

Environmental Scan of Parental and Family Involvement National Research Centers and Technical Assistance Providers

Methodology

In an effort to better serve the Pathways to College Network partners and others, the Parental, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) component of the Pathways initiative conducted a web-based environmental scan of national research centers and technical assistance providers in the field of parental and family involvement. This report summarizes the results of that scan.

This web-based scan is a first step and will be followed by a survey and vetting process that will engage these research centers and technical assistance providers in confirming, challenging, and otherwise enriching its findings. Through this process we will identify organizations outside of the Pathways initiative that can inform and contribute to the research and training materials being developed by the PFCE component of the Pathways to College Network. This environmental scan will also help us to identify gaps in the field of parental and family involvement (PFI) that our own work can address.

Defining PFI continues to be an ongoing process in the field. Both researchers and practitioners define various activities as examples of “parental involvement.” Traditional models of parental involvement often enlist parents and families according to the needs of the school as understood by school personnel. This might include fundraising via bake sales, car washes, and other venues; helping their children with homework; disciplining their children; attending school meetings; or otherwise supporting school events. A more activist approach to PFI seeks to engage parents and caretakers in the decision-making processes of the school.

Several parent organizations, non-profit organizations, foundations, government agencies, and universities have made significant investments in promoting the involvement of parents and families in the education of their children and in conducting research examining the impact of that involvement. We selected these 12 centers and technical assistance providers based on leads from a literature review of PFI research and an environmental scan of parental and family involvement programs conducted in the Summer and Fall of 2001. All of these organizations are national in scope, focus on researching and/or otherwise supporting PFI, and are cited frequently in the research literature.

In order to keep our analysis systematic, we developed a rubric for compiling information about each of these research centers and/or technical service providers. We also developed a coding structure to provide a quick overview of the kinds of services and activities they provide regarding PFI. The chart following this introduction summarizes the results of our initial analysis. The services and activities of each organization were classified as one or more of the following:

- **Primary Research (PR)** – conducts its own research;
- **Networks Researchers (NR)** – links researchers to one another via conferences or other means;
- **Networks Practitioners (NP)** – links practitioners to one another via conferences or other means;
- **Networks Parents (NPA)** – links parents and parent organizations via conferences or other means;
- **Clearinghouse (PFIC)** – provides parents and other constituents with information and/or databases that specifically assist parents and other caretakers support the education of their children;
- **Advocacy/Policy (A/P)** – engages in policy analysis and/or advocacy on behalf of its constituents;
- **Provides Technical Assistance (TA)** – convenes meetings or workshops; provides training to its constituents;
- **Manages Projects (MP)** – manages its own direct service partnerships;
- **Evaluation (E)** – evaluates projects;
- **Communication (CM)** – conducts social marketing campaigns and/or markets the programs and models of its constituencies.

Analysis

Unlike the Pathways partners, whose PFI activities emphasize social marketing and the dissemination of information, these national research centers and technical assistance providers generally focus on conducting primary research and evaluations, linking PFI researchers, practitioners, and parents, and providing technical assistance as well as dissemination.

Our analysis reveals that, despite this broad range of activities and research, however, gaps still exist in the field that the Pathways initiative would be particularly well-suited to address. While a great deal of research and technical assistance is available for promoting the involvement of parents and families in the education of their children, less is known about the involvement of parents and families in supporting the college aspirations of their children. Much of the PFI field in the past has focused on early grades and reading. Reading at grade level in the early grades is clearly an important benchmark for students aspiring to attend and graduate from college. But reading at grade level in the early grades is not enough in and of itself to promote college access and success. For this reason, helping parents and families support their children in grades 6-12 and beyond, years crucial to the college access and success of underrepresented students, needs to receive more attention. Given its emphasis and experience in the field of college access and success, the Pathways to College Network is in a particularly advantageous position to bring together the fields of college access, college preparation, and parental and family involvement.

PFI National Research Centers and Technical Assistance Providers

1. Center for Law and Education
2. The Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships (Johns Hopkins University)
3. Comer School Development Program (Yale Child Study Center)
4. The Education Trust
5. Harvard Family Research Project
6. Institute for Responsive Education
7. National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE)
8. National Education Association (NEA)
9. National PTA (Parent Teacher Association)
10. Parents for Public Schools
11. Project GRAD (Graduation Really Achieves Dreams)
12. Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL)

Center for Law and Education

Contact Info: 1875 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 510
Washington, DC 20009
202-986-3000; 202-986-6648 (fax)

Contact Person: Kathleen Boundy – Co-Director

Mission: The Center for Law and Education (CLE) strives to make the right of all students to quality education a reality throughout the nation and to help enable communities to address their own public education problems effectively, with an emphasis on assistance to low-income students and communities. For more than a quarter of a century, the CLE has worked to bring about school- and district-wide change across the country in order to improve educational outcomes, particularly for low-income students.

Classifications: Networks Practitioners; Networks Parents; Clearinghouse; Advocacy/Policy; Technical Assistance

Programming:

- **Standards-based reform:** The National Title I and School Reform Advocacy Project works to mobilize parents, community advocates, and school personnel to use federal Title I and state and local law and policy to bring about broad-based school reform. The project activities include site work (technical assistance and training), materials, advocacy, and training.
- **High school restructuring (including vocational reform):** The Vocational Opportunity for Community and Educational Development (VOCED) project has worked in urban school districts to help create programs that are high quality, equitably serve all students, engage the community in program development, and engage teachers and students in community development. As the primary subcontractor for the Office of Vocational and Adult Education's New Urban High School initiative, CLE now works with several schools that are uniting school-to-career principles with school-wide high school reform.
- **Parent and community involvement:** The Community Action for Public Schools project helps parents, educators, and advocates link together and improve their capacity to work for the right of all children, and low-income children in particular, to high-quality education.

Notes:

- In 1994, CLE augmented its capacity to engage in parental involvement/community engagement by absorbing the former National Committee on Citizens in Education, a major resource on parent involvement issues.
- Has an extensive clearinghouse of parental involvement/community engagement literature.

The Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships (Johns Hopkins University)

Contact Info: National Network of Partnership Schools
Johns Hopkins University
3003 N. Charles Street, Suite 200
Baltimore, MD 21218
nnps@csos.jhu.edu
410-516-8800

Contact Person: Dr. Joyce Epstein, Director

Goal: Schools, families, and communities working together to promote successful students.

Mission: To conduct and disseminate research, development and policy analyses that produce new and useful knowledge and practices that help families, educators, and members of communities work together to improve schools, strengthen families, and enhance student learning and development.

Year Established: 1990, as part of the Center for Social Organization of Schools (CSOS) at Johns Hopkins University.

Partners: The Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships is a part of the Center for Social Organization of Schools (CSOS) at Johns Hopkins University. Also a part of CSOS is the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR), with whom the Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships does much research.

Classification: Primary Research; Networks Researchers; Networks Practitioners; Clearinghouse; Technical Assistance

Programming:

- **National Network of Partnership Schools**, which guides school, district, and state leaders, and teams of educators, parents, and others to improve school, family, and community partnerships.
 1. Clearly defines exactly what PI is, the challenges and redefinitions of PI, what results from increasing PI in schools, and examples of partnering connections.
 2. Provides one-day workshops for Action Teams for Partnership (helps attendees produce one-year action plans (which will then be vetted to school administrators, PTAs, etc. for revisions) and broad three-year outlines with goals for PI).

Action Team for Partnership (ATP): “action arm” of school improvement team or school council, which takes responsibility for assessing present partnership practices, writing plans for family

and community involvement, implementing activities, evaluating next steps, and continuing to improve and coordinate practices for all six types of involvement. They use a “goal-oriented approach,” outlining one-year and three-year goals to increase Parental Involvement and then developing an action plan to achieve these goals.

3. Provides forms to help ATPs document and review the school’s progress in developing comprehensive PFCE programs.
 4. Has district-level facilitators that help schools set a course, stay on course, reach their goals, share ideas with one another, and continue their plans and programs. The facilitators conduct training, planning, networking, and technical assistance activities.
- The Center also organizes an **International Network of Scholars**, including researchers from the U.S. and 40 other nations who are working on topics of school, family, and community partnerships.

Research: Research is conducted in collaboration with JHU’s Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR). This research focuses on the effects of school, family, and community partnerships, and on the development of pre-service, inservice, and advanced courses in partnerships for teachers and administrators. The mission of CRESPAR is to conduct the research, development, evaluation, and dissemination needed to transform schooling for students placed at risk. CRESPAR produces an academic journal, *The Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk* (JESPAR), which is the only refereed academic journal that presents research focused exclusively on improving the education of students placed at risk.

Benefits of the Center: Epstein is clearly a leader in the field – all research leads back to her and the six types of PI that she has identified.

Drawbacks of the Center:

- Lack of specific focus on high school students/college access.
- The research on high school students through the Center focuses on “at-risk” youth.

Notes: The Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships does not appear to do any direct service programming. They conduct and disseminate research on “best practices” of PI and convene the National Network of Partnership Schools. They seem to act like a clearinghouse of information for practitioners and parents. They organize a network of scholars, but it is hard to tell if that network of scholars does anything (in terms of conferences, dialogues, etc.) or if they are just used to do research for the Center.

Comer School Development Program (Yale Child Study Center)

Contact Info: Comer School Development Program
55 College Street
New Haven, CT 06510
203-737-1020; 203-737-1023 (fax)
schooldevelopmentprogram@yale.edu

Contact Person: Dr. James Comer

Goals: To provide a structure and a process for mobilizing adults to support students' overall development.

Overall Philosophy: Comer identifies Six Developmental Pathways (physical, psychological, language, social, ethical, and cognitive) that are critical for academic learning. His school reform model aims to support students' overall development and thus improve academic learning through a nine-element design: three teams (the School Planning and Management Team, or SPMT; the Student and Staff Support Team, or SSST; and the Parent Team, or PT); three operations (Comprehensive School Plan, staff development, monitoring and assessment); and three guiding principles (consensus, collaboration, and no-fault).

Key Partners: Yale Child Study Center

Classifications: Primary Research; Networks Practitioners; Networks Parents; Technical Assistance; Manages Projects; Evaluation

Programming:

- Planning and support teams comprised of parents, teachers, and administrators work to enhance students' overall development by adapting the structure of the school, the curriculum, assessment tools, and staff development to a more consensus-centered model of operation.
- "Parent Team" involves parents by developing activities through which the parents can support the school's social and academic programs, and also selects representatives to serve on the School Planning and Management Teams.

Research:

- Many evaluations of the SDP have been done, both by in-house evaluators and by outside evaluators. Referred to as "data-driven school improvement process."
- Things that tend to change first in SDP schools are school climate (indicated by improved relationships between students and staff), better collaboration among staff members, and greater focus on the child as the center of the education process.

- The Learning Teaching and Development unit (LT&D) of the SDP focuses on helping schools and districts set academic priorities and focus resources on them. Its method is to provide consultation and services to schools and districts to help them identify and address their students' unique academic needs. The LT&D focuses on literacy,

What SDP Provides to Member Schools:

- SDP-trained facilitator works with school district, and others have “Comer Action Teams” in their school district.
- “National Academies” held at Yale train school communities in the Comer Process.
- SDP faculty visit member schools twice a year to provide continued training, feedback, and coaching on site.
- Member schools also receive training manuals, research data, publications, and other materials.
- SDP conducts workshops to train schools in the Comer Process.
- Teachers Helping Teachers (THT) program operates with teachers meeting frequently throughout the year with a partner to help one another strengthen teaching competencies. It runs on the theory that “teaching will improve and student learning will be enhanced when teachers, in a climate of trust, take time together to reflect in-depth on their teaching and on how children learn and develop.”
- Consultation services at both the school and the district levels, providing presentations, coaching, support, planning assistance, trouble-shooting, and facilitation of strategic planning for change.

Benefits of SDP:

- Clear, well-defined process that is easily replicable.
- Evaluated well and frequently, both by their own researchers and by others.
- Certainly a respected program in the field; frequently cited by others as a model program.

Drawbacks of SDP:

- Somewhat of a “deficit model” – one of the founding assumptions is that “due to a lack of developmental support in their homes and communities, many of today’s children come to school with developmental gaps that impair their ability to learn.” They try to refute this by saying that the SDP “recognizes and addresses the experience deficit that inhibits the development of many of today’s children. On the other hand, the SDP does not accept the academic deficit theory that leads to tracking and lowered expectations of minority and ESL students.”

The Education Trust

Contact Info: 1725 K Street NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20006
202-293-1217; 202-293-2605 (fax)

Mission: The Education Trust works for the high academic achievement of all students at all levels (K16), focusing on low-income students and students of color. It does this through:

- advocacy that encourages schools, colleges, and whole communities to mount effective campaigns so that all their students will reach high levels of academic achievement;
- analysis and expert testimony on policies intended to improve education;
- writing and speaking for professional and general audiences about educational patterns and practices – both those that cause and those that close achievement gaps between groups of students;
- research and wide public dissemination of data identifying achievement patterns among different groups of students; and
- assistance to school districts, colleges, and community-based organizations to help their efforts at raising student achievement, especially among minority and poor students.

Year established: 1990

Classifications: Primary Research; Networks Researchers; Networks Practitioners; Advocacy/Policy; Technical Assistance; Manages Projects

Programming:

- **Local K16 Councils:** Made up of local education, business, and civic leaders around the country, these councils mount and sustain comprehensive, standards-based change in local educational institutions, kindergarten through college.
- **State K16 Councils and NASH (National Association of System Heads):** Network of state university system and K12 leaders who are working together to improve achievement and close gaps between groups of students, focusing on aligning college admissions with K12 standards, improving teacher preparation, and establishing standards for undergraduate education.
- **Putting Standards into Practice:** Work with teachers and administrators across the country to implement standards in their schools. Offer Standards in Practice (SIP) professional development for teachers to examine the effectiveness of their assignments by examining student work.
- **Parent and Community Engagement:** Provides strategies for collecting and analyzing data about student achievement, students' access to challenging curricula, and the distribution of educational resources. Also offer SIP training to parents so that they are able to judge the quality of their child's assignments to see if the work will meet new standards.

- **Transforming School Counseling:** Works with six universities and their K12 partners to create models for preparing school counselors to undertake a role as advocates for all students, and especially for low-income students and students of color.
- **Federal and State Policy:** Education Trust staff meets with policymakers, parents, education professionals, and community and business leaders across the country who are trying to transform their schools and colleges into institutions that genuinely serve all students, and bring those lessons to DC's public policy debate.
- **Quality in Undergraduate Education (QUE):** Establishes discipline-based standards for postsecondary student learning at participating four-year institutions and their feeder two-year colleges.
- **National Conference:** Provides a forum for administrators and faculty from schools and colleges, and education advocates from all regions of the country to meet together and share ideas, information, models, and strategies that work to raise the achievement of all students at all levels. The conference stresses standards-based improvement, professional development, and ways for school, college, and community leaders to improve student learning and close the achievement gap. The conference takes place each November in Washington, DC.

Research:

- **EdWatch Data:** Analyzes and reports national, state, and local data about student achievement and the institutional practices that help or hinder students' chances for success, casting a spotlight on inequities between groups of students and paving the way toward solutions.
- **Teacher E/Quality:** Reports that focus attention on the issue of teachers and their impact on student achievement.
- **Reports and Publications:** Publishes a variety of research, including the biennial *Education Watch: The Education Trust State and National Data Book* and the periodic series *Thinking K-16*.

Harvard Family Research Project

Contact Info: Harvard Graduate School of Education
Longfellow Hall, Appian Way
Cambridge, MA 02138
617-495-9108; 617-495-8594 (fax)
hfrp_gse@harvard.edu

Contact Person: Dr. Heather Weiss, Director

Mission: HFRP strives to advance knowledge development; providing training, professional development, and technical assistance; and offer strategies to encourage continuous learning and promote dialogue. Under this framework, HFRP's goals are to:

- Develop, test, and communicate methods that promote continuous improvement and accountability;
- Promote diversity, program and system complexity, and outcomes measurement and attainment through evaluation practices;
- Expand and strengthen the professional development base of those who work directly with children and families;
- Provide policymakers, practitioners, and foundations with research and information to guide them as they fund new strategies and strengthen existing initiatives.

Year Established: 1983, at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Classifications: Primary Research; Networks Researchers; Clearinghouse; Evaluation

Programming:

- **Family Involvement Network of Educators (FINE)**—effort to strengthen teacher preparation in family and community engagement in education.
- HFRP has created **Professional Standards of Practice Database**, a compilation of family-school-community partnership standards for teachers.

Research:

- Provides research and information to constituency, as well as a forum for dialogue among educators, researchers, policymakers, etc.
- Provides training and professional development to educators.
- HFRP serves foundations, nonprofit organizations, and public agencies by designing and implementing evaluations of their varied initiatives.
- Offers research publications to educate the public; promotes “active and continuous learning” through its Web site, educators network, and regular newsletter.

Notes:

- Acts as a clearinghouse of information and as a network to share information between practitioners.
- Has many various databases of information on parent/family involvement.
- Does not appear to have conferences, dialogues, etc.

Institute for Responsive Education

Contact Info: 21 Lake Hall
Northeastern University
Boston, MA 02115
617-373-2595; 617-373-8839 (fax)

Contact Person: Don Davies, Founder

Year Established: 1973

Classifications: Primary Research; Networks Practitioners; Networks Parents; Clearinghouse; Technical Assistance; Evaluation; Communication

Goals: The Institute for Responsive Education 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 partnerships are essential components of efforts to improve schools and raise standards.

Programming:

- Parent Leadership Exchange Program: the goal is “to develop a network of trained parent leaders who can share promising practices with individuals at their respective sites, train other parents to support their children’s learning and cultivate and sustain collaborations with various community groups.”
- Offers training, technical assistance workshops, materials, and support to parents, teachers, and community members on three training models:
 1. Building a Successful School Partnership Team (includes strategic planning and assessment);
 2. Outreach to Parents; and
 3. Building Capacity in Central Administration.
- Responsive Schools Project: promotes systemic educational change through family-school-community collaboration in predominately low-income areas by creating partnerships, conducting focus groups, and undertaking action plans.

Research:

- High School Family Center Research Project: a two-year study of the establishment of family centers in high schools as a strategy to involve parents in their children’s educational development.
- Numerous publications on school, family, and community partnerships. They use an “action research approach” in schools and communities with the participation of parents, teachers, and students. “Action research” is a collaborative, outcome-oriented process that involves members of the school community in ongoing program assessment and improvement.

Notes:

- Appears to be a beneficial model for what we eventually would like to do.

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE)

Contact Info: 3929 Old Lee Highway, Suite 91-A
Fairfax, VA 22030-2401
703-359-8973; 703-359-0972 (fax)
ferguson@ncea.com

Contact Person: Sue Ferguson

Year Established: 1980

Classification: Networks Researchers; Networks Practitioners; Clearinghouse;
Advocacy/Policy; Technical Assistance

Mission: NCPIE is a coalition of major education, community, public service, and advocacy organizations working to create meaningful family-school partnerships in every school in America. The coalition seeks to:

- Serve as a visible representative for strong parent and family involvement at the national level.
- Conduct activities that involve the coalition's member organizations and the constituencies in efforts to increase family involvement.
- Provide resources and legislative information that can help member organizations promote parent and family involvement.

Programming:

- Conference – First Annual Review of Family Involvement in Education” held by NCPIE, Feb. 23, 2000 – brought people together from key organizations and institutions to have a dialogue about the role of family involvement in school reform.
- Convenes monthly meetings of NCPIE members who share information about what they have been doing in the field of Parental Involvement in Education.
- NCPIE also hosts an annual Information Fair at which each member organization exhibits its programs and products.

Research:

- NCPIE provides information but does not appear to conduct any of their own research.

Notes:

- Programming lags behind research findings.
- One of goals for 21st Century: “Reducing social and educational gaps between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots,’ to move much closer to the time when all children, regardless of race, social status, or family income achieve high standards of social and academic achievement.”

- The conference proceedings publication lists several organizations prominent in the PI field and gives hypotheses as to where the field should head. These proceedings are exceedingly helpful in determining where to go from here and in assessing whether or not we are “on track” (we are). The following organizations were “found” by us because they were listed in NCPIE’s conference proceedings: Institute for Responsive Education (IRE), the Center for Law and Education, and Parents for Public Schools.

National Education Association

Contact Info: 1201 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-833-4000

Goal: NEA is a volunteer-based organization supported by a network of staff at the local, state, and national level. At the local level, NEA affiliates are active in a wide variety of activities, everything from conducting professional workshops on discipline and other issues that affect faculty and school support staff to bargaining contracts for school district employees. At the state level, NEA affiliate activities are equally wide-ranging. NEA state affiliates, for instance, regularly lobby legislators for the resources schools need, campaign for higher professional standards for the teaching profession, and file legal actions to protect academic freedom.

Mission: To fulfill the promise of a democratic society, the National Education Association shall promote the cause of quality public education and advance the profession of education; expand the rights and further the interest of educational employees; and advocate human, civil, and economic rights for all.

Year Established: 1857

Classification: Networks Practitioners; Clearinghouse; Advocacy/Policy; Technical Assistance; Manages Projects; Communication

Overall Programming:

- **Building a Sense of Community, *School Stories***
Thirty-minute television show about connecting schools and their communities, co-produced by NEA and the Learning Channel.
- **Making Academics Count**
This is a nationwide campaign to have employers use student records in their hiring decisions. Making Academics Count resulted from the partnership between business and educators. It reinforces the message that academic achievement matters in the employment arena. In a recent Public Agenda survey, 84% of high schools students said they would work harder if employers looked at their academic transcripts.
- **NEA's Minority Community Outreach Strategy**
This is a list of minority organizations with which collaborative agreements have or are being developed.
- **NEA-Saturn/UAW Partnership Award for Teacher Mentoring Programs**
The 2001 Partnership Award recognizes mentoring programs that are created and sustained through joint efforts of school districts and unions. Winners are acknowledged during the NEA Annual Meeting and in their home districts. The winners also are invited to visit the Saturn Plant in Spring Hill, Tennessee.
- **ParentTech**

ParentTech: Parenting in the Digital Age is designed to educate families and educators of children in grades 6-8 about how technology makes a difference in the ways we learn, work, and live. The ParentTech resource kit offers the latest research, inspiring stories from families and educators, practical tips, and places to go to learn more. ParentTech is a partnership of the North Central Regional Laboratory (NCREL) and Ameritech.

- **A Pocket Guide to Building Partnerships for Student Learning**
Suggestions for schools and local education associations who want to promote better community relations and see samples of practices that lead to these improved relations.
- **Read Across America**
Each year millions of Americans join NEA to celebrate the value of reading.
- **SchoolNotes.com**
SchoolNotes.com is an innovative service designed to link educators to their community and complement school Web sites by allowing teachers to post school information online without having to learn HTML or other programming. Parents and students with Internet access can reach homework assignments, spelling words, reading lists, and other school material posted to the site. SchoolNotes.com is a free community service made possible through sponsorship from leading corporations.

PFI-specific programming:

- Extensive Web site with parental “how-to” information.
- **Teacher TV** – NEA’s Emmy award-winning TV program explores the impact of parent and community involvement in children’s schooling through a number of episodes.
- **Family-School-Community Partnership Training** – NEA has developed an effective family-school-community partnerships training module that has been presented in workshops and conferences across the country. This program is designed to encourage parental/family engagement. This is crucial to the educational success of children.

Key Topics:

1. What are family-school-community partnerships?
 2. How do we work with rural and urban families with diverse needs?
 3. How do we build advocacy for teachers through partnerships with parents and the community?
 4. What effects do these partnerships have in the school, home, and community (as they work with families and communities as learning environments)?
- **State Contacts**
State contacts have been developed to promote and energize the Family-School-Community Partnership program.
To enhance the program, each state contact is responsible for:
 1. Distributing information provided by NEA Urban Initiative to the appropriate affiliate and external locations;
 2. Agitating for training opportunities for staff, members, and parents; and

3. Serving as advisors to NEA's Urban Initiatives team for program feedback and innovative ideas.
- **Materials Distribution** – NEA Urban Initiatives provides materials and technical support to local and state affiliates to help them build ties with their communities. Some items available in limited quantities are: *Parent Power*, *Parents are Powerful*, and *Family Engagement Leaflets*.

National PTA (Parent Teacher Association)

Contact Info: 330 N. Wabash Avenue, Suite 2100
Chicago, IL 60611
312-670-6782; 312-670-6783 (fax)

Mission:

- To support and speak on behalf of children and youth in the schools, in the community, and before governmental bodies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children;
- To assist parents in developing the skills they need to raise and protect their children;
- To encourage parent and public involvement in the public schools of this nation.

Classifications: Networks Parents; Clearinghouse; Advocacy/Policy; Technical Assistance; Communication

Programming: “**Building successful partnerships**” workshops are available to train PTA leaders to give presentations on the benefits of parent involvement, the Components of effective parent involvement programs, and how to implement the National Standard for Parent/Family Involvement Programs.

Research:

- Developing **National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs**, which are “voluntary guidelines to strengthen parent and family involvement on behalf of children in schools and other programs,” and are developed in collaboration with NCPIE and the Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships at JHU (Epstein’s program).
- “**Building Successful Partnerships**” is a PTA-produced publication that is a comprehensive, practical guide to bring parents, educators, communities, and schools together. The book is a how-to guide on developing Parental Involvement programs in local communities.

Notes:

- The PTA seems to be a clearinghouse of information. It links up people with similar interests from around the country and disseminates information to them. It provides some training and resources on issues of parental involvement.
- The PTA provides countless lists, policies, forms, and other fill-in-the-blank methods of adapting their model to your local community, and offers many ways to strengthen local PTA organizations.
- It also provides National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs, along with a detailed how-to listing.

- The PTA does not appear to have much programming beyond the dissemination of its resources or the training of constituents in how to utilize its resources and build a stronger PTA.

Parents for Public Schools

Contact Info: 1520 N. State Street
Jackson, MS 39202
800-880-1222; 601-353-0002 (fax)

Contact Person: Kelly Ann Butler

Mission: Parents for Public Schools is a national organization of grassroots chapters dedicated to:

- Recruiting families to stay in or come back to public schools;
- Involving parents in more meaningful roles (as decision-makers);
- Improving public schools community-wide through district level involvement.

We believe that offering every child the highest quality of public education is vital to American democracy. By mobilizing parents who reflect our diverse culture, we build excellent public schools and better communities.

Year Established: 1989

Classifications: Networks Parents; Clearinghouse; Advocacy/Policy; Technical Assistance; Communication

Programming: With both a national headquarters in Mississippi and local chapters all around the country, PPS mobilizes parents to build strong public schools and healthier, more vital communities. PPS aims to elevate the role of parents in public school advocacy and reform by promoting a new standard and a new attitude for involvement at every level.

Project GRAD (Graduation Really Achieves Dreams)

Contact Info: 1100 Louisiana Avenue, Suite 450
Houston, TX 77002
713-654-7083; 713-986-0490 (fax)
www.projectgrad.org

Mission: The goal of Project GRAD USA is to increase the graduation and college attendance rates of inner-city students. They seek to demonstrate that public education can generate an educated workforce for the future and provide schools across the nation with a model that is cost-effective and replicable.

Year Established: 1988

Partners: Ford Foundation; Houston Endowment Inc.; Houston Independent School District; United States Department of Education

Classification: Networks Parents; Technical Assistance; Manages Projects

Overall Programming:

- **Scholarships:** All ninth grade students are offered scholarships of between \$1,000 and \$1,500 per year for four years of college if they meet the following academic requirements: graduate on time with their class at the Project GRAD High School; achieve a 2.5 GPA in college preparatory courses; attend two specially designed Summer Institutes; and take higher-level college prep courses, including Algebra II.
- **Math Opportunities, Valuable Experiences, and Innovative Teaching (MOVE IT Math)** is an instructional program that uses a wide variety of teaching tools to address the unique needs of students with different learning styles. Schools that use the program have shown significant improvements in teacher and student interest in math, student performance in math, and other areas such as student discipline and school attendance.
- **Success For All** is a comprehensive reading and writing program that requires the restructuring of elementary schools to ensure the success of every child. The program emphasizes prevention and early intervention to anticipate and solve any learning problems. Success for All provides schools with research-based curriculum materials; extensive professional development in proven strategies for instruction, assessment, and classroom management; one-on-one tutoring for primary grade children who need it; and active family support interventions.
- **Consistency Management & Cooperative Discipline (CMCD):** Designed to help teachers and students create and maintain orderly classrooms, CMCD helps students build a sense of structure in their classroom, even if they lack

structure at home. This program creates an atmosphere of order and discipline in inner-city school hallways and classrooms.

1. Classroom Management System
2. Promotes Student Self-Discipline
3. Builds Self-Esteem
4. Pre-K through High School
5. Consistent, Positive, and Interactive

PFI-specific Programming:

- **Communities in Schools (CIS) and Parent University:** Project GRAD provides a CIS social worker to each elementary school and teams of three to five social workers for middle and high schools in the feeder system. One of the roles these professionals play is to focus on increasing parent involvement in their children's academic success.
- There are two areas of emphasis for the PFI component of Project GRAD:
 1. During the Annual Walk for Success, volunteers visit the homes of all the first, second, sixth, and ninth graders about to enter a Project GRAD school. Parents learn of the availability and expectations of Project GRAD's college scholarship and are encouraged to sign a contract that commits their children to the academic expectations of the scholarship program.
 2. As a result of a Walk for Success-sponsored survey, Project GRAD helps establish a parental leadership team that acts as a Board of Trustees for implementing the suggested course offerings. Parents are then encouraged to "enroll" in Parent University. A Project GRAD Family Involvement Coordinator organizes the Parent Universities throughout the feeder system with the assistance of Communities in Schools.

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL)

Contact Info: National Center for Family and Community Connections with the Schools
Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
211 East 7th Street
Austin, TX 78701
1-800-476-6861

Mission: SEDL's mission is to find, share, and sustain effective solutions for the most urgent problems facing educational systems in the southwestern United States. SEDL's particular emphasis is on ensuring educational equity for students. The primary strategies are those of applied research, development, dissemination, training and technical assistance, and evaluation.

Classifications: Primary Research; Networks Practitioners; Networks Researchers; Clearinghouse; Technical Assistance

Programming:

- SEDL operates the National Center for Family and Community Connections with the Schools which bridges research and practice, linking people with research-based information and resources that they can use to effectively connect schools, families, and communities.
- Provides training and networking opportunities to the Regional Educational Laboratory Network, consisting of 10 regional educational laboratories across the U.S.

Research: Gathers and shares information from the field, including research, theory, programs, policies, and practices.