



Family-School
& Community
Partnerships
Bureau



Family School Partners

September 2009

First Things

SCHOOLS FIRST – rewarding successful partnerships



Schools First announce that they received 1555 applications in Year One. In 2009, there will be 68 local awards at \$50,000 each, eight of which will go on to be awarded a state/territory award which receives a total of \$100,000 each. One outstanding school-community partnership will be judged the national winner and receive an award valued between \$500,000 and \$1 million.

The 20 **Seed Funding Award** winners for 2009 were announced on 7 September. Full list with project descriptions is at <http://www.schoolsfirst.edu.au/sf-2009-awards-winners/index.phps>.

The **Local Impact Award** winners in each state/territory will be announced between 24 September and 13 October. The **State Impact Award** winners in each state/territory will be announced between 22 and 29 October. Read the full schedule of winner announcements at <http://www.schoolsfirst.edu.au/sf-stories/announcement-of-schools-first-award-winners.phps>.

Read more at <http://www.schoolsfirst.edu.au/>

Perspectives

Here are some examples of how family-school and community partnerships are understood, explored, developed and strengthened outside Australia. They are as notable for their differences as their similarities.

State of Wisconsin, USA

Family-School-Community Partnerships Work!

Forty years of research show that schools with effective partnerships have

- **Students** with higher grades and test scores, better attendance, higher graduation rates, and greater enrollment in postsecondary education
- **Students** with more positive attitudes and behavior
- **Teachers** with higher morale and higher ratings from parents
- **Families** who give the school more support
- **Communities** which regard the school more highly

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction **Community Learning and Partnerships Team** offers publications, tools, presentations, PDF Document and events to help schools and districts start and sustain partnership practices that make a real difference.

Former State Superintendent Burmaster established the **Parent Leadership Corps** to share information on successful family-school-community partnerships across the state. DPI has instituted a **Family-School-Community Partnerships Policy**.

Partnerships also play an important role in Wisconsin's **REACH (Responsive Education for All Children) Initiative** to enhance the success of all students.

Read more at <http://dpi.wi.gov/fscp/fscphome.html>

State of New Mexico, USA

Working Together: School-Family-Community Partnerships

A Toolkit for New Mexico School Communities

This Toolkit is designed to support the development of school, family and community partnerships with the ultimate goal of helping all children and youth succeed in school and in life.

For **teachers and administrators** to strengthen, examine and reflect on their own family involvement practices as well as support strong partnerships between school, home and community.

For **parents and community members** to guide involvement and the strengthening of partnerships between school and home.

Training modules designed to provide opportunities for understanding the six types of parental involvement, meet challenges towards improvement, and link partnership activities to results.

Read more at <http://www.cesdp.nmhu.edu/toolkit/index.html>

The Knowledge Loom

In the Spotlight: School, Family, Community Partnerships



Children move between two influential environments that build attitudes and readiness for learning: the home and the school. Family involvement research clearly demonstrates that children thrive academically when the family and the school agree that they are stronger together than apart.

Schools and homes that share philosophies, resources, goals, information, and the hard work of teaching give children the stability, consistency, and encouragement they need for academic success.

Family involvement has proven to work regardless of the educational context, the age of the child, or the family's situation and experiences. From preschool to high school, family involvement accelerates learning, although it takes on different forms.

Organizations with strong ties to urban America believe that family involvement can help low income and minority children transcend the educational barriers. Major initiatives such as Head Start, Even Start, and the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program require family involvement as a core element, as crucial to academic success as an effective curriculum.

Read more at <http://knowledgeloop.org/practices3.jsp?location=1&bpinterid=1051&spotlightid=1051>

SEDL

Family and Community

SEDL is a private, nonprofit education research, development, and dissemination (RD&D) corporation based in Austin, Texas. Improving teaching and learning has been at the heart of SEDL's work for more than 40 years.

National Parental Information and Resource Center (PIRC) Coordination Center: The National PIRC Coordination Center, a partnership of SEDL, the Harvard Family Research Project, and the Miko Group, Inc., supports the nation's 62 PIRCs through regional and national conferences, new grantee orientations, workshops and training events, dissemination of research-based materials, on-site technical assistance, and program evaluations.

The PIRCs work to promote parental involvement policies and activities that can lead to improved student academic achievement, particularly among low-income, minority, and limited English proficient (LEP) students in elementary and secondary schools.

National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools: SEDL's National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools disseminates research-based information and resources to foster connections among families, communities, and schools with the goal of improving student academic achievement.

The Center emphasizes connections that impact student achievement in reading and math, as well as connections that contribute to students' overall success in school and in life.

Read more at http://www.sedl.org/expertise/family_community_services.html

Helping your student at home

abc 123

Simple steps to your child's success



Canada is another country exploring how family-school and community partnerships might positively influence student achievement and satisfaction.

A key element is providing guidelines and resources to help parents support their children's education at home.

The Ontario Ministry of Education provide sets of 10 tips to parents of primary school students:

- Help Your Child with Reading (K-3, 4-6)
- Help Your Child with Math (K-3, 4-6)
- Help Your Child with Writing (K-3, 4-6)
- Help Boys with Reading
- Help Your Child Do Homework
- Get Your Child Ready for School
- Help You Communicate with Your Child's Teacher
- Use Arts and Crafts to Develop Math and Literacy Skills

Read more at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/abc123/eng/tips/>

Research

International Perspectives on Contexts, Communities and Evaluated Innovative Practices: Family-school-community partnerships

Edited by Rollande Deslandes, published June 2009 by Routledge



Research and practice in the vast field of school-family-community relations have evolved dramatically over the last thirty years. Schools throughout the world face enormous challenges due to demographic changes and societal problems, making partnerships among schools, families and community groups a necessity.

Specific issues such as poverty, school dropout, violence and suicide, the wider diversity of students and parents, the higher accountability demanded of school systems, the implementation of school reforms and a multitude of government strategies and policies all contribute to a rapidly changing educational world.

But as this book shows, even though research is often being undertaken independently in different countries, strong similarities are apparent across countries and cultures. School-family-community collaboration is no longer a single country issue.

The book brings together contributions from culturally and linguistically diverse countries facing these common situations and challenges. It details practices that have proved effective alongside relevant case examples, and covers a wide variety of topics, including:

- challenges arising from the application of parent-school legislation at national level
- the work of schools with migrant groups, low-income parents and parents with behaviour problems.
- evaluation of various family-school-community partnerships programs
- the way ahead for Family-School-Community Relations

Read more at <http://www.routledgeeducation.com/books/International-Perspectives-on-Contexts-Communities-and-Evaluated-Innovative-Practices-isbn9780415479493>

School-Parent-Community Partnerships: The Experience of Teachers Who Received the Queen Rania Award for Excellence in Education in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Obeidat, Osamha M.; Al-Hassan, Suha M., The School Community Journal, 2009, Vol. 19, No. 1

The purpose of this study is to examine and understand the school-parents-community partnerships created by teachers who received the Queen Rania Award for Excellence in Education. This study analyzes the applications of the 28 teachers who received the Award in 2007 and addresses three questions:

- How do teachers who received the Queen Rania Award communicate with parents and the broader community?
- What kinds of voluntary work do teachers who received the Award pursue inside and outside the school?
- And, How do teachers who received the Award encourage students to be more aware of social and community issues and then motivate students to be involved in the community?

The findings of the study show that teachers connect with parents and the community in five ways: (1) communicating with parents, (2) involving parents in the learning process, (3) involving the community in the school, (4) pursuing volunteer projects, and (5) involving students in the community.

Each of these categories are divided into several themes that represent ways to connect with parents and the community.

Read more at

http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/44/b7/cb.pdf

National Family-School Partnerships Framework



Has your school, or your P&C, received its copy of the **Guide to the National Family-School Partnerships Framework**?

You can download a copy from our website at <http://www.familyschool.org.au/pdf/framework.pdf> or email info@familyschool.org.au to have a hard copy mailed to you (make sure you include a mailing address).

This Digital Life

Community partnerships

NSW Department of Education

School communities are encouraged to review their current supporting structures, policies and procedures for community partnerships and develop new ones where necessary.

This may include establishing a dedicated family-school action team or using an existing working group that includes parents and community members, to develop and coordinate partnership plans and activities in relation to the *Digital Education Revolution*.

Research by Richardson, T (Executive Director Strategy & Policy, Becta), shows that parental interest in their child's education is the single most powerful predictor of achievement at age 16.

To maximise support for laptop implementation in classrooms, leaders can provide parents and community members with the **Parent FAQs**, the **Parent and Community Fact Sheet** and **Laptop Policies and Procedures**.

Read more: <https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/proflearn/der/infopages/compart.htm>



Tell us your story

The Bureau wants to build up a collection of video stories about schools that we can use to inspire other schools and their communities. Contact us at info@familyschool.org.au.

Please send your comments and suggestions to <mailto:info@familyschool.org.au>

To unsubscribe from **Family School Partners**, click here:

<mailto:webmaster@familyschool.org.au?subject=unsubscribeFSP>