



PRACTICAL PARENTING PARTNERSHIPS  
*Working Together for Our Children*

*Volume 14, Issue 4  
November 2009*

## **EXTRA MONEY IN A TIGHT ECONOMY**

by Janet Shepard, Director

Especially now, I think we all like to dream about what we would do with extra money. If I could reach out and hand you \$1,000 right now what would you do with it? Save? Splurge? Spend it on one big item or service? Divide it and use it toward several small things? Share? Keep it for yourself? Pay off an existing debt? Worry so about what I want in return that you won't take it? Perhaps other ideas come to mind for you.

What if I offered \$10,000 or \$100,000 instead of a mere \$1,000? Would that change your answer? Probably.

Many of us aren't worrying about how to spend a windfall, but rather are worrying more about how to deal with additional budget cuts. Some of us are worrying about whether we will have a job for the entire school year or whether our job assignment may change.

Superintendents, financial officers and other administrators and board members may, however be grappling with some of these very questions about extra money. Most, if not all, school districts have extra Title I and Special Education funds this year. This is a one-time increase and funds must be encumbered by the end of the federal fiscal year at the end of September, 2010.

No doubt some districts will choose an expensive training or conference perhaps in a warm place in January while others may use funds to meet one request on each teacher's wish list. There may even be a few who won't get around to spending the extra funds at all and they will be returned. Most, we know, will spend wisely and make decisions based on state and federal requirements, local needs assessment and other data available in the district.

As you review needs, we hope you will consider family and community engagement. Consider whether additional training is needed, whether folks responsible for parent engagement have the support they need to do their jobs well and whether parents have been provided support in gaining skills for working with their children on academics. How have you addressed parent involvement in your accountability or CSIP plans? Are you meeting what your board approved parent involvement policy says you will do? If you have questions about how PPP might be help to help you, please call us. We have included some survey opportunities about professional development needs in this issue of the newsletter and hope you will take a few minutes to provide us with data we need to plan the rest of our year.

A superintendent serves on a board on which I also am a member and we were discussing funding at a recent board meeting. The superintendent mentioned these extra funds and some of the challenges of spending one-time money wisely. The discussion ended with the superintendent saying, "I hope that many superintendents will choose to spend their extra funds with the Missouri programs and services which have supported us for so many years." PPP, [SuccessLink](#), [MSSN](#), [Project Construct](#) and many other fine Missouri educational professional development organizations hope so, too.

## **PLAN NOW TO ATTEND ONE OF THE 2009-1010 PPP REGIONAL WORKSHOPS!**

The topic for this year's regional workshops is organizing, maximizing and utilizing school volunteer programs. These workshops will support schools in their efforts to utilize volunteers, especially in the challenging times we now face. This workshop will explore the value of volunteer programs, discuss how to establish a program, strengthen volunteer skills, look at working with students, teachers, and parents, review management and legal issues and provide tips and resources. The workshop should be attended by:

- school staff members and/or volunteers who are interested in taking the information back and training volunteers in their school community;
- volunteers interested in receiving training.

Participants will receive a training notebook. Come join us and others in your region for support in strengthening parent and community involvement in your school, thus improving education for students!

Follow the link for registration:

[Click Here for PPP 2009-10 Regional Flyer](#)

## **PPP CENTER UPDATE**

by Janet Shepard, Director

As the PPP staff continues to plan and seek a means of sustainability, one of the questions still looming large is whether or not to host an annual conference. March 26 and 27 are on hold with Tan Tar A. Your feedback would help us make that decision. Please take a few minutes to answer a [very brief survey](#). There is also space for you to make comments, but if you prefer, you may call or e-mail your comments to us.

Last month we experienced a glitch in getting the electronic notification sent alerting readers that the October issue of the newsletter was available on the website. Our topic was health and wellness. If you missed it or other back issues, you will find the newsletter archive by clicking on the newsletter button on the right side of the website home page. Please do forward this issue to others in your building and remember to share the parent page with parents either as an attachment to your own printed newsletter or as a link on your website.

Implementation Training was scheduled for Kansas City in October, but had to be postponed due to lower enrollment than expected. We are working to reschedule that session and are willing to schedule training any place where we have enough registered. We are working on scheduling in St Louis and will have those dates posted soon. For many years, we have created and publicized a training calendar for the school year. Since we are not doing that, it would be very helpful to know your training needs. If you need to train staff, please take a moment to email me at [jshepard@pppctr.org](mailto:jshepard@pppctr.org) and let me know which training is needed and how many people you have to be trained.

In September we participated with the PIRC Partners and Missouri PTA in the proclamation signing for Parent and Family Involvement in Education Week observed the second week in September in Missouri. The photo shows Shelly and I with representatives from LIFT, PIRC, ParentLink, PAT and PTA and Governor Jay Nixon.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, November 10	<a href="#">PPP Regional Workshop</a> – Webb City
November 10	<a href="#">Mix it Up At Lunch Day</a>
November 15-21	<a href="#">National Hunger and Homeless Awareness Week</a>
Tuesday, November 17	<a href="#">PPP Regional Workshop</a> – St. Louis
Wednesday, December 2	<a href="#">PPP Regional Workshop</a> – Blue Springs
Wednesday, January 6	<a href="#">PPP Regional Workshop</a> – Rolla
Thursday, January 14	<a href="#">PPP Regional Workshop</a> – Cape Girardeau
Thursday, February 4	<a href="#">PPP Regional Workshop</a> – St Joseph
Wednesday, February 10	<a href="#">PPP Regional Workshop</a> – Jefferson City

## GRANTS

by Janet Shepard, Director

This month we are featuring grant opportunities which offer schools an opportunity to partner with the community. Please let us know when you are awarded a grant you have read about in the newsletter. We would like to share your success with our readers.

### Local History Grant

The deadline for the 2009-2010 History Channel Save Our History (SOH) Nat'l Grant Program is set tentatively for June 2010. The grants are designed to encourage educators and historical organizations to join forces to educate students on the history of their local communities. Grant applications will be posted online in January, officials say.

Grants typically range from \$1,000 to \$10,000. Projects must focus on a significant aspect of community history, such as preservation of a building or historic site/event. The end product must be a permanent resource to be shared with the community, including oral histories, exhibits, a notebook or research documentation or photo/video documentaries.

Insider's Tip: For the best chance for success, grant applicants should develop a Save Our History project in partnership with a school or community-based group.

**Info:** SOH, <http://www.saveourhistory.com> or [info@saveourhistory.com](mailto:info@saveourhistory.com)

### School Garden Grants

Last month we featured garden grant sites and this month we have another school garden grant opportunity [http://www.annies.com/grants\\_for\\_gardens](http://www.annies.com/grants_for_gardens). Gardens are a great way to improve the meal choices and quality at school, teach children about food sources, and engage parents and community members.

### Building Healthy Communities Grant Program

Grants, up to \$2,500, are now available to registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, public schools or tax-exempt public service agencies in the U.S. who are using the power of volunteers to improve the physical health of their community. Grants are made in the form of The Home Depot gift cards for the purchase of tools or materials. Read more at [Building Healthy Communities Grant Program](#). Applications are due December 15.

## FACILITATION TIPS

by Janet Shepard, Director

Reaching out to ALL parents is not a new concept to any of you or to the staff at the PPP Center. I was recently, however, caught with a question I cannot answer about how PPP schools reach out to homeless

families. I am going to need your help in providing information to a subcommittee which has just been convened.

The first meeting of a subcommittee to address the needs of young homeless children was held recently. The group is a subcommittee on the Governor's Committee to End Homelessness. The committee believes that housing is a right and not a privilege. The subcommittee is focused on children from birth through third grade.

Does your parent involvement committee or care team attempt to identify homeless children and families? Will you take a few minutes to answer [some survey questions](#) to be shared with the subcommittee?

If you have things to share with the committee beyond the survey, please just send me an e-mail at [jshepard@pppctr.org](mailto:jshepard@pppctr.org). Please also feel free to forward this link to others in your district such as social workers, nurses and PAT educators. I will keep you posted on the subcommittee's work. Thank you for your help in supporting this very needed and important work. Economists tell us the recession is over or at least easing, but many children and their families will be in recovery for some time.

## HOME VISIT

by Janet Shepard, Director

As school based home visitors, you know some of the homes you visit have other agencies and organizations making visits to the same home. Perhaps there are some ways we can make connections and share resources with other home visitors. Have you talked about home visiting at your interagency council or care team meetings? Have you offered to share your home visit resource materials? Perhaps with some organizations you might even be able to share visits with families.

At one of our home visit training sessions last spring a participant who is an active volunteer in her community mentioned that the resource materials would be very useful to CASA volunteers. Court Appointed Special Advocates or CASA is a national organization working with children. Visit the [Missouri CASA website](#) to learn more about their work.

Missouri CASA Volunteers recently held their state conference and PPP was pleased to be a part of their exhibit area and to learn just a little more about their work by visiting with staff members and volunteers. Many of the volunteers were interested in the PPP Home Visit resource materials and in some cases I was able to mention that they might partner with their school to learn more about or even share resources.

We are continuing to run home visit training and resource materials at a special price until supplies from the current printing are exhausted. The training with a training notebook is \$50 per person. Training with the training notebook and the full set of resource notebooks is \$275. You will find a complete list of resource [notebook topics](#) on our website.

Just last week a parent involvement coordinator expressed interest in home visit training. As you know we are trying to schedule training on a requested basis rather than scheduling dates that we can't fill. I have created a short survey on home visit training. Please take a few minutes to complete this online survey. If you know of others in your school or community who might be interested, please forward the survey to them.

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=e5YR2i0QZgHhOhTycc9Pdg\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=e5YR2i0QZgHhOhTycc9Pdg_3d_3d)

## SITE NEWS

by Janet Shepard, Director

Last month we featured Health and Wellness as our newsletter topic. In a recent tweet from Nixa schools I learned about their free e-newsletter and signed up. When I read the following article I asked if I might share it with you and Zac Rantz, District Communication Coordinator, readily agreed.

*The Nixa School Health Advisory Committee (SHAC) in conjunction with the Safebase afterschool program sponsored a Nutrition Night for all Nixa elementary students and their families at High Pointe Elementary. This family event included a cooking demonstration by a professional chef, samples to eat, make-n-take snacks, a personal weight loss testimony from Derrick Chambers, a rock wall climbing station, a Wii station, and a Dance Dance Revolution station. It was a great time learning about healthy recipes, fun snack suggestions, and physical activity. The next Nutrition Night will be November 17 at Mathews Elementary and will be for all Nixa elementary students and their families.*

By the way Nixa R-II does a great job of embracing and using social media for making home, school and community connections. I follow both the Superintendent and the district Communication Coordinator, Zac on Twitter and am a fan of the school on Facebook. This isn't a student created facebook page but one created by the district to communicate *with* not just *to* their community.

## THE ROLE OF SCHOOL STAFF IN TITLE I, NCLB

by Shelly Lock, Program Development Coordinator

Collaboration and effort by all school staff leads to greater success of Title I programs. Students receiving Title I services show higher academic success when the Title I program is a united effort in a school, rather than isolated services. All school staff should take interest in understanding the Title I program and its benefits. This will help staff better meet the needs of their students and be better prepared to discuss these supplementary services with parents.

There are many opportunities for staff members to get involved in the decision making and services of the Title I program. In addition to Title I staff, other staff members may be called upon to serve on the annual needs assessment team, local annual review team, program planning team, or the committee working on the parent involvement policy. Most classroom teachers will be asked to provide assessment results for determining student Title I eligibility and for ongoing monitoring of student and program progress. Classroom teachers are to collaborate with Title I teachers on lesson plans and instruction. Title I teachers are to support the lessons and instruction of the classroom to ultimately help the students be more successful in the regular classroom.

Each school that receives Title I funds must develop a written parental involvement policy that establishes the school's expectations for parental involvement. The policy must be developed jointly with the parents of children participating in Title I and distributed to parents of all children participating in Title I. If you are not part of the team that develops this plan, it is important for you to be familiar with the plan. The plan should include how the school will:

- Involve parents in jointly developing the school's parent plan and incorporate it in the process of school review and improvement;
- Provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to plan and implement effective parental involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance;
- Build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parental involvement;

- Coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies under Title I with parental involvement strategies under other programs;
- Conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy in improving the academic quality of the schools served with Title I.

Parent involvement requirements under Title I are extensive. Many of these involve the entire school staff. At the beginning of each school year, schools must inform parents of each student attending a Title I school of their right to request information about the professional qualifications of both the teachers and the paraprofessionals who teach and work with their children. A district report card must be available to parents including information related to assessment, accountability, and teacher quality for each school. Schools must also adopt written procedures for receiving and resolving any complaint that applies to the Title I program. Schools must publicize and disseminate the results of their local annual review for each school (the review that determines whether the school is making adequate yearly progress) to parents, teachers, principals, schools, and the community so that they can continually refine the instructional program. Each school receiving Title I funds must hold an annual parent meeting to inform them of their school's participation in Title I, to explain the Title I requirements and to inform them of the right of parents to be involved in those programs. Each Title I participating school must jointly develop, with the parents of children served in Title I, a school-parent compact as a component of its written parental involvement policy. A school-parent compact is a written agreement between the school and the parents of children participating in Title I programs that identifies the activities that the parents, the entire school staff, and the students will undertake to share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement. In addition, the school-parent compact outlines the activities that the parents, school staff, and students will undertake to build and develop a partnership to help the children achieve to Missouri's high academic standards. Schools must provide parents with an individual student report informing them on their child's level of achievement on the state's assessments in core subject areas. It is also the responsibility of schools to help parents understand topics that will help them become equal partners with educators in improving their children's academic achievement.

PPP can be a valuable resource for schools in meeting these Title I parent involvement requirements. PPP can provide assistance to schools in development of parent policies, in conducting parent meetings, in helping parents understand topics that will help them become partners in educating their child. PPP can support school efforts through resources, newsletters, trainings, workshops, and more. As your school processes through these requirements each year, refer to your PPP notebooks and staff members who have participated in PPP trainings. Visit the PPP website for parent professional development workshops and resources available.

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Practical Parenting Partnerships was created in 1992 by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education with support from the Danforth Foundation.

PPP Is sustained by a fee structure, contracts and grants with major funding from the U. S. Department of Education Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC).

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## UNDERSTANDING TITLE I, NCLB

by Shelly Lock, Program Development Coordinator

The reauthorization of Title I under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), strongly focuses on parent and community involvement in education. A framework for which families, educators, and communities can work together to improve teaching and learning is integrated into this legislation. A partnership between schools and parents is recognized as a key to high student achievement.

Understanding Title I services is a start. Talk with your child's teacher, Title I teacher, and administrators to find out what Title I services your child's school offers and what services your child is eligible for. Services offered are determined by an annual needs assessment of the students in the school. These services might include small group instruction outside of the classroom or assistance and additional instruction inside the classroom in a particular subject area for Title I students. Tutorial services may be offered outside of the school day. Summer school services or early childhood program services may be available. Funding for many parent involvement activities is also permissible with Title I funds. This is just a sampling of types of Title I services schools offer. All Title I services are to be supplementary to (in addition to) what the school provides for all students. Services are geared to Title I eligible students, based on individual educational deprivation, while funding for Title I services is based on the economic deprivation of the entire student body. Eligibility for services is based on a multiple criteria including student assessments such as standardized test scores, teacher checklists, student grades, anecdotal records, student portfolios and more. Schools notify parents of their child's eligibility and parents have the right to refuse services. The services are designed to provide additional assistance to students in an area that they are performing below grade level in. Some children only need Title I services for a short time and then are on grade level, while others continue to need the extra support. Title I staff collaborate with the regular classroom teachers to ensure that the support services are aligned with the classroom lessons and instruction.

Parent involvement in Title I includes opportunities for parents to be decision makers, to be informed and to gain knowledge for supporting their child's education. It includes public school choice and supplemental educational services for eligible children in low-performing schools, local development of parental involvement plans with flexibility to address school needs, and building parents' skills for using practices to improve their own children's academic achievement at home and in the community. Required reporting now gives you, the parents, insight into your child's education, the professional qualifications of his or her teachers, and the quality of the school he or she attends. This ensures that you have the information you need to make well-informed choices for your child and to better share responsibility with the teachers for educating your child. The bottom line is that you, the parents, should know your child's academic strengths and weaknesses and how well your child's school is performing. You should be given options and resources for helping your child if his or her school is identified in need of improvement.

The goal of Title I is to help close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers. The involvement of parents in their children's education and schools is critical to that process. Decades of research show that when schools collaborate with parents to help their children learn and when parents participate in school activities and decision-making about their children's education, children achieve at higher levels. Studies have found that students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, are more likely to:

- Earn high grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs;
- Pass their classes, earn credits, and be promoted;
- Attend school regularly; and
- Graduate and go on to postsecondary education.

So the question is “What does this involvement look like?” The Title I, NCLB law defines parental involvement as “The participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring—

- that parents play an integral role in assisting their child’s learning;
- that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child’s education at school;
- that parents are full partners in their child’s education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child; and
- that other activities are carried out, such as those described in section 1118 of the NCLB, ESEA (Parental Involvement).”

Communication is a key component to effective parental involvement, therefore, schools and the state education department must provide information to parents of students participating in Title I, programs in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats when requested (such as for parents with disabilities), to the extent practicable, and in a language that parents can understand. Examples of this are notification to parents of school improvement status, a written parental involvement policy, a written complaint procedure, and information related to parent programs, meetings, and other activities. A school-parent compact is also required in all Title I participating schools. This compact is a written agreement between the school and the parents of children participating in Title I programs and identifies the activities that the parents, the entire school staff, and the students will undertake to share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement. In addition, the school-parent compact outlines the activities that the parents, school staff, and students will undertake to build and develop a partnership to help the children achieve to high academic standards.

Resources for parents are provided in the NCLB legislation as well. Parental Information and Resource Centers (PIRC) are school-linked or school-based centers established by nonprofit organizations under competitive grants from the US Department of Education. These PIRCs provide comprehensive training, information, and support to parents and those who work with parents. Practical Parenting Partnerships is a PIRC partner. Another Title I resource is The US Department of Education Information Resource Center for information on programs, resources, and events at 1-800-USA-LEARN.