



NCPIE Update

A Publication of the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education November 2005

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- **Highlights from the October Meeting and Presentation**

The Recommendations of Maryland's Parent Advisory Council to the State Board of Ed.

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Due to some of the concerns brought about by the 10/26 LA Times misleading headline, *Parents' Involvement Not Key to Student Progress*, we felt it important to reiterate the research from the Westat Policy Studies Associates. This month we highlight again this piece of research originally covered in the October 2004 Update.

- **Parent Involvement Resources, Upcoming Meetings, and Trainings**

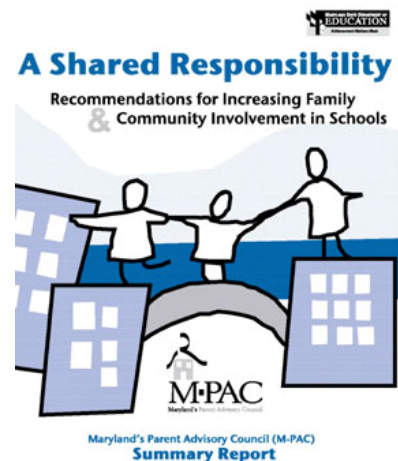
In this section find out more about upcoming NCPIE activities and presentations, meetings of groups and organizations that support parent involvement in education and NCPIE Coalition members, and general updates about what is happening and taking place in the parent involvement community

- All Pro Dad—An NFL Initiative For America's Dads
- National Community Education Association Annual Conference: "Community Education: Gateway to Strong Diverse Communities"
- FINE Makes Researching Parent Involvement Easy

Maryland's Recommendations for Increasing Family and Community Involvement in Schools

The October NPCIE meeting featured a presentation of the Maryland Parent Advisory Council's (M-PAC) recommendations to the Maryland State Board of Education for strengthening parent involvement. On hand to share with us the M-PAC final report, *A Shared Responsibility: Recommendations for Increasing Family and Community Involvement in Schools* and to provide first hand knowledge of its development was **Esther Parker**, President of Maryland's PTA and Chair of M-PAC, Maryland's Parent Advisory Council, **LaVerne Nicholson Sykes**, a Main Council member and Director of the Office of Parent Involvement and Family, School,

Community Connections in Baltimore City Public Schools, and **Adam Kernan-Schloss**, President, KSA-Plus Communications, who served as a consultant to M-PAC during this process. An overview of their presentation and highlights of the M-PAC project including the History, Rationale and Recommendation is provided below.



A Look at Parent Involvement Initiatives in Maryland and M-PAC's Charge

In October 2001, The Maryland State Board of Education adopted a statewide Family Involvement Policy. At the time of its adoption, this policy was one of the most inclusive policies in the country and was a demonstration of Maryland's support and commitment to promoting family and community involvement in public education. In the fall of 2003, Nancy Grasmick, Maryland State Superintendent of Schools, convened Maryland's Parent Advisory Council (M-PAC); a statewide group of 125 appointed parents and advocates who advise the State Board of Education and Dr. Grasmick on parent involvement issues ranging from policy to implementation. Specifically, Dr. Grasmick charged M-PAC with making recommendations on how the Maryland State Department of Education could meet the state's family-involvement goal (known as Goal 5) and objectives from its strategic plan, *Achievement Matters Most*. Goal 5 states that: *Families will be involved in education*. There are four objectives related to this goal:

1. School systems and schools will communicate more frequently and clearly with families and communities
2. Schools will help parents and legal guardians enhance their parenting skills and will share with them activities to promote academic success
3. All school systems will adopt a family involvement policy aligned with the state policy
4. Schools will help parents and legal guardians improve school and student performance

M-PAC spent nearly two years studying the current state of parent and family involvement in Maryland and identifying ways to increase the quantity and quality of it. The scope of the project included state, local and school-based policies and implementation strategies. The work of the project began with a survey developed by Soo Hong, a Policy Fellow from the Council of Chief State School Officers. The survey was distributed to and collected from 1,684 parents, educators, community members and other stakeholders. Feedback from that survey directed the work of three M-PAC subcommittees:

Parent Involvement and its Impact on Student Achievement
Communications and Partnership Through Non-Traditional Channels
Education Policy Issues

An M-PAC Main Council oversaw the work of each subcommittee, which met one to two times a month. Additionally, they each conducted research, listened to presentations from state and national level experts in their respective committee level areas, and submitted reports to the Main Council. It was the information gleaned from these individual reports that guided the creation of a preliminary set of recommendations from M-PAC to the State Board of Education in February 2005.

In order to allow the Maryland public to review and provide feedback on these preliminary recommendations, public forums were held in all 24 school systems in the state. Each forum was held in locations close to public transportation, publicized in multiple formats and languages and participation by diverse groups of stakeholders in the community was very good, including: parents, educators, and community and business partners. The feedback given in these forums was used to finalize a set of recommendations to the State Board.

M-PAC's Five Recommendations

M-PAC's final report to the Maryland State Board of Education represents the strongest set of recommendations in the country in support of parent involvement in public education. This includes mandatory participation by parents on the State Board of Education, emphasis on training in the field of parent involvement for parents and educators alike, as well as regular satisfaction surveys, and a recommendation for local level districts to include parent satisfaction as a factor in staff reviews and assessments. The recommendations have five themes:

1. Communication

2. Leadership
3. Training
4. Partnership
5. Accountability

M-PAC's Communication Recommendations: To improve parents' ability to be involved in schools, the Maryland State Department of Education should...

- Communicate — using varied methods, media, resources, and languages — the rights and responsibilities of parents to develop and respond to education policy, procedures, and practices at the state, local school system, and school levels.

Local school systems and schools should...

- Hold regular, meaningful parent/teacher conferences that address the full range of issues affecting student achievement.
- Using varied methods, media, and languages, regularly provide parents information on their rights and responsibilities, on grading and discipline policies, and on the importance of meaningful parent involvement.
- Using varied methods, media, and languages, provide parents curriculum and program information *by grade* and suggest steps for improving individual student achievement. A committee of parents and educators should review the information to ensure that it is understandable to all parents.

M-PAC's Leadership Recommendations: To build the leadership and organizational structure necessary to support family and community involvement in schools, the Maryland State Board of Education and/or Maryland State Department of Education should ...

- Initiate and/or support legislation that would place at least two parents with a child attending a Maryland public school on the State Board of Education.
- Ensure the establishment of an organizational structure that includes personnel at the state, local school system, and school levels. This structure will oversee leadership, training, monitoring, and support for family and community involvement and partnerships.
- Encourage local school systems to establish parent involvement advisory groups to advise their local boards of education on parent involvement concerns, practices, and research. These groups would also communicate board policies, parent involvement strategies, and research to parents and communities.

M-PAC's Training Recommendations: To increase the amount and effectiveness of family and community involvement in schools, the Maryland State Department of Education should...

- Assess local school systems' parent and community involvement training needs, and then provide school systems appropriate technical assistance, training, resources, and mentoring.
- Encourage local school systems to include family and community involvement measures in their local assessment of training needs.
- Work with local school systems, colleges, and universities to develop and offer coursework on family involvement for current teachers, administrators, and other school staff.
- Work with colleges and universities to develop a course in parent and community involvement that is a requirement for all undergraduate education students seeking teaching certification in Maryland.

The Maryland State Board of Education should...

- Encourage local boards of education to support parent and community involvement training for central office staff, school-based staff, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members.

Local school systems should...

- Provide or ensure that schools provide job-embedded staff training that addresses issues related to individual student needs, family advocacy, cultural proficiency, and — to ensure a family-friendly atmosphere in the school — parent involvement and customer service skills.
- Provide or ensure that schools provide training for parents and community members on leadership and effective involvement with schools. To maximize access to training, it should be offered at schools, at additional sites that are convenient to the community, and on the Web.

M-PAC's Partnership Recommendations: To encourage and support schools' partnerships with families and communities, the Maryland State Department of Education should...

- Encourage all committees and task forces at the state, local school system, and school levels to offer an opportunity for participation to at least two parents (or 25% of the membership) with a child attending a Maryland public school.
- Encourage public schools to collaborate with community agencies to provide in schools such services as wellness centers, health care (physical and mental), social services, and childcare.
- Develop programs and incentives for more effective communication and partnerships (parent and community, including businesses) at the state, local school system, and school levels.

M-PAC's Accountability Recommendations: To support and measure the effectiveness of family and community involvement in schools, the Maryland State Board of Education and/or Maryland State Department of Education should...

- Adopt the State Board's 2001 Family Involvement Policy Resolution into the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR). Require local school systems to align their family involvement policies with this COMAR regulation.
- Develop a set of survey questions — that could stand alone or be incorporated into existing local school system survey instruments — to assess annually the effectiveness of parent and community involvement policies and practices. Input from local school systems and advocacy and community groups must be sought in the development of the survey. This survey information should be used to design and modify parent/family involvement activities detailed in each local school system's Master Plan and annual update.
- Establish benchmarks — in collaboration with local systems and advocacy and community groups — for local school systems and schools to use in measuring the effectiveness and progress of their parent and community involvement policies and practices. Once these benchmarks are established, progress should be reported in the Maryland School Performance Report.
- Encourage local school systems to factor parent and family involvement into the annual performance evaluations of school administrators and staff.

Concluding Statements and Next Steps

The recommendations by M-PAC were unanimously adopted by the Maryland State Board of Education on August 30, 2005. They have also been endorsed by the National PTA and the Secretary of Education. The work of the current M-PAC has been completed and a new advisory group will monitor the implementation of the recommendations, gather information and communicate to Maryland's citizens the best practices involved in increasing parent involvement in schools.

(Source: A Shared Responsibility Final Report, NCPIE Update-March 2002, "Md. Backs Closer Ties Between School, Family," The Washington Post, August 31, 2005)



Spotlight on *The Evidence*

A continuing column highlighting the research from “A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement” by Anne Henderson and Karen Mapp.

This month we spotlight a 2001 longitudinal analysis conducted as part of the National Assessment of Title I. This piece of research can be found on page 195.

“The Longitudinal Evaluation of School Change and Performance in Title I Schools, Volume I: Executive Summary:

Identified in *The Evidence* as the Westat Policy Studies Associates, this particular piece of research was not designed to study parent involvement per say. However, it did discover that parent involvement, if established as a policy and practice at schools, is a factor in improved reading and mathematics achievement.

This piece of research was the first major study to examine the impact of standards-based reform practices on student achievement. Conducted between 1996 and 1999, it is a longitudinal analysis as a part of the National Assessment of Title I. Twelve hundred students from 71 schools in 7 states took part in the study that examined data from assessments administered each spring as students moved from the third grade through the fourth and fifth grades.

This study drew on several sources of data: standardized reading and mathematics achievement test scores, teacher surveys, district administrator and principal interviews, classroom observations, focus groups of school staff and parents, and documents regarding school districts’ policies related to standards-based reform. It traced the students’ achievement scores and examined the effect of a number of student and school-level variables involving school practices, teacher preparation, and reform policies on both initial achievement and changes over time.

Parent involvement was measured by the extent to which teachers reached out to parents of low-achieving students by:

- Meeting face to face.
- Sending materials on ways to help their child at home.
- Telephoning both routinely and when their child was having problems.

Key Findings as They Relate to Parent Involvement and Reading Achievement

When third-grade teachers were especially active in outreach to low achievers’ parents, students made faster gains in reading over the next 2 years, gaining 4.6 points more than students whose teachers made only an average amount of outreach. In addition, in schools where all third grade teachers were especially active in outreach to low achievers’ parents, students gained an additional 3.7 points by fifth grade. Third-grade classrooms with generally low achievement tended to be the ones in which teachers reported contacting more parents of low achievers.

Key Findings as They Relate to Parent Involvement and Mathematics Achievement

Outreach to parents was related to mathematics achievement gains for one subgroup of students, those who initially showed low achievement. It is possible that when teachers involved low-achieving students’

parents early on, students were able to resolve their learning difficulties before they multiplied and went on to raise their test scores.

The study went on to find that test scores in math between third and fifth grade grew at a 40% higher rate for low-achieving students in schools where teachers reported high levels of parent outreach. Mathematics academic achievement increases were not at the same high levels when compared with students in schools whose teachers reported low level of parent outreach.

Additionally, the study revealed a positive correlation between professional development opportunities for teachers and academic achievement. When teachers gave higher ratings to their professional development in reading, students gained 3.1 more points than average in reading and 3.9 points in mathematics.

Conclusions

This study identified school practices and state or local policies that contributed to higher student achievement and greater achievement gains in Title I elementary schools in states and districts that had been engaged in standards-based reform for some time. Several school practices ranging from high-quality professional development and highly visible standards and assessments to less basic instruction had positive effects on student achievement in reading and mathematics. Most important is the fact that the study found that more intense outreach to low-achievers' parents had positive effects on student achievement in reading and mathematics. And the fact that such outreach was of long-term benefit to reading achievement for all students and to mathematics achievement for low-achieving students.

To read the Executive Summary please visit: www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/PES/esed/lesc_p_highlights.html.

(Source: The Longitudinal Evaluation Of School Change and Performance (LESCP) in Title I Schools Final Report, Volume I: Executive Summary)

Parent Involvement Resources, Upcoming Meetings, & Trainings

NFL Players Want to Recruit Dad to Your School

Get dads more involved at your school through the All Pro Dad program! All Pro Dad, an initiative of NFL players headed up by Indianapolis Colts' Head Coach Tony Dungy, encourages men to become better fathers. Log on to www.AllProDad.com for more information.

One of All Pro Dad's initiatives is a monthly breakfast before school hours where fathers and their children meet with other dads and kids. They hear great speakers on a wide range of family topics, spend time together and are equipped with resources to strengthen their relationship. Additional options include a dads and kids movie night, board game night etc. The best part of all, the resources are provided at **no charge!** Send away for a complimentary DVD on starting an All Pro Dad chapter by e-mailing the director Bryan Davis at: Bryan@AllProDad.com



The National Community Education Association's Annual Conference: "Community Education: Gateway to Strong Diverse Communities" Celebrating 40 Years of Excellence
December 7-10, 2005,
Renaissance Grand Hotel, St. Louis, Missouri

If you work to improve education, health and services, and cultural and recreational opportunities for all members of your community — from infants to seniors — this two- and-a-half day conference is for you. This conference is a national gathering of community educators in a forum is designed to help you create comprehensive community programs, including community schools, for the 21st century. Whether you're a newcomer or a veteran, experts in the field will fill you in on the latest issues, model programs, best practices, services and products to support you efforts. Come to learn about community education management and professional development, community education programming, after-school programs and the opportunity to explore how community education can create unity in diverse communities.

Keynote speakers on the program include:

- **Wendy D. Puriefoy**, President of the Public Education Network, a national organization of local education funds and individuals working to improve public schools and build the public's support for public education. Her organization has helped many communities establish community schools.
- **Joy Dryfoos**, author of the "Inside the Full Service Community School" and "Community Schools in Action" books. She is known for her leadership in campaigning for full service schools.
- **Eileen Kugler** a mother who shares her experiences in her children growing up in a very diverse high school. She is the author of "Debunking the Myth: Why Diverse Schools are Good for All Kids".
- **Jorge Cardoso**, the new director of the Institute for Responsive Education, brings a rich background developed by working in working with families of students in the bilingual programs in schools in the Boston area. In working on his doctorate at Boston University he studied under Don Davies, a longtime leading advocate for increasing the voice of families and communities in the education of their children.
- **Warlene Gary**, the Chief Executive Officer of the 6 million member National PTA draws from her more than two decades of advocacy for children and families to further National PTA's mission to be a powerful voice for children, a relevant resource for parents, and a strong advocate for public education. She is also a great supporter of community schools and Community Education. Warlene will address Community Education as the underutilized resource for schools to connect families and communities to their schools.

Attendance at the NCEA National Conference will provide you with excellent professional development opportunities, allow you to renew old friendships and make new ones, all the while enjoying the best St. Louis has to offer. **To register on-line visit <http://www.ncea.com/conferences/index.cfm> or call 703-359-8973.**

The 2006 Reading Recovery & K-6 Classroom Literacy Conference

The 21st annual National Reading Recovery & K-6 Classroom Literacy Conference will take place February 4-7, 2006, in Columbus, Ohio. The Conference theme is "*Changing the World One Child at a Time Through Reading.*" Literacy advocates from all levels will experience high quality professional development as they attend sessions by leading experts in the areas of Reading Recovery and K-6 classroom literacy. Please note this year's addition to the Conference — new children's literature sessions including many author sessions.



The Reading Recovery Council of North America, Inc. is a not-for-profit association of Reading Recovery professionals, advocates, and partners. The Council provides a network of opportunities for leadership and professional development. It is an advocate for Reading Recovery throughout North America. Nearly 11,000 individuals have become members of the Council since its establishment in 1995.

For additional information about the conference or to register, visit: www.readingrecovery.org

New Resource from FINE Makes Finding Information about Family Involvement Online Less Overwhelming

The Harvard Family Research Project has come up with a solution to searching for the latest information on family involvement. *"Taking a Closer Look: A Guide to Online Resources on Family Involvement"* is a guide that contains information about what national organizations are currently doing in family involvement and home-school partnerships. It contains Web links to research, information, programs, and tools about parenting practices to support children's learning and development, home-school relationships, parent leadership development, and collective engagement for school improvement and reform. The resource guide can be used to find out what's new in the field, locate national organizations that support family involvement, and inspire new ideas. You can access it at: <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/fine/resources/guide>

NCPIE's December Meeting and Presentation

The last NCPIE meeting of 2005 will be Wednesday, December 14th. Our guest speakers are Linda Peterson, Vice President, Institute for Responsive Education (IRE) and Michele Brooks, Consultant and School Committee Member with Boston Public Schools. As many of you know, The Institute for Responsive Education has been working with the DC Public Schools, facilitating the process to design five neighborhood parent resource centers. IRE staff has spoken to more than 200 parents, community members and organizations, and DC Public School staff over the past few months. The goal of the conversations and focus groups was to gather information on: 1) What supports do parents need to help their children succeed in school, and 2) what are the priorities for staffing, services and information for the centers. The preliminary findings and recommendations for the basic operations of the centers will be discussed with Superintendent Janey in mid-November and shared with us at the NCPIE meeting. Please join us on the 14th, 9:00 to 12:00 at NEA, 1201 16th Street NW, Washington DC.