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Introduction

Illinois Statewide Technical Assistance Center
www.is-tac.org

The Illinois Technical Assistance Center (ISTAC) is the Illinois State Board of Education’s model of integrated technical assistance for families and school districts. Each ISTAC project uses a coaching and support network model, focusing on building the capacity of districts through the implementation of evidence-based practices, utilizing self-assessment, data collection, and data analysis in support of data-based decision making.

Illinois Statewide Technical Assistance Center Projects

• Illinois Autism Training and Technical Assistance Project (IATTAP)
• Illinois Positive Behavioral Intervention & Supports Network (PBIS)
• Illinois Service Resource Center (ISRC)
• Illinois Statewide Technical Assistance Center for Parents (ISTAC-P)
• Project CHOICES
• Project REACH
Nothing Motivates a Child More…

“The research is abundantly clear: nothing motivates a child more than when learning is valued by schools and families/community working together in partnership…These forms of [parent] involvement do not happen by accident or even by invitation. They happen by explicit strategic intervention.”


Home Factors… Account for 49% of the Influence on Student Performance…

In October 2001, Stephanie Hirsh, in the National Staff Development Council publication, Results writes, “According to research by Ron Ferguson, home and family factors…account for 49% of the influence on student performance…”

Hirsh continues, “This important position of influence is why family involvement is addressed in the NSCD Standards for Staff Development…educators will benefit from staff development that helps them gain the knowledge and skills aligned with the specific outcomes they want for parents and their children.”
Research strongly supports school-parent partnerships as effective in improving school climate and student performance. According to a comprehensive survey of 85 research studies cited in two National PTA publications, *National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs* (1998), and *Building Successful Partnerships: A Guide for Developing Parent and Family Involvement Programs* (2000), the influence of parent involvement is profound and provides comprehensive benefits for students, families, and schools when parent and family members become participants in their children’s education and lives. Research shows that:

- Students with involved parents – no matter what their income or background – are more likely to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more.

- Partnership programs can increase student achievement, improve attendance and behavior, and promote positive social skills.

- When partnership practices are tightly linked to school goals, families become involved in ways that directly assist students’ learning and success.
Framework

The ISTAC Partnership Schools model was developed using the School, Family, Community Partnerships (SFCP) framework, a research-based methodology developed by Dr. Joyce Epstein, Professor of Sociology, and Director of the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Epstein’s framework is grounded in over 20 years of research. Goal-oriented Plans for Partnerships are developed to enhance family engagement which supports student achievement. Activities are centered on six identified types of involvement. The six identified types of involvement are:

- Parenting,
- Communicating,
- Learning at Home,
- Volunteering,
- Decision Making, and
- Collaboration with the Community.

School, Family, and Community Partnerships involve all stakeholders in the school community. Participants may be:

- District and building administration;
- Teachers, paraprofessionals, and other school staff;
- Family members of all populations; and
- Members of the community which are invested and concerned about the quality of education in their community.
The ISTAC uses a coaching and support network model, focusing on building capacity of districts through the implementation of evidenced-based practices, utilizing data collection and analysis in support of data-based decision-making.

Support will focus on assisting district leaders on developing and implementing an effective and sustainable SFCP at the district level. The ISTAC will provide support through a three year process and the district will be expected to provide data for three years, plus two.

ISTAC Integrated Support:
- Phone consultations with ISTAC staff
- Website support
- Webinar support
- Networking opportunities
- Site visits from ISTAC staff

Commitment of Participating School Districts:
- 3 year plan
- 5 years of continual data collection
**Next Steps**

**Step 1:** Commit to partnerships by reading the ISTAC commitment agreement, on page 9; and by completing the *Intent to Commit* form enclosed with this packet. A copy of the form will be available online at www.pepartnership.org. Send the completed form via mail or fax to:

Parent & Educator Partnership  
25 S. Washington  
Suite 106  
Naperville, IL. 60540  
Fax: 630-428-4055

Questions should be sent to the attention of Merle Siefken or Yvonne Janvrin, via e-mail: msiefken@sased.org; yjanvrin@sased.org; or toll free, 877-317-2733.

**Step 2:** Support partnerships by identifying a district leader to be the key contact person for partnerships. This person should be a member of the Superintendent’s Leadership Team and will serve as the District Facilitator for Partnerships.

**Step 3:** Grow partnerships by attending the District Leadership Institute in September, 2008. District facilitators will learn to implement partnerships in their districts.
Step 1: Commitment

ILLINOIS STATEWIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER
Commitment Agreement

An effective technical assistance process is dependent upon systemic collection of data and the use of data-based decision making at both the systems and practice levels.

ISTAC will commit to:
1. Prepare District Leadership Team for implementation of ISTAC practices.
2. Assist districts in the collection of baseline data.
3. Assist districts with the collection, interpretation and analysis of data for the purposes of problem solving and action planning.
4. Provide technical assistance to internal and external coaches.

District will commit to:
1. Support the ISTAC project(s) in its schools for a minimum of 5 years
   a. Three year minimum for implementation of technical assistance
   b. Five Year minimum for sharing of data
2. School Board agreement to participate with the ISTAC project(s).
3. Implementation on a District Level Leadership Team (which includes at least one district level administrator and one parent, who is not an employee of the district, of a student with an IEP) to plan, analyze and review ISTAC activities.
4. Identify a district leader with designated FTE to coordinate district ISTAC efforts.
Step 2: Identify District Facilitators for Partnerships

What do District Facilitators do?

• Provide training to School Improvement Teams to help them understand the framework of the six types of involvement and to use the framework to write One-Year Action Plans for improving partnerships

• Help schools tailor practices of partnership to reach specific school improvement goals, such as improving attendance, achievement, behavior, and a school climate of partnership

• Help schools focus on meeting specific challenges that affect the success of their practices of partnership

• Help schools assess the results of their practices of partnership in activity-specific and annual evaluations

• Conduct quarterly cluster meetings that bring small groups of schools’ SFCP leaders together to share best practices and to discuss problems and solutions

• Meet individually with principals at the start of the school year to clarify the work of the facilitator and how the principal will support partnership work

• Conduct End-of-Year Celebration Workshops with all schools to celebrate progress, share problems, and continue planning

• Conduct other activities to assist partnership development, such as presentations to teachers, families, groups of principals, superintendents, the school board, other district leaders, parents, or other groups interested in improving partnerships

• Meet with district administrators to discuss their expectations for the program, for facilitators, and to clarify how they will encourage principals to support the work of their schools’ family engagement initiative
Step 3: District Leadership Institute

District leaders, who will serve as District Facilitator for Partnerships will be expected to attend the District Leadership Institute in September 2008.

District Facilitators will learn and plan strategies to strengthen district and school partnerships.

Information will help build and sustain effective programs of family and community engagement. By the end of this one day workshop, district facilitators will be able to:

- Guide the district in developing a district action plan for partnerships;
- Conduct school Action Team for Partnerships training;
- Guide schools to write and implement an effective one-year action plan.

Fall Training Schedule:
- Thursday, September 25 Central/Southern IL
  - Crowne Plaza, Springfield, Illinois

- Wednesday, September 24 Northern IL
  - Northern Illinois University, Naperville Campus
The ISTAC Partnership School’s three-year plan is a non-linear, continuous process, involving all stakeholders in the existing school improvement process. On the following pages, this process is defined with sample activities.

At the District Leadership Institute in September, district leaders will develop a plan for implementing this process in their school community.
Three-Year Process

Create Awareness: Actively promote the partnership program to all key stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, families, and community groups.

Sample activities:
- Identify schools to participate in the district’s partnership initiative.
- Conduct presentations about the district’s goals for its partnership program to the school board, parent advisory council, and/or other key leadership groups.

Align Program and Policy: With support from district leadership, integrate the partnership program with district policies, requirements, and procedures.

Sample activities:
- Write a district leadership plan for partnerships that includes district-level actions and direct assistance to schools - use this inventory as a resource.
- Ensure that each school’s policy on family involvement reflects the Illinois State Board of Education policy for family engagement.
Guide Learning and Program Development: *Organize and conduct professional development activities to assist schools in developing their partnership program.*

Sample activities:

- Develop and implement professional development for all staff on partnerships.

- Assist schools with preliminary steps to begin the process of developing partnerships (e.g., identify the partnership facilitator within the Improvement Team, arrange team-training workshops, etc.).

Share Knowledge: *Foster ongoing communication throughout the district to build knowledge about programs of school, family, and community partnerships.*

Sample activities:

- Share progress on the district’s partnership program efforts with the superintendent, school board, principals, and others in leadership positions.

- Facilitate regularly scheduled meetings with other district stakeholders working on family involvement issues (e.g., special education, ELL/bilingual education, Title I).
Three-Year Process

Celebrate Milestones: Recognize school and district successes in partnership programs and practices.

Sample activities:

- Write an annual progress report on the district’s partnership program to share with key stakeholders.

- Organize a recognition program to celebrate schools for achieving milestones such as implementing their first partnership activity, increasing attendance at activities, etc.

Document Progress and Evaluate Outcomes: Collect information to document activities and progress in meeting district and school partnership goals.

Sample activities:

- Establish a quarterly/monthly recordkeeping system for the district facilitator(s) to document visits to schools and technical assistance that is provided or requested.

- Assist schools with evaluation tools including the End-of-Year Evaluation form and the Annual Review of Team Processes and develop additional activity evaluation tools.


100% of funding is from federal IDEA dollars provided by the Illinois State Board of Education.

To learn more about the Illinois State Board of Education Technical Assistance projects, visit [www.is-tac.org](http://www.is-tac.org).
Appendix

A. Illinois State Board of Education Policy for Family and Community Responsibility

B. ISBE Policy and the Six Types

C. Organization chart

D. Keys to Successful Partnerships: Six Types of Involvement

E. Using the Six Types to reach the Underrepresented

F. District Checklist

G. State Performance Plan Indicators
Appendix A: ISBE Policy for Family and Community Responsibility

The State Board of Education recognizes that a child’s education is primarily the responsibility of the family and that this responsibility is shared with the school and the entire community. The Board believes that meaningful family support, both for individual students’ learning and for the work of the school in general, is critical if students are to achieve their potential.

The State Board believes that schools must create an environment that is conducive to meaningful participation by families, community members, business and governmental agencies. Clearly, educators must welcome the involvement of family members and be receptive to their participation if this interaction is to have the desired results. Further, schools have a responsibility to seek out and enter into partnerships with other members of the community, both in order to bring additional resources to bear on the educational process and in order to meet the needs of students that affect their ability to learn.

Schools also need the support of other members in the community, including businesses, governmental agencies, and a wide range of community-based organizations. These various entities have considerable scope for affecting the lives of individual students and their families, for broadening the resources available to schools, and for supporting the educational endeavor in both tangible and intangible ways. A strong community commitment to education is important if schools and students are to do their best work.

Parents and other family members should take responsibility for helping students to be effective participants in their own schooling. They can do this specifically by providing a home atmosphere conducive to studying, by expressing to children the importance of education, and by cooperating with teachers and school administrators in matters relating to their students.

Families in diverse communities have widely differing needs which must be met in order to foster maximum student achievement, calling for equally diverse family and community involvement initiatives. In order to be successful, these initiatives must be designed at the local level by educators, family members, and the many interested parties in business, government, and community-based organizations.

The State Board of Education also has a role to play in fostering wider and more substantive family and community involvement. It will therefore be the policy of the Board to:

- Disseminate information on the importance of family and community support for education, as a means of increasing awareness and commitment among the various segments of the community.
- Provide guidelines to encourage and assist local school districts and schools to develop their own family/community responsibility policies.
- Support resources, assistance, and learning activities for parents to enable them to carry out their responsibilities as parents of individual students, as well as active members of the broader community. Such activities could include volunteering and participating in decision-making activities such as policy formation and curriculum development.
- Provide technical assistance to schools to enable them to form more effective partnerships and bring community resources to bear on family needs related to student learning.
- Seek training (both pre-service and in-service) for teachers and administrators that will enable them to engage the support and cooperation of parents of parents from a variety of backgrounds.
- Seek federal and state funding to assist local schools, parents, and communities in this initiative.
Appendix B: ISTAC Response to ISBE Policy for Family and Community Responsibility

- Disseminate information on the importance of family and community support for education, as a means of increasing awareness and commitment among the various segments of the community.

- Provide guidelines to encourage and assist local school districts and schools to develop their own family/community responsibility policies.

- Support resources, assistance, and learning activities for parents to enable them to carry our their responsibilities as parents (T-1) of individual students, as well as active members of the broader community. Such activities could include volunteering (T-3) and participating in decision-making (T-5) activities such as policy formation and curriculum development.

- Provide technical assistance to schools to enable them to form more effective partnerships and bring community (T-6) resources to bear on family needs related to student learning (T-4).

- Seek training (both pre-service and in-service) for teachers and administrators that will enable them to engage the support and cooperation of parents from a variety of backgrounds.

- Seek federal and state funding to assist local schools, parents, and communities in this initiative.
Appendix C: Organization Chart

District/School Improvement Process

Academic GOAL 1
Practices from TYPES 1-6
To meet this goal

Academic GOAL 2
Practices from TYPES 1-6
To meet this goal

Nonacademic GOAL 3
Practices from TYPES 1-6
To meet this goal

Partnership GOAL 4
Practices from TYPES 1-6
To meet this goal

Appendix D: Keys to Successful Partnerships

Type 1

**PARENTING:** Assist families with parenting and child-rearing skills, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions that support children as students at each age and grade level. Assist schools in understanding families.

Type 2

**COMMUNICATING:** Communicate with families about school programs and student progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications.

Type 3

**VOLUNTEERING:** Improve recruitment, training, work, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at school or in other locations to support students and school programs.

Type 4

**LEARNING AT HOME:** Involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum-related activities and decisions.

Type 5

**DECISION MAKING:** Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through PTA/PTO, school councils, committees, action teams, and other parent organizations.

Type 6

**COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY:** Coordinate resources and services for students, families, and the school with businesses, agencies, and other groups.

## Appendix E: Reaching the Underrepresented

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type 1</th>
<th>PARENTING: Provide families with workshops on parenting a child with a disability (academic and behavioral supports needed for the child to be successful).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type 2</td>
<td>COMMUNICATING: Communicate with families when school activities, which may connect their child to school socially or emotionally, are available. Survey families on student’s needs and suggestions and reactions to school programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 3</td>
<td>VOLUNTEERING: Enlist retired teachers/community members to assist by reading along with children of disabilities. Having the extra hands in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 4</td>
<td>LEARNING AT HOME: Assist families with understanding academic/skill outcomes for grade level completion. Provide information on how to help with homework at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 5</td>
<td>DECISION MAKING: Include parent leaders from all Subgroups to be active participants on school advisory councils. Prepare parents for decision-making through providing workshops on the IEP process, assessment, and other related topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 6</td>
<td>COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY: Coordinate resources and services for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support, and other programs or services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix F: District Action Checklist

- Identify the District Improvement Team members who will work on aspects of family and community involvement.
- Review district policy on school, family, and community partnerships and revise if necessary to reflect the district’s commitment to partnerships.
- Use the six types of family involvement throughout your district plan for school improvement and student success.
- Write a One Year Action Plan for district improvement for partnership, identifying strategies, timelines, and persons responsible for accomplishing specific family and community involvement activities.
- Support the implementation of planned partnership activities through financial resources.
- Conduct staff development for the district and school leadership.
- Introduce the district’s partnership initiative to decision-making groups in the district, schools, and community.
- Disseminate and share information about the district’s work and schools’ progress on partnerships to all stakeholders.
- Celebrate end-of-year successes and help schools share good practices.
- Commit to continuous growth.
- Outline strategies for program continuity in the event of changes in leadership.

Appendix G: State Performance Plan Indicators

- Indicator 1: Graduation
- Indicator 2: Dropouts
- Indicator 3: Assessments
- Indicator 4: Discipline
- Indicator 5: Educational environments, ages 6-21
- Indicator 6: Educational environments, ages 3-5
- Indicator 7: Preschool performance
- Indicator 8: Parent Involvement
- Indicator 9: Disproportionality, all
- Indicator 10: Disproportionality, specific disability categories
- Indicator 11: Evaluation
- Indicator 12: Transition from Part C to Part B
- Indicator 13: Transition of youth ages 16 and above
- Indicator 14: Postsecondary outcomes
- Indicator 15: Noncompliance
- Indicator 16: Complaints
- Indicator 17: Due Process Hearings
- Indicator 18: Hearing requests
- Indicator 19: Mediations
- Indicator 20: State-reported data