



NCPIE Update

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New Column Shares Their Success Stories and Why They Are Important to Implementing No Child Left Behind

The *NCPIE Update* is beginning a new series, "*In Their Own Words*" to showcase the work of the Parent Information Resource Centers (PIRCs) around the country. They are one of the best-kept secrets around and as each PIRC tells "their own story" we hope to provide them with greater visibility and recognition at the national level. PIRCs help facilitate the development of partnerships between families and schools and are critical to helping families understand their rights and responsibilities in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001(NCLB).

The PIRCs, funded through the U.S. Department of Education, are responsible for the training, information, and technical assistance of those in the education community as well as parent groups and individual family members.

So what do the PIRCs do?

The PIRCs evolved out of Goal 8 of the Goals 2000 Educate America Act passed under the previous Bush Administration. It said that, "by the year 2000, every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children." In 1995 Congress appropriated \$10 million to fund 28 PIRCs in 27 states and Washington, D.C. In 1999, 58

more were funded. Presently there are a total of 69 PIRC's in 46 states and the District of Columbia, including representation in Micronesia (1), The US Virgin Islands (2), and the Northern Marianas (1).

The main purpose of each PIRC is to establish school-linked or school-based parental information resource centers that provide training, information, and support to parents, and to individuals and organizations that work with parents, to implement parental involvement strategies that lead to improvements in student academic achievement.

Additionally PIRC's work to:

Strengthen partnerships among parents (including parents of children from birth through age 5), teachers, principals, administrators, and other school personnel in meeting the educational needs of children.

Develop and strengthen the relationship between parents and their children's school.

Further the developmental progress of children assisted under Title I.

Coordinate activities funded under this program with parental involvement initiatives funded under Section 1118 and other provisions of NCLB.

Provide a comprehensive approach to improving student learning, through coordination and integration of Federal, State, and local services and programs.

A Fight for Funding... Why?

Each year the PIRCs are faced with a struggle for funding and again in the fiscal year 2004 budget they will have to fight for financial survival. If you carefully read the No Child Left Behind legislation, which calls for informed parents and active parent involvement in education, how can one think to eliminate the very program that can provide the education and technical assistance required by the law?

With each issue of the *Update*, we will spotlight 2 PIRC programs from around the country that are doing exceptional things when it comes to achieving the goals and aims of the legislation. Send your comments to ferguson@ncea.com or jocelyn@ncea.com.

In Their Own Words

Connecticut PIRC:

About a month after I was hired to direct the Connecticut PIRC, I read an article about First Day (First Day of School America, www.firstday.org, is a grassroots movement that brings together school, families and communities to celebrate the first day of school). No one was doing it in Connecticut and it seemed like a perfect way to bring parents and schools together right at the beginning of the school year, to (hopefully) begin a partnership that would last throughout the year.

We started in 1999 with 2 schools in Hartford, a city going through a major transition - the 8th superintendent in 9 years was about to begin his tenure here, the schools were being managed by a state-appointed board of trustees, and 11 of the 33 schools were on the state's list of low-performing schools. We recruited a community leadership class (American Leadership Forum) to help us, and when the new superintendent came in, he told us that if we were successful in these two schools, he'd help us take it district-wide the following year. One of the two schools had a new principal appointed three days before the first day of school. She knew nothing about First Day, and when we told her we'd invited 1,000 parents into her school on the First Day, she said, "that sounds like a good idea!"

Those two celebrations were successful. The superintendent was true to his word, and the concept went district-wide in Hartford the next year. One of the original two principals stood up in principals' meeting and said about his First Day Celebration, "I've been an educator for 35 years, and this was the best first day I've ever had." Now, Hartford's First Day features a "yellow bus tour" - a school bus filled with legislators, community and business leaders, and the media that stops at several schools to partake in some of their First Day activities.

Over the next 3 years, we expanded the concept to 95 schools in 2002, we've gotten funding from Fleet Bank to offer seed grants for First Day Celebrations in the most impoverished districts, and we now have 147 schools in our database that have requested information about First Day. I'm attaching the results of a survey we did with our First Day 2002 schools. You'll see that 100% of them say they will do First Day again, and a majority of those with more than one year of First Day Celebration experience say that they've seen an increase in parent involvement over the whole year.

We use our First Day school mailing list to distribute materials and resources for the schools to use with parents - we've sent them all the ED Helping Your Child series of booklets, a list of family-oriented web sites, workshop curricula for parent involvement workshops and many other items, along with suggestions for their use with families. I received a hand-written note from a principal in New Haven thanking me for all the good resources we've sent.

Evie Herrmann, Director
Connecticut Parents Plus

Hawaii PIRC:

There are 2 Parent Information Resource Centers in Kona, Hawaii. They are physically based in an intermediate and high school (both part of the same school complex) with links to the elementary school. The Center at the Kealakehe Intermediate School has been on site for 7 years and 2 years at Kealakehe High School.

Why are they located on school premises? It's a "neutral place" on campus and readily accessible to respond to parents and teachers and has served well in our community as a "partnership" between school, community, parents. This is my 4th year and I have been

at both locations but more recently moved permanently to the high school (by invitation from the Principal). My success is owed to first spending time to “listen” and build relationships and trust. I spend 3 mornings a week (1-1/2 hours each) in the Administration Office meeting parents and teachers and have learned how the school “works”.

Learning to navigate the system is a tremendous asset. The staff openly accepts me and applauds our ability to be advocates for parents and often to diffuse parent’s anger toward the school and redirect their energies into a productive resolution. I attend the weekly Departmental Chairperson’s meeting with the Administration and take an active role in the parent groups and the school’s governing council. The school welcomes the wealth of information the Parent Center has. The No Child Left Behind has opened another door for us and we have been regarded as a source of information for the community, parents and the school. We have sponsored and partnered with other community members, schools, and peers in providing parenting workshops, drug information programs (including coordinating theatre performances on campus), nonviolent communication seminars and special education support programs.

Asking to be a part in the school’s accreditation process was a pivotal point in knowing that we are an “added value” to the schools. My input is always sought for Open House, incoming 9th grade parent orientation, communication to parents and community and recently academic legislative matters. I truly feel accepted in the school’s family, bridging those gaps that do exist between families, schools, and the community. The goal of academic success for our students is reflected in my Center’s motto, “TOGETHER, WE STRENGTHEN OUR RESOURCES.”

Linda Jeffrey, Site Coordinator
Kealakehe Parent-Community Center
Kealakehe High School, Kona Hawaii

PIRC Web-site Addresses

Alabama

www.seacparentassistancecenter.com

Arizona

aperc.asu.edu

Arkansas

www.parenting-ed.org

California

www.sctca.net, parent.sdsu.edu

Colorado

www.cpirc.org

Connecticut
www.ctparentsplus.org

District of Columbia
www.turningthepage.org, www.gwulparentcenter.org

Florida
www.fndfl.org/partnership

Georgia
www.cisga.org

Hawaii
www.hawaiiipirc.org

Idaho
www.ifep.net

Illinois
www.adi.org

Indiana
www.dunebrook.org www.fscp.org

Iowa
www.higherplain.org

Kansas
www.kpirc.org, www.keys.org

Kentucky
www.ovpirc.org, www.fif.org, www.kyparentinfo.org

Louisiana
www.ywcafrc.org

Maine
www.mpf.org

Maryland
www.thefamilyworks.org

Massachusetts
www.thehome.org

Michigan
www.lifeservicessystem.org

Minnesota
www.pacer.org

Mississippi
www.parents4publicschools.com, www.mfcf.org

Missouri
www.lift-missouri.org

Montana
www.montanapirc.org

Nevada
www.sunrisechildren.org

New Hampshire
www.parentinformationcenter.org

New Jersey
www.spannj.org

New Mexico
www.parentsreachingout.org

New York
www.epicforchildren.org

North Carolina
www.ecac-parentcenter.org

North Dakota
www.pathfinder.minot.com

Northern Marianas
www.vzpacifica.net/community/ayudanet

Ohio
ohiopirc@lys.org

Oklahoma
www.parentsaspartners.org

Pennsylvania
www.papirc.org

Rhode Island
www.ripin.org

South Carolina
www.scchildren.org

South Dakota
www.bhssc.org/sdprn

Tennessee
www.parentsfirst.org

Texas
www.neighborhood-centers.org, www.idra.org

Utah
info@utahfamilycenter.org

Vermont
www.vermontfamilyresource.org

Virgin Islands
www.villagesouth.com

Virginia
www.cisnet.org/nova

Washington
www.childrenshomesociety.org

West Virginia
jimshafer@adelphia.net

Wisconsin
www.parentspluswi.org

Wyoming
www.wpen.net

Save the Date!

The American Youth Policy Forum and NCPIE Invite you to a Lunchtime Discussion on *A New Wave of Evidence*

On Friday, May 9, 2003 at 11:45am on Capitol Hill the authors of this report, Anne T. Henderson and Karen L. Mapp, will discuss their major findings, explore implications for improving student achievement, and present concrete recommendations for both research and practice into the impact of school, family and community connections on student achievement.

Registration deadline is 12:00 p.m. Tuesday, May 6th and you may register by sending a message to aypf@aypf.org. A box lunch will be provided to those who register by the deadline and arrive before 12:00 p.m.

This forum will be the fifth in AYPF's Urgent Message: Families Crucial to School Reform series that highlights the importance of family and community engagement in educational change and renewal.

Published by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, this report reviews 51 studies published between 1995 and 2002, and covers three bodies of research:

1. The impact of schools' family involvement programs and practices and of home-based family engagement in children's learning on student outcomes.
2. The practices of high-performing schools that are successful in engaging low-income families from diverse backgrounds.
3. Community organizing initiatives that build low-income families' political skills to hold schools accountable for results.

The report finds that students with involved parents, regardless of 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 toward graduation
- Attend school regularly
- Have better social skills, show improved behavior and adapt well to school
- Graduate and go on to postsecondary education

Henderson and Mapp's recommendations will address:

- Bridging class, race and cultural differences to form more productive partnerships with families
- Developing families' social and political capital, and sharing power with parents and community groups
- Closing achievement gaps and developing more effective programs for school reform
- Broadening the definition of parent engagement and developing more rigorous research

For more information about this forum and to confirm the location, please contact the American Youth Policy Forum at 202-775-9731 or aypf@aypf.org and reference the New Wave of Evidence Forum.

Upcoming NCPIE Meetings and Presentations

May 29, 2003

9:00 a.m. - Noon

NEA Building

Conference Room B

June 25, 2003

9:00 a.m. - Noon

NEA Building

Conference Room A

FAPE Update

National Summit on IDEA

The second National Summit on IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) is scheduled to take place June 19-21, 2003, in Washington, D. C. Parents and professionals interested in issues affecting special education and children with disabilities are urged to attend.

The PACER Center's FAPE (Families and Advocated Partnership in Education) Project and its three partners in the National IDEA Partnerships will conduct the event which will feature results of the state summit discussions as well as a variety of other information that is of interest to parents, advocates, teachers, service providers, administrators, and policy makers.

For information about attending the National Summit, see the FAPE Web-site at www.fape.org, the IDEA Partnership Web-site at www.ideainfo.org, or link to it through www.pacer.org.

Update on the Reauthorization of IDEA

The House is scheduled to vote on passage of HR 1350 to reauthorize the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act on Wednesday, April 30th. Pushed through committee and subcommittee in less than a month, this bill has sparked praise from some quarters and outrage from others. Special education and disability advocacy groups oppose the bill and urge members to vote against it. "H.R. 1350 is a bad IDEA," is the rallying cry. Objections to the bill include the expansion of the discipline provisions, the elimination of short term objectives in the IEP, the inclusion of three year IEPs, the lack of "highly qualified" standards for all special education teachers and related services personnel and the movement of research into the Institute of Education Sciences. In addition, funding for Part D programs is capped at or below the FY '03 level. Some education groups,

most notably the school administrators, have hailed the bill, calling it “the best special education policy revisions we’ve seen in decades.”

The Senate continues to draft a bi-partisan bill that will be introduced before the next recess on Memorial Day. Senators Hagel (R-NE) and Harkin (IA) are expected to introduce their IDEA full funding bill next week. *Source: The Education Report, April 25, 2003*

NCPIE is a core partner in the FAPE Project

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