

## Resource #1 Partnering Definition

### Family, School, and Community Partnering

## What is Your Definition of Partnering?

Partnering is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

**Materials:** Sheets with the Partnering Sentence Stem; Writing Utensils

**Outcome:** Participants engage in discussing personal and/or team definitions of partnering. Participants hear varying definitions and have an opportunity to collaborate on creating a mutually-shared definition.

**Instructions:** (These can be varied to fit audiences.) Please write down a brief response to "Partnering is \_\_\_\_\_". Then discuss response with your team (or a neighbor). Create a team partnering definition or list the characteristics your team identified. Share key points with entire group. Optional discussion points: ask would responses be different if all were educators or family members or community resources? or any different group from the current one? what would students say? or compare with given definition.

**Conclusion:** Individual, team or dyad keeps their responses to re-examine after a role-play activity or listening to other components of workshop or to take back to professional setting to share with others "Partnering" can be applied to staff as well as families and communities.



**Resource #2**



**Family-School Partnering Continuum**

Where are you and your school on the partnering continuum? Give a number for you and one for your school.

Home and school are separate, very different worlds. It is the school's responsibility to educate children, and the family's responsibility to see that the children are dressed, fed, and prepared for school.

1 ←————→ 10

Schools share the responsibility for education with families. The partnership with families is flexible: on some issues the parents will be the more active partner and on others, the school will be.

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### Activity: Family-School Partnering Continuum

#### Key Points:

- Each individual can be at a different spot on the continuum. Partnering can be very new to some and culture, history with schools can be influential.
- There are no right or wrong answers.
- It helps to know about the continuum in respecting differences and working together.

#### Possible Activity:

**Materials:** Long Sheets of Paper with Continuum on Walls, Sticky Dots OR Individual Copies of Continuum for Participants or Teams; Writing Utensils

**Outcome:** Participants will rank their sites and themselves as to their beliefs about family-school partnering. These numbers can be a baseline for future rankings. This exercise can be also used as a "progress-monitoring" tool for assessing progress in a partnering initiative and/or used to compare different stakeholder groups so as to plan future activities.

**Instructions:** (This activity can be completed in several ways.) 1) Using a wall chart, take red dot and place where you feel YOU are on this continuum on the wall chart. Then take a green dot and place where you feel your school staff (or families) might be on the continuum; or 2) Using the sheet above, give yourself a number and then your school community; or 3) Give yourself a number and then give a number to where you think families might be at your site. Discuss and compare responses.

**Conclusion:** This is a quick, easy activity to share with others and to generate discussion. Other end points could be identified to more specifically address relevant school issues.

**Resource #3**  
**Family, School, and Community Partnering**  
**Sample Administrator District/School Letter/Email/Website**

August 2013

Welcome back to school! We are looking forward to a year of learning and **partnership**. We are committed to helping every student succeed in school. Specifically, I want to share some important focus areas we will be addressing in the upcoming months. We want to clearly communicate our beliefs about **partnering with families**. We would like to share some of our ideas and **invite your input on this important topic**.

At \_\_\_\_\_ (district/school) \_\_\_\_\_, we believe it is important for families and schools to **work together and share responsibility for student success**. We very much value family members' expertise about their children. Families know a student best and we can learn from you. Also, we want our students to know the importance of schools and families together supporting their work at school. As part of this goal, we have developed {or worked with some families in the community to create district's/school's process} some two-way communication tools and shared activities.} You will be hearing more about these in the next few weeks. They are: {include school specific activities; below are examples}

- **Classroom two-way communication tools (these vary by school, teacher and/or grade/department) so that you and your student's teacher(s) can share successes and concerns in an ongoing manner. This allows for early, teamed intervention if your student is struggling or timely sharing about successes.**
- School expectations for homework, behavior and learning communicated to you by your student. **We want students to know and understand that we are working with you to help them succeed.**
- **Different learning opportunities for families and staff on various topics throughout the year. Some of these opportunities will be at school and others at various places in our community.**
- A "Suggestion Box" in the front office and at a link on our website. **Please share your thoughts with us frequently; if you leave us your name and contact information, we will personally respond.**

In addition, we are implementing a process this year, Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)/Response to Intervention (RtI), which provides a continuum of support for students who may be struggling in academic or behavioral areas. MTSS/RtI focuses on addressing concerns when they first begin in the classroom, so that learning support can be implemented in a timely manner. **In MTSS/RtI, families and teachers team together in intervention planning, monitoring, and decision-making as to needed student support. If you have concerns about your student, please share those with the**

**Resource #3 (Continued)**

**classroom teacher so you can together discuss intervention planning for home and school. Similarly, your student's teacher(s) will be teaming with you if he/she sees your child struggling.** If you would like more information about the MTSS/RtI process, there is information on our website (insert URL here) or in the front/counseling office. You may also contact your student's teacher(s) or \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ (phone, email) for more information about Response to Intervention at \_\_\_\_\_ (district/school) \_\_\_\_\_.

We welcome you to the \_\_\_\_ (year) school year at \_\_\_\_\_ (district/school) \_\_\_\_\_. We hope to see and hear from you often.

Sincerely,

Administrator/Principal  
Schools/Staff (List of names, grades etc. - if possible)

**Bolded information is to point out key partnering language and principles.**

## Resource #4

**Family, School, and Community Partnering  
Sample Teachers Involving Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) Assignment**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- I. LOOK THIS OVER:** Explain this example to your family partner.  
Remember: To find the average for a set of data: 1. Add all of the data;  
2. Divide by the number of pieces of data; and 3. Round to the nearest whole number if necessary. Here is an example:  
**DATA: 4,9,5,6,11**  
**ADD:  $4 + 9 + 5 + 6 + 11$  (5 items of data)**  
**DIVIDE BY NUMBER OF DATA ITEMS: 35 by 5 = 7**  
**AVERAGE = 7**

- II. NOW TRY THIS:** Show your family partner how to do this example.
- DATA: 7,13,23,3 ADD THE DATA: \_\_\_\_\_**  
**DIVIDE BY NUMBER OF DATA ITEMS: \_\_\_\_\_**
- AVERAGE (ANSWER): \_\_\_\_\_**

- III. PRACTICE in the REAL WORLD:** Complete this example with your family partner. Show your work. Explain how you found your answer.
- 1. FIND OUT THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF HOURS YOUR FAMILY PARTNER SLEPT THIS WEEK!**
- 2. DATA: WRITE DOWN THE HOURS**  
**M: \_\_\_\_\_; T: \_\_\_\_\_; W: \_\_\_\_\_; TH: \_\_\_\_\_; F: \_\_\_\_\_; S: \_\_\_\_\_; S: \_\_\_\_\_**
- 3. FIGURE THE AVERAGE BY ADDING AND DIVIDING.**
- 4. ANSWER:**

**IV. HOME-TO-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION:**

Dear Family Partner,

Please share your reactions to your student's work on this activity. Please mark statements that are true for you.

\_\_\_\_\_ My child understood the homework.

\_\_\_\_\_ My child was able to complete the homework.

\_\_\_\_\_ This assignment helped me to know what my child is learning in math.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like more information about how I can support learning at home.

Family Member Comments:

Student Comments:

Family Member Signature and Contact Information:

Thanks for partnering on this homework!

Adapted from: Epstein, J.L., Salinas, K.C., & Jackson, V. (revised 2000). *Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) Interactive Homework for the Middle Grades*. Baltimore: Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships, John Hopkins University.



## Resource #5

### Family, School, and Community Partnering

### Family Sharing Sheet

I like to partner with each of my student's families in supporting his or her school success. In teaming, it is helpful for me to know about your student and family's needs and views about school. Please complete this sheet and return to me. It may be better for you and your student to complete this together. Your individual comments can be put in the labeled boxes. I look forward to partnering with you this year. I want you to feel free to contact me at any time. \_\_\_\_\_ (Name and Contact Information)

My Student is: \_\_\_\_\_ I Am: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. My student likes \_\_\_\_\_ about school.
2. My student has the following strengths in school  
\_\_\_\_\_.
3. My student's challenges in school are  
\_\_\_\_\_.
4. What are some of your student's interests, activities, and talents?
5. What are some of your interests, activities, and talents you would be willing to share with the class?

**Student Comments:** What else would you like me to know about you this year?

What suggestions do you have for our class?

Other thoughts?

**Family Comments:** What else would you like me to know about you or your student?

Please share your hopes and dreams for your student's school year.

What are the best ways and times to contact you?

Other thoughts?

## Resource #6

### Family, School, and Community Partnering READ Plan Feedback

Our school is working on supporting teachers, families and community resources working together in coordinating student success. This survey was developed to gather staff, family and community feedback about partnering during the development and monitoring of an individual student's READ Plan. The planning process may have been through telephone, email, postal service, face-to-face conversation, or meetings involving several people. Thank you for your time in letting us know about your experience. Please share any comments with us.

NAME (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

ROLE: Educator \_\_\_\_\_ Family Member \_\_\_\_\_ Community Resource \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle the number for each of your responses:

	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree
1. I felt like a team member when we were discussing my student.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I shared my perspective (home, classroom, agency) in the discussion.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Written information and progress data were given to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I was considered in decision-making.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I know what goals we are working on together and how we will decide if the plan is working.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I know my responsibilities in supporting my student's READ plan (home, classroom, agency).	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. There is a two-way home-school communication plan in place.	1	2	3	4	5	6
COMMENTS:						

Adapted from National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring. *Parent Survey-Special Education. Version 2.0.*

Retrieved May 9, 2008 from

[http://www.accountabilitydata.org/New%20DATA%20FEB%202006/2005NCSEAM\\_Part8\\_Watermarked\\_\(21244%20-%20Activ.pdf](http://www.accountabilitydata.org/New%20DATA%20FEB%202006/2005NCSEAM_Part8_Watermarked_(21244%20-%20Activ.pdf)

**Resource #7**  
**Family, School, and Community Partnering**  
**Staff Self-Reflection Tool**

**Do I . . . ? (Check those that apply to you.)**


- ☐ Connect with every family soon after school begins?
- ☐ Personally always start with a positive message?
- ☐ Talk about my desire to work together to help the student?
- ☐ Express the fact that family members' input and perspective are important?
- ☐ Convey respect for family members as experts on their child?
- ☐ Identify the circumstances under which families feel more/less comfortable and try to understand those feelings?
- ☐ Approach families flexibly, offering multiple times, places, and modalities?
- ☐ Elicit, openly value, and use families' input?
- ☐ Ask open-ended questions to get families' full thoughts?
- ☐ Really listen to family members?
- ☐ Thank the families for listening, caring, and helping?
- ☐ Tell students that I am partnering with their families?
- ☐ Always communicate two-way, asking for family ideas, not just sharing my own?
- ☐ Productively problem-solve concerns so each student is successful?
- ☐ Ask what families need to support learning at home and provide ideas about homework and various approaches accordingly.

**How can I . . . ? (Think about how to apply to your site or situation.)**

- Use partnering language to promote teaming? For example:
  - Use common language ("us," "we," "let's")
  - Use family members' words
  - Convey understanding
- Ask the family for help in a respectful, mutually gratifying way?
- Clarify responsibilities of each person?
- Avoid advice giving?
- Meet families "on their turf?"
- Make events fun?
- Make sure roles are meaningful?
- Plan for and prevent logistical barriers such as language or transportation?
- Make time to build relationships with all families?
- Gain confidence in my ability to talk comfortably with families?
- Learn about each family's unique culture?

*Source:* Adapted from Future of School Psychology Task Force on Family-School Partnerships. *Family-school partnership training modules*, 2007. Retrieved March 31, 2009, from [http://fosp.usf.edu/future\\_index.htm](http://fosp.usf.edu/future_index.htm).






## Resource #8

### Challenges & Solutions: Plan for Hurdles

Please identify the most significant partnering challenge in your situation for families and educators, then at least one solution.

	Challenges	Solutions
Family		
School		



#### Activity: Planning for Hurdles

##### Key Points:

- "Hurdlers know there will be several obstacles...they plan ahead as to how to overcome. With a little foresight...there can be successful navigation."  
(adapted from Ellis and Hughes, 2002)
- Put your biggest challenge in partnering with a school. Then think of a possible solution; think of the school or teacher's biggest challenge.

##### Possible Activity:

**Materials:** Copies of Challenges/Solutions Chart for Each Participant and One for Table; Writing Utensils

**Outcome:** Participants will identify their biggest challenges for educators and families in implementing partnering throughout their school community. Prioritizing them helps in planning for future work.

**Instructions:** Please take a minute and write down what you think are your "Big 3" challenges for each of educators and families. Then share with team and prioritize for your site with numbers 1, 2, and 3. Then we will compare yours with the research (see next slide).

**Conclusion:** The prioritized challenges can guide initiative planning such as deciding on training needs, shifts in staff time, accessing family cultural liaisons.

**Resource #9**  
**Family, School, and Community Partnering**  
**Multi-Tiered Family-School Partnering Practices Checklist**

Date:

Name:

INSTRUCTIONS: Please check those you implement or are present at your site. Use the data in prioritizing personal and school action plans for Educator Effectiveness or UIPs.

**Universal Tier – All Families/Staff**

**SCHOOL: Our school administrators and staff members are...**

- ☐ 1. Providing a shared understanding of the evidence and legal base for partnering.
- ☐ 2. Creating a welcoming, culturally responsive environment with multiple visiting and volunteering opportunities (home and school).
- ☐ 3. Communicating partnering beliefs: (a) *Education is a shared responsibility between home and school;* (b) *Families are equal partners;* (c) *Student success is always the focus.*
- ☐ 4. Integrating partnering practices and language into all documents, procedures, teams.
- ☐ 5. Ensuring every family uses the school technology - parent portal, email, website.
- ☐ 6. Ensuring all family members know the importance of their actions in supporting learning at home: (a) *Frequent and systematic discussions about school;* (2) *Encouraging their children regarding schoolwork;* and (3) *Providing or working with resources to provide supervision, support for homework and after-school time.*
- ☐ 7. Sharing the MTSS/RtI process with all staff and families.
- ☐ 8. Providing family education on learning-related topics, based on identified needs.
- ☐ 9. Including families in school decision-making, such as accountability committees.
- ☐ 10. Using data systematically to improve and expand family partnering practices.
- ☐ 11. Allocating time for a staff person to support personnel and families in partnering.
- ☐ 12. Collaborating with community resources.

**CLASSROOM: Our teachers and specialists are...**

- ☐ 1. Contacting every family personally to create ongoing, two-way communication.
- ☐ 2. Ensuring each family, including students, understands class and homework expectations, and how everyone will partner if a student struggles.
- ☐ 3. Providing information on current learning content, with specific out-of-school coordination strategies and follow-up.
- ☐ 4. Asking families what they need to support learning at home and following up.
- ☐ 5. Sending progress data regularly to families, with opportunities for discussion.
- ☐ 6. Telling students that school and home are working together for their success.

**Upper Tiers – SOME Families/Staff; A Few Families/Staff**

**Our special services/intervention teams, with teachers and administrators, are...**

- ☐ 1. Designating people and processes to reach out and individually encourage families and staff who may be hesitant or uncomfortable.
- ☐ 2. Including families as equal partners throughout the individual MTSS/RtI problem-solving process, providing information and participation in decision-making.
- ☐ 3. Supporting teachers and families in mutually developing and implementing individual student plans such as IEP, RtI, READ, ALP, and FBA/BIP.
- ☐ 4. Ensuring families understand and participate in the implementation of small group (standard protocol) interventions.

**Our school mental health professionals, with teachers and teams, are...**

- ☐ 1. Individualizing family-school partnering plans and support when needed.
- ☐ 2. Providing school, family and community wraparound when needed.
- ☐ 3. Providing conflict resolution support and process when needed.

**Resource #10**  
**Family, School, and Community Partnering**  
**Tiered Data-Based Action Plan**

INSTRUCTIONS: Please use existing and collected data to prioritize partnering outcomes and steps. Identify data tools, implement, and evaluate effectiveness. This plan can be used by individuals or groups for continuous improvement and as a component in the body of evidence for such processes as the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) or Educator Effectiveness.

School:

Team/Group/Staff Member(s):

Planning Date:

Review Date:

**IDENTIFY. (Date and Attach Applicable Data Sources)****ANALYZE. (Provide Relevant Data Points) STRENGTHS:****CONCERNS:****IMPLEMENT. Prioritized Measurable Outcome:**

<b>IMPLEMENT. Prioritized Measurable Action Steps</b>		<b>Responsibilities</b> "Who Will Do It?"	<b>Resources</b> Funding, Time, People, Materials	<b>Timeline</b> By When Day/Month	<b>Data Tool</b> Measure to Be Used
1.	Universal Tier				
2.	Targeted Tier				
3.	Intensive Tier				

**EVALUATE. Data Points: Outcome** \_\_\_\_\_ **Action #1** \_\_\_\_\_ **Action #2** \_\_\_\_\_ **Action #3** \_\_\_\_\_ **Was the plan implemented as described?** \_\_\_\_\_ **Were there sufficient data?** \_\_\_\_\_ **Was the specific measurable outcome reached?** \_\_\_\_\_ **Were the essential knowledge/skills demonstrated?** \_\_\_\_\_ **Were resources appropriately allocated?** \_\_\_\_\_ **NEXT STEPS**