

What is a Partnership?

A partnership is a mutually supportive arrangement between a school or school board and a large or small local business, post-secondary institution, government department or community agency. Its main purpose for establishment is to benefit learners, though it is a given that both partnering organizations can and should benefit from the association.

Partnerships can involve additional dollars to education, but business employees can also serve as mentors, guest lecturers, cooperative education supervisors, objects of job shadowing, tutors, directors of research projects, etc. Business can donate equipment as it is being upgraded or allow learners access to state-of-the-art equipment in the business facility. School employee time is often spent working with learners to produce music or drama shows; printing; photography; video; catering services or art displays. Teachers can provide academic upgrading and English language instruction for partner employees and the school facilities can be made available for partner employee recreation or social events.

All endeavors of this magnitude take a great deal of hard work on the part of many committed people. Ownership of the partnership must occur by both the business and education employees. It must be a bottom-up type of initiative with acceptance by upper management. Only when both sides agree to the concept can true benefits accrue to the learner and the partnering organizations.

Partnerships may differ greatly in size and commitment. Only one or two learners may be involved in a partnership that requires minimal time allotment by either party. Some partnerships may involve hundreds of learners in multiple events that require a very large commitment by both parties. Some partnerships are formalized by written agreements; others are informal and based upon trust. Whatever the extent of the partnership, it is essential that both partners agree to the goals and objectives and how the arrangement will come to fruition.

"The Etobicoke Board of Education is hereby acknowledged and thanked as the source of the foregoing material."