

Family, School, and Community Connections Symposium:
New Directions for Research, Practice, and Evaluation
December 2, 2004, Cambridge, MA

Sponsored by
National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools
Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, Austin, TX
&
Harvard Family Research Project
Harvard Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, MA

KEYNOTE SUMMARY

Supporting Student Achievement: Family and Community Connections with Schools
Karen Mapp, Deputy Superintendent for Family and Community Engagement, Boston Public Schools and President, Institute for Responsive Education, Northeastern University, Boston, MA

Karen Mapp offers a brief presentation on her research work and experience in the area of school, family and community partnerships and focuses on the findings from her work published in SEDL's *New Wave of Evidence*. Specifically, Mapp touches on three points: why schools, family and community partnerships are key to student learning and development; what types of partnership programs work best to support learning; and how to achieve effective school, family and community partnerships. Mapp also shares effective strategies to connect families and communities, such as The Joining Process. Mapp discusses "The Joining Process" in terms of strategies aimed at welcoming families as part of the school community; honoring family members for any type of involvement they make; and connecting staff and families on education issues to improve opportunities for children. In her efforts to "put findings into practice," Mapp suggests that schools: [work with school staff to broaden the definition of family and community engagement](#); link all efforts to engage families, whether based at school or in the community, to student learning; and implement initiatives that focus on building relationships with families and community members. Mapp also provides examples of schools across the country using effective practices to connect to families and communities.