• Dr. Joyce L. Epstein is Director of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships and the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS).

• She is also Principal Research Scientist, and Research Professor of Sociology at Johns Hopkins University.

• Through the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS), Dr. Epstein provides professional development to enable school, district, and state leaders develop research-based programs of family and community involvement.

• Her current research focuses on how district and school leadership affects the quality of schools’ initiatives for family and community involvement and results for all students.

**Objectives**

Participants will:

1. Review research and policy positions on engaging families of students with special needs
2. Connect NNPS approaches and the framework of six types of involvement with parental engagement requirements of IDEA.
3. Explore successful partnership practices.

**Webinar Interactions**

In this webinar, there is one poll and several “think fast” activities. In these you will consider the information presented. Then, you will have one minute to share an idea or reaction in the Chat Box.

**Q & A**

As we go along, write your questions in the Chat Box. We will address them at the end of the session.

**POLL: Who is here?**

What is your position in helping schools develop their programs of partnership, including family engagement in reading?

- 1. District Leader for Partnerships
- 2. Organization Leader for Partnerships
- 3. State Leader for Partnerships
- 4. School-based Leader
- 5. Parent Leader
- 6. Other
Studies* conducted over the past 20 years confirm:

- Students with disabilities whose parents are involved in their education are more successful than similar students whose parents are not involved. This is confirmed in studies of school years, transitions, and post-secondary education and employment.

- Some school principals report that their special education teachers are not well prepared to engage parents in ways that improve students’ academic and social skills.

*See reference slide and Resource Packet for publications and materials.

Studies reveal . . .

- A child’s disability may affect the entire family. Parents and other family members may face various stresses, such as:
  - Securing services for their children.
  - Understanding common emotions, including: Denial, Blame, Sadness, Fear, Guilt, Anger, Isolation, and Acceptance.

- But also:
  - Pride in students’ accomplishments.
  - Love, Gratitude, Enjoyment

Think Fast Activity

A Question to Ponder

What do the research results mean to you?

- Family engagement improves the achievement of students with disabilities and improves students’ transitions to post-secondary placements.
- Many teachers are unprepared to engage families of children with disabilities in their education across the grades and in the transition process.
- A child’s disabilities may affect the whole family.

Write one idea in the Chat Box, now.

Instructional Approaches in the News

Compare Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Personalized Learning

Universal Design for Learning, or UDL, is an instructional framework that supports flexible ways for educators to teach lessons, and multiple ways for students to demonstrate what they know. The goal is to reach all learners, including students with disabilities, ELL. (Samuels, 2016, Education Week)

Personalized Learning had its roots in gifted and special needs classrooms to provide differentiated teaching strategies. These were often codified in a child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP), and enabled students with special needs to be integrated in mainstream classrooms. (Carolan, 2016, Education Week)

How do teachers’ instructional approaches (e.g., UDL and Personalized Learning) affect the engagement of families of children with special needs?

Write one idea in the Chat Box, now.

Think Fast Activity

Classroom Instruction and Family Engagement

How do teachers’ instructional approaches (e.g., UDL and Personalized Learning) affect the engagement of families of children with special needs?

Write one idea in the Chat Box, now.

Based on research, policy, and practice, most agree:

- Teachers need information and strategies to increase the engagement of ALL families of children with disabilities.
- One part of the solution is strengthening and sustaining comprehensive partnership policies, programs, and practices.

NNPS research-based approaches assist educators to organize effective partnership programs. Let’s review.
Partnership Program Development

KNOW THE BASICS!

Everyone wants EXCELLENT and SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS and STUDENTS.

How will we reach these goals?

Excellent Schools
Strong Families
Healthy Communities

Primary Components of the NNPS Model

- Action Team for Partnerships
- Framework of Six Types of Involvement
- One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships
- Evaluation

Identify an Action Team for Partnerships (ATP)

- At least . . .
  - 2-3 teachers
  - 2-3 parents/family members
  - Principal
  - Others (nurse, counselor, secretary, parent liaison, community partners, representative of PTA/PTO)
  - 1-2 students at high school level

Delmae Elementary School, SC  Park Middle School, WA  Wolcott Technical H.S., CT

How to adapt the ATP to ensure attention to engaging families of children with special needs

- Required for ATP
  - 2-3 teachers or more
  - 2-3 parents/family members or more
  - 1 administrator (principal or assistant principal)
  - 1-2 students (required in high school)
  - Other members (nurse, counselor, community partners)

- Recommended—ADD
  - 1 special education teacher
  - 1-2 parents of students with special needs
  - Chair of special education
  - ARD manager
  - Transition specialist
  - School psychologist
  - Others
  - Special education students

What does an Action Team for Partnerships do?

Dolby Elementary School
Lake Charles, LA 2015

ATP MEMBERS work together to . . .

- Review school goals. Select 2 academic goals; 1 non-academic goal; and goal to ensure a welcoming school climate.
- Write a One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships to involve families and the community in ways that contribute to the selected goals for student learning and development.
- Implement and evaluate the quality of the activities.
- Continually improve partnership plans, program, and practices.
Use the Framework of Six Types of Involvement

NNPS FRAMEWORK
for Family and Community Engagement

IDEA REQUIREMENTS
for Family Engagement
From P.L. 94-142/P.L. 105-17

Type 1 - PARENTING
Ensure that educators and parents have the necessary tools to improve educational results for children with disabilities.

Type 2 - COMMUNICATING
Inform parents regularly of their child's progress toward the goals in the IEP.

Type 3 - VOLUNTEERING
At the discretion of the parent or agency, invite other individuals who have knowledge about the child to participate in the IEP meeting.

Type 4 - LEARNING AT HOME
Develop an IEP based on the strengths of the child and the concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child.

Type 5 - DECISION MAKING
Involve parents of children with disabilities on the IEP team, and in the design, evaluation, and implementation of school improvement plans.

Type 6 - COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY
Beginning when the child is 14 years old, transition services and a plan for transition on the IEP.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EXAMPLES
for a One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships to IMPROVE READING ACHIEVEMENT

TYPE 1 Workshops for parents on various ways to read aloud with young children
TYPE 2 Parent-teacher-student conferences on reading goals and reading progress
TYPE 3 Reading-partner volunteers, guest readers of favorite stories, and other organized, ongoing read-with-me activities
TYPE 4 Family Reading Night to demonstrate reading strategies for parents and activities to conduct with students at home
TYPE 5 PTA/PTO support for a family room or parent center to provide information on children's reading
TYPE 6 Donations from business partners of books for classrooms, for the school library, and for children to take home

...AND MANY OTHER IDEAS FOR EACH TYPE OF INVOLVEMENT

MIDDLE SCHOOL EXAMPLES
for a One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships to IMPROVE ATTENDANCE

TYPE 1 "Attendance Summit" for parents on the importance of student attendance. Speakers may include school administrators, counselors, legal experts, teachers, health service providers, students, and family members
TYPE 2 Recognition postcards for good or improved attendance
TYPE 3 Family volunteers as attendance monitors
TYPE 4 Interactive homework for students and family partners to create a poster about why good attendance is important
TYPE 5 PTA/PTO communications, translated as needed, for all families on requirements for student attendance and on-time arrival, and steps to take when students return to school after illness
TYPE 6 Agreement with local businesses to post signs that students are welcome only during nonschool hours

...AND MANY OTHER IDEAS FOR EACH TYPE OF INVOLVEMENT
### Think Fast Activity

**Successes and Challenges**

From your view or experience…

To engage families of students with disabilities...

What is ONE activity that has worked well?

Write your idea in the **CHAT BOX** now.

What is ONE challenge that needs to be solved?

Write your idea in the **CHAT BOX** now.

### Engaging Families of Students with Special Needs

Let’s discuss a few activities designed to engage families of children with special needs.

ALL of these ideas were implemented in schools with high % of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Also see the Resource files for this webinar for details and more information.

### STRATEGIES THAT ENGAGE FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

From annual books from NNPS and other resources

### STRATEGIES FOR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

**CONSIDER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES A & B**

**A. VIP: Volunteers in Partnership**

**Northern Suburban Special Education District, Highland Park, IL**

The Partnership Team for this special education cooperative serves several districts with services for students 6-21 year old with learning delays and other disabilities. The organization developed VIP to recruit parent volunteers to work with 175 students as mentors, coaches, and to assist their teachers in other roles. A Volunteer Coordinator ran background checks and provided training in teaching and enrichment activities linked to the goals the students’ teachers set for learning, communicating, and for improving social and emotional skills. The program assisted teachers and students alike, and was slated for scale up.

From: *Promising Partnership Practices 2013*.

Baltimore: National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University.
B. Chats and Chews: Partnering for Success of Students with Disabilities
Lowndes Middle School, Valdosta, GA

Teachers wanted to mobilize parents to help students with disabilities master skills and gain positive attitudes about learning. This middle school designed social meetings—Chats and Chews—for parents of children with disabilities to meet and talk with their children’s Resource Teachers. With breakfast, parents gathered ideas on setting up study areas at home, students’ notebooks, how to reinforce students’ writing skills, and other topics, and were able to ask questions about school and tests. Parents increased understanding of school requirements and how to support students in special education programs with middle grades.

STRATEGIES for Family Engagement
Preparing Teachers to Work with Parents of Children with Disabilities

Family as Faculty*
This approach, developed years ago, can be organized in many different ways. The main idea is to draw upon parents and grandparents as “faculty” to “teach” future teachers or practicing educators what family members hope for their children, think about school, and how they can help students attain attitudes and skills for success in school. Most times, a panel of diverse parents come to talk to a college, school, or district group. They address a set of planned questions, tell personal histories, and answer questions from the audience. Educators gain a realistic picture of options for effectively engaging all students’ families, including families of children with disabilities.


THINK FAST ACTIVITY
THINK: Which activity—
VIP: Volunteers in Partnership
or
Chats and Chews: Partnering for Success of Students with Disabilities
would work well in a school you know and why?
OR:
How would you improve one of these activities?
WRITE: Your reaction to one activity in the CHAT BOX.
You will have one minute to write a reaction. Then, we will move on to the next set of ideas.

A network can help!
Help is available from NNPS at Johns Hopkins University

Research-based tools, training, and publications.
On-going technical assistance from NNPS
Facilitators by phone, e-mail, monthly e-briefs, website, newsletters.
Coordinated planning and evaluation tools to meet Title I requirements for family involvement.
Networking to share best practices with hundreds of schools, districts, states, and organizations across the country.

THINK FAST ACTIVITY
Focus on Family as Faculty
How might hearing from parents of students with disabilities on a Family as Faculty Panel change the way that teachers think about the engagement of families in their children’s education?
WRITE: Your reaction to one activity in the CHAT BOX.
You will have one minute to write a reaction. Then, we will move on to the next set of ideas.

NNPS PUBLICATIONS
From Corwin Press
3rd Edition 2009
PRINCIPALS Matters: A Guide to Supporting Partnerships

From Corwin Press 2009
Family Reading Night

From Eye on Education 2012
Multicultural Partnerships

From Eye on Education 2011
TEXT, SECOND EDITION
Westview Press 2011
### MORE NNPS PUBLICATIONS

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### Think Fast Activity

**Reflection and Action Steps**

Using the information from this webinar:

What is **ONE action step** that YOU can take to improve school-based activities to engage parents, other family members, and community members with children with special needs?

Enter your action step in the **CHAT BOX** now.

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### Resources

- **Beach Center on Families and Disability**
  University of Kansas
  [www.beachcenter.org](http://www.beachcenter.org)

- **Harvard Family Research Project**
  Harvard Graduate School of Education
  See: Family Engagement and Children with Disabilities:
  A Resource Guide for Educators and Parents
  [Download a PDF of this publication](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/IDEA)

- **IDEA regulations**

- **National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS)**
  Johns Hopkins University
  [www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org)

- **PACER Center, Minneapolis, MN**
  Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights
  [www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org)

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### Selected References


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**For more information and to join NNPS, visit:**
[www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org)

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Working Together for Student Success
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