Creating a Successful School/Business Partnership: A Guide for Schools and Businesses
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Importance of School and Business Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Vital Components of a Successful School / Business Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Guidance for School Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Guidance for Business Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Get Help in Your Efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Partnerships Focused on Getting Baltimore City School Students College and Career Ready</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Click [here](#) for a Checklist for a Successful School and Business Partnership

Table of Contents

*Content from this guide was adapted from "Guiding Principles for Business and School Partnerships" published by the Council for Corporate & School Partnerships.*
The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) has been a strong supporter of quality educational opportunities in Baltimore City and the Baltimore region. Past efforts have included the creation of an internship guide for businesses, active involvement in funding efforts for city schools, and oversight of school partnerships.

One of the GBC’s pillars of economic development states that a necessary component is a “Workforce that is highly-educated and meets Maryland’s business needs. Maryland’s secondary and higher education institutions must offer access to quality instruction at all levels and cultivate a workforce that is well-suited to a modern economy and to the specific needs of Maryland’s business sectors.” The GBC remains committed to advocating for policies that improve education, as well as to provide direct assistance to ensure quality education for our region’s students, through GBC and business involvement.

GBC President and CEO Donald C. Fry and Baltimore City Public Schools CEO Dr. Sonja Santelises are working to find ways the GBC and Baltimore’s business community can support city schools and students. One aspect of this work is to support and nurture partnerships between businesses and city schools.

Successful school/business partnerships take work, clearly communicated roles and outcomes, and commitment to ongoing communication and follow-up. To assist in building effective partnerships, the GBC’s Education and Workforce Committee produced a partnership guide, to provide guidance and best practices to both school-based partners and business partners in how to create and sustain successful School/Business partnerships.

In addition to the information in this guide, a checklist of steps to follow when creating a partnership can be found here.
School and business partnerships are more important than ever in today's rapidly changing economy.

Research has shown that there is an emerging gap in community and family based support for schools. Communities are finding it more difficult to support schools without the help of outside groups. As a result, there is a need for other volunteers to augment the work done by school teachers and staff. Businesses can help to fill this gap.

In addition, students benefit from exposure to working professionals, particularly ones who are from similar backgrounds. School/business partnerships give businesses the ability to showcase their business to students and families, as well as to expose students to their industry. Finally, students can highlight their academic achievement and how their learning and skills match with future business needs.

Many students can benefit from meeting and interacting with professionals in careers that might be of interest to them. Early and frequent exposure to varying careers can transform student perception regarding possible career options. This student exposure to career opportunities can help feed the pipeline for these careers. Businesses are able to assist through mentorship, in-school presentations, job shadow field trips, and internship and apprenticeship opportunities.

School/business partnerships help a business to build brand awareness, cultivate their future workforce, have the opportunity to advise on curricular areas of focus and instruction through increased participation, and invest in the overall workforce ecosystem.
An agreement document can be invaluable in setting the table for a successful partnership. This document should include the specific goals and expectations for the partnership. Is this an ongoing partnership? A one-time event? An annual event? Ideally, these would line up with the strategic goals of each partner.

Details regarding specific responsibilities of each partner should be outlined. Plan should identify individuals within each partner organization who are responsible for ensuring completion of various tasks and steps.

While it is not necessary for the school principal and top leader of the business to be the organizational contacts for the partnership, these individuals should be aware of and committed to the partnership and its outcomes. It is also helpful if, in ongoing partnerships, these organizational leaders participate in a yearly planning meeting.

The broader school community, including faculty and staff, as well as the business’s employees should also understand the importance of the partnership and be aware of leadership’s commitment.

### Vital Components of a Successful School/Business Partnership

A **foundation with core values and expectations outlined in an agreement**

- An agreement document can be invaluable in setting the table for a successful partnership. This document should include the specific goals and expectations for the partnership. Is this an ongoing partnership? A one-time event? An annual event? Ideally, these would line up with the strategic goals of each partner.

An **implementation plan with a clear management process and structure with specific measurable outcomes**

- Details regarding specific responsibilities of each partner should be outlined.
- Plan should identify individuals within each partner organization who are responsible for ensuring completion of various tasks and steps.

**Plan must promote continuity of the program with support from the highest levels within the business and school, and have concurrence at all levels**

- While it is not necessary for the school principal and top leader of the business to be the organizational contacts for the partnership, these individuals should be aware of and committed to the partnership and its outcomes. It is also helpful if, in ongoing partnerships, these organizational leaders participate in a yearly planning meeting.
- The broader school community, including faculty and staff, as well as the business’s employees should also understand the importance of the partnership and be aware of leadership’s commitment.
Regular evaluation of partnership, determining strengths, weaknesses, and future direction
- Evaluation metrics should be determined ahead of time. Metrics should be specific and easily measurable.
- A time frame for evaluation should be set.
- The partners' commitment to the evaluation is essential.

Expectations of each partner must be clear and part of a written agreement or plan
- How often are the partners planning to meet or communicate?
- Who is responsible for following up on expected actions?
- What are the milestones each partner is expected to meet?
- What is the final result expected of the partnership?

Each partner must identify a key contact or coordinator to ensure that communication lines stay open and predictable
- All partners interviewed for this project stressed the importance of good communication between partners.
- Several mentioned that it can be helpful to have more than one contact involved, even if that person is not the key contact, in order to prevent problems if there are personnel changes.

Partners must understand the other partner’s motivations and interests
- Business leaders should ensure that school leaders fully understand the business’s motives for participating in the partnership, whether it be name recognition for a local restaurant, building a pipeline for future employees, or part of a community involvement goal of the business.
- School leaders must ensure that the business partner understands its goals for participating in the partnership, helping to ensure that offers of assistance align with the needs of the school.
Examine school plan to determine where a partnership could assist in filling gaps

Possible asks:
- In-school lectures, job shadowing and internships, mentors and role models for students
- Work-based experiences and mentors for teachers
- Help setting goals or creating/integrating curriculum
- Assistance in meeting student needs beyond the classroom: counseling, personal development, work appropriate clothing for interns
- Help secure equipment, resources and funds
- Help with recognizing partners, parents, and staff for their efforts

Make potential partners aware of your needs
- Designate one person to be responsible for interacting on partnership issues.
- Businesses are not aware of your school’s specific needs. Many businesses may reach out to your school wanting to do something, but don't know what would be helpful. Consider having an agreed upon list of possible partnership activities that align with your School Improvement Plan.
- Consider holding regular meetings of all school partners and potential partners to discuss upcoming needs of the school. This can help prevent overlap or duplicity in partnership offerings.
- Make sure to post your needs on the Baltimore City Public Schools' Partners in Education Portal. Businesses should be directed to this database to find schools with needs that could be met by partners.
Guidance for School Leaders

Understand the Business Perspective
- Business leaders value data and metrics. Work with them to determine how to best evaluate a project or partnership so that the business can appropriately evaluate the results of their involvement.
- Businesses often desire to publicize their volunteer and community activities. Work to ensure that the school is recognizing businesses for their assistance, and make sure that businesses understand how to appropriately publicize their partnership contributions without violating student privacy laws.
- Businesses appreciate having a direct contact who is readily available to answer questions and make decisions. Make certain that your designated contact has sufficient time to make partnership activity a priority.

Work with the District’s Career and College Readiness (CCR) department for partnerships related to job shadowing, guest speakers, and more
- For assistance, contact Adenike Akintilo at aakintilo@bcps.k12.md.us or call the CCR main office at 443-642-3928.
- See page 11 for more details on the CCR department’s work.
Determine the resources that you could offer a school. Resources can vary, and all types of assistance are needed by different schools

- **Possible offers:**
  - Your employees’ time as part of a volunteer service day
  - Mentoring support
  - Training / workshops for parents or staff in your area of expertise
  - Funds for a specific school project
  - Career related activity
    - Job shadowing opportunities at your place of business
    - Providing speakers for career days and other events highlighting your industry
    - Providing opportunities for high school students to apprentice or intern

**Understand your own motivations and goals for participating in a partnership**

- Goals for a partnership can vary.
  - Expand the name recognition of your business
  - Supporting your community school to create a stronger community
  - Spark the interest of young students to pursue a particular career upon graduation
- Whatever your goal, it is important to understand it so that you can clearly share your goals with your school partner.
Principals and school staff are being asked to do more and more all the time. Understand that the school staff may have limited time to help a potential business partner figure out what to do as a partner. Come to the table with ideas of what you would like to offer to the school. Realize that not all offers of assistance might be accepted by a school, as it may not line up with the school’s improvement plan and current needs. Rejection of an offer is not a sign that a school is ungrateful for the offer, it likely means the offer does not meet the school's current needs.

Baltimore City Public Schools has created the Partners in Education Portal for both schools and potential partners to register, to make finding a match easier for both partners. City Schools are being encouraged to post their needs on the Partners in Education Portal. This will give you an idea of schools that have needs that could be met through a school and business partnership that your business would be interested in pursuing.

For assistance, contact Adenike Akintilo at aakintilo@bcps.k12.md.us or call the CCR main office at 443-642-3928. See page 11 for more details on the CCR department’s work.
Get Help in Your Efforts

City Schools’ Website - [https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/partners](https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/partners)
- The Partners in Education (PIE) Portal is the platform City Schools uses to track partnerships and connect local organizations with schools.
- The School website also has information on how to provide in-kind donations.
- The staff in the Engagement Department is ready to assist you in any way they can. Contact them at 410-545-1870 or engagement@bcps.k12.md.us.

For Work-Based Learning partnerships, contact the College and Career Readiness department.
- Adenike Akintilo, Manager of Work-Based Learning at aakintilo@bcps.k12.md.us.
- CCR main office: 443-642-3928.

The Fund for Educational Excellence is the school system’s partner foundation.
- Contact them for more information on how to provide funding for general or specific needs.
  - Website: [www.fee.org](http://www.fee.org)
  - Phone: 410-685-8300
  - Email: info@ffee.org
  - Contact Roger Schulman, President and Chief Executive Officer, rogers@ffee.org.

The Y of Central Maryland coordinates both individual and business school partnership opportunities, particularly around mentoring.
- Contact by email: mentoring@ymaryland.org.

Business Volunteers Maryland (BVM) supports regional companies in making their community engagement strategic, easy, impactful and rewarding.
- Contact BVM to discuss how they can develop and manage a partnership or service event with a community organization that meets your needs.
- Visit [www.businessvolunteersmd.org](http://www.businessvolunteersmd.org) to learn more about the programs and services available to companies and professionals.
- Email info@businessvolunteersmd.org, call 410-366-6030, or contact Julie Kernan, President and Chief Executive Officer, jkernan@businessvolunteersmd.org.

The Greater Baltimore Committee Education and Workforce Committee
- Contact Teresa Milio Birge, Senior Policy Analyst and Special Assistant: teresab@gbc.org or 410-727-2820 ext. 19.
- A Checklist for a Successful School / Business Partnership can be found on the GBC website [here](https://www.greaterbaltimorecommittee.org/education-and-workforce-committee/).
Partnerships Focused on Getting Baltimore City School Students College and Career Ready!

The goal of the Baltimore City Schools’ department of College and Career Readiness (CCR) is to ensure that Baltimore City Schools’ students graduate and pursue well-matched post secondary options aligned to college, career, and citizenship through investments in: student plans, college and career knowledge, work based learning, and caring adults.

The department’s work and success are measured on:

- Student enrollment, completion, and industry certification along the various career and technical education (CTE) pathways;
- Post-graduation employment in high wage, high demand careers;
- Student post-secondary enrollment rates; and high school dual enrollment and college credit obtainment;
- The District’s high school graduation rates; and
- The number and quality of work-based learning opportunities a student experiences

Ways to partner with CCR include, but not limited to:

- Guest speaking
- Job shadowing
- Career coaching
- Informational interviews
- Career profiles
- Company tours
- Internship
- Pre-Apprenticeship
- Resources and support for CTE pathways

For more information on how to partner with the CCR department and its work that supports the success of Baltimore City School students, please contact Adenike Akintilo at aakintilo@bcps.k12.md.us or call the CCR main office at 443-642-3928.
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

Regional business leaders creating a better tomorrow...today.

www.gbc.org