

# K-12 Partnership *Report*

## Building Partnerships: What the Research Says

*Lessons learned from the surprisingly broad base of research on partnership work*

Many communities are working to build partnerships between schools and community agencies, the nonprofit sector, and business in order to create supportive structures that enhance the educational opportunities of students and positively impact community and family life. Research shows that organized programs that support the development of partnerships improve schools, increase student achievement, strengthen families, and energize communities (Epstein, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Schools and communities need to create partnerships to build the capacity of students at risk. Neither the school or community agencies working in isolation has the resources to interrupt patterns of risk (Anderson-Butcher, 2006). This calls for an expansion of partnerships between communities and schools and a sharing of resources within those partnerships.

### Why partnerships?

With ongoing gaps in achievement at all levels of schooling, it is evident that schools cannot meet the complex set of needs presented by school age children alone.

Children entering school often have unmet needs and challenges that limit their ability to be successful. These are often nonacademic barriers, and include such risk factors as aggressive behavior, mental health needs, and antisocial behaviors (Anderson Butcher et al, 2006). Partnerships can serve to meet some of these needs by including nontraditional parties in the process of education.

We know that collaborations across systems tend to improve the experiences of disconnected young people, influence the way individual agencies and systems operate, fill gaps in service and result in more comprehensive interventions, more effectively utilize

resources, and lead to better practices for sharing information (National League of Cities, 2007).

Given what are generally perceived to be positive outcomes, the challenge becomes less about justifying the effectiveness of partnerships and more about how to effectively create and sustain collaborative efforts.

### Collaboration

School and community partnerships can take various forms, ranging from casual links by which local agencies or faith based organizations work with students to a variety of wraparound services provided to youth in direct partnership with schools (Sanders, 2001). Often, schools are engaged at multiple levels with multiple agencies and businesses that may provide services to youth in the community.

In considering the multiple levels at which schools link with other agencies and business, Chrislip (2002) identifies a continuum of partnerships that includes the following:

- **Networking:** At this level, agencies engage in exchanging information for their mutual benefit. This is relatively simple to do: it requires a low initial level of trust, limited time availability and no sharing of resources. For example, at this level of partnership, a school may have a casual or familiar relationship with a community agency that also works with students. As a result, an educator may refer a student or a student's family to that agency for services, but would not be involved in the actual provision of those services or have contact with the agency regarding the student's involvement.
- **Coordinating:** At this second level, agencies are involved in the exchange of information and are willing to alter program activities for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose. This coordination requires more organizational involvement than networking, including a higher level of trust and some access to one another's resources. For example, a school and an agency may have a relationship where there is an

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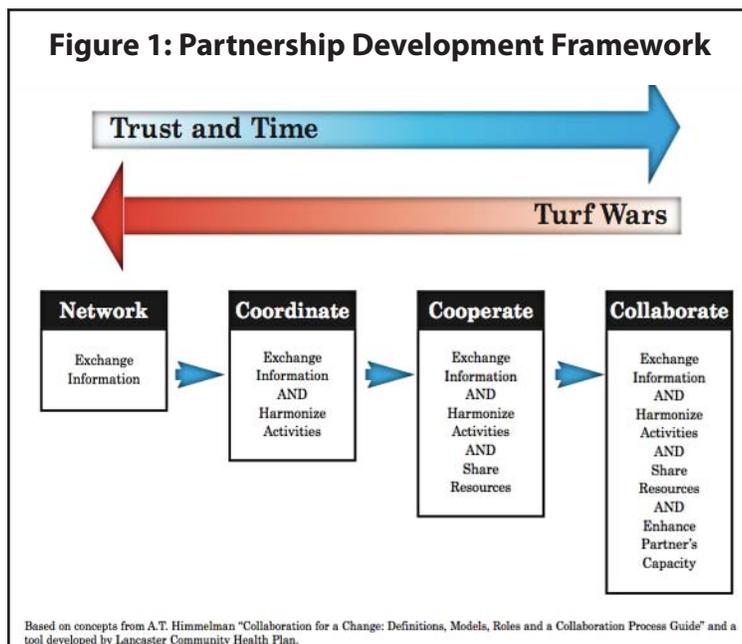
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agreement that the school refers students to a particular program, and may exchange information regarding the needs or outcomes of the students involved.

- **Cooperating:** When groups are cooperating, they are exchanging information, altering activities, and sharing resources for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose. This requires increased organizational commitment and may involve written agreements such as a memorandum of understanding between agencies. At this level, the agencies commonly share resources.
- **Collaborating:** The next level involves exchanging information, altering activities, sharing resources, and enhancing partner agencies' capacity for mutual benefit and working together to achieve a common goal. The biggest distinction between cooperating and collaborating is that organizations and individuals are willing to learn from each other to become better at what they do. Collaborating means that organizations share risks, responsibilities, and rewards. It requires a substantial time commitment, very high level of trust, and sharing of resources.
- **Integrating:** At this level, partnering agencies completely merge. This includes the sharing of operational duties, administrative structure, and all activities involved in the mission of the newly formed organization. At this level, distinctions cease to exist between the original structures and they become one new agency.

Torres and Margolin (2003) utilize the framework shown in Figure 1 to assist in understanding the continuum of relationship and activities that are involved



in the building of a collaborative relationship.

### Challenges

While the research for developing collaborations to support student success is compelling, the process is not without challenges. These challenges appear across the spectrum, from the conception of the program model to program implementation and evaluation.

### Funding

According to a study conducted by the National Network for Partnership Schools, only 8.6% of schools indicated that they were well funded to conduct comprehensive partnerships (Sanders & Epstein, 2000). With increasing pressure for schools to partner, as well as the potential benefit for students and communities that these partnerships could impact, this is an important consideration.

### Evaluation

Collaborative processes, because they can impact so many different areas, are challenging to evaluate effectively. A solid quantitative analysis requires time and funding, which are also often lacking in this area (Sanders, 2000).

### Training

Educators and school professionals lack training in how to develop and sustain community and family involvement. This lack of training is also evident in what appears to be a gap in knowledge about the importance of involvement and its potential for positive impact on educational outcomes for youth.

### Shared Responsibility

Individuals and agencies need to share turf and resources, human or financial, in order to create a successful partnership. This is a difficult proposition for many and must be addressed in this collaborative process. Communication and maintaining focus on the issues that are under consideration can be a challenge, particularly when we consider the time implications of participating in collaboration.

While the challenges are significant, they are not insurmountable. There are a number of successful collaborations that have proved that success in this arena is possible.

### Case Study: Alignment Nashville

Alignment Nashville has a mission to "bring community organizations and resources into alignment so that their coordinated support of Nashville's youth has a positive impact on public

school success and the success of our community as a whole (Bouffard, 2007).”

At the start, city leaders and local organizations met to establish a common vision that all participants could commit to. This process took time, but in the end, there was a shared commitment to creating a plan of action with the interests of the city’s children at the center. The mission was created and a strategic plan was developed. This plan is revisited and redeveloped every five years through a community-wide collaborative process. One of the organization’s operating principles is that committees do not determine what to accomplish, but rather how to accomplish what the strategic planning process showed was necessary.

The structure of collaboration is strategic and well-coordinated. Leadership comes from various sectors of the community and includes a board of directors, operations board, and outcomes committee. These entities oversee other committees that focus on specific issues and age groups and are also made up of a variety of community members. Each committee coordinates a project aligned with the strategic plan.

The partnership is also supported by key champions, or individuals who work to explicitly support the work of the collaboration. The mayor champions the effort of the agency, school district leaders are supporters, and organization staff works closely with school staff at all levels. This has helped support the ongoing partnerships.

Finally, all the work done by Alignment Nashville is rooted in best practices and relevant data. The agency utilizes evaluators to ascertain the success of initiatives and point to areas of growth.

### Promising and Best Practices in Collaboration

Throughout the literature on collaboration and partnerships between schools and communities, a few promising themes emerge for developing, implementing, and maintaining partnerships that support student success and academic achievement.

- **Creation of a shared mission:** In examples of model collaborative processes, it appears that part of the success of the partnership depends upon a commitment of all parties to a unifying mission. A group coming together needs to ask itself about its purpose and its goals, and create a sense of shared purpose among the stakeholders involved.
- **Including a diversity of stakeholders:** Successful collaborations between communities and schools need to include stakeholders from different sectors and with different areas of expertise. A partnership needs to include the voices of parents, students, city leaders, community members, school staff, and others with a stake in the process and the outcomes of the partnership.

- **Skilled facilitation:** Because of the time commitment required in creating a successful partnership, facilitation is important in making things run smoothly. It may be useful for fledgling partnerships to utilize an outside facilitator to assist in goal setting and developing a focus.
- **Focus on maintaining relationships:** To maintain effective working relationships, collaborations should consider how they will nurture and maintain relationships. This may be different for each partnership, but could include such processes as monthly meetings, utilizing social networking sources, and sharing success stories.
- **Creating community support:** Schools are integral parts of communities and, as such, partnerships should be transparent and open to the community. Making work visible and accessible to community members is helpful in garnering support for the efforts of the collaboration.
- **Focusing on the needs of students rather than those of agencies or collaborating partners:** The goal of any partnership with schools is ultimately focused on student success. Therefore, all the work that the collaboration undertakes should be focused on those outcomes rather than what individuals or agencies need.
- **Using data and evaluation:** The most effective programming is informed by data and subject to ongoing evaluation. Collaborations should focus on using evidence-based practices and evaluating the work that they do in order to best serve the community and the students.
- **Creating a clear strategic plan:** Partners should plan using logic models and theories of change. The collaboration needs to consider where it is going and how it plans to achieve its goals. Taking the time up front to create a strategic plan will save time in the end and help the collaboration focus on the mission of the organization in a way that is credible and consistent.

### Conclusion

When focused and clear, collaborations can have great impact on individuals, schools, and communities. Utilizing the current research and promising practices will assist schools and potential partners in implementing and maintaining quality partnerships that positively impact school aged children.

*By Ellen Morrissey*

### Resource Links

Research citations for this article  
[www.kprnewsletter.com/v2n5notes.htm](http://www.kprnewsletter.com/v2n5notes.htm)

# Letter from the Publisher

*Defending your resources and enhancing your skills*

It's budget season for schools and districts, and I've heard from several partnership leaders about the tough situations they're facing. I've talked with a couple of people who were transferred to other positions after their districts reduced or eliminated their partnership efforts; I've talked with others who are in the thick of the planning process now, fighting to retain staff members and the resources needed to do their work.

In light of this, I'd like to highlight a couple of resources for anyone in the midst of a similar fight:

- **The Case for Community/School Partnerships** – this was our feature article in the March 2009 issue of the *K-12 Partnership Report*, and it's free to download. The article lays out the big-picture scenario for school funding in the future (hint: it's not good), making the case for finding other sources of support, specifically partnership support.
- **Unlocking the Full Spectrum of Community Support** – this is a white paper we published last summer (also free to download); it revisits some of the key indicators from the article above, goes into greater depth on the myriad ways in which community stakeholders can contribute to schools and districts, and offers a few tips on effectively approaching new partners.

Budget problems are very real, and partnership leaders can't expect to get a free pass during the resulting discussions. But by highlighting the critical role that partnership efforts can play in shoring up budgets and improving student services and academic achievement, we can make a powerful case for maintaining – or even increasing – support for this critically important function. Personally, I believe community engagement in general, and partnerships in particular, are the only real way forward – and I wish you the best of luck as you make that case to others.

## National Conference - Save the Date!

Many people have asked when we would be holding another national event like the 2008 Effective Education Partnerships Conference (see a link to the EEPC 2008 archive below). I'm excited to announce that, thanks to the support of the Texas Association of Partners in Education, we're planning an event for January 2011!



Details will come soon; in the meantime, please mark your calendars for the following:

- Dates:** January 30 through February 1, 2011
- Location:** Austin, TX
- Registration:** \$250; \$200 for TAPE members (rates are approximate)

We'll be releasing more details soon, including the speaker RFP, final pricing, and travel information. In the meantime, please mark your calendars and plan to join us – thanks to the help of TAPE, this will be a can't-miss learning and networking opportunity!

## Resource Links

The Case for Community/School Partnerships  
[www.kprnewsletter.com/KA/v1n3\\_Feature.pdf](http://www.kprnewsletter.com/KA/v1n3_Feature.pdf)

Unlocking the Full Spectrum of Community Support  
[www.dehavillandassociates.com/DeHavilland\\_Briefing\\_061509.pdf](http://www.dehavillandassociates.com/DeHavilland_Briefing_061509.pdf)

EEPC 2008 Archive Site  
[www.dehavillandassociates.com/eepc08/](http://www.dehavillandassociates.com/eepc08/)

Texas Association of Partners in Education  
[www.tape.org/](http://www.tape.org/)

## K-12 Partnership Report

Brett Pawlowski  
Editor and Publisher

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## Distribution policy:

While the *K-12 Partnership Report* is delivered electronically as a PDF, we ask readers to treat the publication as they would any print-based newsletter to which they subscribe. Specifically, you can pass it around to an associate or two in the office - but we ask that you NOT blast it out across your district or the membership of your organization.

We do not add any security features to the PDF newsletters because we trust our readers to follow reasonable guidelines in sharing *KPR* with colleagues. If you have any questions, or would like to learn more about purchasing bulk subscriptions so that every school in your district receives a copy, contact Brett Pawlowski at 704-717-2864 or by email at [brett@dehavillandassociates.com](mailto:brett@dehavillandassociates.com).

# Expert Roundup: Finding Business Partners

*KPR asks the experts for their best tactics*

As part of our occasional “ask the expert” series at KPR, we asked partnership leaders across the country: [How do you establish new relationships with local businesses?](#) Here are their answers:

## Steps for the Direct Approach

nConnect has found it easiest to cultivate partners by directly contacting local businesses. Here’s our approach:

- 1. Set goals.** Be really clear about what you want the business to do, and what the demand is. It’s much easier to recruit an internship, for example, if you can tell the business about a specific student who needs an internship, and can clearly articulate what an internship will entail for the business. This is, in many ways, the most important step.
- 2. Research.** Do Google searches, or drive around town to identify potential business partners. Once you’ve identified a few, start researching the business itself. Does the business offer what you need?
- 3. Call.** Pick up the phone and call, rather than sending an email which can easily be ignored. If you have a contact already within the business, start there. If not, call the general number, explain what you are looking for and ask who you should talk to. This has been more effective for us than a top down approach.
- 4. Ask.** Ask for help in getting what you need. Provide them with solutions to your problem that will work for them. Look for win/win solutions. If they can’t meet a particular need, offer an alternative way for them to get involved.
- 5. Follow through.** Do what you say you will do, when you say you will do it. Provide excellent customer service
- 6. Thank.** Let them know that you appreciate what they are doing for you.
- 7. Keep in touch.** You never know when you may need to ask them for something, so keeping in touch is important. Newsletters work great for this.

—*Natalie Pacholl*  
*Director*  
*nConnect; Vancouver, WA*

## A Focus on Maintenance and Retention

Bringing the community to the joy of supporting our student’s academic achievement is actually easy, with so much support from the community. Annually, our Chamber of Commerce hosts a Principal for a

Day program which engages Chamber members in learning more about our schools. Follow-up from the school, the district and the Chamber help solidify the relationship. Major corporations help set the tone by their engagement encouraging others to WANT to become a part of the solution in supporting our urban students (70% Free/Reduced Lunch). But the most important component is insuring that businesses (and all sectors of the community) will be supported and nurtured from the early stages of their interest and for all the years to come. This is accomplished by creating a warm and welcoming environment with the community (beyond geographic boundaries) where their needs and desires are met as well as the needs of the schools; where they are welcomed and valued at all levels of the school; and where they are a part of the school in driving improvement. This is the real key to establishing new relationships and hence encourages one new partner to reach out to another. It takes a lot of effort but for our students, it is well worth the effort!

—*Miriam Davidow*  
*Specialist, School Community Partnerships*  
*Richmond City Public Schools; Richmond, VA*

## Solid Partnerships = Workforce Success

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For more information on EPI, visit [www.educationpartnerships.org](http://www.educationpartnerships.org), write to Jim Hoffmann at EPI, P. O. Box 875, Southport, CT 06890, call 203-362-1450 or email [jimhoffm@optonline.net](mailto:jimhoffm@optonline.net).

## Leveraging Deeply Engaged Partners

The Partners in Education program at North East ISD in San Antonio, Texas relies on creating lasting, relevant relationships to provide successful partnerships with business and community neighbors. We then use these friendships to garner new partners and partnerships. For example, Leadership North East is an exciting dialogue between a small number of community leaders and the district. During the nine month program, participants will go behind the scenes to learn about specific areas of district operations. Once the participants have finished the program, it is our hope that they become advocates for the district both in the community and at a statewide level. The district asks them to participate in community committees, for recommendations for new partners, for advice on community issues like bond elections, to assist in creating new partnerships, and to contact key legislatures concerning issues that are important to our students.

—Sandra Kozero  
*Director for Partners in Education  
North East ISD; San Antonio, TX*

## Calling on the Board of Directors

The Allen County Education Partnership is a BBB-accredited charity, a certification which seems to validate our standing within the community. The President/CEO of our Chamber of Commerce serves a leadership role on our Board of Directors; this helps, when necessary, to get the message of who we are and what we do out to the business community. In addition, high-ranking leaders from each of our county's four public school districts also serve on our Board of Directors, allowing us unprecedented access to public schools across our county which helps us market our literacy programming through parents and educators. The remainder of our Board of Directors is made up of retired business leaders and non-profit staff with experience pertinent to our mission and vision.

—Brian White  
*Executive Director  
Allen County Education Partnership; Fort Wayne, IN*

## Building Ties to Multiple Community Groups

Columbia Public Schools' Partners In Education program is celebrating 26 years. We have 145 partnerships and 115 partnership friends.

The program is based on the premise that "We want a handshake, not a handout." We want people to know that we don't want money, but that we want the resources that we have here in our community. The mission of our program is to share resources to enhance the educational opportunities and economic development of our community.

The program is ingrained in our community.

From a direct partnership with the local Chamber of Commerce, to partnerships between nearly every city department and a school or program, one strategy has been to keep those who will champion the program best involved at the ground level. Additionally, the school district works closely with the Regional Economic Development Group to court economic development opportunities for Columbia. Employees, including the Partners In Education program coordinator, are involved in civic groups such as Rotary, Kiwanis and Optimists. These help strength ties to the community as well as provide networking opportunities.

To reinforce ties with our partners, each year we celebrate and recognize the good work our partnerships do for kids. The week-long celebration, dubbed PIE Week, is co-sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce and kicks off with a parade and mayoral proclamation and ends with an anniversary celebration breakfast recognizing partnerships for 5, 10, 15, 20 and 25 years in the program. During the week, businesses are encouraged to participate in service activities with their schools, Reading is Everyone's Business and Taste of Teaching experiences. Partners are recognized in a special 12-page section in our local newspaper, highlighting some of the great things that have taken place during the school year. The week of activities is a great way to thank our partnerships, but also helps recruit additional businesses to participate the following school year.

Visit [www.columbia.k12.mo.us/pie/index.php](http://www.columbia.k12.mo.us/pie/index.php) to learn more about our Partners In Education program.

—Michelle Baumstark  
*Community Relations Coordinator  
Columbia Public Schools; Columbia, MO*

## Working Through Existing Contacts

In Waco's Partners in Education program, we use three primary avenues to connect our community and our campuses together to meet the needs of our students and teachers.

Our relationship with the Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce is our most valuable resource. Volunteering on their committees and attending their events opens doors and allows us to meet people, especially new businesses. Attending the Chamber board meetings also provides important connections. Of course, I constantly have needs of campuses in my mind as I am talking with people.

Waco's partnership program has a diverse Advisory Board whose primary responsibility is to assist the director in making connections to build new partnerships. At each meeting, they are asked for suggestions, especially if there is a particular campus need to be met. Following up with them on any suggestion is very important so that they feel their effort or suggestion is of value.

Our teachers are also very good about making connections with businesses, churches, and organizations

in the community that will meet needs on their campus. To ensure that the partnership is set up with the correct expectations and understanding, the partnership office sets up the first meeting with a potential partner, even if the teacher has made the primary contact.

People make things happen, so the partnership director constantly works with many different groups in the community. This networking proves very valuable in establishing new partnerships. To be the most effective, a 24/7 attitude is needed in promoting the program.

—Kay Metz

*Director, Development and Community Partnerships  
Waco ISD; Waco, TX*

### Combining Outreach with Incoming Calls

Forsyth County Schools has a very close working partnership with the Cumming-Forsyth Chamber of Commerce. I receive the new member list each month from them and send a letter to all new chamber members and follow up with an email two weeks later. The Chamber also has a weekly luncheon for new members, and I try to attend that as often as possible. Also, we have a lot of parents/businesses that want to partner with their kids' schools or with schools located in close proximity to their business location. We have a lot of random calls from the community that would like to partner with a particular school. We have an educator discount that is accessible to all our employees that is located on our

web site. As a result of this, a lot of them become PIE (Partners in Education) with Forsyth County Schools.

We have over 600 businesses and community organizations currently partnering with our 35 schools as official PIE. Last year our partners provided \$1.6 million in funding to our students. These funds, in addition to the thousands of volunteer hours and countless in-kind services, have enhanced the lives of our students, teachers and administrators.

—Judi Jenkins

*Business and Community Relations Facilitator  
Forsyth County Schools; Cumming, GA*

### The Value of Face-to-Face Presentations

We are a huge school system with over 200 schools, so some of our partners are large international companies and some are "mom and pop" shops. They all bring something valuable to the school with which they partner. But how does the partnering relationship begin? It varies. Sometimes businesses simply call and express their interest; sometimes there is a personal connection to an employee; sometimes a parent facilitates the connection; sometimes the local school simply asks etc.

One effective tool has been to bring the school system's needs and beliefs to the attention of a local Chamber of Commerce. Asking to be included on their website or newsletter has been granted with surprising ease. But the MOST productive results are when the presentation is face to face. That is, sharing via a personal conversation, a presentation at a meeting or a display table at a gathering. What has been most helpful is to emphasize that this is not a one-way street, but rather that the business "profits" – it receives positive visibility, becomes known as a caring community member etc. Using business terms like "return on investment" helps seal the deal!

—Shelley Prince

*MentorWorks Specialist  
Fairfax County Public Schools; Fairfax, VA*

## Discounted rates on bulk subscriptions to KPR

Do you want to share practical partnership information with a large group? Do you want all of your principals to receive information on building strong community partnerships? Do you want members of your organization to get regular updates on what's working in the field?

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**Brett Pawlowski, Editor and Publisher**  
Brett@dehavillandassociates.com  
or call 704-717-2864

### Monthly Luncheons as a Development Tool

Volunteers In Public Schools discovered that listening is a key element when establishing new relationships with local businesses. In order to better hear business representatives, VIPS developed its bi-monthly Partners In Education Business Luncheons. The hour-long Luncheon allows time for networking, lunch, and a short talk from a prominent business leader. The talk focuses on areas that the company has found to be effective in partnering with the school system or where partnering with the school system could prove helpful. Occasionally, the speaker may touch on a hot button item occurring in the district. The school superintendent speaks at the first Luncheon of the year. VIPS uses its extensive database and the media to invite businesses.

Compelling speakers and topics are useful tools in attracting new businesses.

VIPS takes the information learned from the Luncheon and conducts a follow-up Round Table. At the Round Table, school personnel and business representatives discuss detail steps to establishing partnerships. Through active listening, VIPS pinpoints those issues that are important to facilitate deeper discussions and form new partnerships.

—*Judy Bethly*  
*Executive Director*  
*Volunteers in Public Schools; Baton Rouge, LA*

### **Pursuing Multiple Channels**

Juneau, Alaska's capital, is the third largest city in the state with a population of 30,711. The Juneau School District has 4,900 K-12 students served by six elementary schools, two middle schools, two high schools, and an alternative high school. The district has strong engagement from the business community, supporting classroom activities and educational programs across the curriculum and grade levels. Successful strategies for building new business contacts have included:

- Presenting news about the District's career and technical education programs to the local Rotary organizations and public radio shows;
- Inviting representatives from government agencies and businesses to participate in annual career fairs to make personal connections with students;
- Attending local economic development events to recruit business contacts; and
- Inviting businesses to participate on advisory committees to build advocacy, program guidance and workforce connections for staff and students.

—*Carin Smolin*  
*Career and Technical Education Coordinator*  
*Juneau School District; Juneau, AK*

### **Using Research to Set Up a Mutual Win**

The key is to start small. I begin my efforts by talking with teachers and administrators about unmet classroom needs and we talk about the advantages and disadvantages of seeking outside support. As a follow-up, I conduct a little research about the company so as to learn more about its core mission and reputation. The goal is for a connection to emerge between the needs of the classroom and the mission of the company.

—*Jason Altenbern*  
*Community Relations Coordinator*  
*Indian Prairie School District 204; Aurora, IL*

### **Leveraging the Chamber**

In Iredell Statesville Schools, we feel one of our major strengths is our connection and visibility in

the community. Our Chamber of Commerce is an enormous asset for the opportunities and channels of communication they provide. Businesses and civic groups in our county want to be involved with the school district because they are constantly reading about the programs and initiatives we are implementing.

Whether I am seeking out a resource for a particular school need or attempting to find that perfect "fit" for a business with a school, doing my homework is important. I try to be as educated as I can be on the business and take my knowledge of our District with me. With these two pieces of information, a match will usually occur and both business and students will succeed.

—*Susie Wiberg*  
*Partnership Coordinator*  
*Iredell-Statesville Schools; Statesville, NC*

### **Community Leaders Drive Engagement; Technology Facilitates Action**

The relationship between local business and government has been long standing. We have expanded upon it through initiatives by creating the Woodbridge Township "Mayor's Advocacy Committee for Education (MAC-E) - Local Government, Education and the Business Community...Putting Children First!"

Mayor John E. McCormac and Superintendent of Schools Dr. John Crowe have created this program to energize and support a partnership between the local business community, Woodbridge Township schools, parents/volunteers, and the Mayor's administration. The commission views its work as an effective means to impact and enhance the academic experience of our district's students.

The MAC-E pledges to be effective advocates in broadening the educational experience of our district's students by presenting them with options for real world career opportunities and informing them of the skills necessary to productively and successfully participate in the processes and procedures needed in the modern workplace.

The MAC-E intends to utilize business professionals, administrators from higher education, and parent groups to promote the quality of education received in Woodbridge Township. These goals will be met through fundraising events, mentoring activities, student assemblies and support programs that encourage a strong work ethic, academic excellence, self-esteem, and personal growth of participating students.

One approach we have taken is the establishment of an exciting new website designed to foster a business/school partnership linking the local business community with the Woodbridge Township Public Schools. The goal of the website is to meet the challenge of ensuring quality education for the more than 13,000 students attending our 24 schools. Businesses can lend support

in a variety of ways, including mentoring/internships, career fairs, financial support for educational and family programs, and even by donating office and cafeteria furniture. The partnership has great potential to strengthen the educational experience for our youth while preparing the future workforce for the Woodbridge Township business community. Log on to: <http://www.twp.woodbridge.nj.us/mac-e>, where you will find ideas appropriate for small and large businesses looking to donate time, expertise, or funds to help our public school children reach their fullest potential. We also are leveraging technology by using Constant Contact for communicating with constituents interested in the program and continue to send blast e-mails with the latest information. Collaboration is in the works with Joni Krieg from Business Education Partnership which will include Woodbridge Township, the fifth largest municipality in New Jersey.

—*Michael Esolda*  
*Chief Information Officer*  
*Woodbridge Township School District; Woodbridge*  
*Township, NJ*

### **Preparation is Critical**

When approaching a new contact, the first thing I do is some homework about the business or organization. Who is the right person to speak with? What are their successes? What can they offer our students? What kinds of organizations do they currently contribute to with time and/or resources? Is there a personal connection with their business somewhere within the school district? The answers to these questions can help to open the door for us.

Then, knowing more about who I'm dealing with, I create a plan. How do I see this business contributing to our schools? Would they be a good host site for our high school internship students? Would they be a good candidate to sponsor an event at one of our schools? Do they have potential speakers that could come into our classrooms? Would they provide a student-friendly field trip?

With both of these components in place, the actual conversation with a new business contact is usually pretty smooth. Convincing our community to help with our schools and our students is really an easy sell. Generally speaking, businesses want to contribute. They just might not know what our needs are and how they can help us. It is our job at Partnership Rapid City to show them the way, show them the positive impact that they have for our students, and finally, show them our gratitude. We can't thank them enough.

—*Liz Hamburg*  
*Apprenticeship Coordinator/Business Liaison*  
*Partnership Rapid City; Rapid City, SD*

### **Three Keys to Success**

Three Steps to Becoming an Indispensable Partner:

1. Remember that you are a vital community member. The school system is often one of the largest employers, with great economic value. Your district has much to offer. In your approach, be an equal.
2. Join your Chamber of Commerce or similar organization. Work toward including several administrative staff. Our Chamber added an executive position especially for education. Be proactive and responsive.
3. Expect success, in many forms. Involvement will begin friendships, leading to natural partnerships. If businesses cannot provide funding, perhaps they can volunteer or give materials. Find ways to help them, too. Perhaps a school IT expert could visit, or a math tutor. Partnerships work both ways. Be persistent.

By working together, we can all rise above our problems to become stronger. Think about your vision for the schools. Be there for the children, and each day, keep going.

—*Lila Phillips*  
*Executive Director*  
*El Dorado Education Foundation; El Dorado, AR*

### **Create a Coalition of Leaders**

Kelloggsville Public Schools continues to work on establishing new relationships with businesses through the development of a community coalition group. This group, made up of local churches, business leaders and school district administrators, work collaboratively on selected projects to enhance and sustain the community.

Through these collaborative efforts, we continue to bring in new members. An example would be the addition of a retired county commissioner who has local connections to many business leaders. Thanks to this relationship, our next meeting will feature a representative from our local transportation company who will talk to us about the transit master plan and proposed development ideas.

It is through these relationships that many of our school-based projects have become further developed, as well as area churches and businesses having their organizations showcased. We are truly living the vision set forth by this coalition - strengthening our community through relations, with dignity, mutual support, respect and opportunities to serve each other.

—*Tammy Savage*  
*Director of Literacy/Media Services*  
*Kelloggsville Public Schools; Grand Rapids, MI*

# Calgary's Career Pathways Initiative

Community-school partnerships come in all forms, and they don't just happen in the United States. Sophisticated and effective programs can be found in places as far away as Australia and the United Kingdom. Closer to home, Canada boasts a great deal of partnership activity, as illustrated by Calgary's Career Pathways Pharmacy Technician Retail Certificate (CP-PTR) program. This partnership, which represents the interests and efforts of career and technical educators in public and Catholic schools along with postsecondary and industry representatives, provides a strong example of a workforce preparedness initiative with lessons that can be applied in any market, US or otherwise.

## Background

Career and Technology Studies, the Canadian counterpart to Career and Technical Education in the US, has been gaining traction for several years. Unlike in the US, all Canadian children receive significant exposure to career-related content, regardless of their post-secondary intentions. And Alberta's curriculum objectives, established for the entire province, encourage career-related exposure for all students, whether students experience a handful of optional courses or pursue a focused course of study through their senior year.

While this provided a supportive environment for a pharmacy technician program leading to certification, it took several years to create the program, primarily due to funding constraints. Key partners, including the Calgary Board of Education, Alberta Education, the Calgary Catholic School District, SAIT Polytechnic, and the business community, all agreed on the need for programs such as this one - but the funding was not available until a grant was uncovered through Alberta Education.

## Planning

The core idea of the CP-PTR program was to expose students to the work of pharmacy technicians over a two-year period and take them through to certification as part of the successful completion of the course. While it was expected that some students would specifically be pursuing this career, the intention was to use the real-world exposure and certification process as a broader introduction to the health science field. In fact, the program designers found that even students who expected to become physicians or scientists were interested in the course as a way of gaining exposure and experience, and possibly identifying an opportunity for evening and/or summer employment during their education.

The consortium of partners proposed to offer the SAIT Pharmacy Technical Certificate Program to students in grades 11 and 12. The goal was to build a scalable program in which learners moved smoothly from secondary to post-secondary education, which included giving students dual credit for their work from the schools and from SAIT.

The program objectives focused on both academic and work preparedness objectives, and included the following:

- Offer grade 11 and 12 students in both the public and separate (i.e., private; in this case Catholic) school systems the opportunity to complete post-secondary credentialed career training while completing their high school diplomas.

## The Calgary CP-PTR Program

### Where:

Calgary, Alberta (Canada)

### Partner(s):

Calgary Board of Education, Calgary Catholic School District, Alberta Education, SAIT Polytechnic, business/industry representatives

### Challenge:

Build a career pathways program that gave students the academic and practical experience to earn a certification in a health sciences field

### Solution:

Working from a grant provided by the provincial education board, the partners designed a two-year program that combined high school coursework, a five-month certification preparation program, and on-site job experience.

### Partner Roles:

The secondary education partners worked with SAIT to combine their respective courses into a two-year program, a process led by an SAIT instructor who had worked in the pharmacy field for several years. Development of the curriculum was supported by business and industry partners.

### Outcomes:

Of the 37 students initially accepted to the two-year pilot program, the majority - 30 students - successfully completed the program, earning dual credit between their schools and SAIT Polytechnic and earning their Pharmacy Technician Retail certification. Evaluations of this first cohort and of primary stakeholders point to a very successful program that will likely be continued going forward.

- Demonstrate the ability of the three sponsors to develop and deliver a dual credit program.
- Address areas of labor market demand for Pharmacy Technicians - Retail in Alberta.
- Provide a tangible successful example of a Career Pathways initiative.

The partners decided that the program would consist of the standard five-month SAIT certification course for this field, delivered over a two-year period in the high school environment. It combines high school courses with modified SAIT courses, and includes on-site work experience with a local pharmacy. The prerequisites for the course involved successful completion of a biology course, with no prior career coursework or exposure; students successfully completing the program would not only receive credit for their high school work, but would also gain credit for the SAIT course - and, in addition, their on-site work experience would translate into credit for Work Experience 35.

In the first year of the program, all coursework would take place within a high school environment, with high school teachers working with a SAIT instructor on course delivery. In the second year, courses would be taught at the high schools and at SAIT (including a lab requirement, and the final practicum took place at a partner pharmacy participating in the SAIT diploma program.

The curriculum content was developed by all the key stakeholder groups, with substantial input from pharmacy industry representatives and from individual businesses involved in the partner program.

Three locally-developed courses were developed based on the content of multiple SAIT courses were created and delivered by one SAIT instructor in order to ensure that delivery was consistent and that students had a strong mix of foundational knowledge and some hands-on experience before participating in the on-site work component. The course developer/instructor was a key factor in the success of the program, given his experience as an instructor combined with his experience in the pharmacy business.

In terms of assessment, students were assessed on nine core competencies, and the final mark was pass/fail. Each competency was judged on a three point scale.

### Implementation

The program was approved by Alberta Advanced Education and Technology in 2007 and was quickly marketed to students, as the pilot was expected to launch in the fall of that year. In the first cohort, William Aberhart High School saw 41 applicants, and enrolled 23 of the 27 who were considered qualified; St. Francis High School, the Catholic school counterpart, saw 15 applicants and enrolled 14 (all 15 were deemed to be qualified). Of the 37 students initially enrolled, six

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withdrew from the program after the first year, and a total of 30 graduated from the program after the first complete program cycle.

### Outcomes

As a pilot program (and one funded by a grant that specifically required extensive evaluation of outcomes), the results of the program were studied closely to determine effectiveness and find ways to improve the program.

Program designers and key stakeholders were pleased with the results of the program, including the industry and business representatives who assisted in development of the curriculum and who hosted students during their practicum. There was a great deal of enthusiasm for the collaborative efforts of the parties involved and for the greater level of benefits (dual credits, real-world exposure, etc.) they were able to offer students by working together.

Students were similarly enthusiastic, giving the program high marks and expressing not only gratitude for the exposure to health sciences in general, but also a greater interest in the pharmacy field specifically.

Of course, there were challenges as well: students highlighted the opportunity for improved collaboration

and communication among key partners (particularly between their schools and SAIT) and, like the other stakeholders, noted issues with transportation between the various sites.

Students and stakeholders also identified ways of improving the program going forward, including making sure the coursework was rigorous but achievable; that protocols were in place to allow non-certified individuals to teach the course; and to find a way to build a solid financial model given the course fee requirements of some elements of the program (the pilot grant covered all fees, but will not be an ongoing source of support).

### Conclusion

After years of planning and preparation, all parties considered the program to be a success in terms of both process (planning and implementation among various collaborators) and outcomes, and agreed that the program structure could serve as a model for similar programs in other fields. As the program goes forward and the initial grant is exhausted, there is discussion of finding ongoing support from industry to continue the program, given the workforce needs faced by those in the field.

## Two Year Financial Report - Budget vs. Actual

	Year 1: 2007-08		Year 1: 2008-09		Total Budget	Total Spent	Variance
	Budget	Spent	Budget	Spent			
<b>Project Development</b>							
Project Planning <sup>1</sup>	\$16,000	10,914	16,000	35,683	32,000	46,597	(14,597)
Marketing and Promotion <sup>2</sup>	5,000	4,107	0	24,950	5,000	29,057	(24,057)
Travel	4,000	791	1,000	0	5,000	791	4,209
Program Evaluation	10,500	900	10,500	9,110	21,000	10,101	10,990
Subtotal	35,500	16,712	27,500	69,743	63,000	86,455	(23,455)
<b>Curriculum Development</b>							
Curriculum Development <sup>3</sup>	\$34,182	11,893	0	0	34,182	11,893	22,289
Subtotal	34,182	11,893	0	0	34,182	11,893	22,289
<b>Program Delivery</b>							
Instruction	\$25,814	21,607	60,000	60,596	85,814	82,203	3,611
Texts and Modules	5,000	2,624	5,000	3,808	10,000	6,432	3,568
Supplies	1,000	0	1,000	555	2,000	555	1,445
Photocopying	2,000	1,096	2,000	2,542	4,000	3,638	362
Transportation	8,000	0	8,000	0	8,000	0	8,000
Subtotal	33,814	25,327	76,000	67,501	109,814	92,828	16,986
Total	\$103,496	53,932	103,500	137,244	206,996	191,176	15,820
SAIT Overhead (20%)	20,699	10,786	20,700	27,449	41,399	38,235	3,164
Contingency Fund (3%)	3,104	0	3,105	0	6,209	0	6,209
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$127,300</b>	<b>64,718</b>	<b>127,305</b>	<b>164,693</b>	<b>254,605</b>	<b>229,411</b>	<b>25,193</b>

#### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Additional planning and logistics efforts were needed in Year 2

<sup>2</sup> Costs in Year 2 primarily reflect recognition efforts for graduating students

<sup>3</sup> Curriculum was substantially aided by in-kind contributions