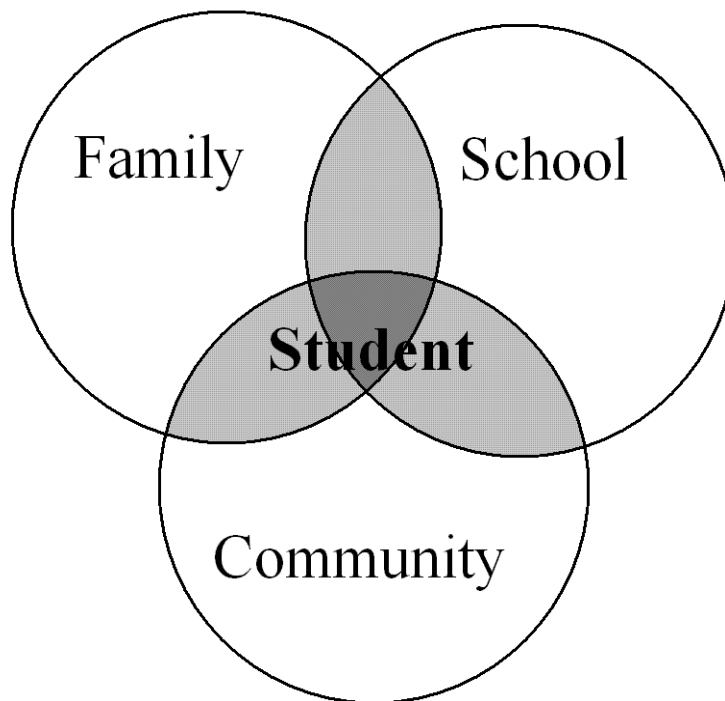








# *Volunteering*

## **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

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!*

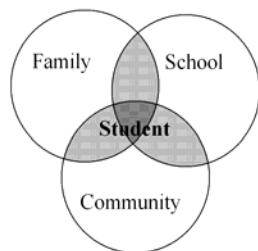
*Please Note: "Parent" and "family" involvement are used as interchangeable references in this book. Both terms include all adults who play an important role in the child's life and who may have responsibility for a child's education, development, and well-being. For some children, "parents" may include 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 from the model developed by Dr. Joyce L. Epstein. We hope that these books will help families, educators and Action Teams identify needs that will be used to 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!

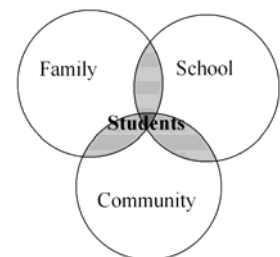
The Epstein Model is a research-based process. It offers a flexible framework for meaningful involvement that embraces families as full partners in improving outcomes for all children. This model encourages the efficient use of time, talents and resources to improve results for every student required 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

*Volunteering is more than signing up to sell popcorn on Fridays!* The goal for this book is to share tools that provide creative ways to build strong partnerships that tap the skills and expertise of parents and other family members through volunteering activities. We offer strategies to plan meaningful solutions for the diverse needs in our communities. Our tips are designed to make “volunteering” a positive, practical and personal effort to connect families to school and community efforts that improve outcomes for our kids. *This book is designed to be used by families, educators and Action Teams to make the most out of every learning opportunity—at home and in school.*

# 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.—

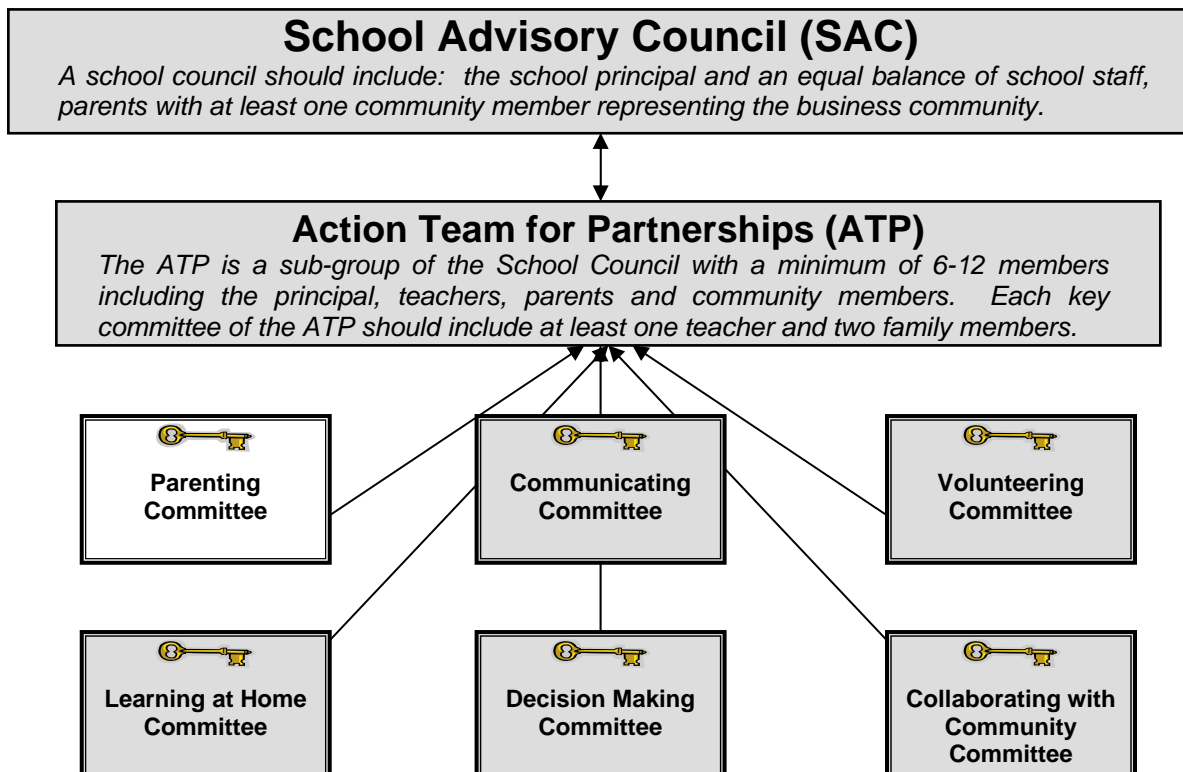
A. Each public school shall create an advisory "school council" to assist the school principal with school-based decision-making and to involve parents in their children's education.

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.





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## Acknowledgements

Parents Reaching Out, the New Mexico Parent Information and Resource Center (NMPIRC), wishes to extend special thanks to:

Joyce Epstein, Director of the National Network of Partnership Schools and the Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships, for allowing the use of her materials in our series;

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.

This publication was produced in whole or in part with funds from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, Parental Information and Resource Center program, under Grant # 84.310A (GAN # U310A060090). The content herein does not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Education, any other agency of the U.S. government, or any other source.



*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 Volunteering Committee of the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP)

The role of the Volunteering committee of the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) is to recruit and organize parent help and support. Parents, educators and others on this committee plan and implement activities that may include:

- School and classroom volunteer programs to help teachers, administrators, students and other parents
- A parent room or family center for volunteer work, meetings and resources for families
- An annual postcard survey to identify all available talents, times and locations of volunteers
- Class parent, telephone tree, or other structures to provide all families with needed information
- Parent patrols or other activities to aid safety and operations of school programs



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

## ***The Goals of the Volunteering Committee***

The most difficult part of anything we do is knowing where to begin. “How do we get started?” Having a goal in mind and a step by step plan for reaching your goal is the best way to start off on the right foot. The Present Practices Inventory included in the Action Team Toolbox on page 19 will help guide the work of this committee.

Why does our school need volunteers? It’s not just because NCLB requires family involvement. Volunteers can make a difference in our school. A comprehensive home and school plan can tap the resources of volunteers to improve student achievement. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

1. Recruit volunteers widely so that all families know that their time and talents are welcome.
2. Make flexible schedules for volunteers, assemblies, and events to enable employed parents to participate.
3. Organize volunteer work; provide training; match time and talent with school, teacher, and student needs; and recognize efforts so that participants are productive.
4. Provide opportunities for open discussions of the challenges to sharing knowledge and expertise among parents, educators and administrators.
5. Don’t forget to listen! We must learn to listen for the family’s interests, resources and their ability to commit time.

To find out more about the Action Teams call Parents Reaching Out (1-800-524-5176) and request your copy of our *Family Connections* book:

**Decision Making: Action Teams for Partnerships**

## ***Who is a Volunteer?***

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a volunteer as “a person who voluntarily undertakes or expresses a willingness to undertake a service.” Traditionally, this has meant that parents who wished to volunteer for their child’s school had to do so on school grounds and during school hours. Usually the volunteers were moms manning the concession stand at school events, selling raffle tickets or chaperoning field trips.

It is true that each of those activities is volunteerism and is valued and encouraged. However, there is a growing need to begin exploring other ways in which entire families, including moms, dads, grandparents, siblings, etc. can be involved. We believe that a volunteer is anyone who supports school goals and children’s learning or development in any way, at any place, and at any time—not just during the school day and at the school building. With the increasingly hectic demands of life, it is now also necessary to get more creative in our approaches to volunteering and the activities we can engage in.

For educators, refer to your annual volunteer surveys often to ensure you are using all your parents. If you cannot think of an obvious opportunity for them, be creative and brainstorm activities with the school action team that specifically compliment a family’s skills and or interests. There is nothing more discouraging to a family that is willing and available to volunteer than to be forgotten.

For parents, start by filling out your annual survey and remind your child’s teacher of your desire and availability to volunteer. Mention specific areas that you recognize you can contribute to, or skills or interests you have that may help your child’s teacher decide where you can best be used.

Remember, volunteerism is not limited to what it used to be! You do not have to be confined to the school building or restricted to the hours between nine and three. If you have the desire to volunteer but circumstances keep you from performing during the day or at the school, get creative! A little bit of time + dedication = endless possibilities!



**Volunteer opportunities can come in all sizes from small to large and take place at school or not.**

## What are the Challenges?

Those who work in schools and other systems are trained in the work they do. They go to school, attend workshops and participate in continuing education to learn about their role in the system to help them feel competent in their role. On the other hand, families did not receive a training manual with the birth of their child, but they do have practical knowledge learned from their experiences with their child. *Parents do know and care about their child.*

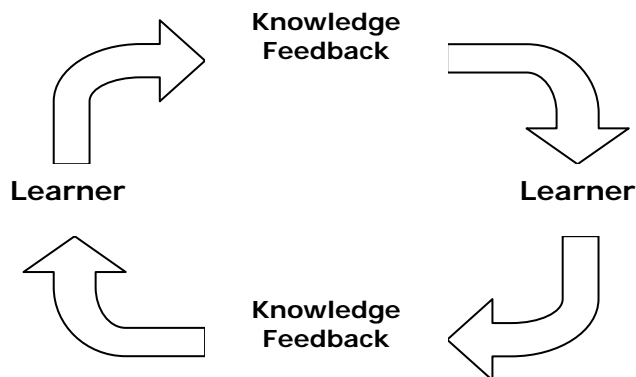
As partners, parents must be provided opportunities to learn about the system and have the tools to use this knowledge to make informed decisions on behalf of their children. Administrators, teachers, school support staff and policy makers need learning opportunities that will help them understand the family perspective as they seek new ways to improve our children's future.

In order for schools to make parents and communities truly feel welcomed as equal partners, they need to ensure that they have access to the same information as the schools. To do this, schools need to offer learning opportunities to all families and members of the community. There are two ways in which this can be done. One is through "top-down learning." The other is through "collaborative learning."

Top-down learning is a faster way to share knowledge and information, but is equivalent to "one-way communication." One-way communication and top-down learning mean that there is not feedback or input between the person sharing the knowledge and those they are sharing it with, or the "learners." The learners are *told* what they need to know. Their input is not sought or requested and therefore, equal partnerships are not built.



A better way to share knowledge that does encourage feedback and foster partnerships is "collaborative learning." The collaborative learning method recognizes all participants as learners with knowledge to share and allows and encourages everyone to participate in the process. Questions and new ideas are encouraged as part of the learning process for everyone. Additionally, all the learners brainstorm solutions and work towards a common goal, ensuring a greater buy-in or ownership of the outcomes.



## **Communication Networks**

*Communication builds strong partnerships. Good communication informs, engages and encourages all partners in the school community. Design a comprehensive plan to ensure positive results.*

Families, educators and others in the school community do have something in common. We live in a fast paced and complicated world. We lead lives that are very busy and often full of surprises (good and bad). Let's face it—with so many things to remember and so many things that need attention, we all need a friendly reminder about meetings or activities from time to time. Even if we have the best intentions, it is easy to forget.

### **Common Concerns and Frequent Comments ...**

Educators may say: "How do we reach our parents? How do we get the information out there? We have low response when we send notes home."

Families may say: "I never hear about anything until the last minute. I have to try to arrange for childcare or put something on hold or just not attend."

Educators and families may say: "My phone calls aren't returned. There are no replies to my e-mails or the notes I write."

It just simply is not enough to send a flyer home with your student anymore, more than likely it will get forgotten at the bottom of the backpack. Posting flyers won't always reach everyone. Phone calls may be missed. Emails may not find their way. In order to build partnerships to engage families in schools and volunteer programs, it is necessary to develop a comprehensive plan for communication. Ask questions. Conduct a school wide survey of staff members, students and families to get ideas for the plan. Share the plan so that everyone is in the "loop".

Remember: Communication is a two-way street! It is important to provide multiple pathways for communication. Use a variety of media and personal formats not only to share but also to receive information within the school community.

- Telephone calls (telephone trees)
- Person to person
- Newsletters
- E-Mail (including listserv networks)
- Website
- Voicemail
- Bulletin or message boards
- School marquee
- Posters in local businesses, community centers and churches



Communication is never a destination.

It is a journey that must be worked on by experts and novices alike.

## Positive, Practical and Personal

Volunteering provides you with the chance to become involved in your community, to meet new and interesting people, share your talents build new skills. Volunteering also provides you with the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping others making a difference for your child.

*Before undertaking a volunteer opportunity, you should consider a few things first:*

### **Make it Positive**

Volunteer in ways that match your skills and interests. Be clear about your roles and responsibilities and how your involvement helps students. Remember, if the experience is positive and fun, you will want to repeat it.

### **Make it Practical**

Volunteer during times that are convenient for you. Remember that there are volunteer activities that you can do in the classroom, school, home or work.

### **Make it Personal**

Ask for clarification on any questions you have about your responsibilities, special needs of students you are working with, time lines and school safety procedures. Share phone numbers and email addresses with teachers and other parents that you work with.

- **What are your abilities?** Do you enjoy working with people? Do you have clerical or computer skills? Are you an organizer—how about helping organize a school event? Are you a patient person—could you help children practice spelling or math skills? Do you enjoying woodworking—how about making props for the school play?
- **When are you available?** Mornings, afternoons, certain days a week, after school, evenings, once a month-or does your availability change? This will help the organization schedule your volunteer opportunities.
- **What is your commitment?** Volunteering can be a specific event like the school science fair or it can take the form of an on-going relationship, such as serving on the schools Action Team. You decide and stay true to your commitment.

Adapted from: So You Want to Volunteer, Child and Family Canada <http://www.cfc-efc.ca>

#### **PRO Note:**

**Too often we hear educators say, “Families are not dependable.”**

**Making our efforts positive, practical and personal will help us volunteer for things that are within our comfort zone, thus making it easy to follow through with our commitments.**

## **Guidelines for Volunteers**

The New Mexico Public Education Department identifies the following volunteer guidelines in their publication, *Working Together: School Family Community Partnerships: A Toolkit for New Mexico School Communities Manual*. These guidelines offer good information about where to start and set boundaries to ensure that your volunteer experience is valuable for you, the teachers and most importantly, for the students. Remember that whether you volunteer in the classroom, at school or at home, volunteering is one of the most important things you can do to build a stronger community, and improve the achievement of students.

### **Communication**

Ask for clarification on any questions you have about your responsibilities, special needs of students you are working with, time lines and school safety procedures. Share phone numbers and e-mail addresses with teachers and other parents that you are working with. Avoid interrupting teachers while they are teaching. Questions and concerns can be addressed after instructional time.

### **Supplies**

Set aside any supplies or materials that you need. Carry what you need or set aside a place where you can keep supplies in the school or classroom.

### **Teacher's Lounge**

Be clear on the use of the teacher's lounge and whether volunteers are welcome to use the lounge for breaks. Do not feel insulted or offended if parents are not welcomed in the teacher's lounge. It is often the only place that teachers have to meet informally to discuss confidential issues such as school policies and individual students.

### **Confidentiality**

All information concerning students and teachers and other families is strictly confidential and should not be shared with others. Don't repeat stories and personal information that teachers or children share with you.

### **Schedule**

If you are volunteering in the classroom, call the school if you are coming in late or will be absent. If you are volunteering from your home, let others who are depending on you know if you are going to be delayed or not able to complete tasks that you are working on.

### **Boundaries**

Children often ask personal questions. It is best to be prepared to answer them in a polite way. Have a clear idea of what your personal boundaries are regarding how you would like the students to refer to you (first name, Mr., Mrs., Ms.) and your willingness to discuss aspects of your personal life.

### **Discipline Issues**

Most schools have a discipline plan with clear-cut consequences for negative behavior and rewards for positive behavior. Many teachers add to the school wide guidelines by making a more specific behavior plan for their classroom. Be familiar with school and classroom discipline plans and what role you will play in that plan.

### **Dress Code and Campus Policies**

Attire should be neat, clean, comfortable and appropriate for the school setting. Be familiar with the dress code and follow it. Advocating political or religious preferences is not allowed on school campuses. The use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco is prohibited.

# Volunteers Make a Difference in Many Ways!

We've gathered information about some of the ways you can volunteer for your child's school. Please keep in mind that these are just ideas and can be used as they are or as springboards for other ideas or ways you can contribute your time. Share your ideas with your school Action Team. There are endless possibilities.

1. Help organize an annual postcard survey to identify all available talents, times, and locations of volunteers. This should be a school's first step in finding and utilizing potential volunteers. These surveys usually go out at the beginning of each school year, so express your interest to help with the process at the end of the preceding year or sometime during the summer. See the Volunteer Survey on page 46.
2. Be an active partner in planning activities to support student achievement goals set by your school's principal and advisory school council by volunteering to be a part of these various groups:
  - Advisory School Council
  - Action Team for Partnership
  - PTA / PTO and other parent organizations
  - Classroom committees
  - Attend board meetings on a regular basis
  - After-school programs
3. Participate in school or classroom volunteer programs that assist teachers, administrators, students, and other parents. Here are a few things you can do to help alleviate some of their stress:
  - Distribute flyers and follow up, if needed
  - Participate in circle time, snack time etc.
  - Occasionally serve as a playground assistant
  - Assist with filing and other administrative work
  - Assist with answering phones or making phone calls
  - Help produce the school wide or classroom newsletter, by contributing information, helping with layout, proofreading, etc.
  - Chaperone on fieldtrips, dances or other events
  - Tutor a struggling student in math or reading
  - Mentor a student, by visiting them for lunch once a month, sending notes or being a pen pal
  - Help with registration
  - Team teach with the teacher in an area of your expertise
  - Offer to be a new parent buddy



4. Volunteer in the parent room or family center or help develop one in your school if one is not already in place.

- Take turns with other parents to staff the parent room
- Stock the parent room with resources that may be useful to others
- Help to organize a school supply drive, onsite clothing bank, or food drives
- Assist other families in establishing good communication with the school
- Serve as a liaison to the community for your school



5. Develop or assist existing parent patrols or other activities to aid safety and operation of school programs. Some possible activities include:

- Developing neighborhood watches that ensure safety for students that walk home from school
- Serving as a parking lot attendee during school functions to help direct traffic
- Setting up campus “Clean Up or Beautification Teams” that can set a goal to get together periodically for campus improvement
- Developing “Snow Removal Teams” in case of excess inclement weather.
- Participating as a general before/after school homework helper in the school library or cafeteria.



6. Organize efforts for school Staff Appreciation and Encouragement. Remember, it is a tough job and everyone enjoys a pat on the back from time to time. Here are some ideas of things you could do for school staff:

- Organize a parent provided breakfast or lunch for teachers and administrators during in-service days or periodically during the year
- Send cards to staff on holidays or during state wide testing dates offering words of encouragement
- Send small gifts throughout the year. They don't have to be anything major. All the parents in your child's class can contribute. Some things teachers may enjoy include:
  - Starbucks cards
  - School logo shirts
  - Bookstore gift certificates
  - Pens, book marks, etc.
  - Chocolate!

## 7. Support School Testing!

- Organize with other parents to promote the school breakfast and lunch program or provide snacks for students during state wide testing.
- Provide test “goody bags” to the students prior to the test which include a water bottle, pencil, small healthy snack and a personal hand written note of encouragement “to do their best”. Let them know you have confidence in them!
- Set up a phone tree to inform families when school wide testing is going on and the importance of students attendance.
- Offer “emergency” carpools for testing day in case the car had a flat, student woke up late, etc.
- Be a part of the celebration when testing is over!



## 8. Organize parent/community Job-Shadowing Days and Internships.

- Help coordinate students participation by interest.
- Volunteer for a student to shadow you at your job.
- Ask others to participate by allowing students to shadow them.
- Assist with transportation.
- Help student follow up on job shadowing by sending personal thank you letters.
- Coordinate with the school and assist with bringing professionals into the school to meet with students.
- Coordinate community internships.
- Sponsor community internships.
- Recruit locations for students to serve internships.



## 9. Mentoring and tutoring

- Coordinate a mentoring/tutoring program.
- Volunteer to invest in a student by being a mentor.
- Recruit tutors and mentors from professional industries.

## 10. Organize parent/community sponsored awards, incentives, and scholarships in order to celebrate efforts.



# Promising Practices for Volunteering

Here are just a few examples of ways that the *spirit of volunteering* has worked in schools around the country. The National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS), Johns Hopkins University, invites member schools to share their success stories. We have selected examples that represent activities in elementary, middle and high school for a cross-sampling of activities for these student populations. Even though these schools are miles away from New Mexico, there are similarities that we can adapt for schools in our state as they work to connect with families and promote volunteering.

The NNPS provides technical assistance in using research-based approaches to improve policies and practices of school, family, and community partnerships for member schools. Details of the success stories highlighted below and other stories can be found at: <http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/program.htm>

## Bringing the PTA to the Parents

*William H. Farquhar Middle School Olney, Maryland (Article submitted to NNPS by Stefanie Parizer, Student Support Specialist)*

“Noticing the poor attendance at Farquhar Middle School’s PTA meetings, the principal started asking why. One answer parents gave was that the PTA seemed to have cliques that made them feel unwelcome. As a solution, the principal worked with four parent volunteers to plan parent meetings at three locations in the school community. The meetings provided opportunities for the school to share important curriculum and contact information and for parents.



## Chess: A Game for Growing Minds

*Northwoods Elementary School. Eau Claire, Wisconsin (Article submitted NNPS by Laurel Erdman, Parent Partnership Coordinator).*

“Responding to an interest in playing the game during recess, the parent partnership coordinator at Northwoods Elementary School brought in her husband, a chess enthusiast and high school teacher, to form an after-school chess club. In addition to weekly meetings, the club held an Invitational Chess Challenge so that members could play students at other schools in the district.”

## English Language Learners Translation Service

*Naperville North High School, Naperville, Illinois (Article submitted by Sue Ellis, Translation Committee Co-Chair).*

The inability to read or speak English fluently prevents many parents from getting involved in their children’s school. At Naperville North High School, a new translation service attempts to remedy this problem and connect with families who speak limited English. *Nearly 20 parents, who speak at least 10 different languages, volunteered to translate school materials.* Thanks to the translation service, parents will know what is going on at the school and better understand school policies and practices.

# Effective Planning Improves Results

*“Families and teachers might wish that the school could do the job alone. But today's school needs families, and today's families need the school. In many ways, this mutual need may be the greatest hope for change.”*

S. Christenson, “Supporting Home-School Collaboration”  
Children, Youth and Family Consortium (CYFC) <http://www.cyfc.umn.edu>



There are noticeable and measurable results for the children, parents, educators, administrators and community when parents participate in volunteer activities. Sometimes it can be hard to see the big picture, and many of us may lack the patience, but the outcomes are tremendous and well worth the effort!

Every year New Mexico is one of the lowest ranking states in regards to education. Parent involvement and a comprehensive plan to effectively engage families in bringing about changes to improve outcomes for children is one way we improve results for our schools and our state.

When parents get involved with schools, positive changes will come. At first, the changes may begin with a small group of parents partnering with their school to improve results for their child. With the encouragement and support from schools, families can be provided with opportunities to volunteer in a wide range of activities to improve student achievement.

Momentum for change grows as volunteers are recognized for their contributions and involved in school decisions. Parent volunteers move from building success for their child to working as partners within the entire school community to achieve goals for all students in their school. The Southwest Education Developmental Laboratory research shows that *parent, family and community organizing (volunteering)* contributes to:

- Upgraded school facilities
- Improved school leadership and staffing
- Higher-quality learning programs for students
- New resources and programs to improve teaching and curriculum
- New funding for after-school programs and family supports

The information on the following pages highlight the direct and indirect benefits of a comprehensive volunteer program based on findings from Project Appleseed, Children, Youth and Family Consortium (CYFC), Johns Hopkins University and others. The benefits include the perspective of students, families, educators and communities.

# The Benefits of Volunteering

The time and effort spent to develop a well thought out plan for volunteering will benefit everyone in the school community. The forms and resources in the ATP Toolbox (p.xx), you can plan strategies that will be a good fit for your community.

## How Do Students Benefit From Volunteers in the School?

In observing and interacting with volunteers in the school and community, children:

- Develop real world connections.
- Build communication skills with adults.
- Improve their levels of academic achievement and social competence from tutoring or targeted attention from trained volunteers.
- Increase their awareness of the skills, talents, occupations, and contributions of parents and other volunteers.
- Experience an increased sense of belonging, self-worth and significance, self-discipline and responsible independence nurtured by partnerships with families to create positive caring adults in the community.
- Have an improved appreciation for the lifelong assets of generosity and unselfishness fostered by volunteering activities in the school and community environment.
- The presence of additional adults provides role modeling and with improved behavior outcomes when they are provided with opportunities to practice social competence skills.



## How Do Families Benefit From Volunteering in the School?

Being an active volunteer gives you the opportunity to see your child in a different environment as you become a recognizable figure in not only your school, but your community. Volunteering demonstrates to your child and his or her teacher that you truly value education. *The benefits of volunteering include:*



- A sense of belonging and increased awareness that families are welcome and valued at school.
- Increased understanding teacher's job, increased comfort in school, and carryover of school activities at home.
- Enhanced self-confidence about ability to work in school and with children or to take steps to improve own education.
- Improved capacity and confidence for informed decision-making and problem solving and other specific skills related to chosen volunteer work.
- Improved connections with the school community to facilitate their child's learning and opportunities for success.
- Increased sense of pride as the school acknowledges parents as essential partners and values their unique expertise as contributors to the partnership.
- Increased levels of trust and open communication as schools move from words to actions to implement comprehensive plans that view all partners as part of the solution for student success.
- Family ownership and commitment to:
  - Support school initiatives
  - Academic achievement
  - Advocacy for schools and staff

When schools invite parents to share in the responsibility for their child's school performance by indicating that efforts from school and home toward a common goal are known to produce better outcomes for students, schools are saying parents are essential, not merely desirable, to promote student success."

S. Christenson, Supporting Home-School Collaboration  
Children, Youth and Family Consortium (CYFC) <http://www.cyfc.umn.edu>

## How Do School Staff Benefit From Volunteering Programs?

*The benefits of volunteering for staff include:*

- Increased readiness and comfort level with planning and implementing activities to involve families in new ways, including those who do not volunteer at school.
- Enhanced awareness of parent talents and interests in school and children.
- Greater individual attention to students, with help from volunteers.
- Improved morale and decline in stress levels as educators gain confidence and identify opportunities to share responsibilities with parents.
- Decreased workload for teachers as the volunteering partnerships make them feel more comfortable with delegating or sharing tasks with volunteers.
- Increased levels of trust and open communication as schools move from words to actions to implement comprehensive plans that view all partners as part of the solution for student success.
- Expanded avenues of resources fostered by two-way communication among all members of the partnership in the school community.
- Increased sense of pride for the educators and administrators as the parent acknowledges their unique expertise and contribution to the partnership.
- Improved; student behavior, achievement and AYP scores.

## How Does “Volunteering” Benefit the Community?

- Development of a legacy of volunteering as student’s model the concepts of service to give back to their community through volunteering.
- Increased numbers of highly involved citizens will create long term benefits to reduce crime, strengthen the economy and improve the quality of life.
- Increased pride and sense of ownership of the community.
- Improved personal communication and positive relations within the community will create a resilient environment in a complex world.



# Connecting Volunteering with School Wide Goals

Here are two examples of how the **Volunteering Key Subcommittee** would support the **School Action Team** in accomplishing an Academic Goal.

## School Wide Goal: Improve Science Comprehension

**Activity:** Organize a school wide Science Fair.

### Recruit Parent, Teacher or Community Volunteers to:

- Serve as judges and Master of Ceremony
- Set up and break down the facility
- Serve as mentors or consultants to students participating in the fair
- Serve as leaders for the fair
- Organize and oversee supplies and donations

### Meetings:

- How often?
- Where will they take place?
- When will they take place?

**Timeline:** How long will this event last?

### Evaluation of Activity:

- What did the student's learn?
- How did the parents respond to this activity?
- How did the school and the community respond to this activity?



### Summary:

- What worked?
- What didn't work?
- How can it be improved?

### Measuring the Student's Comprehension:

- Is this applicable to the standards?
- Will it help meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)?
- How did this activity support the student's learning?
- Is the comprehension measurable?
- Did this activity promote and support family and community involvement?

## School Wide Goal: Improve Reading and Comprehension

**Activity:** Organize a school wide “Read All About It” day.

### **Recruit Parent, Teacher and Community Volunteers to:**

- Serve on coordinating committee to decide on: topics, materials and speakers
- Serve as leaders for the event
- Serve as reading group leaders, guest speakers, and mentors to students
- Organize and oversee supplies and donations
- Get reading materials and supplies donated
- Assist with set-up and break down of the facility used for event
- Serve on the panel that the students will be presenting to or as judges depending on how the event is organized

### **Meetings:**

- How often?
- Where will they take place?
- When will they take place?



### **Timeline:**

- How long will this “day” event last?
- How much advance notice will be needed for participants, staff and family (“book reading groups” or other pre-event preparations).

### **Evaluation of Activity:**

- What did the students learn?
- How did the parents respond to this activity?
- How did the school and the community respond to this activity?

### **Summary:**

- What worked?
- What didn’t work?
- How can it be improved?

### **Measuring the Student’s Reading and Comprehension:**

- Is this applicable to the standards?
- Will it help meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)?
- How did this activity support the student’s learning?
- Is the comprehension measurable?
- Did this activity promote and support family and community involvement?

# 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. Before moving forward in this book, think about the topics we have covered. As you read the information, we hope you were thinking about your school community. Use these questions to share your ideas.

**What resources are already in place to support volunteering?**

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**What resources or activities could be put in to place to support volunteering?**

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**What are some things that you think should be addressed by the Volunteering Committee of the 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.*

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

~Margaret Mead

*Action Team for Partnerships*  
*ATP*  
*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/>

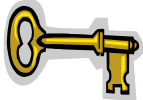
# The Keys to Successful School, Family and Community Partnerships

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.



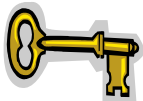
## Parenting

Type 1



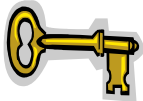
## Communicating

Type 2



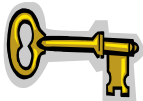
## Volunteering

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	Mic 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:						

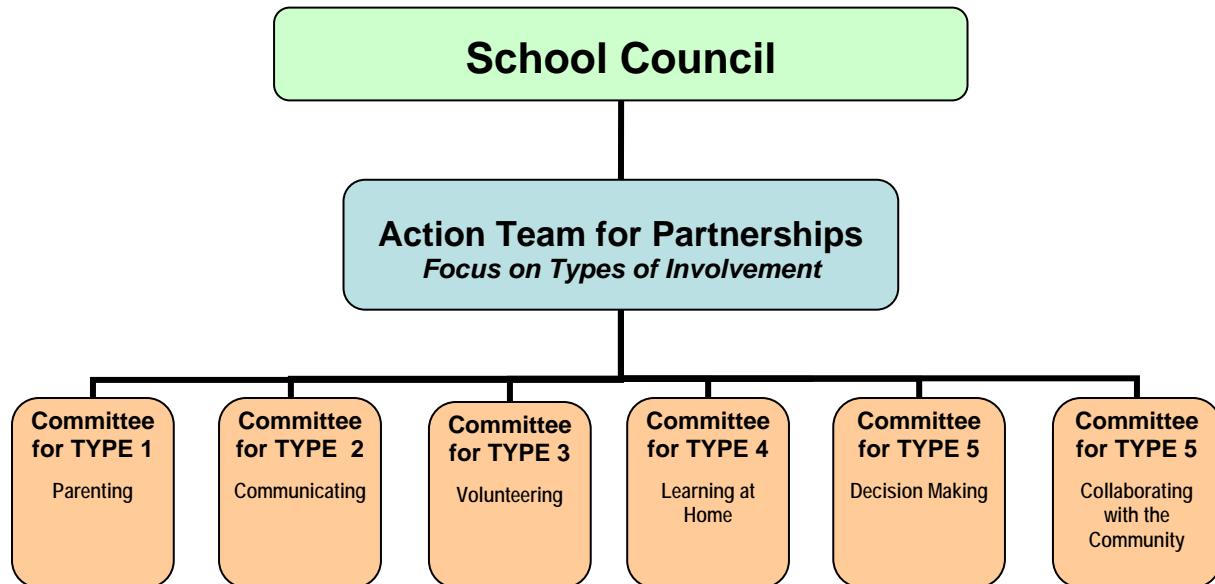
<b>Key 6 Collaborating with the Community Goal:</b> Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.	Rating			Which Level?		
	Excellent	Good	Poor	Elementary	Mid School	High School
<b>Our School:</b>						
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

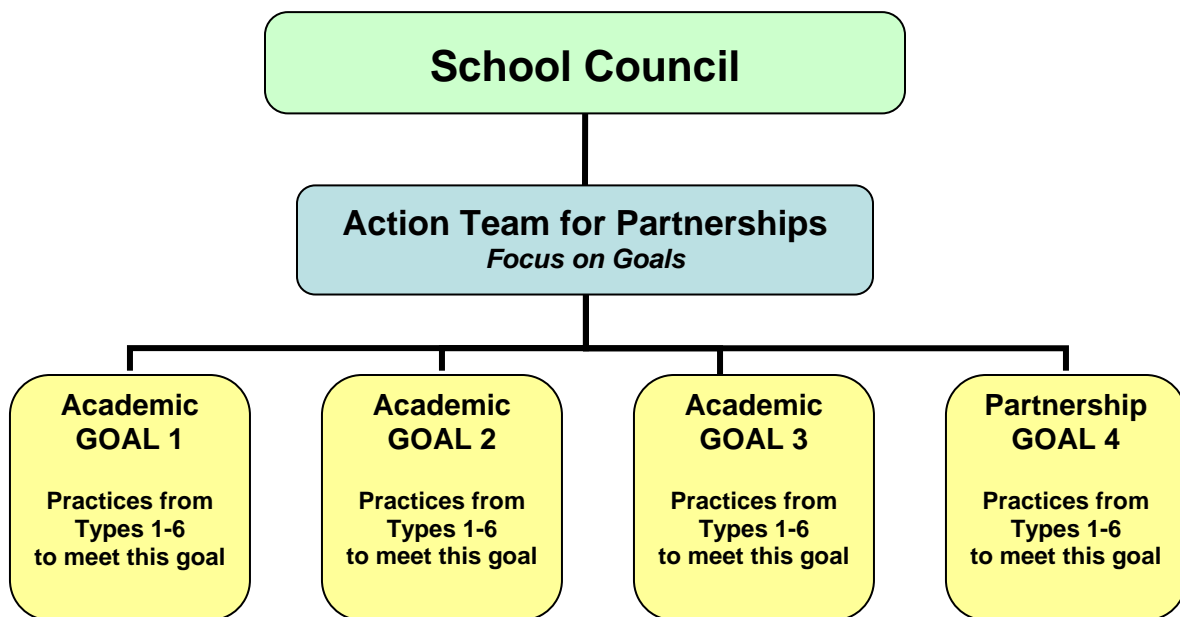
## Action Team for Partnerships Structure

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



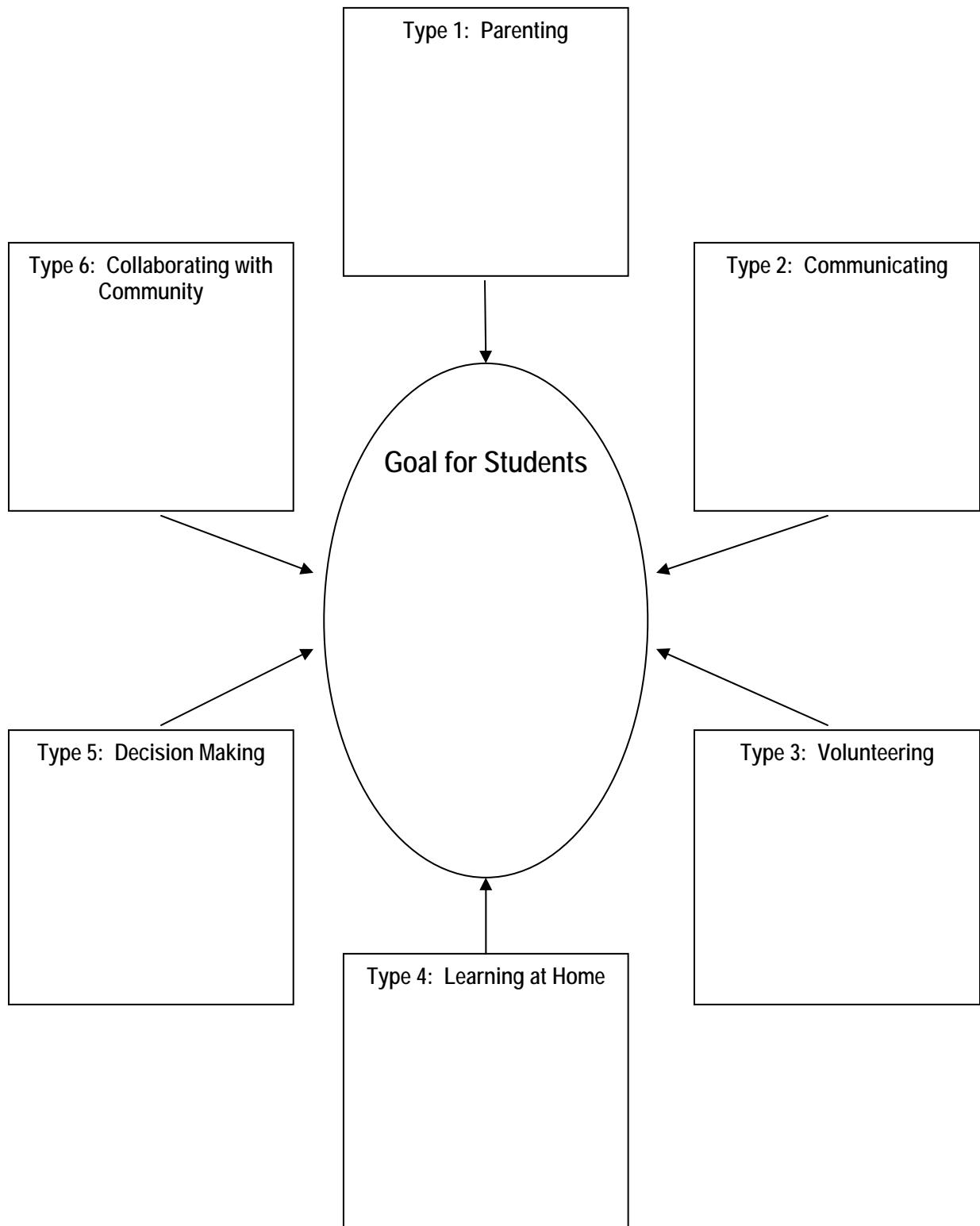
### Goals Structure



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 32).
  - 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

<b>Coordinating Responsibilities</b>	<b>Who Will Do It?</b>	<b>For How Long?</b>
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		
<b>Facilitating Responsibilities</b>	<b>Who Will Do It?</b>	<b>For How Long?</b>
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		
<b>Recording Responsibilities</b>	<b>Who Will Do It?</b>	<b>For How Long?</b>
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>		
<p>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).</p>		
<b>Planning for the Future</b>		
<p>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.)?</p>		



# 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 Student Success*



# 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 Volunteering

## For Parents

### Parent/Family Reflection on Volunteerism

Use this checklist to rate the school in the area of school-home-community volunteerism. Think about specific questions and actions you can take to increase volunteering. *Think of ways to make a difference!*

	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Specific Questions to Ask at School:	Actions to Take to Increase Volunteering:
1. I feel that the school has tried to find out about my interests and skills and has connected me with things that I would be interested in doing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
2. If I have questions about volunteering or an idea to share, I know who to talk to at the school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
3. I feel that the school staff respects and values the skills and experiences I can share as a volunteer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
4. I think giving back to the community is important and want my children to learn from what I do in the schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
5. I feel good sharing my skills and experiences with students and staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
6. I think the school volunteer program is clear, organized and offer many different things that I can do.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

## For Administrators and Educators

Here is an example of a volunteer survey. Volunteer surveys can be a useful tool to identify the parents' or other family members' interests in volunteering. You may use it as is or modify to address the needs in our school community. Results will help match volunteer interests and skills with identified needs in your school, based on your Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS).

### Sample Volunteer Survey:

*School staff and active parent groups are always looking for ways to improve the school and opportunities available to students. In no way is this an obligation, just an opportunity. Please complete this survey and return it to your school to let them know your interest in volunteering. Return it to the school secretary, principal, parent representative or your child's teacher.*

Please complete the following page to let us know about volunteering opportunities you are interested in learning more about.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the best time to reach you to talk about school events or your child? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the best time for you to attend meetings, conferences or school functions?

Weekdays: Are there particular days of the week that are best for you? \_\_\_\_\_

Evenings: Are there particular evenings that are best for you? \_\_\_\_\_

Weekends: Do you prefer a particular day or time on the weekends? \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in learning more about volunteering in the classroom in the areas checked below:

Tutoring students

Reading with students

Working with small groups of students

Translating for parents or students

Helping prepare materials for classroom use

Attending field trips

Assisting with special events (performances, celebrations, science fairs, etc.)

Appearing as a guest speaker in the area of: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Sample Volunteer Survey (continued)

I am interested in learning more about volunteering **in the school** in the areas checked:

- Sponsoring a presentation to provide information about school goals and curriculum
- Leading a discussion at a community meeting or Chapter House meeting on school issues
- Working in the school library and/or computer lab
- Photographing school activities
- Providing transportation to parents and/or students for special events
- Accompanying children to the clothing bank
- Typing, clerical work, copying or collating handouts or making phone calls
- Preparing newsletters
- Preparing bulletin boards, posters and displays
- Campus beautification
- Share the type of work you do with a class
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in learning more about volunteering **from home** in the areas checked:

- Recruiting parents, community members and local businesses to participate in special programs for students
- Typing or data entry on a computer
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Gathering resource materials
- Sewing
- Providing snacks or food for special events
- Preparing envelopes or mailings

# For Everyone

## Creating Family Friendly Schools

Family friendly schools create a climate that is open and helpful. These schools make every effort to build partnerships with all *families*, not just those that are most involved. Use this checklist to determine how family friendly your school is as you set goals and plan to increase the “friendliness factor” in ways that will reflect the cultures and languages of your community.

Practices for creating a family friendly school environment:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create and publicly post a family, school, community partnership policy or mission statement that provides the philosophical framework for all family, school, community activities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish policies and practices that acknowledge and support traditional and nontraditional families, as well as those with differing schedules and commitments.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create an open door policy and climate that is responsive to parents and their concerns. If for safety reasons it is necessary to lock some doors, be sure that families understand this and know the procedure for calling and being met at the front door.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Set school calendars, when possible, to accommodate major community events, activities and ceremonies.
Create a front office atmosphere that makes people feel welcome:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Greet families with a smile and warm welcome.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have parent friendly information translated into other languages as necessary.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create a comfortable, clean place to sit, meet and access resources.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hire bilingual staff to serve as interpreters as necessary
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recognize that families have different learning styles and require that you vary the way information is shared.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arrange for flexibility in routine tasks such as registration and orientation. For example, offer online and telephone options, and day and evening hours, etc.
School staff who are successful in engaging family members share the following qualities:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recognize that parents play a crucial role in their child’s learning.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Always treat parents with respect.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrate professionalism and confidence.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrate concern for students in all interactions with parents.

# 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 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 resources that may prove useful to those who wish to learn more about the importance of parental involvement.

## **Center for the Education and Study of Diverse Populations (CESDP)**

[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.

## **Children, Youth and Family Consortium (CYFC)**

<http://www.cyfc.umn.edu>

The Children, Youth and Family Consortium's web site is a bridge to a wide range of information and resources about children and families. It connects research, teaching, policy, and community practice. CYFC seeks to advance greater understanding, shared knowledge, and action that is informed and deliberate.

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

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

"...NNPS tools, guidelines, and action team approach may be used by all elementary, middle, and high schools to increase involvement and improve student learning and development," explains Dr. Joyce L. Epstein, Founder and Director of NNPS. This link has many tried and true volunteering practices based on the Epstein Model.

## **New Mexico Parent Teacher Association**

<http://www.nmpta.org/100ways.html>

There are many ways to be involved. *100 Ways to Know More. Do More.* describes ways you can be involved with your school. Whatever you choose, you'll soon see the effects your efforts have on your children, their schools and yourself. That's because when parents get involved in their child's education, everyone benefits.

## **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.

## **Parents Are Teachers Too!**

<http://www.parentsareteacherstoo.com/Index.htm>

This website is based on the Family Tools section of the School, Community & Parent Toolkit produced by the New Mexico Public Education Department. It has some good ideas about getting more involved through volunteering at your child's school.

## **Project Appleseed**

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

Through the National Campaign for Public School Improvement, Project Appleseed is helping schools involve parents. This organization has created a list of 37 different ways in which parents can connect with schools to make a difference.

## **PTO Today**

[www.ptotoday.com](http://www.ptotoday.com)

PTO Today supports PTA's and parent organizations with free articles, tips, resources and management tools (available for purchase) to develop and sustain vibrant, equitable family involvement and volunteering in schools.

## **Service Leader**

<http://www.serviceleader.org/new/volunteers/index.php>

Great information to help you decide about the right volunteer opportunity that is a good match for you. Making the most out of your volunteer activities can be crucial to making a real difference and having a rewarding experience.

## **Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL)**

[www.sedl.org](http://www.sedl.org)

SEDL is funded by a grant the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education to identify and sustain effective solutions for the problems facing educational systems. *Creating Collaborative Action Teams: Working Together for Student Success* is a good resource for school communities as they design quality learning opportunities to sustain partnerships through the Action Team process. Action Teams in school communities in New Mexico are featured in these materials.

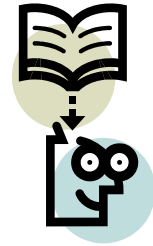
## **United States Department of Education**

<http://www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml>

Everything you need to know about No Child Left Behind, including fact sheets, success stories, policy information and much more.

You cannot order people to become cohesive. You cannot order great performance. You have to create the culture and climate that makes it possible. You have to build the bonds of trust. Michael Abrashoff

# 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?*



# 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.

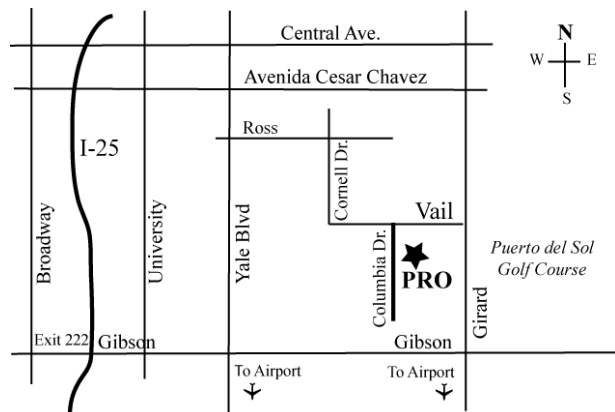
*Parents Reaching Out is the home of:*

- 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"

