

COMMON GOALS UNIQUE STRENGTHS

EDUCATION AND BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS



Corporate Voices for Working Families (Corporate Voices) and the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) are working together to help communities build broader partnerships across the public and private sectors. Collaboration between business and education better ensures that students graduate high school equipped with the skills necessary to thrive in the workplace, post-secondary education and life. In this brief, Corporate Voices and AASA highlight the benefits of these partnerships, tips for engaging educators and business leaders, and a case study illustrating these partnerships in action.

Educators and business leaders share common goals and challenges.

Education and business leaders should create meaningful, successful and long lasting partnerships to ensure that all youth are ready for college, work and life. Corporate Voices and AASA are working with the Ready by 21® National Partnership to implement Ready by 21 in communities across the country. Ready by 21 is a set of strategies that helps communities take a broad approach to looking at systems change, challenges leaders to look across the age range from birth to young adulthood, and involves all sectors including schools, business, youth development and others in a collaborative approach.



MISSION CRITICAL - WHY PARTNER?

Educators and business leaders share common goals and challenges; both manage large, complex operations and want to ensure that students graduate high school prepared with the skills necessary to succeed in the workplace or in further educational opportunities. Working together, schools and businesses can achieve more than they can on their own. These partnerships:

- ◆ **Increase labor market opportunities** for student engagement/growth through internships, jobs and hands-on opportunities for learning.
- ◆ **Create strong private and public advocacy teams** to drive initiatives in the community that impact the local economic outlook.
- ◆ **Produce a more skilled and better prepared workforce** that enhances economic stability and growth.
- ◆ **Generate positive publicity and brand awareness** for both entities through success of the partnership and improved outcomes.
- ◆ **Establish additional funding streams** for schools and programs, including in-kind contributions.
- ◆ **Expand corporate citizenship engagement:** by providing volunteer opportunities to their employees, businesses can increase employee motivation and retention rates and provide professional development while also providing a dedicated and skilled volunteer base for schools.

SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS AND EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

Chattanooga: Principal Leadership Academy

Since 2006, Hamilton County Schools Superintendent Dr. Jim Scales envisioned establishing a Principal Leadership Academy. He stated, "Being a principal is an incredibly demanding job, and we need to give new principals every tool available to be successful in that role."¹ In establishing the academy, he brought together four main partners: The Hamilton County Department of Education, the Public Education Foundation, the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. The Principal Leadership Academy was established in March 2010 as the first of its kind for Hamilton County schools.

Scales was able to engage the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce and diverse business leaders in this effort because these individuals know that creating and supporting successful and dynamic leaders in schools produces students who are better prepared for college, work and life. Local business leaders have a defined role in this partnership: they serve as mentors to the principals, help develop the curriculum and participate financially.

"A school principal is much like a CEO of a business," said UNUM's Bob Best, chief operating officer for the Chattanooga-based employee benefits provider, and a member of the Chamber of Commerce. "He or she must have a clear vision for success and the skills and preparation to make that vision a reality. If we want strong schools, we must have strong school leaders."²

Through this partnership, principals form business relationships, receive professional development and management courses and become more confident leaders. Effective school leaders shape and improve schools which generate increases in student achievement and ultimately, a more skilled workforce.

For more information on Chattanooga, please visit:

Hamilton County Department of Education
<http://www.hcde.org>

Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce
<http://www.chattanooga-chamber.com>

¹ Collier, Aaron. *School District and Businesses to Train Aspiring Principals*. *Chattarati Chattanooga News and Opinion*. 4 March 2010. <http://chattarati.com/metro/education/2010/3/4/community-business-partners-help-deliver-principal/>.

² *Chattanooga News Channel 9*. *Unum Gives \$100,000 to Principal Leadership Academy*. 4 March 2010. www.newschannel9.com/articles/principal-989270-academy-leadership.html.

WHAT EDUCATORS LOOK FOR FROM BUSINESS LEADERS

◇ Find a point of entry.

'Meeting leaders where they are' is a core underlying principle of Ready by 21. Experience suggests that business leaders will be more successful partners with schools if they understand the school system's stated goals and find a common theme on which to collaborate.

◇ Begin by developing a relationship.

Building relationships through coordinating councils, networks, community structures, or through personal connections makes partnering and collaborating easier.

◇ Understand that the education culture is different from the culture of business or community organizations.

No individual can commit an entire school or district to one activity. While, buy-in from superintendents is critical to success, working with other administrators and school principals allows the project to flourish in meaningful ways. Having broader buy-in also helps ensure sustainability.

"The fact of the matter is that this requires a community effort. Not just the school's effort, not the YMCA's effort, not the United Way's effort, not the businesses' and corporations' effort. A joint effort that everybody agrees on is necessary for success."

– Daniel Domenech,
Executive Director, AASA

◇ Prepare a written plan that clearly states the partnership's vision, mission and direction.

All leaders are pressed for time. Prepare a proposal of the partnership's vision, mission and direction that enables leaders to join with confidence and sets the tone for a positive partnership.

◇ Embrace accountability.

Public schools, like companies, are held to a high standard of accountability and will expect partnerships to meet that standard of tracking dollars, progress and outcomes.

WHAT BUSINESS LEADERS LOOK FOR FROM EDUCATORS

◇ **Understand the business landscape and need.**

Research local businesses in the area and ascertain the best way to engage with their corporate citizenship, philanthropic or other programs. Successfully engaged businesses are often motivated by a business need - either to support their current workforce or to seed their workforce for the future. Make the case for business engagement across the education and workforce readiness pipeline from cradle to career.

“Business and educators today face a unique opportunity to form sustainable partnerships for the future. These partnerships will define the future workforce and our future economic competitiveness as a nation. They are key building blocks to improving the capacity of schools and the workforce for success in the 21st century.”

- *Stephen Wing,*
President, Corporate Voices

◇ **Have a concrete ask.**

Business leaders need layered, specific asks. In other words, be prepared with a list of requests ranging from more intense engagement to some small first steps, such as volunteerism and service. Approaching the first meeting with layered asks improves the odds that you will leave the meeting with a “yes.” Based on your research, ensure that the ask is appropriate for the business leader you are meeting with and his/her company.

◇ **Clarify roles and deliverables.**

Like educators, business leaders want to enter a partnership where there is a firm definition of roles, goals, a timeline is set and deliverables are met. It is important to incrementally measure progress to show the business leaders their return on investment. Plan ahead and stay in communication when building and sustaining the relationship.

◇ **Provide understandable data.**

While partnering, business leaders expect a defined plan with a list of goals and quantifiable outcomes. They want data in “snapshots” to confirm proof points and measure success. They expect data to be easily accessible and want case studies/stories that make the work personal and understandable to their company and the general public.

◇ **Appreciate business leaders.**

Show appreciation for business leaders’ contributions to the partnership both privately and publicly, i.e. in a recognition event, program or award. This will help provide publicity for the work and the partnership.

Common Themes for Engaging Both Educators and Business Leaders

◇ **Understand Each Other’s Goals.**

Educators and business leaders both expect potential partners to have a thorough understanding of their distinct view points and bottom-line needs.

◇ **Small First Steps Lead to Sustainable Partnerships.**

When first approaching a business leader or educator provide a range of opportunities for involvement. Building upon these successful opportunities is important for sustaining relationships.

◇ **Mutual Ownership and Defined Roles and Outcomes are Key.**

Ensure that defined roles and deliverables of the partnership are set up immediately with accountability defined and measures and outcomes set. It is important that both partners have mutual ownership of the overall vision.

LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION?

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The American Association of School Administrators (AASA), founded in 1865, is the leading professional organization for educational leaders in the United States and throughout the world. The American Association of School Administrators' mission - to support and develop effective school system leaders who are dedicated to the highest quality public education for all children - speaks to the core of what Ready by 21 is about. AASA and the Ready by 21 National Partnership assist school system leaders in creating sustainable partnerships to improve youth outcomes across a range of measures. AASA and Ready by 21 are developing tools and resources to aid school districts and communities striving to improve academic achievement, increase attendance and graduation rates, expand family involvement, and advance overall student engagement and well-being. AASA's approximately 13,000 individual members, 49 state affiliates, and Canadian and international units, give AASA a broad cohesive network to impact local, state, and national education policy and practice.



www.corporatevoices.org

Corporate Voices for Working Families is the leading national business membership organization representing the private sector on public and corporate policy issues involving working families. A nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, we improve the lives of working families by developing and advancing innovative policies that reflect collaboration among the private sector, government and other stakeholders. To create bipartisan support for issues affecting working families, we facilitate research in areas spotlighting the intersecting interests of business, community and families: workforce readiness, family economic stability, flexibility in the workplace, and work and family balance. Corporate Voices and the Ready by 21 National Partnership is working with business leaders to activate the workforce pipeline to drive business sustainability, ensure global competitiveness and to uplift the standard of living for working families. Collectively our 50 partner companies, with annual net revenues of more than \$1 trillion, employ more than 4 million individuals throughout all 50 states.



www.readyby21.org

Ready by 21 is a set of innovative leadership capacity-building strategies developed by the Forum for Youth Investment. The national experts at the Forum have decades of youth policy experience which they leveraged to make the Ready by 21 strategy the most effective way to help communities improve the odds that all youth will be ready for college, work and life. The Ready by 21 strategy recognizes that effective leadership is the critical lever to improving health, educational and social outcomes for children and youth. The Ready by 21 strategy is flexible enough to meet leaders where they are and helps focus them on goals and the systems needing to be addressed; challenges them to create a shared vision and agenda; helps leaders build broader partnerships, set bigger goals, use better data and implement bolder strategies, and asks how all stakeholders, including youth, can deliver solutions.