



Partnership Schools Ireland (PSI) Action Team Partnership Training (ATP)

Some useful questions and answers

1. What evidence is there that ATP works?

- Model is based on research mainly in the USA over some thirty years (Joyce Epstein "School, Family, and Community partnerships - John Hopkins University, Ohio)
- Developed around the model of six types of involvement (Epstein) and to set 4 x specific goals and create an action plan on a yearly basis. The goals can link to the school's yearly (self-evaluation) action plan and can be very useful in term of self-evaluation and illustrate effective partnership in action in terms of inspections etc.
- The partnership can be very helpful in enabling the school to achieve its yearly improvement plan
- To date, 95% of schools who start an Action Team Partnership In Ireland continue into 2-3rd year
- Becomes the "**action arm**" for achieving some of the goals that the school plan might have already identified (adding value)
- It is **not doing more**, but doing it more effectively in a **true partnership** in a co-ordinated and process manner

2. Is it more work for the Principal and teachers?

- *It is the Principal who usually selects the members of the first ATP*
- Although the Principal does not chair the team they are always a member of the ATP.
- The work is **equally** shared across the membership group, although especially in the first year it will require "champions" to encourage and motivate others and these often are teachers, but not necessarily so.
- Teachers and parents will encourage and support the children's involvement.
- Each ATP team will have their own style of working in their school with parents, teachers, children and local community representatives
- Co-ordinator of the ATP programme (Liam McPherson) - would put you into touch with Principals and teachers in your area, of a school already undertaking the ATP model of working to discuss the practical considerations of undertaking the training and working if this would be helpful in your school making the decision to form an ATP.

Who are members of the ATP?

- Membership should include 2-3 teachers (including Principal or representative)

- Children: normally 4th - 5th (at least two from each class)
- Community representation - this can be school liaison / welfare officers, faith groups, members of the local and business community. Some schools have included youth club workers, local shop keepers and even the lollipop person!
- An ATP can be any size but to have the representation required is usually 8-16 members but can be smaller (or bigger to suit the school) and should have representation from children, teachers, school, parents and business and local community.

3. What does the training involved?

- Training input provide via National Parents Council - Coordinator and trainers providing input to meet needs of school
- Training is usually 2 x 3.0 hours sessions (Children are involved with adults in the training), with usually a week between them. Could be done anytime within the school day, straight after school or even a Saturday - all day events. Would not advise trying to do in one whole day since there is a lot of information to get through, especially in the first session and concentration would be hard to maintain! The second session is about developing the school's own action plan and by the end of it the school normally would have identified the 4 goals : 2 academic, one partnership and one behavioural for the first year
- The training and presentation material has now been adapted to meet the needs of special educational schools

Once a school decides it would like to take on the training contact Liam McPherson - Coordinator at 01 8874478 or by email: psi@npc.ie or complete an application form and return.

- **Most schools find that they are trying to work in effective partnerships and that the training enables them to structure and organise their efforts better.**

4. Who Funds the training for Partnership Schools?

This programme is funded by Partnership Schools Ireland and the Department of Education and Skills

It is not doing more but hopefully doing it more effectively in a truly partnership manner!

Liam

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