

Questions to consider on Partnerships

If you are in the market for a school-business partnership or find that existing partnership initiatives are in need of revision or renewal then the partnership may simply be lacking a long term perspective. The following are points to consider when you either initiate the program or want to rejuvenate an existing one.

Are there tangible or measurable benefits to both the school and to the business?

In order for there to be credibility within the program there should be accountability on the benefit for both parties.

Is the school-business partnership directly related to the goals of both organizations?

Since the nature of the program has the potential for an important impact on the quality of education, it is important for all partners to be very clear about the goal of their participation within the partnership. To accomplish this, all staff members from the potential partners should be educated as to the philosophy and desired objectives of the relationship.

The key to success is the internal support. Staff members are vital in the partnership. Staff should be encouraged to share information about their own contacts within the community which may benefit the school-business partnership. Everyone should be aware of positive impact the program will have on the education of the learners. The staff should also feel as if they are an integral resource and have a responsibility for improving services of the future.

Does the school-business partnership clearly state the responsibilities of each party and is there a designated person on each side to chair a partnership planning committee?

One of the keys to success is to plan an outline of the responsibilities of each partner and to designate a specific time frame in which to meet the objectives. There should be a dependable individual in charge of the partnership committee who over-see the intended programs. The partnership committee should have representatives from many departments in order to make the whole school aware of the initiatives.

Does the school-business partnership include a program evaluation which measures whether the agreed upon objectives are being achieved.

In order to assess the gains and advancement of the programs, a close examination of the intended outcomes needs to be carried out by the planning committee.

Further questions for both the school and the business organization to consider when planning and implementing programs:

- What percentage of young people in your high school (or in the neighbouring high school if the question is being posed for an elementary school) graduate with a high school diploma?

- What special programs, support groups or community services exist to serve the potential school dropouts or learners in need of other support services?
- What kinds of linkages exist between school programs and supplemental training, remediation, employment, and other programs?
- Job opportunities can be a vital link in keeping learners in school until graduation. Are there summer jobs, opportunities to do co-op work experience to help potential graduates in finding career-path jobs?
- How do the students in the school learn about available job opportunities and volunteer programs in the community?
- How is the company currently involved with schools already?
- Which are the largest employers in your labour market area, and what types of occupations are most in demand?
- What other businesses or organizations are involved with the school?
- Whose support do we need?
- Who should be involved?