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**PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING® LONGITUDINAL STUDY**  
**YEARS XX THROUGH XXIII (CLASSES 24 THROUGH 27)**

**PREPARED BY:**

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**APRIL 24, 2012**

**Minnesota Partners in Policymaking®**  
**Final Report: Long-Term Follow-Up Survey**  
**Combined Classes 24, 25, 26 & 27 - April 24, 2012**  
**Submitted by Nancy Miller, MS, LPC, HS-BCP**  
**Associate Professor, Metropolitan State University**

**Total surveys mailed 112; returned from both mailings 44**  
**Return rate = 39%** (breakdown by classes and mailings below)

**Mailings of Long-Term Follow-Up Surveys for Classes 24-27:**

Date of **first mailing** of surveys: March 8, 2012

**Number of surveys mailed: 112**

- Class 24: 23
- Class 25: 31
- Class 26: 32
- Class 27: 26

**Received completed by April 4, 2012 32**

- Class 24: 4 (4 ret. address unknown-reported to GTS)
- Class 25: 8 (1 ret. address unknown-reported to GTS)
- Class 26: 11 (1 ret. address unknown-reported to GTS)
- Class 27: 9

**First mailing return rate: 29%**

**Second Mailing of Long-Term Surveys for Classes 24-27:**

Date of **second mailing** of surveys: April 5, 2012

**Total number of surveys mailed: 74**

**Received completed by April 21, 2012 12**

- Class 24: 3
  - (7 total both mailings; 30%)
- Class 25: 4
  - (12 total both mailings; 39%)
- Class 26: 2
  - (13 total both mailings; 41%)
- Class 27: 3
  - (12 total both mailings; 46%)

**Second mailing return rate: 16%**

**Total returned from both mailings: 44**  
**Return rate percent\*: 39%**

- \*The return rate for the 2011 Long-Term Survey for all classes combined was 47%
- \*The return rate for the 2010 Long-Term Survey for all classes combined was 43%
- \*The return rate for the 2009 Long-Term Survey for all classes combined was 45%.

Combined Survey Results for classes 24-27

**1. Did the skills you learned during the Partners program continue to be helpful in securing appropriate services today for you or a family member?**

Yes, most of the time	25	57%
Yes, some of the time	16	36%
Seldom	2	5%
No, not at all	1	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100%</b>

**2. Overall, how would you rate your current advocacy skills?**

Excellent	22	50%
Good	19	43%
Fair	3	7%
Poor	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100%</b>

**3. Since graduating from the Partners in Policymaking program, I (or a family member with a disability) have become more independent\* at work, home or school.**

Yes	40	91%
No	4	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*Independence means the extent to which individuals exert control and choice over their own lives.

**4. Since graduating from the Partners in Policymaking program, I (or a family member with a disability) am (is) more productive.\***

Yes	35	81%
No	8	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100%</b>

**No response or not applicable = 1**

*\*Productivity* means starting employment or a positive change in one's employment situation (better wages, hours, benefits, improved status, or job advancement).

**5. Since graduating from the Partners program, my self-determination (or the self-determination of a family member with a disability) has increased.**

Yes	40	93%
No	3	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100%</b>

**No response or not applicable = 1**

*\*Self-determination* means the freedom to choose where and with whom to live or taking personal responsibility for personal decisions about needed supports and services.

**6. Since graduating from the Partners in Policymaking program, I (or a family member with disability) have experienced more community integration and inclusion.\***

Yes	38	86%
No	6	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100%</b>

*\*Integration and inclusion* means using the same community resources that are available to other citizens or fully participating in community activities.

**7. Since graduation, have you increased or decreased your use of government funded services?**

Increased	13	30%
Decreased	3	6%
About the same	28	64%
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100%</b>

**8. My (or my family's) quality of life is better because of my participation in the Partners program.**

Strongly Agree	26	60%
Agree	16	38%
Disagree	1	2%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100%</b>

**No response or not applicable = 1**

**9. As a result of the Partners program, I (or a member of my family with a disability) am/is more knowledgeable about my rights.**

Yes	42	95%
No	2	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100%</b>

**10. As a result of the Partners program, I (or a member of my family with a disability) am more aware of safety issues and can better protect myself (or a family member).**

Yes	38	88%
No	5	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100%</b>

**No response or not applicable = 1**

**11. What significant changes have occurred in your life (e.g., housing, education, employment, family support, case management, technology, health care, friendships, etc.) or the life of a family member with a disability which you attribute to your Partners program experience?**

- Have sought out more help for my son with autism.
- Friendships – I have been able to help out several others as well as my own family.
- Began CDCs. Better and stronger IEP.
- Self-advocacy skills.
- I have gained so many true friendships along with so many more resources. I have also joined a couple Boards and committees.
- I have made a change in my residence. I moved to Hermantown [as could be read] and have been here for two years. I love it.
- Daughter lives in affordable/handicap accessible housing safely and supported by ILS services. Daughter drives and owns her own car – very safely thanks to Drivability program.
- Returning to college and have gotten services needed and medical equipment.
- Difficult to say.
- I have taken on several leadership roles in my community. Helped found a parent-to-parent program – can advocate for my girls most wisely and feel that have what they need. Plus met a lifetime friend while in class. We are very close and help each other!
- Building friendships with other parents.
- My life has changed completely. My family has moved due to the fact my relationship ended after 20 years. I want my daughter to know if the person is cheating as a woman you don't need to stay.
- Education, friendships, inclusion in society.
- My son is getting a better education.
- Better able to advocate for daughter and access services.
- Nothing.
- I am taking care of my family with a lot of support.
- Employment, health care, friendship.
- I am working with a friend and classmate from elementary school who had a bad experience with ECT. Look at difference of hospital patients [not completely readable].
- I ran for a public office.
- I am a well-prepared advocate who knows the law behind my issues. I am the VP of our local ARC board.
- I got laid off from state job June 30, 2011. Very difficult without health insurance for my daughter's disability. Still not making enough money to survive.
- My son's education setting is more inclusive.
- Self advocate are my needs so I received the right wheelchair. Partners taught me a better way to get my point across with different travel agents so my needs are better met.
- I am a better advocate for my son.
- Family support – bonded with other "PIP" grads to form support group in town. Education – better IEP for child.
- No.
- I am one of the two self-advocate mentors for Merrick, Inc. along with Katie McDermott from Class 28.
- Family support has improved.

- Child now has an interview!!
- Approved for CADI WAIVER, school services increases with more inclusive settings.
- I have a greater commitment to helping organizations that advocate for persons with disabilities.
- I moved into my own apartment. I feel as if I have a wonderful handle on things.
- More streamlined case management; more outspoken; helping everyone I need find resources and provide other avenues.
- Inclusive education.

## 12. What skills did you learn in the program that you still use today?

- Being assertive – expecting him to be treated like all the other kids.
- Advocacy and how the system works.
- Look for appropriate resource. Be prepared!
- Self-advocacy skills.
- Advocacy – courage.
- I have learned that with help you can change anything if you put what you know to good use.
- Advocacy for my kids and others in my community who have disabilities.
- A little of everything.
- Advocacy.
- Keep it simple, do my homework, don't apologize for what my children require to be successful!
- All my info and packets. I refer to them weekly!!! What I forget is always in my paperwork.
- Advocacy! Listening as much as speaking. You may be unique but your situation may not be.
- Advocating for education.
- Good advocacy, reaching out to politicians, knowing and starting petitions for laws/bills.
- Still working with my legislators.
- Resources – who to contact for what services.
- No.
- Advocacy, advocacy, advocacy.
- Pretty much everything!
- Best experience was legislative week. I would have never done that on my own – Thank You!
- Persuasion.
- Knowing who to reach out to and the importance of involvement on board such as the SEAP at MDE.
- Government process, how to contact and be effective with elected officials.
- I'm a trial lawyer. I use many of the same skills in negotiating IEPs, PCS hours, etc.
- Navigating the system.
- Clear communication. Reaction is more positive.
- Advocacy, asking questions of the professionals, ability to research, ability to talk to legislators.
- I am working two jobs.
- I trust parents and other parents, no authority – felt this way in most other disability programs and authority in general (employees, Drs, cops, etc).
- Contacting lawmakers; testimony.
- IEP advocacy.
- If your legislator is not in please call or write them or email them.
- Advocacy, diplomacy, use of resources.



- Knowing my rights in IEPs.
- Advocacy – involvement in ARC. Better wording/communication with those that are involved with my son.
- Self-advocate, getting my needs and points across to health care providers.
- Advocacy skills.

**13. Looking back at your experience with the Partners program, what recommendations would you make to improve the program?**

- Have reunions every couple of years – with guest speakers. Doing follow-up courses for classes.
- Hotel when I was there was dark and dreary and the h/c rooms were bad and poorly located. Sheraton – 3 pts.
- More people participate. More follow-up meetings and refreshers.
- Add an aspect of direct, non-violent civil disobedience.
- None. This was the greatest program ever created.
- I would suggest that you keep doing what you've done. Great work!!!
- Keep it going – terrific program!
- None.
- Let us come back for refresher!!
- It would have been exciting to actually work on an issue or project throughout our training.
- I would love to see all the classes get together and catch up on classmates and other Partner's graduates!!! How fun that would be.
- Core presentation – specific to topic then break-outs in various sub-topics to better “personal-story” distractions during presentation.
- More cultural diversity!
- None.
- Satellite programs in out-state MN. Reimbursement is great and fair – but time consuming to drive 4-5 hours each way for class. Otherwise program is outstanding!
- No.
- I think the program should be ever evolving and not rely on what was done in the past.
- N/A.
- Do not admit those with mental disabilities.
- Information on college opportunities.
- More continued education or chances to reconnect with classmates.
- None. Excellent job. However, I would suggest more to keep graduates informed and connected.
- Don't give out 42 lbs of resources, just email PDF files.
- A little more interaction – kick it up a notch!!
- Make sure speakers educate, rather than champion their personal cause.
- More healthy balanced meals.
- Talk about authority [not readable]; give others more confidence.
- More Colleen.
- I would not change a thing.
- More employment opportunities to work in a field that I am passionate about.
- None – love the program.

- Let us take it a second time. I think much more absorption, etc. future community and political involvement would occur.
- Not sure on this one.
- I wouldn't change anything.