

Partners in Education Reference Manual

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
Office of Community Involvement

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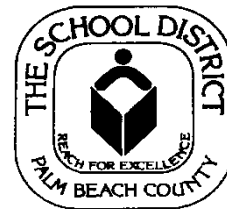


Palm Beach County

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INTRODUCTION TO PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

Why Business Partnerships?

In the past decade, business and education partnerships have become integral components in thousands of school districts across the nation, working together to strengthen the educational process through collaborative relationships.

Education needs to be everybody's business. By utilizing our community's manpower, material and financial resources effectively, our schools can build a resource network that helps supplement tight budgets and meet the challenge of providing quality education to all children. Of course, business and industry also need a skilled and educated work force to stay competitive. Working together, we can meet our respective needs and goals.

A key concept of school improvement is that: "**A successful education system is one in which every stakeholder feels a sense of ownership and involvement in the system's programs and services.**" That's what successful business partnerships are about ... **involvement and teamwork!**

What is a Partner in Education?

A partnership is a **mutually supportive arrangement between a business and a school or school district**, in which the partners commit themselves to specific goals and activities intended to **enhance educational opportunities to benefit students**. Usually, this is in the form of a **written agreement**.

The mutually agreed upon goals and objectives are met by **matching community resources to the identified needs** of the school. In meeting these goals and objectives, school resources are also matched to the identified needs of a partner such as a business or community group.

The focus of partnerships differs for each company and school, but all partnerships share a common commitment to improving education. Individual schools and their community partners develop activities at their own pace, consistent with their needs and resources.

The partner may be a business, service organization, governmental agency, association, community group or institution of higher education. Using human and other resources, the partner has an impact on student achievement. As in any successful partnership the resources, ideas and personnel from both sides are shared for **mutual benefit**.

Partnerships often are "facilitated" by a third party. The third party could be a chamber of commerce or District or Area Partnerships Coordinator. Many businesses choose to partner with schools that are close to their offices or stores, and a school may look for a nearby business that has special resources or expertise the school needs. Partnerships are sometimes established because an individual had an idea and acted on it!

Partnerships may involve business employees as tutors, mentors, coaches, or guest lecturers in the partner schools; a business may or may not make material or monetary contributions, as well, but **people resources** are the most important. In good partnerships, schools provide something to their partners in return. This may be something intangible, such as good will, or a tangible benefit, such as use of school facilities or academic resources.

Businesses may at times be willing to make a monetary donation, especially if it goes directly toward classroom activities and academics. However, fund raising is not the primary goal of the partnership program. Also, business people say that it is usually best not to ask for money initially, but to **build a relationship with them first**.

Successful partnerships have agreed-upon and well-defined goals and objectives; the business may wish, for example, to support the mathematics or science program of a school. Together, they develop activities that will implement their objectives. Once they are joined, partners should attempt to stay together for a long time. Though the partnership may change and evolve, **commitment and continuity** are essential for success, especially when dealing with students.

The business may offer internships for students, incentives for academic achievement, and training for teachers, use of its labs or equipment, instructional enrichment, or employees who can be mentors or tutors.

The school, in turn needs to know its instructional objectives, define its needs, plan for and structure the business relationships, and monitor outcomes. In good partnerships, all activities undertaken by the school and business together are intended to enhance the academic achievement of students.

It is important for prospective partners in education to understand that partnerships do not live by good will alone; they take hard work and good management. Businesses and schools are structured differently and sometimes have problems communicating.

Experience also shows that it is essential to have someone in the school in fairly regular contact with someone at the business to plan or iron out difficulties and keep channels open. Well-constructed partnerships between schools and business are good responses to concerns Americans feel about education. In a complex world, it is becoming clear that energy and resources from the wider community are needed if schools are to succeed in educating all youngsters (as they say, "It takes a village").

What Are Partnerships And How Do They Work?

Educators have a historic opportunity to allow community members to make a strategic investment in the schools. The involvement of business resources will directly impact the health of our communities today and the quality of the workforce available tomorrow.

Business is at the leading edge of change in technology, information services, finance and a host of areas that impact the economic health of the entire community. Sharing expertise and resources helps bring schools up-to-date, and allows business the opportunity to

assist students in developing the work ethic and skills that are critical for success in the workplace.

The district's Department of Public Affairs and Office of Community Involvement is looking for business leaders to develop partnership programs that enhance student achievement

What Are the Types Of Partnerships?

Partnerships can be school-specific (Adopt-a-School programs) or program/project-specific. It's not the size of a business or organization that is key, but the level of commitment. Partnerships and resources come in all shapes and sizes. Each partnership is autonomous, and there are no set requirements. Individual schools or programs and businesses have unique needs and resources to bring together. A mutual agreement will clearly spell out commitments, planned activities and time frames.

Levels of involvement can be characterized by 3 stages: support, cooperation, and collaboration. In the **support stage**, typically a beginning phase, some member of the school community engages a partner to provide resources. These relationships often focus on acquiring new resources for specific activities. These are first steps that begin to build interest and support, and which lay important groundwork for greater involvement. Partnerships usually **start small and expand gradually**. As mutual trust builds, expanded activities and involvement occurs.

The **cooperation** stage is characterized by a greater degree of communication, participation, leadership, and shared decision-making. Typical examples are the development of mentorship projects or school-to-career transition programs.

In the **collaboration stage**, the partnership begins to assume "a life of its own." In this stage, the partnership has the full attention and involvement of top-level leadership and has implementation support. Partners have established long-range goals that address essential school or community needs. Major resources are committed and there is widespread staff involvement on all parts.

Options for Business Partners

This Reference Manual takes you through several steps in a process for developing Partners in Education. It is a series of guideposts for school-based business partnership coordinators.

The handbook offers a menu of options that partners may want to consider. All are aimed at enhancing and enriching the education received by students. Some partnerships will be comprehensive, meaning they include a wide range of activities. Others will be more limited, with only one or two kinds of activities. For almost all partnerships, it is best to start small. Branching out into new activities comes naturally as the partners get to know one another, and see further opportunities for cooperation.

In general, business partnerships operate in the following areas of school life, though imagination and need may add others.

Instructional Support and Enrichment

Business people may work directly with students, one-on-one, or in groups, to remediate skills, motivate performance, or enrich the curriculum. Depending on the nature of the business and the identified needs of the schools, the partner may bring business personnel into the schools as volunteer mentors, tutors or lecturers. Good partnerships try to match the special expertise of businesses with the instructional programs of schools, so students can see real-world applications of the skills they are studying. In some partnerships, the business opens its laboratories or offices to students for training on specialized equipment or for career awareness. Some partners prefer to work with your after-school programs.

In all instructional-support activities, the **business partner works in collaboration with school staff to further the school's instructional objectives.**

Also in this category, are incentives and rewards for academic achievement offered to students by the business partners. These may include scholarships, special trips, recognition events, books, or other minor items, such as T-shirts, caps, or buttons. All incentives work best when people from the partnership are in regular contact with students as part of the incentive program. The business partner should not, of course, offer any incentive without consulting school authorities.

Staff Development

Businesses may help schools with staff development by offering summer internships to teachers or funding attendance at professional meetings and seminars; or they may make corporate experience in management and strategic planning available to school staff and administrators. In fields in which changes have occurred since teachers were trained, business can provide state-of-the-art updates on equipment and content. In turn, schools, particularly high schools, can offer career development courses and basic skills training for business employees.

Curriculum Development

Business partners with technical expertise may develop supplemental instructional materials in fields such as science and mathematics to augment the regular school curriculum and textbooks. This is an advanced step in most partnerships and should be taken in cooperation with the school district's curriculum development staff.

Material and Financial Support

Business partners and school administrators often think of this as the first step in partnership development, but it should probably be the last. Experience shows that **involving people is more important for good partnership development, and is more likely to improve education.** Donating a computer lab to a school, for example, may be an ineffective strategy, unless the business partner and the school have worked out the problems of staff support, training, and maintenance involved in the gift. Schools often need and welcome material support, but it should be accompanied by **people support.**

Career Shadowing and Internships

Partnerships may include a component of counseling and guidance for students, for careers or college. This may take the form of job shadowing, in which students are assigned to business mentors for in-school or out-of-school experiences; or it may involve business people listening to problems and discussing students' plans for the future.

Some partnerships focus specifically on the schools' responsibility to provide education for employment, and businesses' responsibility to employ graduates of the school system. In this kind of partnership the businesses pledge priority hiring in return for students' achievement of certain academic, attendance, and other standards.

Policy Development and Advocacy

Many schools welcome partnerships with business as a way to improve their community relations, as well as a way to improve education. Surveys also show that businesses cite a desire to enhance their image in the community as the single most important reason for forming a school partnership. This mutual desire for good public relations translates into advocacy, with businesses and schools working together to support and promote school-improvement strategies through the School Advisory Councils (SAC's).

As you plan your partnership, it is important to determine which element or elements of a comprehensive partnership you want to develop first. To some extent, this will depend on the needs and resources you have identified in both schools and businesses, and the goals and objectives you want your partnership to achieve.

Team Approach to Partnership Development

The principle of collaborative planning must operate from the very beginning of a partnership, not only between partners but within each of the partner organizations as well.

When possible, use teams to develop partnership plans. Teams, with their inherent synergy, will give you greater chances of success. In designing a partnership to operate in a school, the team (on the school side) may consist of the principal, the partnership coordinator, the volunteer coordinator or a teacher. Some of these team members will also maintain contact with the business. The District's Partnerships Coordinator and Volunteer Coordinator may also be involved in some phases of many partnership activities.

On the business side, the team should include the person who will coordinate with the business, including recruiting business resources and working closely with the school staff. There may be other business representatives as well, such as a member of the local Chamber of Commerce. **The size and makeup of a team will be somewhat different for each partnership.**

The purpose of this team approach is to involve key decision-makers from the beginning in the design of the partnership and the activities the partnership should undertake. Early involvement can minimize misunderstandings and problems in the implementation phase of the plan.

AWARENESS

The success of a comprehensive partnership will, in large part, be dependent upon your ability to create the right environment for growth of the program. Creating an environment conducive to partnership development and growth is accomplished by conducting well-planned awareness activities. Awareness is informing key populations that community partnerships are being considered as a means of improving the schools and the community.

Awareness involves aspects of networking, marketing, brainstorming and public relations. An effective awareness strategy will create the climate in which your partnership can begin and to continue growing.

Different Cultures, Different Values

As you begin the analysis of the structure of the businesses and schools that will be involved in your partnership, keep in mind that business leaders and school leaders may have different sets of values. Your partnership will attempt to bring these groups together.

Understanding the differences between business people and educators in philosophy or accustomed ways of operating is key to developing successful awareness activities. For example, business leaders typically want to move ahead quickly, make decisions and look for immediate solutions. Educators may want to discuss the problem, consult their colleagues, and study alternatives. This means that different strategies may be needed for each group. The question to keep in mind is, "What does this particular key group need to know in order to become involved in the partnership?"

Key School Populations

The **Principals** of each school have overall responsibility for programs and projects operating in that school. Principals need to be informed early that the partnership is mechanisms that can help them reach their existing goals and objectives, and to help achieve existing priorities.

The school's **business partnerships coordinator** will likely be involved in many or most of the school's partnership activities. This entails being knowledgeable of available businesses and resources in the neighborhood and handling the necessary partnership documentation.

Teachers are often the last to learn of a new initiative in a school, despite the fact that they are the people who will help make it work. Teachers may view the use of external community or business resources as added work. Helping them to understand the potential benefits of a partnership to them and to their students is important.

Awareness of the **support staff** of a school is very important. A secretary or receptionist may be the first person in the school to have contact with a business partner and needs to know how to handle the situation.

Key Business Populations

The support of the business' **chief executive officer** or **owner** is crucial to the success of a business education partnership. In addition to the top officers of a business, a number of others, including **managers** and **directors** need to know a partnership is planned, since they will probably be involved at some point. All personnel of a business need to know how an education partnership can improve the company's image and help it fulfill corporate responsibilities to the community.

A key group that is often involved in business/education partnerships is the local **chamber of commerce**. Chambers of commerce can provide leads for partnerships, help organize events (like career fairs), sponsor scholarships or solicit summer employment opportunities.

Developing Awareness

The **awareness plan** that you develop is dependent on your understanding of how the school and business partners are structured. Who needs to be made aware at the school? What conditions exist in the school? How will the partnership improve those conditions? What is the structure of the business' management system? What financial and human resources does the business have? How can the partnership tap these resources?

Awareness activities will vary by target group and based on the message you want to convey. Following is a list of common awareness activities:

- Breakfast meetings with business groups and Chambers to outline partnership elements such as mentoring, tutoring or school advocacy.
- Discuss needs and priorities at school meetings.
- Public service announcements for the community at large.

School Profile

A profile of your school presents your image to the public. This profile can be used for partners, and as a public relations instrument. When compiling this profile, many persons can participate in providing the information. The profile should enable your partner to better understand your school and its needs.

A profile might include such items as:

- Special programs
- A description of the school
- The number of students, teachers and other staff
- Accomplishments of the school and its students and teachers

Benefits of Business / Education Partnerships

For Students:

- Students are exposed to positive role models, where they receive encouragement and support
- Graduates are better prepared for work; have an increased awareness of career opportunities and the job market; help in getting into better colleges.
- Students have higher aspirations, and are better motivated to prepare for the world of work.
- Students have a better understanding of real work applications of abstract concepts.
- Students have increased confidence, self-esteem, pride and motivation.
- Students have more interest in school and better attendance.
- Students have better study habits, hopefully leading to improved test scores.
- Students develop special interests, and have the opportunity to see and use equipment that schools do not have or cannot provide.
- Students receive technical assistance on advanced projects and concepts.
- Classroom studies are supplemented with relevant learning experience in business and the community through internships.

For Teachers:

- Help in covering the assigned curriculum; new approaches and ideas than can be incorporated into examples for teaching concepts
- Familiarization with recent developments in technical skills students need to prepare for those careers
- Interaction with other professionals in the community.
- Better understanding of the business world.
- Enhanced opportunities for professional growth and networking opportunities.

For the School:

- Schools offer, and students receive, a more complete educational background.
- Schools acquire a more realistic and positive image in the corporate community; increased community support and confidence.
- Schools improve their resources, to enhance students' contact with the "real world."
- Access to experts for special courses; supplies and/or equipment that school systems cannot justify; increased public support for school systems.
- Variation in the teaching method and setting, adding another dimension to classroom instruction.
- Recognition for outstanding achievements.
- Better attendance on partnership days.
- Activities that can lead to a variety of assistance (donations of equipment; video tapes and other special teaching materials; persons to serve on curriculum advisory committees).
- Increased resources (human and financial)

For the Business:

The ultimate benefit is knowing that strengthening our school system positively impacts the community as a whole; providing students who are better prepared to enter the workforce and be productive, responsible citizens.

Businesses and organizations gain a greater understanding of the quality and needs of our public schools while making an investment in preparing tomorrow's leaders, employees and consumers.

- Partners receive visibility and recognition for valued community services; and enhance their image in the community.
- Business people can affect how school staff and parents perceive their company.
- Businesses help develop their employees by providing them opportunities to be involved in the community.
- A creative outlet is provided for employees; strengthens workplace team building.
- Increases employee moral, and helps business retain employees.
- Generates an increased understanding of schools and local education.
- Causes enhancement and expansion of a future well-educated job applicant pool.
- Companies can reduce their costs of recruitment, remediation, absenteeism and poor work habits.
- Access to school facilities and special programs.
- Businesses and organizations have an opportunity to affect the quality of the public schools and ultimately, the community.
- Businesses and organizations help students gain a better understanding of business and the community and how they work.

For Business Volunteers:

Business volunteers enjoy rewarding and satisfying experiences with students

- Enjoy working with students and seeing them learn
- Have a sense of social responsiveness and contribution to the community
- Elevate the excellence of the school which volunteers attend

For Parents:

- Parents' positive attitudes toward public education increase as they see their children benefiting from partnership programs.
- The communications gap that may exist between parents and students and business narrows through their mutual concern and support for public education.
- Many parents are served directly by adjunct partnership activities.

It is of great benefit for Business Partnership Coordinators, Business Partners, and Parents to subscribe to districtnews@palmbeach.k12.fl.us

ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS AND RESOURCES

Defining Areas of Need and Setting Priorities

Needs assessment is the process of gathering and interpreting information regarding school and business needs that will determine the goals and objectives of the partnership. Determining specific educational needs and designing partnership elements around those needs is closely tied to the awareness process and essential to the partnership process.

Needs assessment is ongoing because school and business and community **needs change over time**, and also because the partnership itself may alter the needs.

All schools have unmet needs. Students may need tutoring in basic skills, hands-on experiences in math and science, or enrichment in art, music, or history. Your task in planning a needs assessment strategy is to decide how best to determine the existing priority needs of each of these areas.

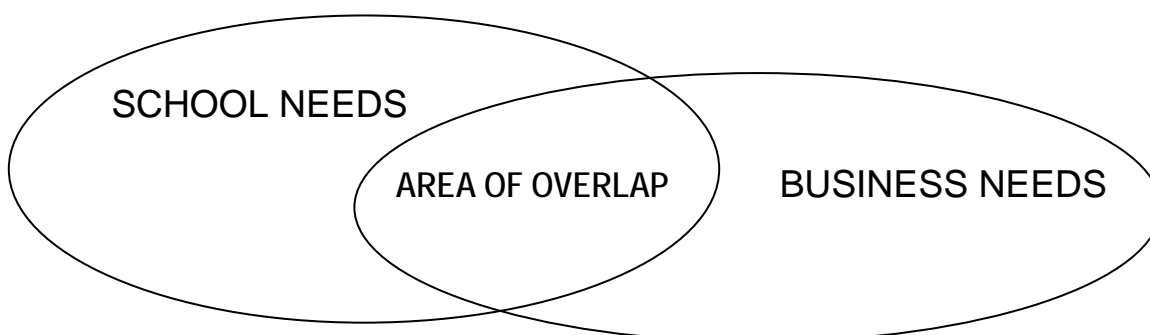
On pages 14 and 15 you will find needs assessment form that can be used to help determine and organize the needs of your school. Remember to review the “**resources needed**” section from your **school improvement plan**.

The primary objective a business/education partnership has is to address the needs of schools. But, in good partnerships, it is recognized that the **business partner** has needs as well.

Areas of Need That Overlap

So many needs, so many businesses and organizations. Where do we begin? It will help for us to focus on areas where the needs of schools and businesses overlap.

The following indicates that each group has its own set of needs and priorities. Successful partnerships define common areas of need and common priorities. The partnership becomes a two-way street, and each group feels the partnership is beneficial.



Identification of Possible Resources

Potential resources are all the people, materials, equipment, and monies available within the school, school district, and businesses to help meet the needs you have identified. This stage of the partnership development process invites you to think about and plan for the use of possible resources.

Where do you find resources of people, materials, equipment, and money? What is already present in the school or the business to help you establish and improve a partnership?

Use your completed needs statement to focus your search. Your needs (volunteers, incentives, or whatever) will direct you to the resources you seek.

Business Resources

You may be surprised at the variety of resources available in a business. Most people initially think of business and corporate contributions to education in terms of donations of equipment and money. But, in fact, the major resources available from business are **people and services**.

Take time to do research by examine corporate news reports and advertising. If your company is a branch office, investigate whether the headquarters or other branches have partnerships with their local schools.

Schools and Community Resources

Seeking student support is an easy task when it takes place on a college campus. Young people are, in general, enthusiastic about giving their time and effort to a cause such as better education. Most universities have programs that allow students time to volunteer in the community. Some universities offer credit to students for community service. College students are eager for the opportunity to participate in schools, especially when they are considering teaching as a career. High school and middle school students are also good resources to tap. Peer tutoring is regarded as an effective way to improve the student volunteer's academic achievement and self-esteem.

State Agencies

Do not overlook the local government's involvement. Partnership opportunities and resources exist with police departments, correctional facilities, post offices, fire departments, mayor's offices, etc.



BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The goal of this assessment is to develop meaningful partnerships. Use this list of focus areas to determine the **primary needs and priorities** of your students, staff, and school programs, and to **prioritize** them. The more clearly the need is defined, the better the partnership match. Objectives may be short-term or long-range.

Review your **school improvement plan** and think of ways to include businesses, organizations or other education stakeholders in achieving your goals.

Increased Student Performance / Academic Achievement –

- Volunteer readers.
- Tutoring services.
- A business or organization project that requires student involvement.
- Business resources to enhance instruction (personnel, equipment or materials).
- Incentive awards to recognize students for improved performance
- Showcase for student artwork or display of notices of school events.
- Acknowledgement of student achievement or school activities.
- Company speakers for classroom presentations or assemblies.

The school's primary needs in this area are:

Career Awareness and Job Preparedness –

- Job shadowing, internship or employment opportunities for students.
- Guest speakers on career awareness topics (interviewing, resumes).
- Career day, job fair or other career awareness activity.
- Volunteers to instruct through Junior Achievement.
- Store visits, or tours of a business facility.
- Career mentor.
- Summer jobs and internships for students.
- Short-term job shadowing for students and/or teachers.

The school's primary needs in this area are:

Increased Parent/Community Participation -

- Provision of parent workshops, or speakers at parent meetings.
- Print parent (PTA, PTO) newsletter.
- Co-sponsor fundraising or community service projects.

The school's primary needs in this area are:

Involvement in Advisory Roles / Encourage Innovation:

- Participation on the School Advisory Council.
- Participation on a PTA, PTO, or athletic board or school-to-work committee.
- Participation on a curriculum or other committee.
- Educational or curriculum support materials
- Marketing, public relations, computer or other consulting services to school staff.

The school's primary needs in this area are:

Enhanced Learning Environment, Motivation, Dropout Prevention –

- Adult role models for students (mentoring).
- Participation in an after-school program.
- Involvement in school beautification or other projects or events at school.
- Printing of a school newspaper or other publications.
- Guest speakers for faculty development workshops or parent meetings.
- Recognition of teachers, by issuing awards or certificates.
- Seminars or skills training for students, parents, faculty or administrators.
- Judges for various school events.
- Participation in sports activities with teachers and/or students.

The school's primary needs in this area are:

Other –

- Sponsorship of clubs, special programs or educational field trips (museum or zoo).
- Donations of used furniture, equipment or surplus materials for classroom use.
- Sponsorship of recognition events or incentive awards for students or teachers.
- Grants for research on effective strategies for school improvement.
- Sponsorship of essay or art contests.
- Donated tickets to cultural or other appropriate events.

The school's primary needs in this area are:

What type of **businesses** might best enhance your curriculum or program priorities?

What specific **projects** are you planning, or what type of grant(s) have you applied for, that a business or community group could enhance? Attach more information if needed.

SCHOOL NAME _____

CONTACT _____

Questions? Call the Office of Community Involvement at 434-7323PX 47323).

Business Partnership Resource Assessment

Business /Organization _____

Mailing Address _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____ CEO _____

Person Completing this Form _____ Position _____

Description of Business or Organization _____

Please indicate the resources which your business or organization could provide to a school and/or district program, through a partnership arrangement.

- Provide technical assistance or services (Area) _____
- Volunteer as a consultant in the area of _____
- Encourage employees to work with students as volunteer mentors or tutors
- Provide speaker(s) to a class (on careers, arts & crafts, science demonstrations, travel, etc.);
Topics(s) _____
- Offer field trips of your facility; indicate preferred grade level(s) _____
- Participate in Career Day or Job Fair activities
- Participate on a School Advisory Council
- Offer seminars for students, teachers, staff, parents, etc. Topic(s) _____
- Provide display space for student work
- Host meetings or special events
- Sponsor incentive or recognition programs for students and/or teachers
- Allow short-term career shadowing opportunity for students or teachers
- Equipment or materials donation
- Volunteer to read to young children
- Judge science fairs, social studies fairs, speech contests, etc.
- Sponsor an extracurricular club for students; Type _____
- Provide financial support to classroom/ department/ special projects
- Serve as a mentor to help discouraged students
- Other; please specify _____

*Thank you for your interest in becoming a **Partner in Education!***

Signature _____ Date _____

Please return this form to:

RECRUITING PARTNERS

The Recruitment Process

Recruitment is the process of engaging people and resources to become involved in your partnership, to service the needs identified by the school community and business. Recruitment is synonymous with promotion of the partnership.

The recruitment strategies you develop for your partnership depend on which elements of a comprehensive partnership you have decided to implement. Recruitment is, therefore, driven in large part by identified needs of principals, teachers, students, and other school personnel, and by the school's instructional priorities.

Schools and businesses are limited only by imagination when they design partnership activities. The opportunities are infinite. Each school has unique needs, goals and priorities, just as each business or organization has unique objectives and resources. So, *no two partnerships will be exactly alike.*

When a school is recruiting a new partner, or renewing an alliance with an existing partner, the school business partnership coordinator and the business contact person should meet in person to discuss the needs and goals of the partnership and the activities that will help achieve them.

Business people also want to see a connection between the partnership and improving education. You may want to point out a relationship between future workforce needs and the partnership.

Specific Strategies for Direct Recruitment

- Person-to-Person
- Group presentations
- Power Point or Video presentations

Remember that follow-up is vital.

Specific Strategies for Indirect Recruitment

Printed materials: posters, brochures, news clips, articles, newsletter

Media: Public service announcements, slide shows, video tapes

Satisfied business leaders and business volunteers are the most important factor in recruitment. Their enthusiasm becomes highly contagious and generates powerful interest, support, and excitement about partnerships in the schools.

Here are some **tips for recruiting Business Partners**. The steps can be modified to suit the partner's knowledge of or involvement with the school.

1. Call the potential partnering organization and find out the name, address, and email address of the person in charge of making decisions, and about the business's community involvement programs.
2. Send a letter or email to that contact person describing the Partners in Education program, the school's goals, and the involvement the company could have in helping the school reach its goals. (On pages 19 and 20 see sample of partner recruitment letter). You may want to include the Business Partnership Interest Inventory that can be found on page 16.
3. Follow up the letter or email with a phone call to the contact person to ascertain the company's interest in becoming involved.
4. If the contact person is interested, make an appointment to meet with them. When asking for something from someone, be prepared to accommodate that person's schedule. This means the coordinator might offer to visit the potential partner's office. The coordinator also should offer to give the company representatives a tour of the school.
5. In the meeting, be prepared to describe the Partners in Education program district wide. Let them know it is a well-established and successful endeavor in which they could be proud to take part.
6. Give them an overview of the school, including its goals and needs.
7. Describe how they can help you meet those goals and needs.
8. Discuss how the business will benefit from the partnership. Emphasize ways the business will be recognized by the school.
9. Ask about their company's goals and needs.
10. Describe how you can meet those needs and goals.
11. Discuss and plan partnership activities.
12. **Sign them up!**

SAMPLE PARTNER RECRUITMENT LETTER (This letter can also be sent home to parents at the beginning of the school year since most of them work in a business or participate in a community organization)

Date

Name

Company

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear _____:

(School Name) is dedicated to providing quality education for our students and preparing them to meet the challenges of the future. We believe that your involvement in our school will help us realize that goal. We would like to invite you to become one of *(School's)* Partners.

A business/education partnership involves the sharing of human and material resources for the purpose of enhancing student learning and promoting academic achievement. Partners dedicate their time and talent, and have an active role in making school programs successful.

We want the partnership to be mutually beneficial. Through your involvement, you will help prepare the future work force, so you reap the benefits of having well-trained employees when today's students enter the world of work. In addition, Business Partners gain a positive image in the community as supporters of education.

Several of our school's major goals for this year include:

We are planning several projects to help meet those goals. They are:

We think that you could play an important role in helping us meet these goals by:

I will call you in the next few days to answer any questions you may have, and to offer you a tour of our school. Meanwhile, please review the enclosed information about the Partners in Education program.

We want you to be part of our team!

Sincerely,

(Name)

(Business Partnerships Coordinator)

(School)

SAMPLE PARTNER RECRUITMENT LETTER

Date

Name

Company

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear _____:

Few things are more important than the education of our children and the environment in which they learn. Even with the growing support public education is receiving, schools must still look to mutually beneficial partnerships, to best serve our children.

Partnerships can involve businesses that give their time in classrooms or in other areas of support. Whether they involve a sharing of products, dollars, services or time, partnerships provide businesses valuable and favorable exposure with students and their families.

We would like to acquaint you with the exciting things that are happening at (*School Name*). I would like to thank you for the time you have given me to present some of the opportunities that exist with a business/educational partnership.

I look forward to working with you as we improve the future of our students.

Sincerely,

(Coordinator Name)

Partnerships Coordinator

(School Name)

Over 100 Ways Businesses Can Be Involved With Schools

If The Goal is to...

Improve Student Performance / Increase Academic Achievement –

- Volunteer to read to young children, or have them read to you
- Tutor students in reading, writing, science or mathematics skills
- Involve students in projects that relate to your business or organization
- Use business resources to enhance instruction (personnel, equipment or materials)
- Provide incentive awards and recognize students for improved performance in attendance, academics, or behavior
- Showcase student artwork or science projects
- Acknowledge student achievement or school activities (in company newsletter)
- Provide curriculum-related speakers for classroom presentations or assemblies: state-of-the-art technology and information; Real-life math problems, found in banking or retail businesses
- Invite students to join you in your involvement in community environmental issues
- Initiate environmental projects, such as recycling
- Provide subject-related technical assistance; be a technology mentor
- Teach time management to students working on projects
- Start or assist with a school newspaper or yearbook
- Print greeting cards prepared by students
- Provide access to computers
- Provide volunteers to instruct students on computers
- Allow students to design holiday cards or covers for annual reports
- Provide demonstrations of various artistic and technical skills
- Start an "employee talent bank" within your business; list employees with special talents or topics of interest to students
- Involve legal staff in mock classroom court cases

Increase Parent/Community Participation –

- Participate in school's advisory council and PTA's or PTO's
- Provide seminars or workshops to parent groups on consumer topics or parenting
- Provide speakers at parent meetings
- Print, or help sponsor, parent (PTA, PTO) newsletter
- Host a college information day, to advise students and parents on college opportunities
- Co-sponsor fundraising or community service projects
- Provide a preschool nursery for school functions
- Provide additional bilingual support
- Sponsor Career Day for parents
- Encourage other parents to become involved in education

Build Career Awareness and Job Preparedness –

- Offer internship or employment opportunities for students
- Allow short-term job shadowing for students and/or teachers
- Serve as guest speaker on career awareness topics (interviewing, resumes)
- Participate on a career day, or a job fair
- Volunteer to instruct through Junior Achievement
- Host a store visit, or tour of business facility
- Be a career mentor
- Participate in career awareness activities (resume and job search techniques)
- Provide summer jobs, internships or part-time jobs for students
- Help develop a career lab
- Conduct mock interviews
- Conduct employability workshops on:
 - skills required for various jobs or careers
 - education required for various jobs/careers
 - job trends and salary ranges
 - employability skills
- Career development for nontraditional students
- Provide assistance to students starting an in-class or school-wide business:
 - discuss hiring, firing and advancement policies
 - explain inventory, production, ordering, marketing concepts
 - discuss small business loans and taxes
- Provide information to students on money and how to handle it; on checking accounts and credit

Be Involved in an Advisory Role / Encourage Innovation –

- Participate on a local School Advisory Council (determine needs and priorities, set goals and develop a strategic plan for the school)
- Help a school achieve community support for its school improvement plan
- Join PTA, PTO, or athletic board or school-to-work committee
- Participate on a curriculum committee or a District Committee
- Provide educational or curriculum support materials
- Offer marketing, public relations, computer or other consulting services to school or school district staff

Enhance the Learning Environment, Motivate, Dropout Prevention –

- Provide an adult role model for students (mentoring)
- Provide paid “release-time” for staff to volunteer in schools
- Participate in an after-school program
- Provide scholarships to students
- Be involved in school beautification or other projects or events at school
- Print school newspaper or other publications
- Provide flexibility in work schedule, for parents and other workers to volunteer at schools
- Serve as a judge for various school events
- Host school-related meetings
- Participate in sports activities with teachers and/or students
- Provide self-esteem programs
- Provide incentives, such as T-shirts, buttons, awards, certificates, etc., to students who have made the greatest improvement in achievement, attendance, or behavior
- Identify potential dropouts to encourage their graduation from school
- Take students to Chamber of Commerce or other business functions
- Display picture of student(s) of the month and/or honor roll students
- Display notices of school events, samples of student work or volunteer needs
- Provide educational field trips and opportunities to expose students to a different environment.
- Provide bilingual support system

Faculty and Staff Development –

- Invite teachers or administrators to attend in-house skills training seminars
- Provide seminars for faculty or administrators
- Provide guest speakers for faculty development workshops or parent meetings
- Recognize outstanding teachers, by issuing awards or certificates
- Provide workshops on: alcoholism, substance abuse, gang awareness, stress management, time management, wellness programs
- Make corporate management training available
- Provide opportunities for advanced learning, particularly in areas of science and technology:
 - send teachers to conferences
 - provide internships, summer employment in field of study
 - provide awards for outstanding teachers
- Participate in a faculty/employee talent show to raise money
- Participate in special school projects, such as Teacher Appreciation Week

Other –

- Sponsor educational field trips (museum or zoo)
- Sponsor school clubs or special programs
- Donate used furniture, equipment (such as good useable computers) or surplus materials for classroom use.
- Provide donations for fund-raisers
- Sponsor recognition events for students or teachers
- Provide grants for research on effective strategies for school improvement
- Sponsor an essay, poster or art contest
- Provide incentive awards, for reading or other performance
- Donate tickets to cultural or other appropriate events
- Donate books to the library
- Sponsor student(s) for national or state meetings or contests
- Subscribe to magazines or newspapers for a class
- Sponsor "mini Olympics" for students and staff
- Photocopying materials or provide printing services
- Provide student scholarships to graduating seniors
- Serve as master of ceremonies for school functions
- Help promote school spirit at ball games by furnishing miniature basketballs/footballs to be distributed to attendees
- Encourage employees to register for Adult and Community Education classes at the work site or at a convenient neighborhood location

Sample Partnerships

The following are ideas on how businesses from specific sectors can participate in education.

Financial Institutions

- Sponsor economic education projects
- Work with teachers to develop up-to-date curriculum for banking topics
- Provide tours
- Provide display space
- Support consumer education programs
- Provide curriculum materials on banking
- Provide publicity throughout community on school projects and activities

Food Management and Restaurants

- Sponsor incentives for citizenship, attendance, or scholarship
- Allow students to paint store windows or decorate for the holidays
- Display the student of the month
- Allow after-school clubs to periodically meet at the facility
- Provide special demonstrations
- Recognize outstanding teachers, administrators, and support personnel
- Provide matching incentives for school fundraising activities
- Provide motivational awards for student accomplishments
- Assist with school awards dinners for community volunteers

Hospitals and Health Organizations

- Sponsor seminars for faculty and students on topics such as CPR, First Aid, child care, and health issues
- Sponsor seminars for parents and PTA groups
- Provide display space
- Provide audiovisual materials
- Use school personnel and students for mock emergency drills
- Provide student pen pals for patients on lengthy hospitalizations
- Participate in career fairs
- Participate in health fairs at schools
- Tutor in science and health-related courses
- Develop mentorship's for gifted students

Media/Communications

- Participate in Newspapers in Education
- Program Provide layout assistance for school publications
- Present workshops for students on how to sell advertising for their publications
- Sponsor writing, public speaking, and debate competition
- Help students produce a school news program to air on in-house video channel
- Develop a public relations campaign for education
- Assist school in reducing their printing costs

Law Enforcement / Government Agencies

- Sponsor student field studies
- Assist the school with its law-related education program
- Provide field studies to court, city hall, or jail
- Serve as judges for academic competition
- Allow journalism or debate students to interview employees or officials
- Sponsor an award for top government students or best debate students
- Participate in competitive events, field days with staff or students
- Develop violence prevention programs

Chambers of Commerce

- Participate in a Career Day
- Provide curriculum for consumer education
- Assist students with getting training in local businesses and subsequent employment
- Invite school system personnel to serve on the chamber's education committee
- Provide workshops for teachers to update their skills
- Sponsor student interns in leadership development
- Assist schools to obtain additional partners from the business committee

Civic Organizations

- Sponsor a service club
- Provide incentive awards or scholarships
- Serve on a school advisory committee
- Support a latchkey program

School Reciprocal Activities

Partnerships are designed to be mutually beneficial. As a business commits its resources to a school, the school in turn provides beneficial activities to the partner.

Knowing the partner's goals will help the school and partner plan these reciprocal activities together. Many business partners want to make a difference in the lives of students; some may want to enhance their employees' morale; some may hope for recognition in their communities; some are following through on a company-wide policy for community involvement. Whatever their interests, schools can show their partners appreciation for the time, energy, and effort they put into helping the school.

How Schools Can Benefit Business –

- Recognition on a marquee, or at a PTA meeting
- Nominate your partner 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 partner's business during the holidays.
- Provide student art work for a partner's lobby or for holiday cards.
- Provide school T-shirts and spirit items for partners' employees to wear (maybe on a specific day of the month).
- Media coverage by sending news releases and notifying media of special events
- Holiday and birthday cards from students and classes.
- Invite your partner to special school programs; include as a participant in school-wide activities or community projects.
- Appreciation breakfast or luncheon programs.
- Put your partner on your mailing list! Communicate school events through monthly newsletters and calendars of school events.
- Include the partner in programs for American Education Week or Community Involvement Week.
- Include Partners in Education column in the school newsletter.
- Participation in a partner's other community service projects.
- Photographs of students and partners working together.
- Plaques and banners to thank the partner for its commitment.
- Free tickets to school sporting events or other activities.
- Have computer math students give assistance with use of personal computers.
- Volunteer to assist in a company special event.
- Provide visibility! Include partnership information in school newsletters, newspapers.
- Encourage your partner to be an active member of your School Advisory Council
- Invite your partner to visit school regularly.
- Give your partner a specific liaison at the school to coordinate activities
- Offer to provide services to the business; making banners, buttons, student designs, or T-shirts.
- Be tuned in to publicity regarding your partner - offer congratulations or support
- Invite your partner to shadow a teacher or administrator.
- Open in-service sessions to company staff
- Make the school buildings available for meetings.

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Begin A New Partnership

In terms of formalizing school/business alliances, there are two types of partnerships: new and renewed. A new partnership has not existed between a specific business and a specific school before. Even if that business has partnerships with other schools, the partnership with this school is new if it has not existed previously.

Coordinators should submit a **Business Partnership Agreement Form (1570)** to the district Business Partnerships office to make sure each partner receives appropriate recognition. Collect as much “contact information” as possible, to facilitate this process. Access form 1570 at <http://pbforms1.palmbeach.k12.fl.us/lfserver/1570>. Use your district username and password to access the Liquid Office system. Liquid Office will allow you to electronically input your partnership information into form 1570. All partnership agreements must be processed through the Liquid Office system.

New partners will probably meet with you to discuss the new partnership. The Partnership Agreement form is used both to facilitate your discussion and to visualize the agreement. The form also provides a paper trail, so you may keep track of your partnerships even though staffing changes occur.

With a new partner, you would most typically:

1. Meet with the new partner to discuss the resources that each party is willing to share to meet each other's needs.
2. You and the partner complete the Partnership Agreement form.
3. Retain the original Partnership Agreement form at your School.
4. Provide copies of the form to: 1) your Business Partner, and 2) the district Business Partnerships office.
5. Send a copy to your Area Coordinator's Office.
6. Send a letter of welcome to the new partner (See sample letter).

New partnerships may be initiated any time of the year. However, to enable the Business Partnerships office to order partnership certificates and send invitations to the district-wide recognition, a cutoff date in winter or spring will divide the current year's partnerships from the coming year's partnerships.

For example, a new partnership as of October will be considered active during the current school year. But a partnership coming in during April will be considered active for the following year.

Renew a Partnership

- Coordinators should contact the previous year's partners to determine which partnerships will be renewed, and complete a Partnership Agreement form.
- Send a thank-you letter to Business Partners for their renewed commitment.

Partnership Agreement Process

1. Sit down with your potential new partner and discuss your school/department unique resource needs. Once you have agreed to partner, access Liquid Office and sign in using your district username and password. Liquid Office will allow you to electronically input your partnership information into form (PBS1570). All partnership agreements must be processed through the Liquid Office system.
2. Review the partnership agreement form to ensure that the agreement retains the spirit of the partnership before input. Also, check the business project activity and school reciprocal activity for completion based on each partner's needs.
3. Complete the remainder of the online agreement including as much contact data as possible. Submit the online Partnership Agreement form and print a copy. Have the Business Partner and Principal/Department Head sign and date the agreement.
4. Retain the original copy of the online Partnership Agreement at the school/department and provide business partner with a copy.
5. Send a letter of welcome to the partner. (See sample letter page 30)

Note: A business partnership agreement form must be on file with the Area and District coordinators' offices before you submit a Business Partnership Recognition Award Nomination.

SAMPLE OF NEW PARTNERSHIP LETTER

Date

Name
Company
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear *(Name)*,

We want to welcome you as a new Partner in Education of *(School Name)*. By establishing this partnership, your organization has joined the ranks of very special community participants.

This is a unique, cooperative venture in which leaders of business, industry, and education can improve educational opportunities for our students. I am pleased to have you as a Business Partner of *(school name)* for the *(current school year)*. I am confident that we will enjoy a long and rewarding relationship.

We have recorded the following reciprocal activities for *(current school year)* in our files. Your business's contribution to *(school)* includes:

- 1 - *(business activity)*
- 2 - *(business activity)*

In return, the school's contribution will include:

- 1 – *(school reciprocal activity)*
- 2 – *(school reciprocal activity)*

Thank you for your commitment to better education through the Partners in Education program.

Sincerely,

(Business Partnerships Coordinator's name)
Business Partnerships Coordinator
(School Name)

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Role Descriptions

Partnerships are team activities, and, as such, it is necessary for each member of the team to be aware of the responsibilities of each player. Role descriptions should be jointly developed for the following individuals:

The ***school's business partnerships coordinator*** is responsible at the school for matching business volunteers and resources to specific teacher requests, conducting orientation to partnership activities for teachers and business volunteers, and acting as contact and overall manager for the partnership within the school.

The school's partnerships coordinator must possess knowledge of the school staff and be a respected member of the school team. He or she should be committed to the partnership concept, see that partnership activities are accomplished and be accessible by phone at school.

Partnerships Coordinator's Responsibilities:

- Keep the principal informed of the program's progress.
- Become knowledgeable about the businesses with which the school is partnered.
- Assist with orientation of business people to the school.
- Arrange for follow-up, thank you notes, and distribution of any program information.
- Serve as the official liaison between the school and the partner.
- Monitor the progress of the partnership.
- Acts as a school's representative to the business community, visits business or Chambers of Commerce when needed.
- Acts as school's contact to the District Business Partnerships office and receives all partnerships-related correspondence
- Attends coordinator training workshops and other events
- Understand school goals and needs; may have a key role in determining them.
- Communicates with faculty and administration about Business Partnerships, to inform them of opportunities and to identify needs (See Needs Assessment).
- Maintains a supply of marketing information and partnership agreement forms.
- Recruits new partners and responds to calls of potential partners.
- Works with businesses to design creative, meaningful partnerships.
- Handles partnerships paperwork, and maintains complete records of partnerships.
- Coordinates ongoing partnership activities school-wide.
- Works with the school's volunteer (VIPS) coordinator to share resources.
- Submits articles to the Business Partnerships office for the district newsletter.
- Plans school-based Business Partnerships recognition events.
- Nominates partners for district and state awards.

The **business' partnership coordinator** serves as the primary contact between the business or organization and the school. The business' coordinator is responsible for recruiting employees to work as volunteers in the partnership, identifying corporate resources, marketing the partnership effort at the business and in the community, recognizing employee contributions, and working out administrative problems.

This person is the direct link between the company and the school's Partners in Education program. Experience indicates that this person is most successful if he or she is at a high enough level to make decisions, is well informed, believes in the value of the program, and has an interest in education and a commitment to young people.

Responsibilities:

- Becomes familiar with the school; works with the school's partnerships coordinator.
- Prepares materials, informs and recruits potential company volunteers.
- Obtains support and authorization of supervisors for release of volunteers.
- Arranges orientation and other training or meetings as needed.
- Coordinates the company's scheduling, placement, time, changes and evaluation.
- Arrange for company recognition of volunteers and in-house promotion of the program.
- Develops the partnership plan along with the school's coordinator.
- Facilitates communication within the company, as well as with the school district.
- Communicates business or organization's participation in the partnership to others.

Teachers are perhaps the most important players in the partnership; the teacher, more than anyone else, determines the success or failure of the partnership's activities, particularly if you have selected instructional support as your partnership priority and plan to recruit business people to work as volunteers in the school.

The **school principal** is responsible for all programs operating in his/her school. The principal should be involved in the development of all role descriptions and in the development of administrative guidelines to govern the partnership. A **principal** who is strongly committed and enthusiastic, and who understands the program, is the key to success. Leadership from the principal gives the Partnerships program increased credibility and impact with the teachers, students, parents and the partner.

Principal's 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.
- Consider new ideas, and possible changes to make the partnership successful.
- Stay in touch with the progress of the program.
- Express approval of programmatic achievement and teachers' efforts.
- Confirm the school's commitment to the partnership.
- Communicate school needs and goals to the coordinator.
- Encourage teachers to support and participate.
- Provide guidance in terms of policies and procedures.
- Provide resources needed to meet Partners in Education program goals.
- Communicate with partners.

The **Chief Executive Officer or Organization Leader/Manager** must have a personal and corporate commitment to the business/education partnership. This commitment is evidenced by his or 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 the organization to participate in the program.
- Allow identified resources to be used.
- Recommend changes or additional resources.
- Stay in touch with the progress of the program.
- Express approval of programmatic achievements and efforts.
- Confirm the organization's commitment to the program

The **District's Business Partnerships Coordinator** is responsible at the district level as a liaison between the district and the business community, conducting orientation to partnership activities for school staff and businesses, and acting as contact and overall manager for the Partners in Education program in the district. The Coordinator may assist in matching business resources and schools.

Business Partnerships Coordinator's Responsibilities:

- Develops and updates program guidelines and procedures.
- Provides workshops to orient and train school coordinators.
- Provides forums for idea sharing between businesses and schools.
- Creates and provides marketing materials to schools to aid in recruitment.
- Maintains a computer database and paper files on partnerships.
- Provides guidance to coordinators in terms of program policies and procedures.
- Markets the program to community through presentations and media coverage.
- Recruits new partners and responds to interested businesses; directs them to schools.
- Is responsible for the Business Partnerships office newsletter.
- Provides annual recognition for partners and schools.
- Submits award nominations for partners in state awards programs.

Guidelines for Business/Education Partnerships

The school's Business Partnership Coordinator should:

- Maintain a businesslike approach with the partner.
- Establish the partnership through the CEO, manager or other leader.
- Request a commitment of human resources first, rather than money (many firms will tell you they already contribute heavily in tax dollars).
- Emphasize key mutual advantages for each group involved in a partnership.
- Respect the individual differences of schools and businesses.
- Propose involvement that enhances the existing curriculum.
- Don't underestimate the enthusiasm and support of small businesses.
- Avoid product pushing and membership recruitment by companies/businesses.
- Value the importance of periodic evaluation and of long-range planning.
- Be available to coordinate and facilitate the partnership activities.

Business and Organization Volunteers Should:

- Express a genuine interest in helping students.
- Assist only those teachers who request their help, and work only with pupils referred to them by teachers.
- Attend training sessions if offered.
- Commit themselves to a regular schedule of service; be prompt and dependable, notifying the school when unable to be present.
- Serve under the supervision and direction of the teacher; never substitute for the teacher.
- Not be responsible for discipline, diagnosis, prescription, or evaluation of students.
- Maintain a professional attitude; respect the confidentiality of all information and activities related to students.
- Be willing and able to comply with school rules, and work within the school program.
- Understand and use appropriate channels of communication for comments and suggestions.

Teachers Should:

- Plan the work the volunteer is to do before the volunteer arrives. Give clear, specific instructions, and support.
- Provide appropriate training for specific volunteer situations.
- Provide information about students to enable volunteers to help students effectively.
- Provide materials for them to use. Give volunteers a textbook if appropriate. Keep school volunteers informed about any changes in classroom schedules that may affect volunteers' schedules.
- If the volunteer assignment is tutoring, see that more than one child is assigned to each volunteer. In case of student absence, the volunteer won't make the trip for nothing. It is wise not to remove the child from an activity he or she enjoys for the tutoring.
- Express appreciation for their contributions. Make time to give them feedback periodically. Make them feel welcome. Always return their phone calls promptly.
- Make the best time of the business volunteer's time, since business volunteers are taking time off from the workday to make a contribution.

What Makes A Partnership Successful?

Within the Corporation:

- Gain top management support and participation
- Encourage a corporate culture that reinforces community service
- Designate a committed coordinator
- Get to know your school partner
- Accept the differences between Business and Education
- Identify the school's needs; plan based on needs
- Consider the teachers; they have needs too
- Inventory corporate resources; determine how business can best meet school needs
- Focus on establishing relationships
- Maintain a win/win attitude
- Remember you are there to help improve education ... not to rewrite the book on it
- Enjoy what you do. Have fun with the partnership

Within the School:

- Gain support and participation of the administrative staff
- Encourage a school climate that reinforces staff for community involvement
- Designate a committed coordinator
- Get to know your business partner
- Accept the differences between Education and Business
- Identify business needs; give something in return for business resources Consider the individual business volunteer, they have needs too
- Inventory school resources; determine how the school can best meet partner needs
- Focus on establishing relationships
- Maintain a win/win attitude
- Remember you are involved with the partner to enhance the education of youth
- Enjoy what you do. Have fun with the partnership

Successful partnerships are characterized by an exchange of ideas, knowledge and resources. Partners form a **mutually rewarding** relationship with the purpose of improving some aspect of education. The relationship must be based on the identification and acceptance of **compatible goals and strategies**.

In addition, the partners should respect the differences in each other's culture and style, striving to apply the best of both worlds to achieve established goals. Successful partnerships have agreed-upon and well-defined goals and objectives. The business may wish, for example, to focus support on a specific subject area or program at a school or district. Together, they work out activities that will implement their objectives.

Successful partnerships take time to evolve. Trust among partners takes time to grow. Becoming partners is a process that involves careful planning, communication and commitment.

SAMPLE OF RENEWAL LETTER

Date

Name
Address

Dear _____:

Thank you for your continuing commitment to education in the School District of Palm Beach County. Your role as a business partner is invaluable to the students who will become tomorrow's leaders. I look forward to an outstanding school year with your help.

Your partnership with *(School Name)* has been renewed until the summer of *(200X – 200X) school year*. Please feel free to call about expanding or adjusting your activities during the year, as you reassess the school's needs and your business's resources.

Our school values your involvement and looks forward to a continuing relationship with your *(business/organization)*.

Sincerely,

(Business Partner Coordinator's name)
Partnership Coordinator
(School Name)

RECOGNITION & AWARDS

A major retention strategy is to provide appropriate recognition to the individuals and institutions involved. Recognition may be public or private, formal or informal, but it should be planned and continue throughout the duration of the partnership. Do not wait until the end of the year to recognize the partners.

Retention of partners allows district coordinators to concentrate on program expansion, instead of replacing partners who drop out. Successful partnerships with longevity provide a solid foundation for program expansion, both at the building site and in the total community. Satisfied, enthusiastic partners make superb spokespersons in recruiting additional businesses and schools to participate.

Program Promotion to the Community

Promoting the school's Partners in Education program to the community aids in recruitment efforts, recognition for current partners and an enhanced image for the school. When a school publicizes its work with the community, community members see that the school is forward-thinking and making strides to make education the best it can be. There are many ways to promote the program to the school's audiences.

Keep your partnerships alive by keeping business partners active, involved, and busy. Otherwise they may get frustrated and sense they were recruited just to get their name on a list (which would not be positive for the school). Make certain that there is positive and frequent feedback to all business partners. Keep the principal informed as to any needs or problems that may arise.

Coverage in the media is a very valuable form of recognition to most partners. They enjoy an enhanced image in their community when newspapers, televisions, or other forms of media cover their activities. School coordinators can facilitate media coverage of business partners.

Recognition and Appreciation Activities

- Include an article about the Partners in Education program in the school newsletter at the beginning of each semester.
- Make a presentation about the Partners in Education program at a PTA meeting.
- Send news releases to local media.
- Put up bulletin boards in a central location at the school so teachers, parents, and other visitors can learn about school/business partnerships.
- Encourage partners to display the plaques they receive from the district each year. These allow the general public to learn about the program.
- Create a Business Partners column in the school newsletter so readers know about the ongoing role partners have in the school.
- Recognize the Business Partners program and individual partners on the school's marquee to catch the eye of passersby.
- Address local civic and social groups
- Have a Partnerships Recognition event, or appreciation program.
- Publicize partnership news in the school newsletter.
- Nominate business or organization for awards
- Reward business partners and their employees and families with discounts (or free tickets) to school sporting events, plays, musicals, and the like. This encourages fuller participation and buy-in to the school's affairs.
- Introduce partner to students, parents - possibly at school open house event.
- Invite your partner to a faculty meeting to meet your staff.
- Have the school, company, and individual corporate volunteer recognition activities in the community, at the work site, and at the school.
- Arrange media coverage of partnerships around special focal points, such as improved test scores, student attendance, successful internship experiences for students and teachers, enriched curriculum, needed materials, etc.
- Write letter to the corporate volunteers' supervisors for their personnel files.
- Have an appropriate individual write a letter of appreciation to the business and district leadership.
- Develop an annual report summarizing the company's and school's involvement in the various partnership activities, including distribution of donated funds/materials, employee volunteer hours and types of services given.
- Provide feedback on how the partnership impacted students and the school.

Awards Available to Business Partners

Commissioner's Business Recognition Award: The Florida commissioner of education recognizes businesses annually who have demonstrated outstanding commitment to education. The Department of Public Affairs and Office of Community Involvement Office selects nominations from the previous year's winners of the district's Business Partnership Recognition Awards.

The School Board of Palm Beach County also recognizes the award winners. Criteria for the Commissioner's Outstanding Business Recognition Awards include:

- The quality and longevity of the partnership
- Provide concrete examples of positive impacts of the partnership, especially as the partnership relates to improved student performance
- Commitment of the organization, including in-kind and financial contributions
- Creativity and innovation and/or uniquely pioneering collaborations
- Describe how the partnership is beneficial, and why it is significant to the district, in terms of meeting district or school goals
- Describe the company's commitment of time and personnel in quantitative terms. Show specific and measurable examples.
- If the nominee works with other schools, showing the broad scope of involvement gives the nomination a lot more weight.

The overall selection criteria are based on The Department of Education's three strategic goals of:

1. Programs that increase high student achievement
2. Promote greater government efficiency
3. Strive for a safer learning environment

Business Partnership Recognition Awards: the Office of Community Involvement yearly recognizes Business Partners at this event. The Business Partnership Recognition Awards Nomination Form (PBSD 1967). Form 1967 can be accessed at <http://pbforms1.palmbeach.k12.fl.us/lfserver/1967>. Use your district username and password to access the Liquid Office system. Liquid Office will allow you to electronically input your Business Partnership Recognition Awards Nomination information into form 1967.

Award Nominations (Being nominated is almost as good as winning!)

Award nominations serve as an extremely meaningful form of recognition that schools can provide businesses. Making nominations for awards can be time consuming, but the payoff for both schools and partners is great.

Nominations are important to Business Partners, because they rely on some sort of feedback for justification of the partnership to CEO's. Award nominations help businesses and their volunteers know how much you appreciate them. Award nominations help enhance a partner's commitment to the school. Partners are worthy of the honor and the time it takes to make the nomination.

These awards are a wonderful way to showcase your Business Partner.

SAMPLE PARTNER THANK-YOU LETTER

Date

Mr. Joseph Smith
Joe's Hardware
1234 Main Street
West Palm Beach, FL 33406

Dear Mr. Smith,

It doesn't seem possible that the school year has ended. Each year seems to go by faster. I didn't want to let the year-end without thanking you again for contributing to the education program within our school.

Using the "how-to" manuals, hammers and nails donated by your store, Ms. Graves' woodworking class built study centers for our Exceptional Education students. Enclosed is a picture of the woodworking class and their finished project for you to display at the store.

Again, thank you for your support. Have a wonderful summer and we'll see you in August.

Sincerely,

(Name)

Partnerships Coordinator

(School Name)

SAMPLE PARTNER THANK-YOU LETTER

Date

Ms. Mary Jones
XYZ Corporation
1000-1st Street
West Palm Beach, FL 33406

Dear Ms. Jones,

(School Name) would like to THANK YOU for another fine year of community support. Your generosity has benefited the students, and faculty alike. Thanks to the efforts of your employee tutors, the test scores of 7th and 8th grade students have increased, and your financial contribution made it possible for the science department to equip their labs.

We hope that you will continue to be a positive leadership influence for education. Time, expertise and financial support are the great benefits *(School Name)* receives through our Partnership in Education.

Sincerely,

(Name), Principal
(School Name)

BUILDING SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS

INITIATE

Begin! Make the call to get together to begin planning for the new year.

DEDICATE

Make a commitment! Find a person who is dedicated to making it work to serve as the partnership contact.

COMMUNICATE

The key to success! Get to know each other; your needs, resources and Expectations. Set goals to make plans and submit partnership agreement form.

PARTICIPATE

Getting plans on paper is not enough. Follow through and be involved. Encourage others at the business to participate.

APPRECIATE

Be aware of all your partner does for you. Thank them often, publicly and privately

EVALUATE

Take time to determine if the goals were met.

CELEBRATE

Don't just work together; play together. Take pride in the partnership

When you've reached this step, start over again. A good relationship is dynamic and cyclical. Build on your successes!

Special thanks to:

Volusia Partners, Volusia County Schools.

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

Partners in Education, Seminole County Public Schools

Community Involvement Office, Duval County Public Schools.

Department of Community Involvement, Pinellas County Schools.

Partnerships Department, Broward County Public County Schools

Business & Education, National Association of Partners in Education, Inc.

School-Business/Community Partnerships, San Francisco School Volunteers.