



NCPIE Update

*A Publication of the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education
March 2003*

Inside this Issue:

Page 1. A New Wave of Evidence

Page 2. Advocating on Behalf of the PIRC's

Page 2. The FAPE Update

Page 3. Upcoming NCPIE Meetings and Presentations

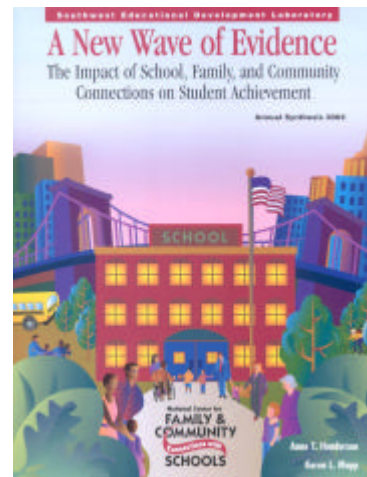
Page 4. Resources Available Online

A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connection on Student Achievement

The January NCPIE meeting was a presentation of the latest research synthesis on parent involvement.

According to a new review of recent research written by Anne Henderson, one of America's foremost authors on parent involvement, and Karen Mapp, President of the Institute for Responsive Education in Boston and a visiting professor of education at Northeastern University, titled *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement*, and published by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, show that students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, are more likely to:

- Earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs
- Be promoted, pass their classes and earn credits
- Attend school regularly
- Have better social skills, show improved behavior and adapt well to school
- Graduate and go on to post-secondary education



Furthermore, studies show that families of all income and education levels, and from all ethnic and cultural groups, are engaged in supporting their children's learning at home. White, middle-class families, however, tend to be more involved at school. Supporting more involvement at school from all families may be an important strategy for addressing the achievement gap.

Programs and special efforts to engage families make a difference

For example, teacher outreach to parents results in strong, consistent gains in student performance in both reading and math. Effective outreach practices include meeting face to face, sending learning materials home, and keeping in touch about progress. Workshops for parents on helping their children at home are linked to higher reading and math scores. Schools with highly rated partnership programs make greater gains on state tests than schools with lower-rated programs.

Higher performing schools effectively involve families and community

Schools that succeed in engaging families from diverse backgrounds share three key practices:

- Focus on building trusting, collaborative relationships among teachers, families and community members
- Recognize, respect and address families' needs, as well as class and cultural differences
- Embrace a philosophy of partnership where power and responsibility are shared

Parent and community organizing efforts are improving schools

This type of engagement, which is based outside schools and led by parents and community members, is growing nationwide. Aimed mainly at low-performing schools, strategies of community organizing are openly focused on building low-income families' power and political skills. Unlike traditional parent involvement, parent and community organizing intends to hold schools accountable for results.

Recent studies have found that community organizing contributed to these changes in schools:

- 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

In Short

When parents talk to their children about school, expect them to do well, help them plan for college, and make sure that out-of-school activities are constructive, their children do better in school. When schools engage families in ways that are linked to improving learning, and support parent involvement at home and school, students make greater gains. When schools build partnerships with families that respond to their concerns, honor their contributions, and share power, they succeed in sustaining connections that are aimed at improving student achievement. And when families and communities

organize to hold poorly performing schools accountable, school districts make positive changes in policy, practice, and resources.

How Can Schools, Families and Community Groups Put these Findings into Action?

- Recognize that all parents, regardless of income, education or cultural background, are involved in their children's learning and want their children to do well.
- Design programs that will support families to guide their children's learning, from preschool through high school.
- Develop the capacity of school staff and families to work together.
- Link efforts to engage families, whether based at school or in the community, to student learning.
- Build families' social and political connections.
- Embrace a philosophy of partnership and be willing to share power. Focus on developing trusting and respectful relationships. Make sure that parents, school staff, and community members understand that the responsibility for children's educational development is a collaborative enterprise.
- Build strong connections between schools and community organizations.
- Include families in all strategies to reduce the achievement gap between white, middle-class students and low-income students and students of color.

From *A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement*, by Anne T. Henderson and Nancy Berla (Washington, DC: Center for Law and Education, 1994) and *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement*, by Anne T. Henderson and Karen L. Mapp (Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2002). Ordering Information: [/www.sedl.org/connections/resources/](http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/)

Advocating on Behalf of America's PIRC's

NCPIE has become increasingly concerned about the livelihood of the Parent Information Resource Centers (PIRC's) and spent the better part of the February meeting brainstorming strategies to help ensure that these valuable centers located across the country continue to be funded in the 2004 budget and beyond. The PIRC's are presently funded at \$42.5 million in the 2003 Budget.

PARENT
Information and Resource Centers

It is the Coalition's position that the PIRC's are extremely valuable at the state and local level to promote parent involvement in education. They provide parents with training, information, and support to help them better understand their children's developmental and educational needs and strengthen partnerships between parents and schools to enable children to achieve to high standards.

After a discussion of the present landscape everyone present at the meeting shared their insights and advice and the Coalition has sketched out the following plan of action.

The following are some of the recommendations:

- Create greater visibility both at the state and local level as well as at the national level
- Develop a position paper
- Write up and publicize PIRC success stories for each NCPIE organizations' newsletter and Ed Week
- NCPIE representatives to share these stories within their own organization's legislative departments
- Make sure the valuable work of the PIRCs is known by congressional staff at the state level
- Make sure the valuable work if the PIRCs is shared with congressional staff in Washington DC
- Target supportive members of the House and Senate
- Join forces with the National Coalition of Parent Centers

On May 9th, Anne Henderson and Karen Mapp are presenting their book, *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family and Community Connection on Student Achievement* at the American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF). This presents an opportunity to target specific congressional staff to learn about the most current research in parent involvement, to showcase the work of the PIRCs and to demonstrate NCPIE's support of the PIRCs.

We have a lot of work in front of us, but together we hope to make sure that funding for the PIRCs will be guaranteed in the years to come.

To find out more information about the PIRC's, visit them on-line at: www.pirc-info.net

Upcoming NCPIE Meetings and Presentations

March 26, 2003

9:00 a.m. - Noon

NEA Building

Conference Room B

April 30, 2003

9:00 a.m. - Noon

NEA Building

Conference Room A

FAPE Update

IDEA Partnerships 2nd National Summit on the Shared Implementation of
IDEA '97

June 19-21, 2003

Crystal Gateway Marriott, Arlington, Virginia

The Summit is designed to bring the full range of partners into the discussion and build a commitment to move forward together to:

- Develop an understanding of the law and evidence-based practices to support implementation
- Strengthen relationships and understand each other's need and priorities
- Contribute expertise in addressing key issues related to supporting achievement for students with disabilities.

Guiding principles for the Summit include: respecting the diverse viewpoints of key audiences, involving the audiences in substantive exchange around key issues, uniting the audience in a commitment to move forward on the issues, supporting discussion that contribute to near-term understanding and long-term solutions, assuring that the selection of presenters includes members of diverse groups, and focusing on evidence-based practice.

Complete registration information is available on-line at www.ideainfo.org

NCPIE is a core partner in the FAPE Project

For more information on FAPE visit them on-line at www.fape.org

Resources Available from the NCPIE Web-Site with Just One Simple Click of the Mouse

Visit the NCPIE web-site at www.ncpie.org for the latest research and articles written concerning parent involvement. Here is a sampling of what you will find:

“From Governance to Accountability: Building Relationships that Schools Work”

By Kavitha Mediratta and Norm Fruchter

Institute for Education and Social Policy, NYU

Engaging Families to Improve Achievement: Advice from the Research

From *A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement*, by Anne T. Henderson and Nancy Berla (Washington, DC: Center for Law and Education, 1994) and *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement*, by Anne T. Henderson and Karen L. Mapp (Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2002 – in press).

No Child Left Behind: What's in it for Parents Six Key Leverage Points for Parents and Community Leaders

Anne T. Henderson, *No Child Left Behind: What's in It for Parents?*, Parent Leadership Associates, Arlington, VA 2002. <http://www.plassociates.org/>

Using NCLB to Improve Student Achievement: An Action Guide for Community and Parent Leaders by the Public Education Network:

www.publiceducation.org

Supporting Parents as Leaders: Stories of Dedication, Determination, and Inspiration

Institute for Responsive Education Parent Leadership Exchange Project

Download your copy today, or follow the hyperlinks on the NCPIE web-site to find out how you can order this timely information.