



NCPIE Update

A Publication of the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education

May 2004

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Back Up and Running

Welcome to the May 2004 edition of the NCPIE Update!

We have been on extended maternity leave (now caring for twins!) but NCPIE is happy to be back to the business of providing Coalition members with this newsletter. It is our hope that the information found here would be helpful to you in your work promoting parent involvement in education.

Our goal is to provide you with information about the latest research that supports parent involvement, resources and materials available from programs from across the country, as well as updates about the happenings at the monthly NCPIE meetings. It is our aim to have each edition of *The Update* serve as a useful tool for you, your organization, and the parents and families you support. Please let us know if you have any information to share or story ideas.

Communities in Schools Uses Parent Involvement Research to Develop Family Strengthening Training



Carole Levine, Vice President of Expansion and Technical Assistance and Lisa Esquivel-Griffin, Program Specialist with Communities In Schools (CIS) were special guests for the April 2004 NCPIE meeting. They presented CIS's newest family involvement initiative, **Family Strengthening: Using Research to Support Our Work with Families.**

CIS History and Background

Founded over 25 years ago, CIS considers itself to be “the nation’s leading community-based organization helping kids succeed in school and prepare for life.” The national organization includes a CIS headquarters in Alexandria, VA and 14 State CIS offices (all independent nonprofit organizations) and 200 local CIS programs (also independent nonprofits) that work with more than 3,000 school and alternative sites. Presently CIS programs operate in 30 states serving more than 2 million young people on an annual basis. The CIS program is based on the “Five CIS Basics: which state that every child needs and deserves: a one-on-one relationship with a caring adult; a safe place to learn and grow and learn; a healthy start and a healthy future; a marketable skill to use upon graduation; and a chance to give back to peers and community.

CIS promotes these “basics” by forming community partnerships involving local governments (including school districts), service agencies, and local businesses and family and community. Each local CIS program is structured as a nonprofit corporation with the intent of bringing various agencies together in order to broker and facilitate services and resources into schools and to promote more effective provision of services to youth and their families. This approach has allowed CIS programs to increase graduation and stay-in-school rates, increase attendance and academic performance, as well as provide participating youth with a marketable skill to use upon graduation.

A Review of the Training

More than 73% of all CIS programs indicate that they provide services in the area of family support and involvement. With this in mind, CIS National developed (over a 3-year period) a training/curriculum to work with the CIS Network. That curriculum is reviewed below and is currently being field-tested in 5 CIS communities.

This training was built specifically for 5-member teams from individual CIS programs. The teams should consist of the following members: A CIS representative, a school/school district or area representative (the reach should be beyond a single school site), a community representative (agency, government, organization, etc.), two parents who clearly represent the parents you are seeking to engage. Of course, there may be some variations in the team structure, and it could be expanded to six people if needed. The key is having the participation of two parents who can speak for those you are targeting and who can support one another throughout the process.

The 5 modules of the training serve as a foundation upon which participants can build initiatives, activities and programs that work best in their individual communities. However, it does focus on helping participants define family strengthening and family involvement. Most importantly it introduces the research supporting family involvement, as well as provides an inside look at what is currently working in these types of programs.

Once the initial training is completed, CIS National follows-up with technical assistance that includes conference calls, site visits, and an Intranet designed to facilitate a discussion forum on family involvement. Here is a look at each of the four modules and

the goal of each. The *NCPIE Update* will keep you posted on the developments of this training and CIS's efforts at incorporating family involvement in its programs.

Module 1: What is Family Strengthening

Goal: To provide a brief overview of the principles and practices of family strengthening/involvement.

Module 2: Benefits/Challenges to Family Strengthening

Goal: Explore the benefits of family involvement and identify strategies to turn challenges into opportunities for building effective comprehensive strategies for partnerships with schools, communities and with all families.

Module 3: What's Working

Goal: Examine exemplary family strengthening and involvement programs and strategies and demonstrate how CIS supports and builds them.

Module 4: Making this Work for Us

Goal: to identify components of effective family strengthening programs and strategies and the policies and systems that supports these strategies.

Module 5: Action Planning/What Are Our Next Steps

Goal: To utilize family strengthening information and individual and community assessments to initiate steps for a family involvement/family strengthening plan.

For more information on CIS and its Family Strengthening training please visit www.cisnet.org or contact Lisa Esquivel-Griffin at GriffinL@cisnet.org.

NCPIE Update Feature-In Their Own Words

Turning the Page: A Washington, DC PIRC

Turning the Page is a non-profit organization in Washington, D.C. that links D.C. public schools, families and our community so that, together, we can ensure D.C. students receive valuable educational resources and a high-quality public education.

As a Parent Information and Resource Center, Turning the Page partners with public elementary schools in low-income areas of D.C. We work closely with each school to identify and coordinate resources that increase family involvement and student achievement. For example, Turning the Page designed and implements a school-based family involvement initiative called "Community Nights." Families visit the schools for evenings of literacy-based parent workshops, child mentoring, book giveaways, family dinner and connections to community resources.

Parent workshops highlight the vital role parents play in their children's academic success and empower them to make informed choices about their children's education. All workshops are based in children's literature and feature interactive, hands-on activities. Turning the Page holds two to three different parent workshops at each Community Night. Workshops include:

1. Introduction to Children's Literature: Parents who are new to Community Nights receive advice on choosing children's literature that is interesting and age-appropriate, fun home activities to expand their children's vocabularies, and read-aloud and storytelling techniques.
2. Supporting Your Child's Education: Parents learn about the No Child Left Behind Act as well as share advice and gain practical tips on maintaining good home-school communication and helping their children with homework and standardized tests.

Turning the Page also integrates the richness of D.C.'s cultural institutions into Community Nights by forming partnerships with local museums. Both The Phillips Collection modern art museum and the Smithsonian Freer & Sackler Galleries have designed parent workshops and family activities for Turning the Page's Community Nights. These workshops are designed to increase families' visual literacy and empower them to understand and access the art resources of their city.

In addition to working directly with families at its partner schools, Turning the Page works closely with groups of teachers. At each school, teachers committed to increasing family involvement meet monthly to discuss and coordinate Turning the Page programs. In the spring of each school year, parents and teachers from across Turning the Page's partner schools gather for a day-long workshop and conference that promotes open dialogue, brainstorming and planning as a united school community.

Turning the Page is confident that with hard work and continued cooperation, we as a community can make sure D.C. public school students receive every opportunity to succeed in school and in life. We believe that every child has the potential to achieve, if given the resource-rich learning environment that families, schools and community members can provide.

For more information on Turning the Page and on how you can support our programs by making a donation or volunteering, please see our web site at www.turningthepage.org

Upcoming NCPPIE Meetings and Presentations

June 30, 2004

9:00 a.m. – Noon

NEA Building

Conference Room B

August 25, 2004

9:00 a.m. - Noon

NEA Building

Conference Room B

NCPPIE and PEN Partner to Provide NCLB Action Briefs

NCPPIE and the Public Education Network (PEN) are working together to develop several Action Briefs that better explain NCLB. These briefs are an ongoing effort by NCPPIE and PEN to enhance the ability of parents, families and community activists to become

knowledgeable about the law, and take advantage of the opportunities it provides for action, engagement, and collaboration.

Formerly known as the NCLB Bulletin, each Action Brief is intended not only to illuminate certain statutes, provisions, and titles in the law that speak to parent involvement, but more importantly to stand on its own as a useful reference for those who would like to gain a deeper understanding of the parental involvement provisions found in NCLB.

Written in easy-to-use language focused on specific sections of the law, each Action Brief includes pertinent regulations, a glossary of terms, action steps, and additional resources. New Briefs will be added over time. Presently Briefs on the following topics are available on both the NCIPIE and PEN websites: NCLB Overview, Title I Overview, Title II Teacher and Principal Preparation, Teacher Quality, Paraprofessional Quality, Parents' Right to Know, Standards and Assessment, Community and Parent Decision Making: A Review, State Accountability System and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), Public School Choice for Schools Identified as Low Performing, LEP Requirements. Visit <http://www.ncpie.org/Resources/nclbactionbriefs.html> to download a copy from the NCIPIE website.

Future Issues of The NCIPIE Update to Include Reviews of Research Found in Evidence

A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement, is the most recent review of research about the impact of school, family, and community involvement on student achievement. Written by Anne Henderson and Karen Mapp and published by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory in 2002, this parent involvement research review examines 51 studies in three different topic areas: 1) how parent, family, and community engagement affects student achievement; 2) effective practices to connect schools, families, and communities; and 3) parent and community organizing to improve schools.

Over the next several editions of *The Update*, we will take a look at each of these areas of research, tell you where to find copies of the studies and highlight one or two of the studies in each *Update*.

We think it is important not only to use "the evidence", but also to delve deeper into each individual piece of research, in the hope that it will be useful to you in your work. We will begin citing specific studies in our June *Update*. To get a copy of the book go to: <http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf>

Resources for Parent Involvement from NCIPIE Community

Listed below are various books, case studies, websites and briefs all designed to support parent involvement.

- The Tellin' Stories Project of Teaching for Change has a publication titled *Between Families and Schools: Creating Meaningful Relationships* (\$10) that documents the process and findings of a yearlong action research project. Contact Jill Weiller at 202-588-7207.
- KSA-Plus Communications, The Center for Parent Leadership and the Pritchard Committee have collaborated to create *The Case for Parent Leadership* can be downloaded at: www.ksaplus.com/ksa/framesplpubs.html. This guide draws on research that documents the impact of parent involvement on student achievement.
- There is a wonderful bilingual web site, www.colorincolorado.org, which contains materials for Spanish speaking parents and downloadable one-pagers for professionals to use with Hispanic families. Questions about this site can be directed to Susan Petroff of Reading Rockets, www.ReadingRockets.org. Her e-mail address is spetroff@weta.com. The Reading Rockets site is really good and has excellent resources and information on teaching kids to read.
- The National Association for the Education of Young Children has an entire section of their website dedicated to providing parents with resources to help their children with their education. Visit the site at: www.naeyc.org/parent_resources/default.asp
- The National Dropout Prevention Center has some wonderful resources that include: *Parent Involvement in Service-Learning*. This publication is designed to prevent “parent dropout” and teach others how to involve parents of children of all ages through service learning. This publication is available from the National Dropout Prevention Center website at: www.dropoutprevention.org/publica/servlear_pub/servlear_pub.htm. Another publication from this group is *Family Literacy Strategies: First Steps to Academic Success* and is available on-line at the following web address: www.dropoutprevention.org/publica/effective/effective_pub.htm

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