.
- Learn about the New Mexico Content Standards and ask teachers about how your child is doing in meeting the standards. *Work with the School Assistance Team if your child is not making satisfactory progress.*
- Borrow books from libraries about various careers to share with your child and ask him/her what they think they would like to do for a career.

In **Grades 6-8** the focus is on **career exploration**. You can help your child by doing the following:

- Meet with your child's counselor to review course selection and ask for tools to help your child assess their own interests and abilities. *New Mexico requires all students to have a Next Steps Plan in place by the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. This written plan is developed with the student and his parents/guardians.*
- Assist your child with challenging course selection such as honors courses, pre-advanced placement classes, Pre-Algebra or Algebra 1, a language other than English and academic preparation programs.
- Attend parent nights, parent-teacher conferences and school activities that focus on career exploration and college preparation.
- Inquire about tutoring and mentoring programs at the school.
- Use the internet at home, school and/or the library to explore careers and job requirements.
- Review all homework assignments and maintain communication with teachers and counselors.
- Assist your child in developing good study habits.
- Work with your children to set goals each year.
- Learn and understand high school graduation requirements and college entrance requirements.

In **grades 9-12** the focus is on **career preparation**. You can help your child by doing the following:

- Ask teachers and counselors about the state mandated exam for high schools.
- Encourage your child to continue with languages other than English with bilingualism as the goal.
- Talk with teachers and counselors to ensure that your child takes the pre-ACT/SAT (plan test) as a sophomore and the SAT or ACT first as a junior and then again as a senior.
- Encourage your child to take good notes during classes.
- Encourage your child to take the right sequence of mathematics: Algebra I, Algebra II, etc.
- Encourage your child to develop and enhance computer skills.
- Model time management and organizational skills.
- Assist your child in developing money management and independent living skills.
- Encourage your child to participate in extracurricular activities and community service projects.
- Request college and career planning guides from the school counselor and/or the US Department of Education. Request information about financing vocational training and/or college costs.

Adapted from: Working Together: A Toolkit for New Mexico School Communities developed by The Center for the Education and Study of Diverse Populations (CESDP) and supported by the New Mexico Public Education Department

# Resources from Parents Reaching Out

*The follow publications are available in hard copy and on CD. Please contact Parents Reaching Out (505-247-0192 or 1-800-524-5176) to request workshops, publications or our PRO CD of all publications. You may download our publications from our website: [www.parentsreachingout.org](http://www.parentsreachingout.org) (\* Indicates Spanish version is available)*

## **Acronyms, Abbreviations and Definitions**

**A Bridge to the Future \*** (Ability Pathway to Diploma)

**Book of Ideas \*** (Learning Styles, Instructional Strategies and more)

**DD Waiver Application & DD Waiver Allocation Handbooks \*** (Health Care Access)

**Did You Know Fact Sheets \*** (NCLB, Literacy, Parent Involvement, Early Childhood)

**Early Intervention and Natural Environments \*** (Birth to three)

**Extended School Year \*** (Special Education Related Service)

**Family Health Care Tips\*** (Fact Sheets on Health Care Access)

**Family Connections Series\*** (Six books based on Epstein's Model)

**Family Involvement: Building Community Partnerships\*** (NCLB, IDEA and more)

**First Steps Fact Sheets\*** (Early Intervention)

**How Can I Help This Child?** (Sensory Integration)

**Let's Begin the Journey \*** (Overview of Special Education)

**Mission Transition \*** (Head Start to Elementary)

**Next Steps to Success \*** (Early Intervention to Early Childhood)

**Open Line and More \*** (Communication Skills)

**Positive Directions for Student Behavior** (Intervention Strategies & Tools)

**Practical Inclusive Education in New Mexico \*** (Differentiated learning at its best!)

**Response to Intervention (RTI)\*** (Planned support system for NM schools)

**Telling Your Story \*** (Communication Skills--Sharing Your Perspective)

**The Journey Continues\*** (Standard and Career Readiness Paths to Diploma)

**The Handbook: Parental Rights and Special Education Procedures \*** (IEP Process)

We also distribute New Mexico Public Education Department-Technical Assistance Documents and publications from other federal, state and local agencies serving children and their families..

## Tools for Well Informed School Communities!

As your school Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) put plans into place in your school community, you might find helpful information in publications available from Parents Reaching Out. Our *Family Connections Series* offers booklets loaded with tools and ideas that are great for sub-committees for each of the Six Keys to Family Involvement.

Our ***Did You Know*** fact sheets listed below are great for workshops and school newsletters. Please call our office (505-247-0192 or 1-800-524-5176) to request a workshop, publications or our PRO CD with all publications. You may also download these fact sheets and other publications from our website: [www.parentsreachingout.org](http://www.parentsreachingout.org)

Parents Reaching Out is the Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC) for NM.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| What is a PIRC?                               | 26. Dads Do Make a Difference              |
| 1. NCLB-10 Facts                              | 27. About Self Esteem and Student Success  |
| 2. NCLB-Parent Involvement                    | 28. About Productive Parent Conferences    |
| 3. NCLB-Public School Choice                  | 29. Homework Hassles and Strategies        |
| 4. NCLB-School-District Report Cards          | 30. Teaching Responsibility                |
| 5. NCLB Supplemental Ed Services              | 31. The Importance of Grandparenting       |
| 6. NCLB District Parent Involvement Policy    | 32. Step Parenting                         |
| 7. NCLB School Parent Compacts                | 33. Helping Your Child Be Ready for School |
| 8. NCLB Teacher Qualifications                | 34. Activity Overload                      |
| 9. NCLB English Language Learners             | 35. Raising a Reader                       |
| 10. Resources for Families and Schools        | 36. The Motivated Child                    |
| 11. NCLB-Student Success                      | 37. Learning Styles and Your Child         |
| 12. NCLB-McKinney Vento                       | 38. Our Children and the Internet          |
| 13. NCLB-Accountability                       | 39. Home Alone                             |
| 14. NCLB-AYP                                  | 40. Safer Schools                          |
| 15. Demystifying Supplemental Ed Services     | 41. Peer Pressure                          |
| 16. Demystifying Adequate Yearly Progress     | 42. Easing the Teasing                     |
| 17. Demystifying Public School Choice         | 43. Being Bullied                          |
| 18. Reading Questions Tool                    | 44. Stopping Back Talk                     |
| 19. Myths and Realities About Testing         | 45. Adventuring with Your Child            |
| 20. Free Tutoring                             | 46. Summer Fun                             |
| 21. EPSS Educational Plan for Student Success | 47. Becoming a More Effective Parent       |
| 22. Quality Reading Instruction               | 48. Ways That Words Help Instead of Hurt   |
| 23. Measuring Adequate Yearly Progress        | 49. The Right Question                     |
| 24. Scientifically Based Instruction          | 50. Boost Your Child's Attitude            |
| 25. Communicating with Your Child's School    |  |

# Web Resources



**Appleseed Network** <http://www.appleseednetwork.org/>

A non-profit network of 16 public interest justice centers in the U.S. and Mexico, Appleseed is dedicated to building a society where opportunities are genuine, access to the law is universal and equal, and government advances the public interest. Their website includes useful resources about the importance of parental involvement.

**National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS)**

[http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/nnps\\_model](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/nnps_model)

Great examples of family involvement practices based on the Epstein Model.

**New Mexico Public Education Department** <http://www.ped.state.nm.us>

New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) provides leadership, technical assistance and quality assurance to improve student performance and close the achievement gap for all public schools in New Mexico.

**Center for the Education and Study of Diverse Populations** [www.cesdp.nmhu.edu](http://www.cesdp.nmhu.edu)

The Center for Education and Study of Diverse Populations provides assistance to communities for improving the quality of education for all learners. *Working Together: School, Family and Community Partnerships—A Toolkit for New Mexico School Communities* was developed by CESDP and supported by the NM Public Education Department. The Toolkit, with resources in English and Spanish, is on their web site.

**National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education**

<http://www.ncpie.org/DevelopingPartnerships/>

The work of NCPPIE is focused on advocating for the involvement of parents and families in their children's education. The information and resources on this website are designed to foster relationships between home, school, and community to enhance the education of all of our nation's young people.

**National Dropout Prevention Center/Network**

[http://www.dropoutprevention.org/effstrat/school\\_community\\_collab/resources.htm](http://www.dropoutprevention.org/effstrat/school_community_collab/resources.htm)

The National Dropout Prevention Center/Network (NDPC/N) serves as a clearinghouse on issues related to dropout prevention and to offer strategies designed to increase the graduation rate in America's schools. Great resources for community collaboration.

## Other Websites for Families and Educators Used to Develop This Book

Connect for Kids <http://www.connectforkids.org/>

Family Education Network <http://www.familyeducation.com/home/>

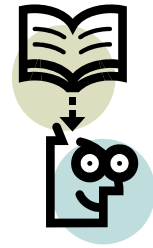
New Mexico Parent Teacher Organization <http://www.nmpta.org>

Project Appleseed <http://projectappleseed.org/sitemap.html>

Service Leader <http://www.serviceleader.org/new/volunteer/index.php>

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) <http://www.sedl.org>

# The Glossary



**Action Team for Partnership (ATP)** – This action arm or work group of an Advisory School Council writes and implements plans for partnerships to produce desired results for students, families, and for the school as a whole. It includes teachers, administrators, family members, business and community partners and students (at the high school level). Their primary goal is to involve families and the community in productive ways so that more students reach important educational goals for learning and success.

**Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)** – No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requires that each state measure yearly progress toward achieving state academic standards. “Adequate Yearly Progress” is the minimum level improvement that states, school districts and schools must achieve each year. The report is done annually.

**Advisory School Council** – This council is the umbrella for all school activities and can be a school administrator’s right hand. It includes the school administrator, family leaders, educators and community representatives. It is the connecting link to the work of other groups within the school. Topics addressed by this council include: Parental Involvement policies, Student Handbook policies, Parent Compact, instructional issues and curriculum planning for the Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS), school improvement initiatives from the Action Team for Partnership (ATP), Next Step Planning for post-school transitions and the school’s proposed and actual budgets. This council is mandated and described in section 27 of New Mexico House Bill 212.

**The Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS)** – This is a long-range strategic plan that each school and school district is required to develop, implement, assess, and evaluate on a yearly basis. The purpose of the EPSS is to promote student academic achievement and continuous school improvement. Districts/schools are required to invite parents to participate in the EPSS process.

**Parent Compact** – All Title I schools must have a written agreement between the parents and school describing what both parties will do to help students be successful. This agreement must also state how educators and parents will work together to improve the child’s achievement and promote parent involvement.

**The Parent Teacher Association (PTA)** – The National Parent Teacher Association is a formal membership organization with a 105-year history of working for children. School PTA’s are linked to the state PTA and National PTA, forming a nationwide network of members working on behalf of all children and youth. Local groups that choose to belong to the PTA must pay dues to the state and national organization and abide by state and national group rules. PTA is a valuable resource to the school community with (1) access to programs to benefit children, youth, and their families; and (2) the recognition and size to influence the formulation of laws, policies, and practices—education or legislative.

**Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)** – These are most often single-school groups that operate under their own bylaws and by and large concern themselves with focusing exclusively on improving and creating community at their own school.

## Reflections

Before you close this book, take time to reflect by answering these questions.

*What did I learn from this book?*

*How will I make a difference for the children and families in my school?*

*How will I work with others to promote family involvement in my community?*

# Notes

You must be the change you wish to see in the world.

*Mahatma Gandhi*



# Parents Reaching Out

*Your One Stop Resource for a Stronger Family*

As a statewide non-profit organization, we connect with parents, caregivers, educators and other professionals to promote healthy, positive and caring experiences for New Mexico families and children. We have served New Mexico families for over twenty five years. Our staff and Family Leadership Action Network volunteers reflect the unique diversity of the communities throughout our state.

Children do not come with instructions on how to deal with the difficult circumstances that many families experience. Parents Reaching Out believes that families' needs go beyond the bounds of formal services. *What we can offer to each other is uniquely ours. We have all been there.*

## Our Mission

The mission of Parents Reaching Out is to enhance positive outcomes for families and children in New Mexico through informed decision making, advocacy, education, and resources. Parents Reaching Out provides the networking opportunities for families to connect with and support each other. This mission supports *all families* including those who have children with disabilities, and others who are disenfranchised. Parents Reaching Out achieves this by:

- Developing family leadership
- Connecting families to each other
- Building collaborative partnerships
- Providing families knowledge and tools to enhance their power

## Our Beliefs

- Families need support where ever they are in their journey.
- All families care deeply about their children.
- Families may need tools and support to accomplish their dreams.
- All families are capable of making informed decisions that are right for their family.
- Families in the state benefit from our organization having the staff and materials that meet their diversity.
- Systems that listen carefully to the family perspective improve outcomes for our children.

We invite all families and those serving families and children in New Mexico to make *Parents Reaching Out your one stop resource for a stronger family.* Our publications, workshops, and Resource Center offer tools for informed decision-making and building partnerships in communities. Our trained staff and network of volunteers are here to serve you.

*Parents Reaching Out is the home of:*

NM Parent Information and Resource Center (NMPIRC)

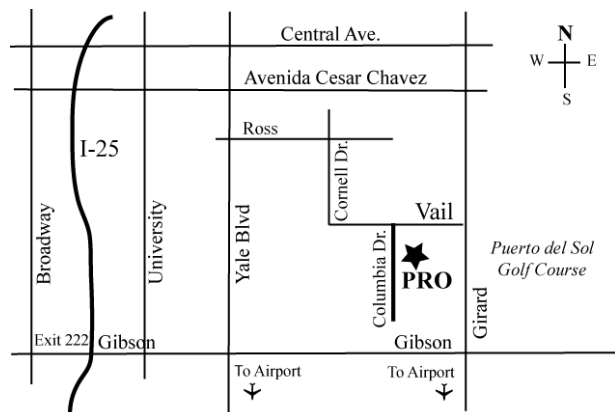
NM Parent Training and Information Center (NMPTIC)

NM Family to Family Health Information Center (NMF2FHIC)

## Parents Reaching Out

1920 B Columbia Drive, SE  
Albuquerque, NM 87106  
1-505-247-0192 ♦ 1-800-524-5176  
[www.parentsreachingout.org](http://www.parentsreachingout.org)

From I-25—take the Gibson Blvd Exit 222 and go East on Gibson. Turn left at the third stop light (Girard). Turn left on Vail. Go one block to Columbia. Turn left on Columbia. Parents Reaching Out is on the east side of the street. Welcome!



*"The way schools care about children is reflected in the way schools care about the children's families. If educators view children simply as students, they are likely to see the family as separate from the school. That is, the family is expected to do its job and leave the education of children to the schools. If educators view students as children, they are likely to see both the family and the community as partners with the school in children's education and development. Partners recognize their shared interest in and responsibilities for children, and they work together to create better programs and opportunities for students."*

Dr. Joyce Epstein, "Caring for the Children We Share"

