

# NCPIE Update

**November 2001**

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## **NYC School Leadership Teams**

### **School Governance and the Role of Parents on New York City School Decision-Making Teams**



An exciting example of school-community-parent collaboration focusing on school governance and the role of parents on school decision-making teams was presented at the October NCPIE Meeting. Adrian Lewis, of the New York Urban League and Project Director for the New York City School Leadership Teams, along with Clesont Mitchell and Diana Coleman also of the NY Urban League, Carol Haupt of the United Federation of Teachers Teacher Center, Jan Atwell of NYC United Parents Associations, and Theresa Ying Hsu of Asian American Communications provided the group with an overview of how this program is impacting the educational system and raising public awareness of School Leadership Teams to parents of public school children in NYC.

In 1996, School Leadership Teams (SLTs) were mandated through changes made in New York State school governance laws. These teams are being established in every school in New York City and require that parents make up 50% of the membership. In an effort to put some teeth into the SLT program and to allow parents to be both knowledgeable and comfortable at the table, the NYC Board of Education awarded The New York Urban League a \$3 million grant to work in collaboration with ASPIRA of New York, the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) and the United Parents Association (UPA) of New York City to provide training to help parents become better informed and learn how to be effective participants in SLTs. The training equips parents with knowledge about how schools operate, and it empowers them to participate as equal partners as they, school administrators, and teachers sit side by side to address the school's needs.

The SLTs are responsible for: 1) developing the school's education plan; 2) matching the budget to meet education goals; 3) communicating these goals to the school community and; 4) evaluating the quality of the school's educational program and its effect on student achievement.

Now beginning its 3rd year of operation, the major goals of the NY Urban League and its partners continue to be to: 1) Develop a citywide campaign to increase awareness of SLTs and the role that parents can play. 2) Conduct broad-based recruitment and information sharing activities that help parents increase their knowledge about the role of teams in their school as well as to increase the number of parents interested in participating in schools/teams. 3) Engage in targeted outreach to under-served communities and diverse linguistic, cultural and ethnic populations to ensure some opportunity for a diverse group of parents to participate in school leadership teams. 4) Build the capacity of individuals to serve on school leadership teams by providing a wide range of parent development opportunities.

Two Parent Resource Centers have been established providing parents access to information on a wide range of topics including education, legal issues, voter registration, immigration, support networks, housing, health, finance, and employment. Additionally, parents can participate in free professional development workshops designed to enhance or develop skills needed to overcome barriers and be more involved. Workshop topics include Parent Leadership Skills, Communicating With Your Diverse Community, Performance Standards, Navigating the NYC School System, and Parent Power for Involvement, just to name a few.

One unique component of the program is the development of a School Leadership Team Certificate Program which provides an in depth approach to the form and function of SLTs. The certificate program teaches the whys and hows of SLT operations and develops the knowledge needed by parents to serve on teams. Those who complete the certificate program, in turn, provide information and training to families within their own communities.

During the second year of operation, 196 parents graduated from the certificate program and to date more than 5,000 parents have participated in various School Leadership Team training, professional development, and workshop offerings. Parents who have completed training report feeling more comfortable at the table with school administrators and believe that the SLTs function better because team members have a thorough understanding of how SLTs operate, the NYC Board of Education organizational structure, school governance mandates, procedures to conduct business in meetings, performance assessment, and other topic areas related to the success of the SLT and offered as training sessions presented by the project.

It is important to note that translation of project materials in languages reflective of parent populations in diverse New York City school communities is an emphasis of the project's marketing initiatives. Materials produced by the program are developed in several different languages including Russian, Haitian/Creole, French, Spanish, Korean, English and Chinese. Additionally local access points or places throughout the city where parents can get project literature, video tapes, posters, flyers and or web site information to help them as they develop the skills of effective team players.

For additional information on the New York City School Leadership Teams project visit their web site at [www.nycslt.org](http://www.nycslt.org) or call them at 1-877-NYC-SLT6.

### ***4th Annual PIRC Conference Set for Early 2002***

Family Friendly Schools is the theme of the 2002 Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC) Conference scheduled to take place January 16-19, 2002 at the Monarch Hotel in Washington, DC. NCPIE will hold its January meeting with the PIRCs, host the annual Information Fair and sponsor a luncheon on behalf of Families and Advocates Partnership for Education (FAPE-see below) to help the PIRCs better understand the resources available to families who have children with disabilities.

Advocates for family involvement in education pack the conference program which promises to provide participants with ample opportunity to learn new insights into the growing value of family involvement in education as well as statistics that support the positive impact of family involvement on a child's ability to succeed in today's school system.

The tentative schedule of workshops and panel discussion topics include: Technology, Violence Prevention, and an Open Space Strategy Exchange on various topics. Featured speakers include Anne Henderson, noteworthy author and consultant, Joel Nitzberg of the Parent Involvement Project, Brenda Logan of the National Center for Family Literacy, Steve Constantino of Family Friendly Schools, and Amy Swisher of the First Day Foundation, just to name a few.

This annual conference is planned in an effort to provide the PIRCs with the latest information on family involvement initiatives taking place around the country. Participants will learn more on how they may help parents participate in school governance, access Federal programs for services and support their children in achieving educational goals. For information visit the Parental Assistance Coordination Center web site at [www.pacc-pirc.net](http://www.pacc-pirc.net).

### ***New Publication Supports Improving Achievement Using Research Tools***

The Poverty & Race Research Action Council (PRRAC) recently published *Add It Up: Using Research to Improve Education for Low Income and Minority Students*, a comprehensive, readable guide to proven strategies and policies that help schools succeed with all their students. Written by Anne Lewis in collaboration with Sandra Paik, *Add It Up* is a guide that explains how low-performing schools can become high-achieving ones.

The very real issues for parents and educators in low-income and/or minority communities of low achievement have resulted from discriminatory policies and practices that have become ingrained in the education system. *Add It Up* however, shows that these schools and administrators have powerful weapons of their own, and do not have to wait for changes from above to root out these obstacles to educational success and high performance. Those weapons at the disposal of these parents and school administrators are data, research-based practices and a plethora of examples of schools that accept no excuse to avoid doing what it takes to become

excellent. Add It Up presents lessons learned from successful schools and communities and the research base behind their success.

The information presented in Add It Up is organized around clear, definitive issues—from early childhood education to what to expect from district leadership. It presents rigorous research as a means of rebuilding civic confidence in the ability of school and political leaders to set schools on the path toward high achievement for all. For more information about or to order Add It Up, visit the PRACC web site at [www.prrac.org](http://www.prrac.org).

### ***Families and Advocates for Partnership in Education Update***

The White House recently announced that a Presidential Commission on Excellence in Special Education has been created and will be chaired by former Iowa governor, Terry Barnstad. Under the leadership of Gov. Branstad, the commission will study federal, state and local special education programs and recommend how the special education system and related services can be reformed to improve the educational performance of children with disabilities.

The commission is made up of 16 members from around the country as well as five ex officio members from the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. These members include recognized special education experts, special and general education finance experts, education researchers, education practitioners, parents of children with disabilities, individuals with disabilities, and others with special experience and expertise in the education of children with disabilities. The commission will deliver its recommendations to President Bush in a report to be submitted not later than April 30, 2002.

The establishment of this commission comes just before the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is due for reauthorization by Congress next year. The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) is holding a series of public forums to solicit comments on the upcoming reauthorization of IDEA. While several forums have already taken place, upcoming forums include:

Date: November 15, 2001

Location: IAS Conference, John Ascuaga's Nugget Hotel, Pavilion B, Sparks, Nevada

Phone: 778-356-3300

Times: 9:30 to 11:30 A.M., 1:30 to 4:30 P.M., and 6:00 to 8:00 P.M.

Host: Western RRC

Date: December 6, 2001

Location: American Geophysical Union Building, 2000 Florida Avenue, Washington, D. C.

Phone: 202-884-8215 Times: 1:30 to 4:30 P.M. and 6:00 to 8:00 P.M.

Host: Mid-South RRC and Federal Resource Center

Date: December 19, 2001

Location: IAS Conference, San Antonio Convention Center, Room 214-B

Phone: 210-207-8500

Times: 9:30 to 11:30 am and 1:30 to 4:30 P.M., and 6:00 to 8:00 P.M.

Host: Southeast RRC

For more information about forums, contact the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at 202-205-5507, 1-800 USA LEARN, or visit their web site at [www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/New](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/New)

**NCPIE is a core partner in the FAPE Project**

## ***NCPIE and American Youth Policy Forum Lunchtime Forum: Community***

### **Organizing for School Reform: Creating the Context for Change**

December 7, 2001 11:45-2:00 PM

Across the country, the field of community organizing is expanding into education. National organizing networks such as ACORN, the Industrialized Areas Foundation (IAF), and the Gamaliel Foundation, as well as existing community groups are focusing on schools and the critical issues of teaching and learning. They also are building support for key interventions, and establishing new and stronger accountability relationships between schools and communities. The Institute for Education and Social Policy (IESP) at New York University, along with its research partners Designs for Change (Chicago), California Tomorrow, and Southern Echo (Mississippi) have recently completed Mapping the Field of Organizing for School Reform, a study of community organizing groups working to improve public education in low-performing schools and districts. The study is based on surveys and interviews of 66 community groups in eight sites across the country.

This forum is the fourth in the Urgent Message: Families Crucial to School Reform series designed to highlight the importance of parent and community engagement in education reform and renewal. Forum panelists will discuss their findings and the prospects for this work to build community capacity and to change school and district cultures, priorities and practices. Panel members include Anne T. Henderson, coauthor of Urgent Message, and author of the site report on Washington, DC for this study, Norm Fruchter, Director of IESP, Kavitha Mediratta, senior project director at IESP, and Nsombi Lambright, of Southern Echo. To receive the electronic invitation to this forum e-mail Banu Dole at [aypf@aypf.org](mailto:aypf@aypf.org).

## ***Upcoming NCPIE Meeting and Presentation Plus Holiday Celebration!***

December 12th 9:00 a.m. – Noon NEA Building Conference Room A

National Education Association Family-School-Community Partnership Training

Warlene Gary, Manager of the External Partnership and Advocacy division of the National Education Association (NEA) will present the NEA's family-school-community partnerships training program.

The training is designed to encourage parental/family engagement. Key topics include working with rural and urban families with diverse needs, building advocacy for teachers through partnerships with parents and the community, and what effects these partnerships have in the school, home and community.

The goal of the training is to build the capacity of NEA affiliates to work with families, schools, and communities. Materials will be provided.

### ***New Award for Parental Engagement in Teacher Education Announced by AACTE***

The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)-MetLife Parental Engagement Institute has a new award parental involvement advocates will be excited to hear about. It's called the Best Practice Award for Parental Engagement in Teacher Education. This award is designed to recognize exemplary practice for the infusion of parental involvement and engagement in teacher preparation programs by a school, college or department of education.

Most favorable consideration will be given to those programs that can produce substantive evidence that their efforts are having a clear and lasting impact in the communities where their teachers are (and will be) assigned, and/or that their programs are sensitive to diversity within those communities. The following questions should be addressed in the submission materials: How long has the program been in operation? What is the theoretical framework of the program, and what conceptualization of parental involvement characterizes the program? What are the goals of the program? How is the program best described, in term of its motivation, history, networks, logistics, costs, funding sources, participants and obstacles to success. And many others.

For more information about submitting an entry for this award, please contact Tom Lapcharoen of AACTE directly at 202-293-2450, ext. 594. You may e-mail him at [tlapcharoen@aacte.org](mailto:tlapcharoen@aacte.org). The deadline for submission is November 16, 2001.

Award winners will be honored at the 2002 AACTE Annual Meeting, February 23-26 in New York City at a special Awards Ceremony. Award winners are featured in Brief, AACTE's newsletter; the Journal of Teacher Education, AACTE's journal; and on the AACTE web-site. In additions, AACTE notifies the association trade press, other major media, and appropriate university departments and personnel.