

# WHY PARTNERSHIP?



School districts do not exist independently of the community they serve – and vice versa. However, all too often, school districts attempt to adopt innovative practices or educational reforms in isolation and with predictably poor results. Copious research affirms the value of educational partnerships, particularly those that focus on equity and results. Everyone benefits when we work together—schools, families, students, teachers, administrators, and the community-at-large.

How do we create effective educational partnerships? According to a School Communities that Work Task Force Report published by the Annenberg Institute for School Reform (2002),<sup>1</sup> there are common design principles communities should consider when developing new partnerships:

- ✓ Effective partnerships have champions – committed leaders who have the power to legitimize the collaborative effort.
- ✓ Effective partnerships have clearly defined, shared goals.
- ✓ Effective partnerships mobilize stakeholders in support of shared goals.
- ✓ Effective partnerships share responsibility for the outcome.
- ✓ Effective partnerships make good use of data.
- ✓ Effective partnerships are built on trust – partners are open about their individual needs and resources.
- ✓ Effective partnerships engage students about what they want and need.
- ✓ Effective partnerships make parent engagement a priority and provide opportunities to build meaningful relationships.
- ✓ Effective partnerships pool resources.

Parent Teacher Home Visits was born out of a strong partnership between Sacramento City Unified School District, Sacramento City Teachers Association, and a local community organizing group, Sacramento ACT. Following these organizing and partnership tenets enabled the Sacramento partnership to flourish from a pilot project of eight schools to more than forty schools within just a few years.

We are seeing similarly strong partnerships across the country. These partnerships not only help to provide support in launching Parent Teacher Home Visits, but are critical to growing and scaling a home visit practice over time. Most commonly district-union partnerships, it is advantageous to consider other community partners – particularly those that represent parents or provide funding support. Other partners to consider are: United Way; educational nonprofit organizations (e.g. literacy organizations, chronic absence organizations, education foundations); afterschool program providers; and other community organizations (e.g., parent, community organizing, and faith-based).

<sup>1</sup> School Communities that Work Task Force. (2002). *Developing Effective Partnerships to Support Local Education*. Annenberg Institute for School Reform. Retrieved from [http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/Partnerships\\_LocalEd.pdf](http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/Partnerships_LocalEd.pdf)