

DPI VISTA PROJECT



VISTA IMPACT SUMMARY AUGUST 2011

The DPI VISTA Project provides eligible schools and districts with three valuable resources:

- **FULL-TIME VISTA MEMBER** (up to 3 years to develop and sustain partnership practices)
- **TRAININGS** (on developing and creating a framework for effective partnership practices)
- **CONNECTIONS AND RESOURCES** (from the DPI and from a network of hundreds of other Partnership Schools)

The DPI supports up to twenty VISTA members per year throughout Wisconsin at schools and districts who serve a high proportion of low-income students.

The goal of the DPI VISTA Project is to build capacity for family involvement in low-income schools and communities by implementing a research-based, sustainable process for partnerships. From the research of Joyce Epstein and others, we know that positive effects for the entire community (low income students, families, teachers and staff) result from meaningful family involvement. Students have better attendance, social skills and better grades, families get more support from school and other parents, have an increased feeling of ownership for the school, and are more aware of student progress, and teachers have more respect for families, are more ready to involve families in new ways, and have an increased feeling of satisfaction with family involvement and support.

Data from Wisconsin DPI VISTA project sites has shown that in general, schools and districts hosting VISTA members are more likely to:

1. Engage low-income families in decision making roles
2. Have the time to develop community partnerships
3. Link low-income families to their children's learning
4. Apply for grants related to family partnerships
5. Develop effective communication tools for families and the community such as newsletters and websites
6. Recruit, train, and support volunteers
7. Receive high quality training and professional development
8. Recognize that a change of *attitude towards low income parents* was necessary to reach families.

WHAT IMPACT DOES A DPI VISTA HAVE?

- According to surveys of *former* VISTA sites conducted each spring by the DPI VISTA Project staff, VISTAs impacted their sites and communities in the following ways:
 - **Sustainability:** 80% of former sites reported that efforts started by the VISTA are still continuing.
 - **School improvement:** 100% of former sites reported that their partnerships program and efforts improved after hosting a DPI VISTA member.
 - **Increased attendance:** 90% of sites reported that the percentage of families attending school wide family nights or workshops increased after hosting a DPI VISTA member.
 - **Community Support:** 30% of former sites reported that partnerships with community organizations and businesses increased after hosting a DPI VISTA member and 60% of former sites indicated that they are now using parent and community volunteers to help conduct activities that support school goals.
 - **Two-Way Communication:** 70% of former sites say that now they are making good progress towards communicating with all families in their school, including those who do not speak English.

- Each year, school and district sites conduct pre and post assessments to measure their progress on building partnerships. Results from 2010-2011 are as follows:
 - **Community collaboration:** 60% of VISTA schools reported making at least *good progress* in identifying and using community resources and services to help meet school improvement goals.
 - **Decision making:** 90% of schools indicated they are making progress towards ensuring that all major groups of families were involved in school decision making.
 - **Sustainability:** 83% of sites not receiving a VISTA in 11-12 have a functioning partnership action team to sustain the work of the VISTA.
 - **Teacher participation:** 61% of teachers supported the program of family and community involvement at VISTA schools.
 - **Addressing Language Barriers:** 90% of VISTA schools reported an *improvement* in communicating clearly with all families, including those who do not speak English.
 - **Parent-Teacher communication:** 70% of parents at VISTA schools attended a parent-teacher conference while the VISTA was serving and 77% of teachers conducted a one on one parent meeting with each student's family while the VISTA was serving.
 - **Training:** 60% of districts hosting VISTAs conducted trainings for schools on family partnerships and the Action Team for Partnerships process.
 - **Professional development:** 60% of districts hosting VISTAs provided workshops for parents to help them build skills.
 - **District collaboration:** 80% of districts hosting VISTAs made connections with other district leaders to coordinate district wide plans for partnerships.
 - **Parent Voice:** 60% of districts hosting VISTAs conducted surveys to obtain input from families.

- Once each quarter each VISTA and host site distributes surveys to families regarding programs and activities they planned, organized, and implemented. Family feedback on partnership activities from 2010-2011 follows below:
 - **Learning at home:** At Alexander Mitchell School in Milwaukee 100% of families at a Spring Family Math Night said that the event provided them with information they could use to help their children. Washington Elementary Science Night.
 - **Health and Wellness:** At Cunningham Elementary School in Beloit 68% of families who attended a Fall Family Fitness Night said they were going to use the information to make healthier meals for their children.
 - **Addressing the Summer Slide:** At Milwaukee Public Schools' Spring Family Empowerment Summit, 90% of families indicated that the information provided would help them support their child.
 - **Building Relationships:** At Sennett Middle School in Madison parents rated the Parent and Teachers Talking Together workshop an average of 4.5 (out of 5) in usefulness and relevance.
 - **Parent Education:** During the Family University Network conference in Wausau 100% of parents indicated they "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that workshops were relevant, useful and would help them support their child. Evaluations from the year long parent ESL classes in West Allis-West Milwaukee reported that 100% of parents rated the class a 6 out of 6.

DPI VISTA PROJECT BY THE NUMBERS

Year	# of Volunteers recruited	# of Volunteer hours	WI wage equivalent	\$ Value of donations received (cash/in-kind)	# of grants written	# of Community partnerships established
02-03	1,528	22,456	\$376,362	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
03-04	1,578	9,025	\$151,259	\$88,562	Data not available	Data not available
04-05	1,074	8,250	\$138,270	\$323,454	Data not available	Data not available
05-06	1,636	6,340	\$106,258	\$242,985	Data not available	Data not available
06-07	1,436	6,338	\$112,753	\$87,289	Data not available	Data not available
07-08	1,146	6,738	\$112,928	\$647,548	Data not available	Data not available
08-09	1,642	11,002	\$184,393	\$476,556	20	Data not available
09-10	1,364	5,521	\$98,218	\$252,149	20	Data not available
10-11	1,625	10,755	\$191,331	\$88,661	37	139
Totals	15,600	91,555	\$1,551,226.09	\$2,207,204	77	139