



# Building Successful Partnerships

The Department of Public Affairs  
Office of Community Involvement

Jimmy Lee Peterkin Jr., MBA

District Business Partnership Coordinator

e-mail: [peterkinj@palmbeach.k12.fl.us](mailto:peterkinj@palmbeach.k12.fl.us)

(561) 434-7323 or PX47323

# What are business/community partnerships?

Partnerships are a powerful way to enhance the learning environment and address the goals and objectives in your school improvement plan.



Partnerships are also collaborative efforts to achieve mutually agreed upon goals and objectives by matching community resources to identified needs of the school. In meeting these goals and objectives, school resources are matched to the identified needs of a particular partner, such as a business, organization or community group.

# Why Partnerships?

With decreasing resources and continued uncertainty about funding partnerships can benefit schools in many ways. Most importantly, the development of external partnerships between members of the community and the school system helps to meet the diverse needs of students.

## Students benefit by:

- Connecting learning to earning
- Learning that community members do care about their success
- Receiving job training, encouragement to graduate, and to join the workforce or to continue their education

## Teachers benefit through:

- Access to resources
- Classroom volunteers
- Ability to showcase classroom and students

## Partners benefit from:

- Parental and student goodwill
- Publicity about relationship
- Well trained workforce

All school stakeholders benefit from partnerships.



# Roles in a Partnership: Who Does What

## Principal

A principal who is strongly committed, enthusiastic, and understands the program, is the key to success. Leadership from the principal gives the program increased credibility and impact with the teachers, students, parents and the partner.

### Responsibilities:

- Designate a competent and interested school coordinator who has the time to devote to the program
- Provide a school environment that contributes to the success of the program
- Work closely with the school coordinator in a co-leadership role
- Stay in touch with the progress of the program
- Confirm the school's commitment to the partnership

## School Coordinator

The school program coordinator must possess knowledge of the school staff and be a respected member of the school team. He/she should be committed to the partnership concept, have a good mind for detail and follow through, be counted on to do what is agreed upon and be accessible.

### Responsibilities:

- Keep the principal informed about the program's progress
- Assist with orientation
- Promote the program among school community
- Serve as the official contact between the school and the partner
- Monitor and evaluate the progress of the partnership

# Roles in a Partnership: Who Does What

## Chief Executive Officer or Organization Leader

The Chief Executive Officer must have a personal and corporate commitment to the School/Business Partnership Program. This commitment is evidenced by his/her approval and adherence to the guidelines of the program and the communication of this commitment to all levels of the organization.

### Responsibilities:

- Appoint an enthusiastic, competent coordinator
- Motivate members of the organization to participate in the program
- Allow identified resources to be utilized
- Stay in touch with the progress of the program
- Confirm the organization's commitment to the program

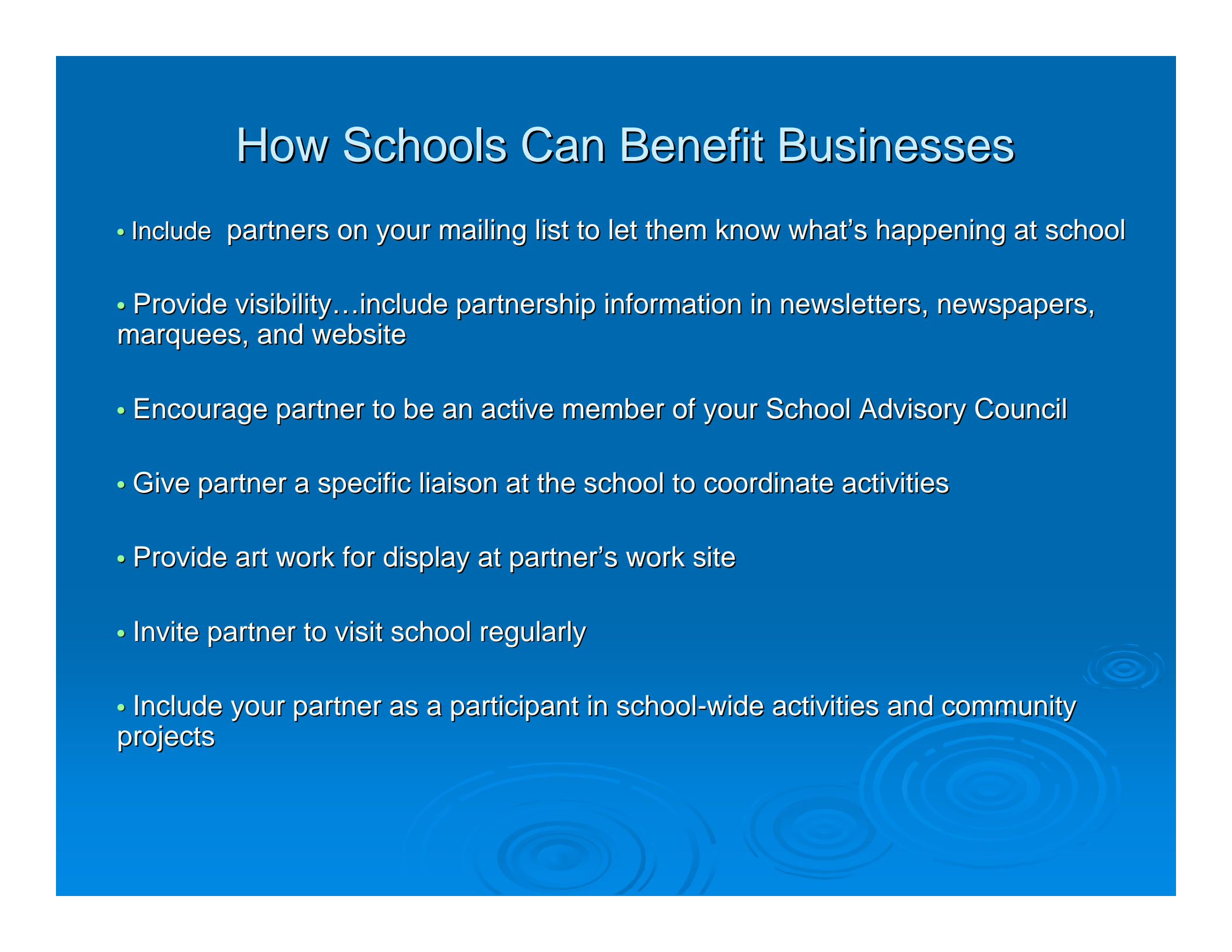
## Business/Organization Coordinator

This individual is the direct link between the school and the company. Experience indicates that this person is most successful if he/she is at high enough level to make decisions, be well informed and believe in the value of the program, have an interest in education and a commitment to young people.

### Responsibilities:

- Become familiar with the school; work with the school program coordinator
- Develop the partnership plan along with the school coordinator
- Facilitate communication within the company as well as between the company and the school
- Attend periodic coordinators' meetings

# How Schools Can Benefit Businesses

- Include partners on your mailing list to let them know what's happening at school
  - Provide visibility...include partnership information in newsletters, newspapers, marquees, and website
  - Encourage partner to be an active member of your School Advisory Council
  - Give partner a specific liaison at the school to coordinate activities
  - Provide art work for display at partner's work site
  - Invite partner to visit school regularly
  - Include your partner as a participant in school-wide activities and community projects
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# How Businesses Can Benefit Schools

- Provide release time for employees to tutor, motivate, or read to students
- Donate used equipment or surplus materials
- Sponsor school field trips
- Provide educational or curriculum support materials
- Host meetings
- Assist with school fund-raising activities
- Offer services to the school which may be unique to the organization
- Sponsor scholarships
- Provide recognition to teachers and staff

# Six Steps to Successful Partnerships

## Step 1: Assess Your Needs

- **Look at your school improvement plan**

How might a business partner help?

Are your needs strictly financial resource-oriented or human resource-oriented?

- **Assess your short-term and long-range objectives**

Where might a partner fit in to these objectives?

- **Survey staff, parents and students**

What needs do they see?

- **Once you determine your needs, prioritize them and make a list to keep handy for future reference**



# Six Steps to Successful Partnerships

## **Step 2: Target the Right Partner**

Brainstorm the solutions and resources that would be required to meet your needs. Consider not only your own needs but also the needs (as you perceive them) of the partners you're considering. Establish a list of outcomes for your partnership that will meet your objectives.

### Questions to Ask Your School Team

- Are you looking for a short-term partnership
- Do you want a long-term relationship
- How will the school benefit
- How will the business benefit



### Identifying Potential Partners

- Parents can serve as tutors, technology consultants, speakers, and many other roles
- Businesses located in the school's neighborhood
- Civic organizations, such as Rotary and Kiwanis
- Staff members in the school
- The faith community

# Six Steps to Successful Partnerships

## **Step 3: Make the Partner Contact**

### **Schedule a Meeting**

If you don't have someone inside the organization to set up a meeting or introduce you, send a letter of introduction yourself and follow it up with a phone call. Or, you can just start with a friendly phone call. In any case, the object is to set an appointment to meet face to face with someone who has decision making authority.

### **Present Your Idea**

Be prepared, brief and professional. Organize your materials to be attractive and informative.

Include:

- School information: staff, students, programs, map, and calendar
- An outline of objectives, strategies and specific ways the business might help
- Allow the business to complete an interest inventory document

### **Reaching an Agreement**

- Can you reach a philosophical agreement to work together
- Can you get a commitment for the partnership
- Be prepared to handle a "no" graciously
- Be flexible and listen to alternative suggestions
- Establish partnership agreement



# Six Steps to Successful Partnerships



## **Step 4: Keeping the Partnership Alive & Well**

### Participate

- Tour each other's facilities, meet each other's staffs
- Invite each other to participate in events and training opportunities
- Let the community know how the partner is participating... let other staff members know and encourage their participation

### Communicate

- Communicate your needs and your expectations of each other
- Establish a clear vision
- Develop a plan of action... get those good ideas and intentions on paper with an agreement form
- Send each other your newsletters... share calendars
- Make sure everyone is aware of the partnership through communication within your organization

# Six Steps to Successful Partnerships



## Step 5: Recognition & Retention

### Recognition means Retention!

Retention is the art of keeping the partners involved by encouraging their annual reenlistment (and is key to maintaining a strong, effective partnership). The decision to remain in the partnership relates directly to the benefits received by all of the participants.

- Have pride in your partnership
- Be sure that you thank your business partners often... privately and publicly
- Invite your partners to school events

The more time business people spend in the schools, the more they're aware of the good things that are happening.



# Six Steps to Successful Partnerships



## Step 6: Evaluation

Partners should evaluate activities which were not successful, incorporate new strategies and try again. Don't be afraid to discontinue a program that does not meet expectations, and do not hesitate to improve or change a partnership program. Each community's interests and needs are different, and these needs continually change.

Be sure that all parties involved have the opportunity to participate in any decision to alter your Business/Education Partnership.

- Assess the partnership annually to determine if objectives were met
- Use evaluation results to plan future activities
- Let business partners know they are making a difference, that working together is making a difference
- Celebrate successes

# Excellent Partnerships

Excellent partnerships are designed to enhance student achievement as an integral part of the school improvement plan.



# Special thanks to:

- Volusia Partners, Volusia County Schools.
- Partnerships and Alliances Linking Schools (PALS), Sarasota County Schools.
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