



## **PRINCIPAL'S TOOLKIT FOR BUILDING SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS**

**From Austin Partners in Education  
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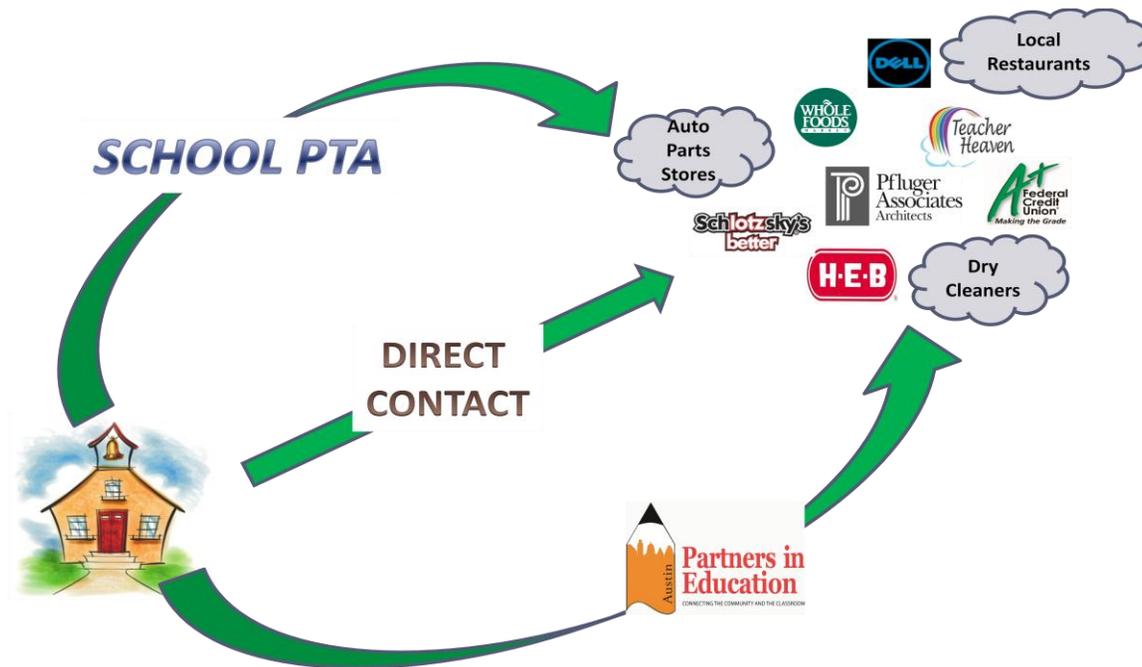
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## Introduction

Building robust relationships with community organizations to help fill gaps in human and capital resource needs has become a critical factor in developing the full educational potential of a school. Bringing together community partners, whether they are local businesses, community organizations or individuals, helps foster a greater understanding of the needs and challenges of the school community, strengthens programs and deepens the investment in community transformation.

The Principal's Toolkit for Building Sustainable Partnerships provides guidelines, ideas and examples that can be used to start or strengthen your partnership programs. Additional assistance is available through your school's PTA/PTO organization or through Austin Partners in Education at [www.austinpartners.org](http://www.austinpartners.org).



## *Establishing Your Partnering Platform*

Perhaps the single most important thing you can do to attract community partners is have a vision for where you want to go. When we can clearly articulate the outcome we are trying to create, then it is easier for people to choose to follow. The following tools are designed to help you organize and communicate what is unique and compelling about your school.

- Use the Resource Planning Guide to organize information from multiple sources and identify highest priority needs
- Use the School Fact Sheet Template to summarize your profile and needs and communicate your goals

## RESOURCE PLANNING GUIDE

**Instructions:** This Planning Guide is designed to help you easily organize information from multiple sources and identify high priority resource needs. This information can then be used to create a one page School Fact Sheet, which can be used with prospective Partners. You will need to refer to the following documents to complete this Planning Guide:

- School Calendar
- Schedule of PTA meetings and events (recognitions, carnivals, etc.)
- Campus Improvement Plan
- BTO
- Needs Assessment

**Step 1:** Review your school calendar and schedule of PTA activities to identify major events that require resources not normally included in your budget, e.g., staff appreciation events, science or other fairs, etc. List key events in Box 1 below.

**Step 2:** Review your Campus Improvement Plan, BTO and/or other needs assessments to identify your campus priorities for the next school year. Examples include: strengthen campus climate with strategies to drive positive behavior/relationships in classrooms and common areas; increase parental involvement on the campus; etc. List up to five priorities in Box 2 below.

**Step 3:** From your list of key events and high priority initiatives, list the areas that are most under-resourced (time, talent, funding, equipment, etc.).

**Step 4:** From Step 3, identify up to three goals that you would like to focus on. Be sure to list your objectives in terms of the outcomes you would like to achieve instead of a “shopping list” of tangible resources you might secure:

Desired Outcomes (example)	Shopping List (example)
Goal 1: Improved staff morale	Goal 1: Pizzas for a teacher luncheon

**Step 5:** Transfer your top three – five goals to your one page School Fact Sheet

## RESOURCE PLANNING GUIDE

1.

Review your school calendar/PTA schedule and identify key events that you would like resources/assistance with:

1. ...
2. ...
3. ...
4. ...
5. ...
6. ...

3.

From the preceding lists, which events and initiatives are most under-resourced?

1. ...
2. ...
3. ...
4. ...
5. ...

2.

Review your current Campus Improvement Plan, BTO and/or other needs assessment and identify your top five priorities:

1. ...
2. ...
3. ...
4. ...
5. ...

4.

List your top three goals that you would like to secure a community partner for:

1. ...
2. ...
3. ...

**School Fact Sheet Template**

*School Name*  
*School Address*

**Principal Name:**  
**Partner Coordinator:**  
**Key Contact Number:**

**School Motto:**  
**School Mascot:**

**School Location:**  North  South  
 East  West  
 Central

***About [School Name]:***

<b>Demographics:</b>		<b>Student Diversity:</b>			<b>In School Programs/Curriculum</b>	<b>After School Programs</b>
Total number of students		African American				
Economically disadvantaged students		Asian				
English Language Learners		Hispanic				
Special education students		Native American				
Total number of teachers		White				
Total number of non-teaching staff		Other				

***Area of emphasis for student academic growth (e.g., STEM, ELL, Reading, etc.):***

***Most critical needs:***

1. ...
2. ...
3. ...
4. ...
5. ...



## *Approaching Partners to Ask for Assistance*

Community partners come in many different forms:

<b>Types of Community Partners</b>	
Business/Corporations	Local businesses, national corporations and franchises.
Universities and Educational Institutions	Universities, colleges, technical and vocational schools, and other educational institutions.
Health Care Organizations	Hospitals, health care centers, mental health facilities, health departments, health foundations and associations.
Government and Military Agencies	Fire departments, police departments, chamber of commerce, city council, other local and state government agencies and departments.
National Service and Volunteer Organizations	Rotary Club, Lions Club, Kiwanis Club, YWCA, United Way, Urban League.
Faith Organizations	Churches, mosques, synagogues, other religious organizations and charities.
Senior Citizen Organizations	Nursing homes, senior volunteer and service organizations.
Cultural and Recreational Institutions	Zoos, museums, libraries, recreational centers.
Other Community Organizations	Fraternities, sororities, foundations, neighborhood associations, political, alumni, and local service organizations.
Community Individuals	Individual volunteers from the surrounding school community.

Having partners is about more than getting stuff. It is about building a long-term relationship that can sustain your school community for many years to come. A partnership, by definition must be viewed by both parties as mutually beneficial. An important step in the process is to consider the benefit that the partner will receive from the relationship. These might include:

- Enhanced corporate image
- New customers/customer loyalty
- Improved employee morale and productivity
- Enhanced employee recruitment and retention
- Extended publicity through school website, newsletters, etc.
- Future workforce development

Strategies for attracting partners include:

1. Inviting current partners to participate in new programs
2. Reconnecting with past partners
3. Reaching out to potential new partners

Tips for making the “ask:”

- Identify the person who can make the decision
- Start by describing your vision and priorities
- Be ready to quantify the need:
- Focus on the outcome you are trying to achieve

<b>OK Approach</b>	<b>Better Approach</b>
I want to recognize my administrative team	There are twenty people on the administrative team that I would like to recognize
Can you donate some pizzas for a staff lunch?	What ideas do you have for helping us show appreciation for this team?

## Sample Solicitation Letter (on school's letterhead).

(Insert today's date)

(Insert Contact Name) **MAKE SURE YOU HAVE THE RIGHT NAME OF THE PERSON WHO MANAGES COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

(Insert Company Name)

(Insert Company Address)

Austin, TX (Insert Company Address Zip Code)

Dear **Mr./Miss/Mrs. (Insert Contact Last Name):** **USE A NAME, not DEAR SIR/MADAM**

The mission of **(Insert your School Name)** School is to provide a quality education that focuses on academic and social growth for all our students. Through the Austin Partners in Education Adopt-a-School program, **(Insert Company Name)** can partner with **(Insert your School Name)** to improve student achievement and help our young people meet the challenges of the future.

Your company can partner us in many ways. The number one need our school is (Insert information here). We also have other needs such as providing student incentives, supplies, equipment or by hosting campus beautification projects. Another way your organization can support our students is ct by employees volunteering as mentors one hour per week, adopting a class to provide tutoring support in collaborative study groups or by coordinating a **(Insert Company Name)/(Insert your School name)** volunteer program.

Each partnership we have at **(Insert your School Name)** is unique and based on the needs, objectives and resources of the school and the partner. If **(Insert Company Name)** agrees to partner with **(Insert your School Name)** School, we would develop a relationship that would be beneficial for your company and employees, as well as our students.

Enclosed you will find information on **(Insert your School Name)** School. I will follow up with you by phone on (INSERT A DATE 8-10 DAYS FROM DATE LETTER IS SENT) to discuss our request for **(Insert Company Name)** to become a partner with **(Insert your School Name)**. At that time I will be glad to answer any questions you may have. We would love to have you visit our school and can schedule a tour if desired.

Thank you for taking the time to look over the enclosed information and for considering our request. We hope that **(Insert Company Name)** will agree to become a partner with **(Insert your School Name)** School and join us in our efforts to make Austin known as a learning community.

Sincerely,

## *Effective Engagement Strategies*

Austin is a highly competitive city in the area of fundraising. Companies and individuals are selective about where they invest their donations and grants. Given this environment, it is extremely important that you work to make your Partners' experience meaningful and successful on your campuses. Some actions you can take to ensure a positive on-going relationship include:

- Ensure that all levels of management and administration and staff on both sides of the Partnership are aware of the contributions that are being provided to the school
- Identify a staff member on your campus to act as the Partner Coordinator to act as the point of contact
- Document agreements with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for both campus staff and Partner resources
- Update Partners' frequently about the development and success of the programs they support
- Return Partner calls promptly
- Keep a list of your Partners at the front desk for your office staff as reference in case a Partner visits your campus without an appointment
- Keep updated records of donations and Partner relations
  - a. The APIE Adopt-a-School/Partner Coordinator Center has tools available to assist you

## *Nurturing Your Partner Relationships*

Finding ways to acknowledge, appreciate and promote your campus Partners is key to sustaining a long-term, healthy relationship that will deliver benefits for years to come. Consider these strategies for nurturing your Partner relationships:

- Acknowledge Partners and volunteers in the school newsletter, marquee, bulletin boards, and website
- Encourage Partners to highlight the Partnership in company newsletters or websites
- Offer to showcase your school's choir, band or orchestra at your Partners' events
- Host a Partner Appreciation Breakfasts/Lunches at the beginning, middle and/or end of the school year to recognize Partnerships and meet with potential Partners
- Send Partners invitations to upcoming athletic events, school events and performances.
- Offer to provide student artwork to showcase at the Partners' office
- Encourage school staff and faculty to learn your Partners' names, greet them warmly, and verbally acknowledge their contributions whenever possible
- Send written thank you notes to acknowledge donations (and keep a copy on file)
- Once a year, write each Partner's Chief Executive Officer a personalized thank you letter
- Encourage the PTA and staff to support your Partners' business
- Send Partners pictures of parents and students enjoying the donation (media releases required!)
- Contact the APIE office to receive certificates of recognition and other appreciation material. Please allow 1-2 weeks to receive materials.

## Sample Thank You Letter (on school letterhead)

**(Insert Contact Name) NAME OF PERSON WHO YOU FINALIZED PARTNERSHIP WITH at ORG.**

**(Insert Company Name)**

**(Insert Contact Address)**

**Austin, TX (Insert Address Zip Code)**

Dear **Mr./Miss/Mrs.(Insert Contact Last Name): (USE THE PERSON’S NAME; not DEAR SIR/MADAM)**

On behalf of the students, faculty, staff and administration at **(Insert your School Name)** School, thank you for your commitment to our school through the Adopt-a-School program. Your participation as a partner has enabled us to meet several of our goals for the year, including increasing the level of education for our students.

**(Describe how the company has helped you: through volunteering, in-kind or monetary donation, etc.)** Special thanks to **(Insert Contact Name)** for all of the time **he/she** gives to coordinating the volunteer program for your company. The program would not be as successful as it has been without **her/his** help and support.

**Mr./Miss/Mrs. (Insert Contact Last Name)**, thank you again for partnering with **(Insert your School Name)** School. The contributions from your company and employees make a positive impact on the education of our students. We look forward to continued success through this collaboration!

Sincerely,

**HANDWRITE YOUR SIGNATURE**

*Signature*

**(Insert your Name)**

Partner Contact

**(Insert School Name)** School

**HANDWRITE YOUR SIGNATURE**

*Signature*

**(Insert Principal Name)**

Principal

**(Insert School Name)** School