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National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education
 3929 Old Lee Highway
 Suite 91-A
 Fairfax, Virginia 22030
www.ncpie.org
 P 703-359-8973 Fax: 703-359-0972

NCPIE Update

Institute for Responsive Education Promoting Family and Community Involvement in Education

The NCPIE Training and Resources Series continued at the June NCPIE Meeting as Linda Peterson of the Institute for Responsive Education (IRE) presented the Parent Leadership Exchange Program. Linda gave the group a brief overview of IRE's founding by Don Davies, and an outline of the organization's new direction under the leadership of Karen Mapp

As a founding member of NCPIE, IRE encourages and supports partnership among schools, families, and communities to enable high quality educational opportunities for all children. IRE believes that school, family, and community partnership is an essential component to improve schools and raise education standards.

IRE offers a range of training and technical assistance workshops to teams of teachers, administrators, parents, students and community members. These workshops provide participants with the skills and materials they need to cultivate, maintain, and evaluate educational partnerships among school, family and community members. A team of IRE staff conducts the training modules, which can be easily adapted to meet the needs of specific groups and populations.

Of great interest to NCPIE participants was IRE's Parent Leadership Exchange Program. The Parent Leadership Exchange Program, currently serving

parent leaders in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New Hampshire, is funded by the Nellie Mae Foundation with the goal of creating a network for parent leaders, liaisons, volunteers, and coordinators. The Exchange recently held its first annual conference in May and more than 100 parent leaders, teachers, and administrators attended.

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Success at the IDEA Summit



For the first time in the history of special education, stakeholders representing varied and sometimes conflicting perspectives met in Washington, DC in June to learn how they could work together to implement the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the federal law governing special education.

"Partners Make a Great IDEA: A National Summit on the Shared Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act" was sponsored by the IDEA Partnerships, a coalition funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The coalition has four key partners: IDEA Local Implementation by Local Administrators Partnership (ILIAD) and Associations of Service Providers Implementing IDEA Reforms in Education Partnership (ASPIRE),

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Linda also shared with the group IRE’s Training and Technical Assistance “School, Family, Community Partnership Action Team Model. This Action Team Model was piloted with the Boston Renaissance Charter School during school year 2000-2001. Components of the model are listed below.

Pre Assessment

- *Concept of action teams and action research.
- *Are you ready for a school, family, community partnership
- *School assessment
- *Self assessment

Module 1: Culture and Climate

- *Building trust and respect
- *The Joining Theory
- *What do we mean by partnership
- *School goals (school-wide and academic specific)
- *Defining family involvement at your school
- *What’s working, what’s not working,

what is your vision
*The Welcoming Atmosphere Walk-Through Tool Kit

Module 2: Short Term Goals

- *Review of the Welcoming Walk-Through activity
- *From walk-through to action-short tem projects

Module 3: Action Research-Data Collection

- *Welcoming Walk-Through project updates
- *Data collection-designing, planning, and scheduling
- *Reviewing and designing surveys for parents and for school staff
- *How to conduct focus groups

Module 4: Data Day

- *Review of school goals (school-wide and academic specific)
- *Overview of the six types of Family Involvement (Joyce Epstein)
- *Survey and focus group data review
- *Define data into six types

- *What’s working, what needs improvement
- *Define action ideas from data

Module 5: Sharing the Information

- *Review action ideas with larger school body
- *Seek several recommendations of ideas from each of the six types

Module 6: Creating an Action Plan

- *Refine recommendations into achievable (up to three) action steps and strategies

Module 7: Sustainability

- *Finalize and initiate the action plan
 - Activity
 - Grade Level
 - Strategies
 - Person(s) responsible
 - Resources
 - Target date
 - Date completed

For more information please contact IRE at 617-373-2595 or visit: www.responsiveeducation.com

The Institute for Education and Social Policy Community Involvement Program

Anne Henderson, a Senior Consultant to the Institute for Education and Social Policy (IESP) at New York University was our third and final speaker at the June NCPIE meeting. She presented a case study titled: “*Community Organizing for School Improvement in the South Bronx.*” According to Henderson, this IESP study demonstrates “an entirely new model for parent involvement that is gathering speed.”

The study is an examination of how a community organization, dedicated to neighborhood revitalization can help parents improve their local public school. It narrates how a group of concerned parents and New Settlement Apartments (NSA), a unique housing development group in New York City that manages 900 units of low to moderate income housing, used a community organizing methodology to try to raise academic achievement in their neighborhood elementary school. The group ultimately succeeded in removing the school’s principal because they held him responsible for student failure to learn.

NSA is composed of 14 fully renovated, previously abandoned buildings within an eight square-block area that “...experienced the destruction of inner city America that went largely unchecked from the 1950’s through the early 1980’s.” (J. Walsh, *Stories of Renewal*). NSA’s mission was to not only rebuild and maintain a significant portion of the neighborhood’s housing stock, but also to provide education programs and community services to all area residents. The development of NSA’s Parent Action Committee is narrated in the study, as well as the organizing strategies they employed in their efforts to improve the school’s outcomes with the assistance provided by the IESP’s Community Involvement Program (CIP).

CIP focuses on strengthening the capacity of community-based organizations to organize parents and neighborhood residents to hold the school system accountable for providing effective education. Additionally, CIP provides neighborhood-based technical assistance to individual CBO’s on school improvement and parent organizing strategies.

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based at the Council for Exceptional Children; Families and Advocates Partnership for Education (FAPE) based at PACER Center; and The Policymaking Partnership (PMP) based at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education. More than 120 organizations, including the National Conference of State Legislators, National Education Association, National Association of School Principals, Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health, NCPIE and the Arc, collaborate with these partnerships.

Over 650 people attended the summit including families, teachers, related service personnel, advocates, legislators, school board members, principals, state directors of special education and others involved in implementing IDEA.

The summit focused on five major topics related to IDEA implementation: school climate and discipline, including children with disabilities in standards based reform, family involvement in special education, disproportionate representation of diverse children, and special education personnel. Experts, researchers, and local teams presented on these topics and on emerging issues. Some of the keynote speakers included Margaret McLaughlin of the National Center for Students with Disabilities in Education Reform, Alfredo Artiles of Vanderbilt University, Robert Yinger of the Holmes Partnership, Al Blixt a parent from Michigan and George Sugai of the National Center for Positive Behavioral Supports.

Additionally 80 delegates, representing each of the four partnerships, were on hand to discuss the challenges facing IDEA implementation and to create a list of possible collaborative activities to move implementation forward.

Proceedings and papers from the summit can be found at www.ideainfo.org. In addition, all of the keynotes were videotaped and the breakout sessions are on audiotapes. Copies of these tapes can be purchased from the partnership website.

Boston Parent Organizing Network

Michelle Brooks, Project Manager, for the Boston Parent Organizing Network (BPON) located



in Boston, Massachusetts also spoke at the June NCPIE meeting. BPON is a Boston initiative established to organize parents and communities as advocates for the improvement of Boston Public Schools.

The BPON objective is to build a network of organizations with the goal of creating a central connection through which an exchange of ideas, information and strategies to empower parents and build partnerships can be shared. More importantly, BPON’s mission is to become the catalyst for the emergence of a strong parent/community voice that is diverse and focuses on support and advocacy for the improvement of the Boston Public Schools.

BPON provides community based organizations (CBO’s) with grant awards to develop programs that allow parents and communities to become more involved in education. This concept emerged from the belief that public schools are more effective when parents and the broader community are actively engaged in their children’s education.

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Upcoming NCPIE Meetings and Presentations

July
No Meeting

August 29, 2001
9:00 a.m. - Noon
NEA Building
Conference Room A
No presentations will be given at this meeting. Instead we will use the time to catch up on each organization’s activities.

September 26, 2001
9:00 a.m.-Noon
NEA Building
Conference Room A
Southwest Education Development Laboratory

SEDL staff will present the results of a new synthesis of the research on family and community connections with schools. They will also present their Collaborative Action Team guide and toolkit, which provides a variety of activities and tools, in English and in Spanish, to support sustainable partnerships between schools, families, community members, and students.

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As Anne said in the introduction, key to the success of the families in the South Bronx was their allying with a community group that has organizing and political skills, triangulating the situation, which added power and respect to their concerns about the schools failure to teach their children.

When going head-to-head with a school or district, parents usually lose. But coupled with the community sector, parents get respect ...and change.

This is a wonderful story! For a copy of this case study or for more information on IESP please visit their web site at: www.nyu.edu/iesp

BPON was awarded 12 major and six mini grants to Boston based CBO's. Award recipients include groups like the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, Parents United for Child Care, Greater Boston Interfaith Organization, the Somali Institute for Research and Development, the Greater Jamaica Plain Parent Organizing Project, and others.

Brooks states that the BPON project, "has been an interesting experience because the CBO's now find themselves in a new arena and want to be successful at providing useful parent involvement tools and programs to their communities.

In September BPON will launch a public awareness campaign designed to rev-up the dialogue around public education in Boston titled: "*Educating the Children of Boston: It's Everybody's Business.*" This awareness campaign is a grassroots effort to engage public awareness and responsibility for

supporting quality education for Boston's children.

One example of BPON's public awareness activity planning is the use of television ads that have a phone number for members of the community to call to express their interest and to make a commitment to education.

The capacity of Boston based CBO's is growing and BPON organizers are excited about the various collaborations that have been developed. Access to schools by parent groups is gaining and BPON grantees have made great strides over cultural and linguistic barriers to help parents increase their capacity to advocate for themselves and their children.

For more information please visit www.responsiveducation.org.

**The newly
designed NCPIE
website
www.ncpie.org
is coming
soon**

