

## Lead and Succeed: An Inventory of District Leadership and Facilitation Strategies for Partnerships

Natalie Rodriguez Jansorn and Joyce L. Epstein

District leaders who are specialists in partnership program development must guide all schools in conducting and sustaining excellent research-based partnership programs. To reach this goal, district facilitators must write and implement a Leadership Plan for Partnerships to (1) conduct district-level activities that support the policy on partnerships, and (2) directly assist schools' Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs) to develop effective, goal-oriented programs of school, family, and community partnerships.

This inventory is organized around six leadership strategies: create awareness, align program and policy, guide learning and program development, share knowledge, celebrate milestones, and document progress and evaluate outcomes. The inventory outlines 50 activities that district facilitators may select to conduct their own partnership programs. The strategies and activities in the inventory are based on the results of research on districts' partnership program development and examples shared by district leaders with the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) for many years.

District facilitators are *not* expected to implement all of the activities listed. They should, however, consider which ones to include in their plans to increase the effectiveness and sustainability of district-level and school-based programs of family and community involvement.

### Directions:

Check (✓) all activities that presently are conducted in your district.

Star (★) the activities that you want to initiate in the future, as you develop your district's program.

At the end of each section, add other activities that you presently conduct or plan to conduct that are not listed.

Use this information to write your district's Leadership Plan for Partnerships (pp. 274–275 and on *Handbook* CD).



CD material referenced on this page can also be downloaded from [resources.corwin.com/PartnershipsHandbook](http://resources.corwin.com/PartnershipsHandbook)

**Strategy: Create awareness.** Actively promote the partnership program to all key stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, families, and community groups.

- Convene a one-on-one meeting with the district superintendent to discuss the goals for the partnership program.
- Conduct presentations about the district's goals for its partnership program to the school board, parent advisory council, and/or other key leadership groups.
- Conduct awareness sessions for school principals on the partnership program, including information on the assistance that your office will provide to all schools' ATPs.
- Identify schools to participate in the district's partnership initiative.
- Announce the district's partnership program on the district website.
- Disseminate a press release announcing the launch of the district's partnership initiative to parents and the public, including businesses and community organizations.
- Conduct presentations in schools for School Improvement Teams, PTAs, faculties, and/or others to inform them of the district's program.
- Meet individually with each school principal at the start of the school year to clarify the work of the district facilitator(s) and how the principal will support the ATP and program of partnerships.
- Distribute information on the district's partnership program and, if appropriate, its affiliation with the NNPS at Johns Hopkins University.

#### OTHER DISTRICT ACTIVITIES TO CREATE AWARENESS

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**Strategy: Align program and policy.** With support from district leadership, integrate the partnership program with district policies, requirements, and procedures.

- Ensure that the district policy on partnerships refers to district-level leadership activities and to direct assistance to help all schools develop their partnership programs with goal-linked engagement activities.
- Write a Leadership Plan for Partnerships that includes district-level actions and direct facilitation of school ATPs. (Use this inventory as a resource.)
- Identify a budget with funds to implement the district partnership program.
- Obtain approval and support from the superintendent for schools to establish ATPs and to link their Action Plans for Partnerships to goals in their school improvement plans.
- Alert the superintendent and school board to how the district Leadership Plan for Partnerships reflects the district's policy on family and community engagement.
- Develop or review district policies so that work and progress on family and community involvement is one component of the professional evaluations of principals and teachers.
- Assist schools to identify a school-based budget to implement their partnership programs.
- Obtain the commitment of each school principal and ATP to strengthen goal-linked activities for family and community engagement.

#### OTHER DISTRICT ACTIVITIES TO ALIGN PROGRAM AND POLICY

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**Strategy: Guide learning and program development.** Organize and conduct professional development activities to assist schools in developing their partnership programs.

- Assist schools with preliminary steps to begin a partnership program (e.g., identify the members of the ATP, arrange a team-training workshop).
- Conduct a One-Day Team-Training Workshop for all participating schools' ATPs that includes basic information on the framework of six types of involvement, how to meet challenges to engage all families, how to link engagement activities to goals for students' academic and behavioral outcomes, how to have a well-functioning team, and how to write a good *One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships*. (See Chapters 4 and 5 and the *Handbook CD* to guide this workshop.)
- Contact or meet with ATP leaders and team members at least monthly at each participating school.
- Organize a clear process for the district facilitator to provide feedback and support for each school's program.
- Convene quarterly cluster meetings for groups of school ATP chairs or co-chairs to share experiences and learn about specific program topics.
- Develop and implement professional development workshops and presentations for all teachers and school staff on partnerships.
- Conduct workshops for parents on ways to partner with the school to increase student success.
- Conduct a refresher workshop to help ATPs continue developing their partnership programs from year to year.
- Award small grants to schools as incentives to build their partnership programs using research-based approaches.

#### **OTHER DISTRICT ACTIVITIES TO GUIDE LEARNING AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

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**Strategy: Share knowledge.** Foster ongoing communication throughout the district to build knowledge about programs of school, family, and community partnerships.

- Share progress on the district's partnership program efforts with the superintendent, school board, principals, and others in leadership positions.
- Use an online learning platform to create a forum for school ATP leaders to share information, resources, and challenges connected with the district's partnership program.
- Disseminate an e-newsletter that shares information, events, and highlights of district and school partnership programs.
- Tweet, blog, post photos to Instagram, write posts to Facebook, and/or use other social media to generate excitement and knowledge about partnership activities throughout the district.
- Facilitate regularly scheduled meetings with other district departments working on family involvement issues (e.g., special education, ESOL/bilingual education, Title I).
- Host a monthly webinar lunch series to share information and answer questions about partnership topics.
- Assist schools to share information about their partnership activities in the local media (including foreign language TV and radio stations) throughout the school year.

#### **OTHER DISTRICT ACTIVITIES TO SHARE KNOWLEDGE**

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**Strategy: Celebrate milestones.** Recognize school and district successes in partnership programs and practices, and disseminate the successes widely.

- Host an end-of-year celebration for all schools' ATPs to share best practices, solve challenges, and write the next *One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships*.
- Edit and distribute in print or e-form a collection of promising partnership practices from each school.
- Send thank-you messages to schools for submitting promising partnership practices to the district collection.
- Send messages to principals, ATP members, and volunteers each year thanking them for their work on partnerships.
- Write an annual progress report on the district's partnership program to share with key stakeholders.
- Organize a recognition program to celebrate schools for achieving milestones such as implementing their first family and community engagement activity, increasing attendance at activities, or connecting activities to specific learning goals for students.
- Create a video, PowerPoint presentation, or other display of selected partnership activities to share with the school board, principals, community groups, parent association, and others.
- Assist ATPs to recognize and thank volunteers and supporters in their schools.

#### OTHER DISTRICT ACTIVITIES TO CELEBRATE MILESTONES

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**Strategy: Document progress and evaluate outcomes.** Collect information to document activities and assess progress in meeting district program goals, and assist each ATP to document and evaluate progress in implementing their action plans for partnerships.

- Provide schools with an easy-to-use electronic recordkeeping system to document and save records of the plans and activities of their ATPs.
- Collect schools' One-Year Action Plans for Partnerships each year and use them to check schools' progress on a monthly schedule.
- Establish a quarterly or monthly recordkeeping system for the district facilitator(s) to document visits to schools and technical assistance that is provided or requested.
- Use the *Summary of School Visits (Handbook CD)* for contacts with ATPs and others at each school.
- Evaluate the district facilitator(s) for partnerships annually on established indicators.
- Assist schools' ATPs to use simple evaluation tools, including the *Annual Evaluation of Activities* (pp. 348–359 and *Handbook CD*) and the *Annual Review of Team Processes* (p. 112 and CD) to continually improve their partnership programs.
- Encourage schools to complete the annual School *UPDATE* survey (if they are members of NNPS) to assess the quality of their partnership programs.
- Complete the annual District *UPDATE* survey (if a member of NNPS) to assess the quality of the district's partnership program.

#### OTHER DISTRICT ACTIVITIES TO DOCUMENT PROGRESS AND EVALUATE OUTCOMES

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