Toolkit for Building Partnerships between Schools and Businesses or Organizations across Stanislaus County

Partnership Definition

A partnership is a mutually supportive arrangement between a business, government agency, and/or a non-profit organization (hereinafter called "employers") with a school or a school district.

Benefit to Students

- Better grasp of school subject concepts and better understanding of real world application of abstract concepts.
- Increased confidence, self-esteem and competence; enhanced maturity; increased pride in specific activities.
- Improvement in study habits; improved grades and test scores.
- Better attendance.
- Increased awareness of career opportunities.
- Development of special interests, e.g., science fairs, research reports, job shadowing, internships, etc.
- Improved portfolio items (resumes, letters of recommendation, on-the-job photos, etc.)
- Friendship, encouragement, and support from adult role models.

Benefit to Teachers

- Help in covering assigned curriculum.
- Exposure to new approaches and ideas that can be incorporated into teaching concepts.
- Familiarization with recent developments in the world of work.
- Interaction with other professionals not a part of the educational community.
- Better understanding between educators and the private sector.

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Recruitment Strategies

Recruitment is the process of engaging employers to become involved in your partnership. Successful recruitment strategies are:

- Select, if possible, an employer that meets the needs you have identified.
- Make a personal appointment (face-to-face).
- Write a follow-up letter to thank the employer for the opportunity to meet, reiterate the purpose of the meeting, and confirm the place, time, and date.
- Let the employer determine the place of the meeting -- your school or his/her place of business.
- If the meeting is at the potential partner's place of business, be early.
- If the meeting is at your school, start on time.
- Be prepared to give a brief overview of your school and clearly articulate your needs.
- Allow the employer to respond to your program and express how his/her company can help.
- Be flexible. The employer may offer help in areas that were not addressed in the needs assessment but would benefit the school and its students.
- Dress appropriately. First impressions can make a difference.

Write a follow-up letter after the initial meeting regardless the outcome. You may want to call on this employer in the future.

Orientation

A good program orientation will acquaint **ALL** the participants with the nature of the undertaking and help them understand their roles. Specifics of the orientation may include:

- Partnership goals and objectives.
- Relevant information about the school and the employers.
- Proposed activities of the partnership.
- What the partner will be doing and why they will be doing it.
- With whom the partner will be working.
- The format in which the partner will work (committee meetings, classroom sessions, tutorial, etc.)
- Time-lines for the activity.
- School calendar and daily schedule.
- Health and safety policies.
- School rules about confidentiality of student records.
- Developmental characteristics of students at various grade levels--what to expect.
- Discipline procedures.
- Use of school facilities (teachers' lounge, where to park, etc.)

Retention of Partnerships

It is necessary to distinguish between two types of partnerships -- on-going and a single event. The expectation of an on-going partnership is that it will continue from school year to school year. A single event partnership is designed for a specific purpose such as staff training. Once the purpose has been served, the partnership disbands.

Strategies to Retain an On-Going Partnership

- Communicate. The key school person and the employer or the employer's representative must communicate on a regular basis to determine the effectiveness and quality of the partnership and discuss ways to improve the partnership, if necessary.
- Publicize the partnership.
- Recognize the partner among their peers through the Chamber of Commerce and/or local business councils.
- Host recognition breakfast and/or luncheon.
- Present the partner with certificate, plaque, etc.
- Issue complimentary tickets to partners to school events.
- Take photographs and share copies with the employer.
- Make an annual report summarizing partnership activities and share the report with the partner's management staff, the school district administration, and the school board.
- Write thank you letters.
- Provide student presentations (speakers, musical ensembles, etc.) for company events.
- Place student work (drawings, paintings, posters, essays, craft work) on display at company facilities.

A business/education partnership takes a commitment from both parties to keep the partnership operating. Some situations that cause partnerships to fail are:

- Key people leave the school or business/agency.
- Financial reversals in a business/agency.
- One or both parties fail to carry out their responsibilities.

Ideas for Activities – Partnership Categories

Identify 2-4 potential partnership projects from the ideas listed below or create your own. Partner contributions could be funding, equipment or product donations, or partner time / expertise.

1. Academic Enrichment

- Academic tutors
- Develop projects to support real-world oriented connections to math and science
- Develop project-based learning units to solve real-world and/or community issues
- Lead class presentations on financial management
- Serve as judges for various school events
- Sponsor field trips based on specific academic area
- Provide a classroom demonstration on your business skill

2. Student Development/Citizenship

- Join food drive efforts, clean up days, support school character-education activities
- Student mentoring programs

3. College/Career Readiness

- Classroom speakers
- Organize site visits
- Speakers for school-based career days
- e-mentoring based on school initiatives
- Career Shadowing
- Internships and worksite learning experiences

4. Student Incentives/Motivation

- Internships
- Career shadowing
- Mentorships
- Expert resource consultants
- Assistance with student projects
- Ongoing courses taught on job site
- Use of equipment on job site
- On-site tours

5. Teacher/Staff Support and Recognition

- Provide food/supplies for staff recognition
- Summer internships
- Teacher in-service
- Expert resource consultants
- On-site tours
- Curriculum advisors
- Marketing programs
- Publicize/promote the school in company communications, community events, etc.
- Establish grant program for teachers to implement special projects in their classrooms

6. **Support School Administrative or Building Functions**

Participate on committee work
Fundraising
Assist in school publications
School cleanup activities
Create/enhance parenting library
Create/enhance a parent resource center

7. **How Schools Can Support Partners**

- Recognition on a marquee or at a public meeting
- Nominate your partners for state and district awards
- Send notes from students to thank partners for their activities.
- Have a special place in the school to announce and highlight partnership activities.
- Have choral or musical performances at the partners' business during the holidays.
- Provide student art work for a partner's lobby or for holiday cards.
- Media coverage by sending news releases and notifying media of special events
- Appreciation at breakfast or luncheon programs.
- Include Partners in Education column in the school newsletter
- Share or provide photographs of students and partners working together
- Plaques and banners to thank the partner for their commitment
- Free tickets to school sporting events or other activities
- Volunteer to assist at a special company event
- Invite your partner to shadow a teacher or administrator
- Open in-service sessions to company staff

School / Community Partner Agreement

AND

SCHOOL NAME **BUSINESS/COMMUNITY PARTNER NAME**

This agreement is completed by the school principal and partner liaison. Both parties should maintain a file copy.

School Name		Organization/Community Partner	
School Leader / Title:		Partner Leader Contact/Title	
Mailing Address/Zip		Mailing Address/Zip	
Phone	Email	Phone	Email
Primary Contact/Coordinator Name		Primary Contact/Coordinator Name	

Partnership Start Date:

Partnership Resource Contributions **School Contributions**

Of Volunteers, Mentors and/or Speakers:_____ Estimated Materials Costs: _____

Estimated # of Hours:_____ Advertising/Promotions: _____

Estimated Financial/Product donation: _____

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS – check all that apply

- ☐ Academic Achievement – Read to students, tutor, provide technical expertise, display student work
- ☐ Student Development/Citizenship – Mentoring, character education activities, sponsor contests, support student led efforts, service learning
- ☐ College/Career Readiness – Offer job shadowing, internships, site visits, career fair or career day, career materials
- ☐ Student Incentives/Motivation – Sponsor contests in writing, art, math, science, etc., support student of the month or end of term/year student recognition programs, academic all---star program, create student scholarship program
- ☐ Support Families in Need - Holidays

- ☐ Teacher/Staff Support or Recognition – Invite teachers to in---house training, seminars, provide job shadowing for teachers, provide food/supplies for recognition or training, establish teacher grant program.
- ☐ Support School Administrative or Building Functions – school committee work, fundraising, create school publications/communications, school cleanup, enhance the library or school environment, create parent center, etc.
- ☐ Other:

Estimated number of students impacted: _____

Shared Partner Goal(s):

Partner Goal(s):   **Partner Commitments:**

School Goal(s)   **School Commitments:**

SIGNATURES

_____

School Partner – Printed Principal Name and Signature Date

_____

Business/Community Partner – Printed Name and Signature Date

Activity Evaluation Form

Partners

School:_____Business: _____

School Partnership Coordinator Name: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Community Entity Partnership Coordinator Name: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Activity Information

Name of activity:_____Date of activity: _____

What worked well?_____

What needs to change to make the activity or objective more successful in the future? _____

Did this activity meet our objective? (Why or why not?) _____

Specific target groups involved: _____

Number of people involved in your target groups: _____

Is there need for additional participants?_____How many? _____

Who needs to be involved? _____

Volunteer Resources (hours)_____ Monetary Resources ($ amount) _____

Other Resources (please list): _____

_____

Grant programs or other sources (please list): _____

_____

Tips for Planning a Successful Partner Visit

Site Visit Goals

- Give your partner a chance to experience the look, feel, and culture of your school
- Learn more about your partner and share interests
- Identify next steps

Partner Travel

- Provide the street address and phone number and map or instructions, if possible.
- Tell the visitors where to park and the specific school entrance to use.
- Share your site's visitor sign-in and/or security procedures.
- Inform your visitor sign---in person or receptionist aware of the meeting and come out to greet the visitors when they arrive.
- If possible, post a welcome sign to greet your visitors.
- Offer simple refreshments.

Preparing for the Visit

- Note the names and titles of all individuals who will be introduced.
- Plan a tour of your school or site – classrooms and activities in action to give visitors a taste of classroom and school realities.
- Share basic information about your school/site.
- Include staff members and possible other speakers.
- Be able to articulate your sites needs and interests in a compelling manner related to a possible partnership and be prepared to share school goals and needs.

The Exchange Visit(s)

Start and finish your meeting on time – make sure to schedule enough time for each agenda item
Take minutes and share minutes in a timely manner.

Sample First Meeting Agenda

- Introductions: Brief introductions: name, job/title, interest in partnership
- School/Site Tour
- The Meeting
- Share impressions from tour
    a. Discuss all parties and individuals' interest in partnering.
    b. Discuss school needs and business interests and brainstorm possibilities.
    c. Decide if partnership development should continue and if so, identify lead contacts from school and partner organization and share contact info. Agree on partner communication preferences.
    d. Identify other staff or organizations to participate in continued partnership development.
    e. Schedule the next meeting.

Example: Year One Goals

For the ABC Corporation and Smith School Partnership

Shared Goal: Become better acquainted.
Objective: Send four groups of three people from each partner to visit the other's site to observe for a few hours a work day; take place over a period of three months.
Objective: Hold a late Friday afternoon party in October for all participants, jointly planned and executed.

Shared Goal: Establish a presence in the respective partner's site.
Objective: A different department from the business or grade from the school will being charge of creating a display for the partner each month during the school year.

Shared Goal: Participate together in collecting food for the food shelf.
Objective: The school and business will both promote this activity and then share a party to celebrate the amount collected.

Shared Goal: Help math curriculum become more real-world oriented.
Objective: Company engineers and fifth grade math teachers will work together to develop business---related math projects for students.

Shared Goal: Establish tutoring opportunities.
Objective: Business and School employees will join forces to become thoroughly involved in tutoring students. Demonstrating that there is nothing more essential than providing students the world's best educational opportunities.

Example: Year One Partnership Calendar
Grades E - 5

Planning as an entire school year and creating a calendar to share with your partner will improve coordination and planning efforts for both parties.

August

- Include partnership info in back---to--school communications for families and new staff.
- Inform staff about partnerships
- Review partner needs/interests and identify possible partners

September

- Prepare compelling story about your school with facts (demographics, successes, history)
- Invite partners in to discuss partnership and visit your school

October

- Develop partner plan / agreement / calendar of activities

November

- Partner guest readers visit classrooms
- Students create thank-you posters

December

- Partners visit classrooms for holiday parties

January

- Guest readers return

February

- Partners support a school---based project such as STEM Fair, History Day, Art Fair or academic competition.

March

- Display items from partnership during school conference or business event.
- Tutors help students prepare for testing
- Partners help with spring school clean-up project

April

- Students/staff hold partnership appreciation activity
- Review partnership status and assess progress.
- Begin plans for following school year – so partnership can begin in September.

June

- Report out partnership progress and successes / Celebrate
- Include partners in end-of-year activities

Example: Year One Calendar of Activities
Middle School

Planning as an entire school year and creating a calendar to share with your partner will improve coordination and planning efforts for both parties.

August
- Include partnership info in back---to---school communications for families and new staff.
- Inform staff about partnerships
- Review partner needs/interests and identify possible partners

September
- Prepare compelling story about your school with facts (demographics, successes, history)
- Invite partners in to discuss partnership and visit your school.

October
- Develop partner plan / agreement / calendar of activities

November
- Partners participate on Student Wellness Committee

December
- Hold "unplug" day for student wellness

January
- Partners visit PE classes – "A Day in the Life of…. Project" related to staying healthy in the workplace.
- Students / Partners meet to work during month to work collaboratively on an identified academic project that students present in class.

February
- Hold various targeted career exploration activities

March
- Display items from partnership during school conference or business event.
- Tutors help students prepare for testing

April
- Hold school bike/walk to school day
- Students/staff hold partnership appreciation activity
- Review partnership status and assess progress.
- Begin plans for following school year – so partnership can begin in September.

June
- Report out partnership progress and successes / Celebrate
- Include partners in end-of-year activities

Example: Year One Calendar of Activities
High School

Planning as an entire school year and creating a calendar to share with your partner will improve coordination and planning efforts for both parties.

August
- Include partnership info in back---to--school communications for families and new staff.
- Inform staff about partnerships
- Review partner needs/interests and identify possible partners

September
- Prepare compelling story about your school with facts (demographics, successes, history)
- Invite partners in to discuss partnership and visit your school.

October
- Develop partner plan / agreement / calendar of activities

November
- Partners support a school---wide community-- service project to help support needy families.

December
- Partners/school present results of service project
- Students sing at partner holiday.

January
- Partners visit classrooms to share career info.
- Students create thank-you posters for partner.

February
- Hold targeted academic competition – partners "judge" the projects.
- Tutors help students prepare for testing

March
- Display items from partnership at school activities or business event.
- Tutors help students prepare for testing

April
- Students/staff hold partnership appreciation activity
- Review partnership status and assess progress.
- Begin plans for following school year – so partnership can begin in September.

May
- Partners support service learning day.
- Partners meet with senior groups for successful transitions presentation.

June
- Report out partnership progress and successes / Celebrate
- Include partners in end-of-year activities

Sample: School / Community Partner Agreement

Anderson School **AND** **The Smith Company**

SCHOOL NAME **BUSINESS/COMMUNITY PARTNER NAME**

This agreement is completed by the school principal and partner liaison. Both parties should maintain a file copy.

School Name ANDERSON SCHOOL		Organization/Community Partner THE SMITH COMPANY	
School Leader / Title: Kristy Jones, Principal		Partner Leader Contact/Title Robert M. Smith, President	
Mailing Address/Zip 262 Anderson Blvd, Newport		Mailing Address/Zip 565 St. Paul Way, St. Paul, MN	
Phone	Email	Phone	Email
Primary Contact/Coordinator Name Jerry Jones		Primary Contact/Coordinator Name	

Partnership Start Date: 8/10/2013

Partnership Resource Contributions **School Contributions**

# of Volunteers, Mentors and/or Speakers: 17
Estimated # of Hours: 141
Monthly Estimated Financial/Product donation: $500

Estimated Materials Costs:
Advertising/Promotions:

PARTNERSHIP FOCUS – check all that apply

☐ Academic Achievement – Read to students, tutor, provide technical expertise, display student work

☐ Student Development/Citizenship – Mentoring, character education activities, sponsor contests, support student led efforts, service learning

☐ College/Career Readiness – Offer job shadowing, internships, site visits, career fair or career day, career materials

☐ Student Incentives/Motivation – Sponsor contests in writing, art, math, science, etc., support student of the month or end of term/year student recognition programs, academic all---star program, create student scholarship program.

- ☐ Support Families in Need – back to school fund drive, "angel" fund, afterschool scholarships, offer dental services.
- ☐ Teacher/Staff Support or Recognition – Invite teachers to in-house training, seminars, provide job shadowing for teachers, provide food/supplies for recognition or training, establish teacher grant program.
- ☐ Support School Administrative or Building Functions – school committee work, fundraising, create school publications/communications, school cleanup, enhance the library or school environment, create parent center, etc.
- ☐ Other:

Estimated number of students impacted: 700

Shared Partner Goal(s): 1) Prepare students for the workplace; 2) Promote partnerships and educational excellence.

Partner Goal(s): The Smith Company

1) Support student career exploration and advance student understanding of communication in the workplace.
2) Recognize students and teachers for excellence.

Partner Commitments:

- 10 volunteers will visit the school 6-8 hours over the year for career exploration activities.
- Smith Company will provide/present a student and staff recognition plaque each month of the SY.
- 5 volunteers will review/judge a student-based project in English classes.

School Goal(s) Anderson School

1. Connect learning in school to the workplace and develop critical workplace skills.
2. Recognize and communicate students, teachers, along with community partnership and related activities.

School Commitments:

- Identify teachers/classrooms and provide guidance for career exploration activities.
- Identify teachers and students of the month and publicize program/partnership.
- Provide partnership updates regularly in school communications and post on the website.

Understanding How Education and Business Cultures Differ

It is important to recognize that public school systems and business/industry and other community entities often operate on different value systems. If unchecked, cultural differences could hinder communication and stall partnership efforts.

Tips for Successful Cultural Navigation:

- Get to know your partner by reviewing the cultural differences outlined below. Knowing your partner well is absolutely essential to creating a successful partnership.
- Be aware of the cultural differences at all times and deal with in a positive way. Awareness is critical.
- When forming a partnership, review the table below. What would you add or delete? You may do this periodically as a way to prevent problems.

VALUES/CONTEXT	EDUCATION	BUSINESS/COMMUNITY ENTITY
PURPOSE/PRODUCTS	Help all children succeed	Competition-based--winners and losers
	Reading/Math/Science test scores and college ready	Produce products and services
TIME	• Measured by curriculum and testing • Time tightly scheduled; master calendar and school-year based; classroom schedules. • Educators tend to students first	• Time is money • Self-managed schedule: meetings, deadlines, fiscal year/annual calendar • Timely responses and quick action
AUTHORITY	Principals and district leaders have authority but success comes with the "buy-in" of staff, parents, and/or students.	Values decisiveness / authority
COMMUNICATIONS	Lacks access during school hours and limited time after/before school	Real time access to phones, computers, etc.
ENVIRONMENT	• Noisy and sometimes chaotic • Little contact outside of school • Some teachers can be suspicious of outsiders wanting to "fix" education	• Generally quieter • Much contact outside of organization • "Do good / help improve education" attitude
ACCOUNTABILITY	State and federal government, parents, students, school district and community.	Stockholders, owners, customers, co-workers and community.
BUSY AND FATIGUE	Everyone is busy! To succeed, the partnership must be integrated into the core agendas of both parties. If seen as one more thing to do, moving forward will be challenged.	