



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Facing the Education Challenge Together	3
I. The Education Success of Young People Benefits Everyone	8
II. The Need for a More Education- Engaged Business Community	10
III. Key Ways Businesses Can Support Student Achievement in Schools	11
Cultivating a College and Career Culture by Strengthening Students' College Knowledge	12
Helping to Align Teaching and Learning with the Competencies Students Need to Succeed in College and Career	14
Helping to Provide Students with Experiential Learning and Value-Added Guidance Along their Education Path	17
Eliminating the Financial Barriers that Keep High Potential Students from Applying to College	18
IV. Building Effective School- Business Partnerships	19
Conclusion	21

Executive Summary

This report stresses the importance of education-business partnerships as a way to improve the student achievement and college and career readiness of low-income and first-generation high school students.

First, it outlines the reasons we need to reverse the ongoing loss of talent when young people don't complete high school or fail to obtain the rigorous and relevant education they need for success as adults. Second, it discusses the costs if these critical challenges are not successfully addressed. Third, the report provides guidance on ways in which the business and education sectors can and do work together to leverage the power of collective action to improve these outcomes. The engagement of effective business-education partnerships is crucial if we, as a nation, are to work together to achieve positive outcomes for young people, communities, and the economy going forward in the 21st century.

The imperative facing the nation today is to find ways to improve education and learning for all young people and to ensure that no one lacks genuine opportunities to develop the skills and competencies they will need to succeed in higher education and the workplace. Postsecondary education is fast becoming a prerequisite for successful entry into occupations that provide a living wage and the opportunity for upward mobility. Achieving success in broadening young peoples' access to college and a meaningful career will result in sustainable and vibrant communities and a more prosperous nation ready to take on the vexing challenges that will most certainly emerge in the years ahead.

The achievement gaps in the nation's education system are real and challenging. Real progress in improving the pool of talented and motivated young workers with the skills to prosper will largely come from improving the academic success of those that fall lowest on the socio-economic ladder. Research has shown that those at risk are less likely to succeed in high school, fail to bridge the gap from high school to higher education, and, if they make it to college, struggle to move forward to degree completion and into a stable job. This group has traditionally lagged their better-prepared peers, and continues to fall behind even as the value of education rises.

Meeting these challenges head-on and with success requires commitment, innovation, and a willingness on the part of the many who have a stake in the future of the nation's young people to work together for change. The resulting partnerships and collective impact can be transformative. Working together, businesses, schools, nonprofit organizations, and others can change the culture and character of the high school experience and enrich the lives of students. They can strengthen the capacity of schools and educators, and enhance their ability to offer students relevant curricula, tools, and techniques that deepen their engagement with real-world learning. Further, they can bring together diverse community members in ways that foster civic involvement and the application of authentic leadership in support of young peoples' educational achievement.

Partnerships between education and business have consistently shown their value in communities across the nation. They can, for example:

- Provide work-based learning experiences and strengthen career awareness.
- Help schools build success-oriented college and career cultures that empower students.
- Help educators align curriculum and readiness standards with business needs.
- Provide funding and equipment to modernize classrooms, workspaces, and labs.
- Help youth build meaningful relationships with strong role models and mentors.
- Provide financial guidance and advice that lessens affordability as a barrier to college.

The value-potential of a true partnership lies not only in the solutions and activities it can deliver but also the level of commitment and engagement of the stakeholders. Businesses need to see importance and return on their investment, be it the development of a pipeline of well-trained employees, a more stable community for their factory and office, or an opportunity for employees to develop new skills and contacts in the community. It is essential that schools have a clearly defined role for themselves in any alliance and be willing to join together as partners in education to optimize their impact. A common strategic vision is essential to help all parties work to the advantage of students.

As this report clearly highlights, the bottom line for business and education is that partnership and collective action is a powerful formula for improving the chances that more students stay engaged with learning, find meaning in school, and follow a pathway into college and a career. An education-business partnership has the potential to change the life experience of a young person in ways that may not always be measurable, but certainly provide an impact—especially as a means to build and to realize a vision of what is possible in their life through learning.





Facing the Education Challenge Together

Historically in the United States, the path to success for millions of Americans was a high school diploma, a strong work ethic, and a good factory job. Industries absorbed high school graduates, and in some cases even those without a high school degree, into low- or middle-skill jobs that offered a fair chance at upward mobility and family-supporting wages. Today, this is no longer the case.

The chance to secure a stable job and earn a middle class wage has become difficult, if not out of reach, without strong academic training, personal determination, and a college degree. America has become a place in which a “comfort with ideas and abstractions is the passport to a good job [and] in which creativity and innovation are the key to the good life.”¹ It is a time when fewer quality jobs will be available to young people who are not adequately prepared for success in college and who do not complete a postsecondary certificate or degree. As the future unfolds, observes Jamie Merisotis, President/CEO of the Lumina Foundation, “the best paying jobs [will go] to people with a college degree, especially in high demand fields.”²

The Impact of Economic and Education Changes

Over the past several decades, America has been experiencing an unprecedented period of social and economic adjustment. The forces of globalization and astonishing advances in communication and information technology have changed the face of the nation. “In a single generation,” noted President Obama in his 2011 State of the Union Address, “revolutions in technology have transformed the way we live, work, and do business.”³ One result is that in a relatively short period of time, the traditional journey from adolescence to adulthood has become more complex and costly than for any prior generation. The goal of economic self-sufficiency has become a far reach for many today. And none are facing more challenges than young people as they step out of high school and college into a labor market that is highly demanding.

The nation is at a defining crossroads where education and learning are significantly linked to the economic prosperity of the individual and the country. We live in a period of fast-paced and skill-based technological change that places a premium on learning and ingenuity as the paths to economic success and upward mobility, especially for America’s youth. It is a time when the doors to the labor market and to stable, well-paying work are opening widest for those who graduate from high school and move on to success in higher education; who receive rigorous academic training and preparation for both college and career all along their educational pathway; and who can offer employers well-developed knowledge and skill necessary to succeed in the workplace.

In the midst of the far-reaching changes shaping the nation and the new demands placed on higher education and learning, we wrestle with numerous challenges as a country. We face the question of how to maintain our economic leadership in the highly globalized and competitive setting of the 21st century. We struggle with how to ensure our increasingly diverse communities remain strong, safe, and vibrant as a base for both commerce and civic engagement. We also contend with a widening skills gap, in particular in high-growth industries, that demand training in science, technology, mathematics, and engineering. As is well documented, across all sectors of the economy, employers are having an increasingly difficult time finding well-skilled talent to meet their evolving workforce needs and to maintain competitive strength.⁴

BRIDGE TO EMPLOYMENT

The Bridge to Employment (BTE) initiative, sponsored by the Johnson & Johnson company, reaches out to support the academic and economic success of at-risk students from disadvantaged communities. The partnership-based initiative links young people to healthcare fields and draws upon the collaborative efforts of individuals from business, education, and the community to empower students to stay in school and to build an enriching pathway into college and a career.

BTE partnerships include, at a minimum, a local Johnson & Johnson operating company, a high school, a postsecondary institution, and a community-based organization. And each collaborative effort shares a commitment to creating activities, experiences, and opportunities that expose young people to careers in the health industry and encourage them to see the value of learning and its meaning and relevancy to success in their life. Each partnership is established to meet the needs of their local community and thus is different in design and operation.

Some partnerships provide career exploration and work-based learning opportunities, such as job shadowing, internships, and site visits to businesses. Others include mentoring relationships, academic tutoring, financial counseling, standardized test preparation, and career guidance. Partnerships also work to improve student learning and institutional effectiveness by providing professional development and instructional support for educators. In some instances, BTE partners have implemented healthcare-themed academies at high schools and community-based health projects.

www.bridge2employment.org



The Need for College and Career Readiness

Central among these challenges, we confront a situation in which many youth are not developing the skills and competencies they need to be ready for college and a career. Employers are voicing more loudly their concern that the education pipeline in the nation's schools is weakening at a time when their reliance on young people to fill the shoes of retiring baby boomers is growing, along with their need for new and motivated talent to drive innovation.⁵ Educational attainment rates among high school students have stalled in recent years and are projected to remain unchanged over the next decade. Achievement gaps remain troublesomely wide. And a significant number of youth from low-income and minority families, many who would be the first in their families to attend college, continue to underperform academically and fall behind in school or drop out.⁶ At the same time, public schools are struggling to build the capacity that is essential to effectively meet the skill needs of young people and to foster college and career readiness.⁷ Greg Ratliff, Senior Program Officer for Education and Postsecondary at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation explains, "Low college expectations and college knowledge is a big part of what holds back the success of low-income young people."

Across America, innovative and effective learning experiences are happening in schools and communities, and students are successfully making the transition from high school to higher education and to the workforce. Many students are engaged in learning environments that center on the values of academic excellence and engagement. Schools are working diligently, both individually and in partnership with businesses and the nonprofit sector, to provide relevant and rigorous learning opportunities and effective student support. While there are countless encouraging stories, there remain schools, communities, and businesses still grappling to find solutions that will turn around poor performance and move students forward.

America, as a result, continues to struggle with the prospects of many young people being left behind, ill-equipped to participate fully in economic and civic life as the economy and society advance.⁸ The nation also faces further erosion in our standing as a global education leader. We continue to be eclipsed by a growing number of countries that have made significant strides in improving the educational achievement and graduation rates of their young people and thus their economic prospects.

What Lies Ahead

The critical task that remains for America is to ensure that all young people graduate from high school and transition successfully into postsecondary education and training.⁹ And that they have the skills and a strategy in place to complete college with a degree or certificate in hand and

with the competencies they will need to confidently turn their learning success in real-life work environments. It is also essential to ensure they are capable and willing to meet the demands and expectations of employers and to engage in a life of learning that will unlock their potential as adults.

What does it mean for a young person to be prepared for adulthood in the 21st century? It means foremost they must be college or career ready. The foundational knowledge and skills young people need for success in college and in work beyond high school are more sophisticated in today's society. Effective approaches to teaching and learning today are those that integrate the academic rigor of college preparatory coursework with real-world relevance of career and technical education. The crucial goal is to make certain all young people have access to a robust education pathway that they can leverage for success across their lifetime.

The Need for Collective Action

How best to achieve this national goal? There is no one-size-fits-all answer to the question. What is certain, though, is that schools working on their own can no longer meet the increasingly complex learning needs of their students. Times and technology have changed in significant ways, and the notion that a school can go it alone and achieve through isolated impact the type of student outcomes and social change that will move our society forward is outmoded.

Schools remain the centerpiece of the education experience for young people and a critical site of learning and personal growth. However, all those with a stake in the education of our young people must join forces and work together to meet the diverse needs of students, and ensure their lives are rich with the opportunities that come with engagement and relevant learning. Effective education in today's complex and interdependent world is necessarily a collaborative venture that places collective impact above isolated action, and that is best achieved in partnership and through mutually supportive activities.¹⁰ Progress in improving student achievement and in keeping young people in school and learning-engaged will only be made "school-by-school, student-by-student" and within the context of local communities and their culture.¹¹ Conditions today, however, warrant that members of the public and private sectors bring together their talents, their time, and their resources to drive improvement in the achievements of all the nation's youth. They need to work together to develop rigorous and high-quality readiness standards and benchmarks that can guide teaching and learning and ensure that student achievement is aligned with success expectations in higher education and industry.¹²



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They also must work in concert and with greater resolve to help those who need the most assistance to successfully navigate the demands of our challenging socio-economic landscape. This means high schools, school districts, businesses, parents, nonprofit groups, civic leaders, and public agencies need to roll-up their sleeves, work side-by-side, and build true partnerships that will open new avenues to learning and personal development for students and improve their chances for success across their school to career pathway.

All who have a stake in the success of our young people have an obvious and convincing incentive to be actively and collectively engaged in their learning-lives. The heavy lifting required to raise education achievement and create transformative learning experiences calls for shared commitment and collaboration. A willingness to encourage innovation and engage new approaches to teaching and learning that will bridge the divide between school and the real-world demands young people face as they move toward adulthood is a necessity.

Business-Education Partnerships

The case for business-education alliances is so relevant because of the value it can bring to improving student success and opportunity. “Ensuring that all students graduate academically prepared for college, citizenship, and the 21st century workplace,” contends the Business Coalition for Student Achievement, “there is perhaps no greater job the U.S. business community can undertake.”¹³ Such a collaborative working relationship built on a platform of shared values and goals, can have tremendous impact on the effectiveness of educators and on the individual outcomes of students. It can enrich lives and open doors to opportunities and greatly improve the capacity of schools to help young people climb the education ladder toward a meaningful career.¹⁴

There is hope, as the U.S. business community has a long legacy of making strategic investments that improve the education and training of America’s young people.¹⁵ As the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Institute for a Competitive Workforce states, “The business community is the number one consumer of the public education system and therefore must be an involved and engaged stakeholder in the education of America’s children.” And, in our current times of scarce resources and increasingly strained school capacity, their active engagement in the education process is increasingly critical. Business leaders and professionals are uniquely positioned to work with schools to educate, inspire, and engage students while helping to develop the talent pipelines for the workforce of tomorrow. The return on their collaboration with educators has consistently shown to be significant for all parties involved: students benefit, as does the school and the business, as well as the community.

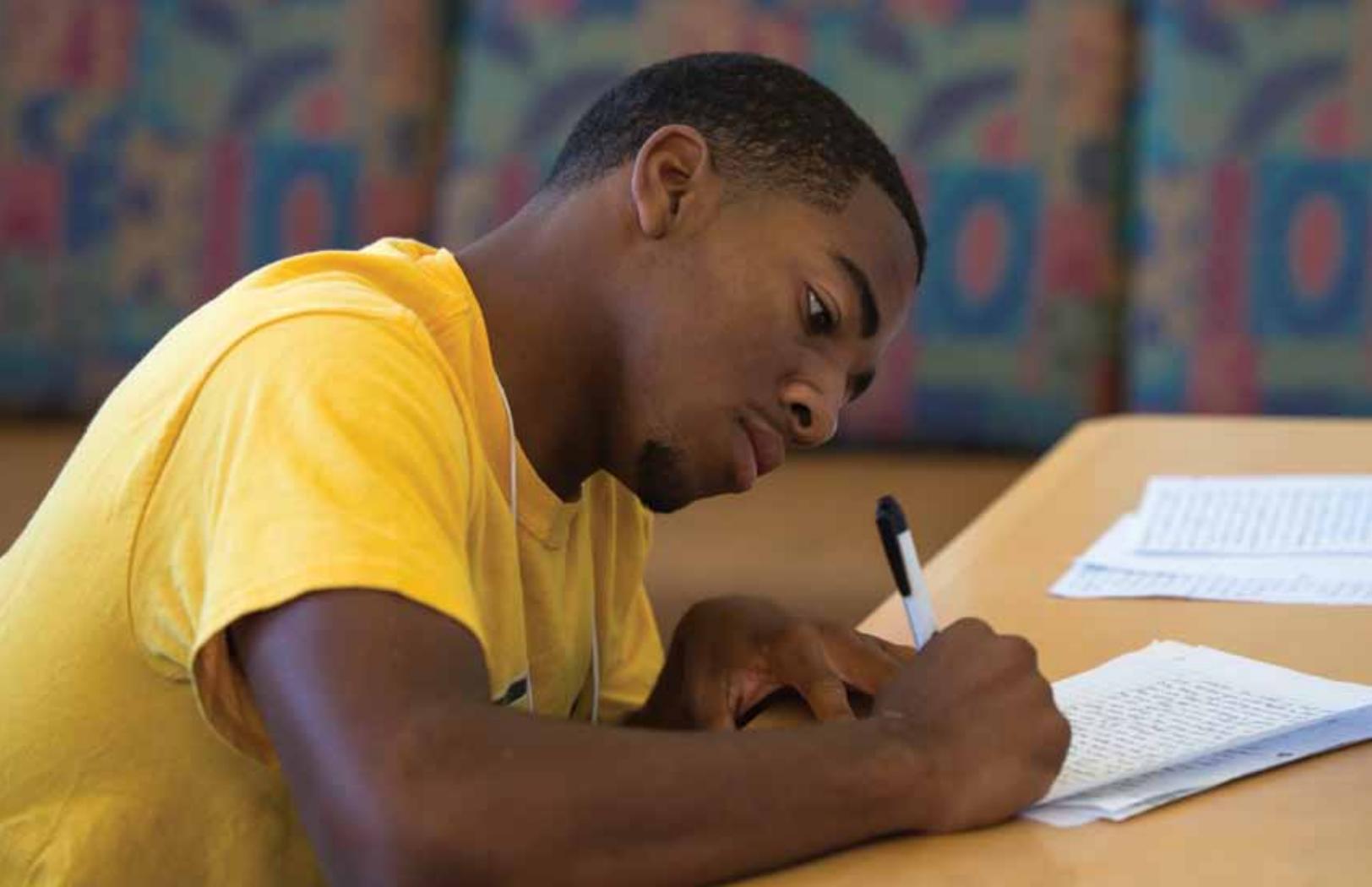
AMGEN-BRUCE WALLACE BIOTECHNOLOGY LAB PROGRAM

The Amgen-Bruce Wallace Biotechnology Lab Program, funded by the Amgen Foundation, the philanthropic organization of Amgen, partners with schools and industry to provide young people the opportunity to experience real-world, inquiry-based science in the classroom setting.

Guided by their teachers and enriched by state-of-the-art resources and materials, students have the opportunity to explore the steps involved in creating biotechnology medicines, discover the challenges and rewards of a genuine laboratory experiences, strengthen their scientific literacy skills, and learn about college and career opportunities in the science fields. The program provides educators with a comprehensive system of classroom and education delivery support. Instructors are provided with a comprehensive experiential-based curriculum, support materials such as student guides and pre-lab notes, resources necessary to implement the curriculum in the classroom setting, and research-grade lab equipment.

The laboratory experiments conducted by students incorporate core technologies used by the biotechnology industry and thus create a highly relevant experience of application, discovery, and learning. Professional development training is available for teachers where they learn from professionals working in the biotechnology field the theory embedded in the program’s curriculum, classroom implementation methods, and current as well as emerging laboratory techniques.

www.bwbiotechprogram.com



I. The Education Success of Young People Benefits Everyone

Young people are a key future source of ingenuity and human capital, and their education success is a valuable asset that companies and communities can leverage to meet their goals well into the future. When students enter the labor market with a strong work ethic, an appreciation for learning, a well-formed base of knowledge and applied skills coupled with the competencies and credentials to be productive and enterprising in the workplace all aspects of society benefit.

Individuals Benefit...

In 21st century America, the labor market favors those who graduate from high school and move on to complete a degree in higher education. In the almost thirty years between 1979 and 2007, real hourly earnings of college-educated workers increased from between 10 to 37 percent. But during the same period, the real earnings of workers with high school or lower educational levels either stagnated or declined significantly.¹⁶ Today, the wage and opportunity gaps relative to level of education are wider. In 2009, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the average earnings for someone with only a high school diploma was \$30,627, compared with \$39,771 for individuals with an Associate's degree, and \$56,665 for a four-year degree.¹⁷

The preference of employers for enterprising, college-educated workers shows no signs of reversing. Net job growth, economic mobility, and job security in the new knowledge-driven economy continues to favor occupations that require at least some postsecondary education. Over the next decade, according to the Center on Education and the Workforce, the proportion of new jobs created across the economy that require at least some postsecondary education and training is estimated to be over sixty percent.¹⁸ And, notes the Alliance for Excellent Education, this number is estimated to increase to ninety percent for occupations that are both high growth and high wage.¹⁹ Even in traditionally blue-collar industries, such as manufacturing, expectations are that entry-level jobs will increasingly require the equivalent of an associate degree.²⁰

Communities Benefit...

Communities prosper when young people succeed. An individual's education and appreciation for learning contributes to the development of strong and stable families and build the groundwork for sustainable neighborhoods. Social institutions flourish when young people have the chance to lead healthy lives, grow intellectually, and reach the milestone of a college degree. Small and large businesses alike endure in stable communities where there is a well-prepared talent pipeline to meet workforce demands, and where schools provide effective environments for learning and personal development.²¹

Conversely, communities and neighborhoods pay a cost when young people fail to acquire the talents and motivation necessary to live a stable and successful life. Pervasively low academic achievement and high dropout rates, as is often found in economically disadvantaged communities, typically lead to numerous challenges that burden community resources. Young people who lack the skills for all but low-wage, disposable jobs provide little tax revenue to support public services and community development and tend to place greater demand on public assistance programs than their better educated and credentialed peers. High school dropouts place significant demands on community resources. They tend to live in poverty, depend heavily on public assistance, have chronically poor health, and be disengaged from civic life.²²

Businesses Benefit...

Businesses depend on a well-educated and adaptable pool of young talent to meet their workforce needs and to maintain stability and growth. Businesses look to young people for the next generation of ingenuity, and future growth. Today's highly competitive and globalized markets require an unprecedented need for a skilled talented pipeline. Industries and labor markets have been transformed by remarkable advances in technology, automation, and improvements in data-driven efficiency and productivity. And the success and sustainability of many industries depends on the ability of small and large companies to access a steady supply of qualified and enterprising young people emerging from America's high schools and colleges.

We are well into an era in which many American companies are having difficulty locating enough highly-skilled workers – from machinists and technicians to robotics specialists and biomedical engineers – to meet their workforce needs. The gap is particularly acute for firms working in the high-growth, high-demand fields of science, technology, and engineering. Research by the McKinsey Global Institute estimates that “under current trends, the United States will not have enough workers with the right education and training to fill the skill profiles of the jobs likely to be created.”²³ This situation is set to intensify as the baby boom generation begins to leave the workforce over the next decade. The long-term and cost-effective solution to addressing the nation's skills gap, and to ensuring that businesses meet the demands of innovation and improvement, is a strong mandate for their education system.



BUSINESSES UNITED IN INVESTING, LENDING AND DEVELOPMENT (BUILD)

BUILD brings together high schools and businesses to support youth entrepreneurship, academic achievement, and college readiness. The organization works with its business and education partners across the country to help students create a path to college and career by leveraging the power found in the real-life experience of launching and operating a small business.

Students enter the program their freshman year in high school when they enroll in BUILD's in-school foundational entrepreneurship class. They meet regularly as a team with their volunteer mentor, who guides them in formulating their business ideas and writing a formal business plan. As sophomores and juniors, students work with their mentors, business coaches, and teammates to launch and operate their micro-enterprises and pitch their business to funders. During this time they also receive regular academic coaching and tutoring, improve their college knowledge by visiting college campuses, and prepare for the SAT/ACT exams. In their senior year, these young entrepreneurs turn their attention more fully to the tasks of college preparation, selection, and admissions, while also continuing to operate and market their business. Academic scholarships are provided to eligible program participants who make the transition from high school to college.

www.build.org

II. The Need for a More Education-Engaged Business Community

In today's society, as notes the McKinsey Global Institute, "there is no greater priority for communities and businesses than building a strong and diverse workforce."²⁴ Such a workforce constitutes the backbone of America's economic development and sustainability. Crucial to both workforce and community development is a quality talent pipeline that brings young people from school to the workplace well-prepared and motivated to meet the skill demands of employers and duties of adulthood.

For businesses and communities of all types, their strength and relative advantage hinges on the ability of young people to fill critical roles and responsibilities. Both need young people who are competent, productive performers, who are engaged and motivated to collaborate with others to achieve key strategic goals—whether this means maintaining a competitive advantage or keeping a community strong.

Business-Education Partnerships Add Value

The rationale for an enhanced role for business in the education process lies in the unique value it can add to the efforts of schools and communities to build a rigorous and relevant education system. The resources, skills, and knowledge businesses, as well as their employees and associations, have to contribute can have broad significance for improving the chances for all young adults to meet and exceed the full potential of their talents and ambitions.

Strategic partnerships between schools and businesses have a tremendous impact on the lives of young people and the effectiveness of schools.²⁵ In short, when businesses and schools collaborate; the partnership generates meaningful improvement in student achievement and promotes innovation across the education process.

Businesses, of course, have long worked with schools, the nonprofit sector, local government and policymakers to improve student achievement and school effectiveness. And, importantly, the business community's involvement in education has grown considerably over the past few decades and now extends into essentially all areas of the American education process.²⁶ Estimates provided by the Council for Corporate and School Partnerships has almost three-quarters of school districts engaged in some form of school-business partnership.²⁷ Corporate giving to education is now close to \$4 billion annually, and growing at an encouraging rate.²⁸

Each year companies and their employees donate tens of thousands of hours of volunteer time to support student achievement and institutional effectiveness. As the breadth of business involvement in education has expanded significantly, so too has the variety of partnership models and types of intervention strategies. The perceived and real value of business engagement also has gained wider recognition and momentum. More educators and community leaders are realizing that conditions today warrant a close working relationship between business and education. Schools, districts, and public education agencies have expanded their dialogue and collaboration with their local businesses.

Those in the business community invested in education understand their role as mutual partners with educators in meeting the nation's goal of building a competitive workforce. Multinational firms, small and mid-size companies, individual professionals, business associations, and nonprofit organizations funded by the business community work with students, educators, and schools to enrich the learning lives of students. These groups understand their social and economic responsibility to invest in building the talent of young people and to help them lay a strong foundation for life-long learning. Many have come to share the observation expressed by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited CEO Barry Salzberg that "The imperative now is for members of the business community to reach further in strengthening the ability of young people and their schools to succeed. The need for a more education-engaged business community has never been greater."

Need for Deeper Engagement

Businesses can be a differentiating factor in fostering student learning, narrowing achievement gaps, and helping schools build capacity to provide effective pathways for youth into college and career. It is essential that businesses work together with schools and nonprofit partners to generate the type of college and career culture that will drive student success if young people are to have meaningful chances to flourish and if businesses are to grow and stay competitive.

III. Key Ways Businesses Can Support Student Achievement in Schools

There are a wide variety of assets that members of the business community can leverage and contribute to support student achievement. Foremost, observes Robert Fukeli, a management Consultant for Deloitte, LLP and a College Summit Volunteer, they have the three keys of "time, talent, and treasure."²⁹ Businesses have the capacity to work together with their school partners across a broad range of mission-critical areas of education and learning. For example:

- providing funding for learning materials and technology to improve the delivery of education and learning support services;
- teaming with educators to define and implement core competencies that students will need to perform well in college and career; and
- leading experiential learning experiences for students that connect the classroom with the real world of an office, a research lab, or a factory floor.



Multiple Models

As might be expected, there is no single framework for a school-business partnership. The design and scope of any partnership, its lifespan and focus, and the specific activities that animate the relationship are as diverse as the needs of the students, schools, and communities that it serves. A business might be a partner in the areas of school policy and practice, working together with schools, teachers, and public officials to shape local or national education agendas or the development of core curriculum standards. A business might be a partner in the classroom, providing technology and materials to support classroom learning, enabling volunteers to work with students to offer learning support or mentoring, or with teachers to design instructional material or lesson plans. A business might also be a management partner, advising school leaders on the design of their strategic plan, undertaking operational improvements, or even assisting in re-visioning the school setting to promote more effective and engaged learning.³⁰

“The next wave of meaningful school reform will involve extensive business involvement. There is a great role for businesses in school reform and supporting the learning of students.”

- JAMIE HARRISON, PRINCIPAL & STRATEGIST, PODESTA GROUP

Cultivating a College and Career Culture by Strengthening Students' College Knowledge

A high school culture that reflects the values and norms of academic excellence, the development of college knowledge, and the goals of higher education and a career is key to student success. Such a setting influences the importance young people attribute to learning and engagement, and it impacts their choices when taking steps toward college preparation, planning, and admission.³¹

Within a high school with a strong college and career culture, educators set early and boldly the goals of higher education and career. The messages and signals sent to students speak to the power of learning and to the milestones of high school graduation, a college credential, and successful entry into a career as marking the path forward into adulthood. Rigorous and relevant teaching and learning, as well as inquiry and accountability characterize the student experience. Importantly, while there are many high schools that provide their students a rich college and career culture within which to learn and grow, there are also a significant number that struggle to deliver the services and experiences necessary to build a pathway into college and career. Across the nation's public school systems there are also many young people who, individually, lack the motivation and skills necessary to embark upon and successfully navigate the processes of college planning, admission, and selection.³²

Specific Ways Business Can Help

There are many avenues through which businesses can work with educators, parents, and students to foster a positive and engaging college-going culture and to help improve young peoples' college knowledge and preparation skills:

- Business leaders and professionals have particular expertise to help high schools improve the rigor and relevancy of their curriculum and education services. They can, for example, work with educators to develop an actionable definition of college and career readiness to frame instruction, curricula, and cultural messaging.
- Business leaders and employees can serve as advisors for designing academic standards and student assessment tools to ensure they reflect real-world learning needs and are aligned with industry-validated standards and competencies.

- Employee volunteers can work with teachers and counselors to help students shape their personal and career goals, and to explore different fields of study in higher education and related careers.
- Members of the business community can help young people build confidence and an appreciation for learning by sponsoring student competitions and exhibits that promote an entrepreneurial spirit and that reward ingenuity, foster engagement, and allow students to demonstrate their subject matter knowledge and team-building skills.
- Employers can strengthen the learning culture and college knowledge by helping schools improve the quality of their core talent base of teachers. Exemplary teaching skills, the scope of instructor knowledge, and the ability to create innovative and relevant learning and support environments all play a transformative role in student success and are key elements of a success-oriented college and career school culture.³³
- Businesses can provide funding, materials, and volunteers for programs to help young people and their families prepare and plan for college and complete college application material. Such programs might be offered during a 'college night' on the high school campus or at a satellite location and include a mix of college preparation courses, information sessions from college representatives, assistance on selecting colleges and programs of study and on understanding basic admissions procedures, and guidance for writing a quality college application essay.

BUSINESS SUPPORTING SCHOOLS THROUGH NONPROFIT COLLABORATION

College Summit is a national nonprofit that works with educators and students at 180 partner high schools in low-income communities to increase the college-going and persistence of students.

College Summit has seen extraordinary success annually helping 50,000 students in grades 9-12 take the steps, learn the skills, and get the support to achieve their dreams of college and career success. Yet the organization was hampered when it came to tracking, measuring, and reporting data on the progress of its partner schools and students because no measurement system for these purposes existed. College Summit recognized that overcoming this operational challenge required highly sophisticated technology and experienced professionals to diagnose the situation, evaluate the options, and determine the right solution.

A Deloitte team of 15 consultants worked alongside College Summit professionals to develop a reporting warehouse that enables them to efficiently measure program success and analyze data to identify the most effective methods for encouraging students to go to college. This pro-bono project is the centerpiece of a larger commitment to the organization that includes a skills-based volunteer program, board service, and capacity-building philanthropy. Cumulatively, Deloitte's support is valued at more than \$2 million.

As a result of the data warehouse, reports that used to require 15 hours to process are now complete in about two and a half hours, allowing College Summit staff to spend less time manipulating data and more time helping educators manage the process more effectively, and ultimately helping low-income students enter college. This is just one example of the many types of reporting that will enable College Summit to better deliver its mission.

The impact on schools and students is tangible and powerful. Deloitte helped College Summit develop a state-of-the-art data reporting system that is one of the nation's most accurate accountings of low-income, post-secondary enrollment trends. College Summit makes this data actionable by sharing it with schools so they can adjust resources, curricula and scheduling to increase college enrollment rates. This data-driven approach allowed College Summit to increase college enrollment rates in partner schools from 15- 20%.

www.taprootfoundation.org/do-probono/corporations/resources-publications/case-studies/deloitte-college-summit

Helping to Align Teaching and Learning with the Competencies Students Need to Succeed in College and Career

Over the course of the past few decades, work settings have evolved into high-tech and information-rich environments. Many occupations now reflect an emphasis on critical and conceptual thinking, problem-solving, knowledge-management, collaboration and teamwork, and the use of advanced information technologies and software. Role definitions also have become more fluid, making adaptability and a broad base of competencies key requisites for quality performance. In short, many of today's jobs require far more than the basic thinking skills and content knowledge that previously framed entry and progress into the labor market. They demand a mastery of a wide range of knowledge, applied skills, attitudes, and behavioral qualities.

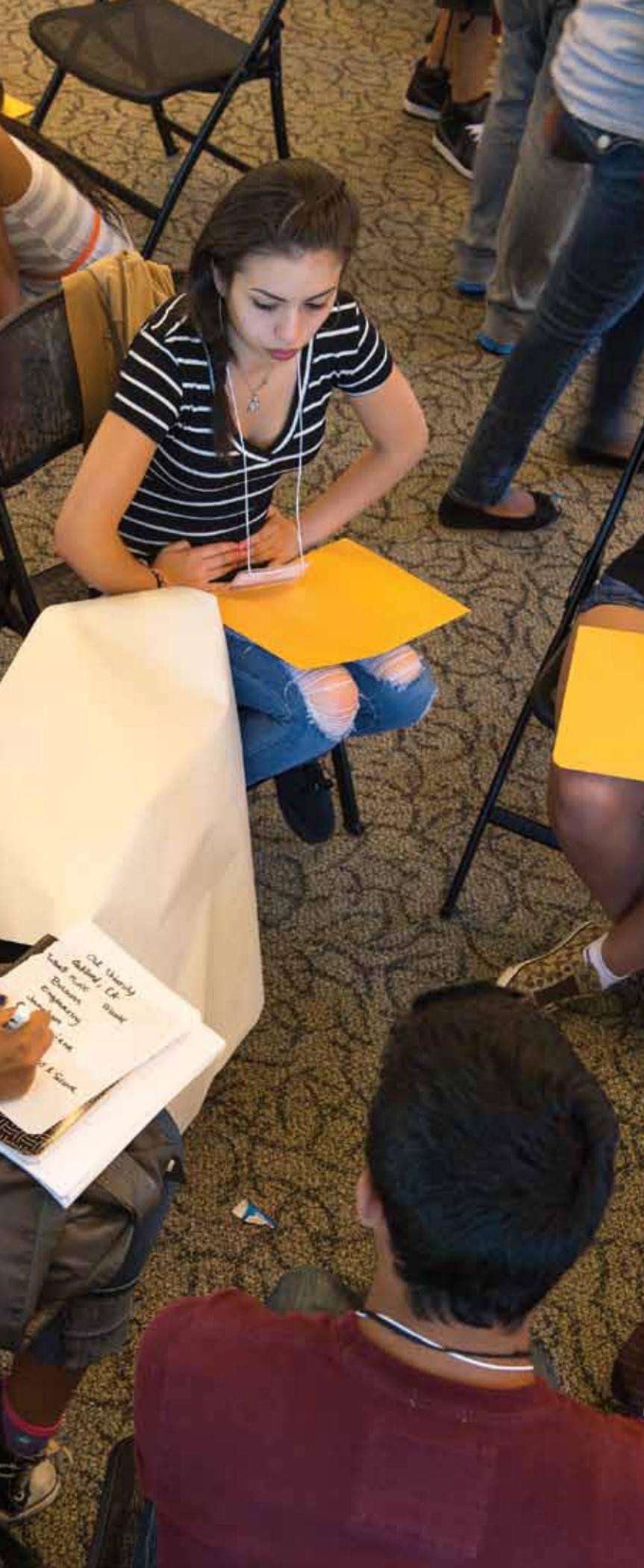
**“If the school environment changes,
then the attitudes among the
students will change.”**

**- LATOYA ROBINSON, 12TH GRADER,
SURREATTSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL, CLINTON, MD.**

The impact of these changes on the education process has been extensive. Secondary schools face an ever-greater challenge to ensure that students not only complete high school and are prepared to move onto college, but that they exit with a command of core academic, workplace, and personal effectiveness competencies that will enable them to perform a broadening circle of complex tasks in college and career.

Traditional learning models and classroom-based instructional practices remain basic building blocks of an effective education in this context. However, if schools are to maintain relevancy and rigor in preparing students to meet current skill expectations, they need to extend further. It is crucial that they define and build into curriculum core college and career readiness competencies, and to bring into teaching and learning the development of work-ready skills. They also need to make concrete and clear for students the connection between college and career opportunities, high school course selection, and behavior. Conditions also necessitate that schools explore innovative practices and next generation learning models and expand their use of technology to deliver learning solutions.³⁴





PARTNERSHIPS FOR ACCESSING COLLEGE EDUCATION

Project PACE is a partnership between local businesses, high schools, and Salt Lake Community College in Utah. The project is directed toward improving young peoples' college and career readiness skills and helping them bridge the gap between high school and higher education. It focuses particularly on increasing the college participation and graduation rates of socio-economically disadvantaged and first generation college-bound students. High school students enter the program as freshmen and are expected to meet a range of criteria across their high school years to remain eligible for participation. These include maintaining a satisfactory grade-point average and attendance record each school year, taking rigorous coursework that provides a strong foundation of academic and college preparation, and completing four years of mathematics and three courses in the social sciences along with one concurrent enrollment course in both mathematics and social sciences from Salt Lake Community College.

The program's local business partners play an important role by supplementing the students' classroom experiences with workplace learning and career exploration opportunities, including internships and summer employment, as well as mentoring and career guidance. A key feature of the initiative is that students who successfully complete the program receive a scholarship for the first two years of their college education. The initiative's business partners provide the funding for the scholarships.

www.slcc.edu/avpsps/pace.aspx

Specific Ways Business Can Help

Business leaders, association members, and professionals in the workforce can be a rich source of ideas and advice for helping schools match education with real-world learning needs, readiness standards, and skill expectations, and for ensuring that the high school experience and exit is aligned with college and career entry expectations. In short, schools can best build the type of contemporary learning environments necessary for student success in today's skill-based labor markets in concert with their many partners in education, in particular those within the business community.

- Members of the business community are well-positioned to facilitate knowledge and professional skill development among educators. They can, for example, connect teachers to applied research in their areas of instruction and provide opportunities for skill enhancement in applied settings. This might include activities such as employer-educator mentorship programs, externships, and job shadowing. The return to instructional quality and student learning can be significant when instructors are able to build their curriculum based on a thorough, and direct, understanding of the knowledge fields and working environments students may face once they leave high school and enter college and the workplace.³⁵
- Businesses can help educators map the skills and competencies young people need for successful job performance, and to build competency models to guide teaching, counseling, and curriculum development. Their knowledge of industry standards, readiness skills, and of work roles and responsibilities offer a relevant framework for guiding such a collaborative process.
- Business professionals can directly mentor and coach students to strengthen their comprehension of the expectations they'll face in college and career and to develop proficiency in the skills and qualities that must be mastered to be successful in both endeavors.
- Providing funding for promising and innovative practices is also a key avenue through which businesses can help schools build the capacity for competency-based education and skills training. Included here might be initiatives that leverage blended forms of instruction to strengthen students' core academic, technical and employability skills.
- A mixture of instructional modes that integrates rigorous, college-level classroom and on-line learning with work-based experiences provided by an employer could promote academic enrichment and personal growth, and offer students novel chances to apply learning outcomes in settings similar to those regularly faced by college students and employees in the work setting.³⁶
- The development and implementation of career roadmaps also provide a rich opening for schools and businesses to strengthen learning and education programs. Roadmaps can help students build a conceptual and functional link between their learning and college and career goals, as well as demarcate the type of skills and competencies they should expect to master at different points in their education. When guided by a plan, complete with milestones and clear definitions of college and career readiness, young people are empowered to monitor their own progress and to work more effectively with others in their learning community to identify and address skill attainment gaps.



Helping to Provide Students with Experiential Learning and Value-Added Guidance Along their Education Path

In the context of today's highly competitive labor markets and widening opportunity gaps, experiential learning and team-based project experiences that develop work-ready skills and knowledge are crucial to a young person's college and career success. Research has shown that young people benefit greatly when they have the opportunity to meaningfully integrate classroom instruction with work-based learning. Indeed, the willingness of students to stay in school, attend class, and do the work they need to succeed in high school is strengthened when they have the chance to see their classroom learning in action and to forge a link between school and real-life work experiences.³⁷

Specific Ways Business Can Help

There are many ways in which members of the business community can open the door for students to discover value in experiential and work-based learning and in engaging directly with a supportive adult outside the classroom setting. These are key elements to helping young people gain informed insight into how their interests and skills match-up with different occupations and knowledge fields.

- An applied learning platform such as an internship or apprenticeship is among the most robust experiences a business can offer a student. This type of hands-on experience offers real-world learning challenges and the chance to transfer knowledge and skills from the classroom into the work setting, and back again. Students have the opportunity to develop employability skills, build work-related competencies, and sharpen their workplace attitudes and behaviors.
- Students benefit in a variety of ways from participating in a mentoring relationship with a business leader or a volunteer professional. They can receive guidance and help in shaping priorities and can engage in positive talk about their ideas and aspirations. They can refine their view of themselves and shape a more coherent vision of the future and a roadmap to achieve their aspirations.³⁸ Mentoring can also help close the gap between school and work. Mentors and coaches can serve as a link for students to connect school-based learning with college and career. They can guide them to better understand the challenges and potentials of higher education and to build their college knowledge and career planning skills. In addition, they can help young people develop soft skills and become familiar with the customs and practices that can determine success in college and in the workplace.³⁹

GW TEACHERS IN INDUSTRY PROJECT

The George Washington University's Teachers in Industry Project brings middle school and high school instructors together with industry professionals to enhance the educators' awareness and understanding of the core knowledge, competencies, and skills required for young people to be successful in STEM-related occupations. Educators participate in several externships over a three-week period at top regional businesses. During this time they shadow employees, participate in company and project-based activities, share knowledge and experiences with corporate personnel, and learn about the demands and challenges of key industries. Teachers have the opportunity to engage company leaders and employees and to develop an education plan that frames how they will transfer their work-site learning experience to the classroom in order to enrich their teaching content and strengthen student learning. Industry partners also provide guest speakers to talk directly with students from participating schools to help them build college and career awareness, and they provide projects for teachers and students that can enhance classroom instruction and learning.

<http://teachersinindustry.gwu.edu/about>

FINANCIAL AID U

Financial Aid U (FAU) is a college access and success initiative that aims to help economically disadvantaged and first generation high school students overcome barriers to college created by financial need and a lack of financial education and planning. The effort is led by the Center for Economic Progress and its National Community Tax Coalition (NCTC), with funding support from Citi Foundation. FAU works with high schools and volunteers from the business community including Citi employees to provide students and their families with opportunities to build their college knowledge and financial planning skills and to receive assistance in accessing monetary resources to pay for college.

Financial education opportunities provided by business professionals and others from the community enable students and their families to learn about the value of saving for college, strategies for financing a college education, college financial aid options, and the type of financial support that works best relative to their needs. A core activity of FAU is providing families' guidance in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at the same time they file their income taxes. Since FAU began in 2009, 8,590 clients have been awarded \$37.4 million in federal and state grant aid and an estimated \$23 million in student loans.

FAU volunteers also work with students to help them navigate the challenging process of college planning and selection. NCTC works closely with high schools and reaches out to students both within the high school setting and outside in off-campus locations. They participate in college night events and offer counseling on-site during and after school hours.

www.tax-coalition.org

Eliminating the Financial Barriers that Keep High Potential Students from Applying to College

A college degree is critical to breaking inter-generational cycles of poverty, increasing earning power and contributing to the economy. While the U.S. Department of Education reports that college enrollment rates are at an all time high, graduation rates have remained unchanged.⁴⁰ As the job market grows more competitive, those without a college degree will be left further behind.

In the United States, fewer than 10% of students from low-to moderate-income families graduate from college by their mid 20's.⁴¹ This rate does not keep pace with that of other industrialized nations, and the United States is facing an alarming education deficit that threatens our global competitiveness and economic future.

Scholarship and academic preparation alone are not enough to support low-to moderate-income students in this undertaking. Financial education, planning, and savings are key elements of college access. In order to increase the number of students who successfully earn a degree, support needs to be provided for them not only to get into college but also to pay for their degrees.

"Applying for college financial aid, in and of itself, takes a significant degree of financial savvy and awareness that many young people and their families lack," said Daria Sheehan, Senior Program Officer of the Citi Foundation.

She explained the importance of school and business partnerships. "Schools often don't have the capacity to support students in building knowledge of finances as it relates to college." Sheehan explained when businesses work with schools and community based organizations to help students identify the gaps in financial aid knowledge, those gaps can be bridged.

Specific Ways Business Can Help

There are many ways in which members of the business community can help students, teachers and counselors navigate the financial aid process required for college access and success, and open the door for students to discover value in experiential and work-based learning and in engaging directly with a supportive adult outside the classroom setting. These are key elements to helping young people gain informed insight into how their interests and skills match-up with different occupations and knowledge fields.

- Businesses can provide funding for programs to help young people and their families prepare and plan for the costs associated with college. It may entail individual counseling sessions that help students and their families understand options for financing college and that guide them through the complicated process of applying for financial aid.⁴²

- Volunteers from the business community can provide hands-on assistance with the completion of the FAFSA and help students understand their options to pay for college.
- Business leaders, educators, and local college access providers can join forces to promote a comprehensive and collaborative college access and success network that can be leveraged to improve young peoples' ability to transition from high school into college and to graduate from college. This includes ensuring students have rigorous academic preparation in high school, school-level college readiness services and supports, a college and career culture within which to learn, and the skills and knowledge in place to manage the college planning, application, and financial aid processes.

IV. Building Effective School-Business Partnerships

As evidenced in the examples in this report, there is no single approach for developing and sustaining an effective and long-term business-education partnership. Each venture, from broad national initiatives that aim to reform education to local efforts to pair high school students with a mentor, is specific to its goals and participants and the setting in which it operates. As would be expected, the effectiveness of any partnership is associated with a range of conditions tied variously to the commitment of the respective partners, the structure and process that frames their relationship, the character of their activities, and the context within which their collaboration was formed and operates. For most joint ventures the process of partnering is one of discovering how best to work together as a team, and which are the most effective strategies to achieve shared goals and interests.

Among the many factors common to effective school-business partnerships, perhaps the most significant for success are shared vision, mutual benefits, and the commitment of each partner to the collaboration and to the binding goal of student success. Patience and perseverance are common and critical ingredients to success, and the benefits of partnering often take time to emerge and take hold.

Factors for Successful Partnerships

- **Be Focused and Committed...** Effective school-business partnerships are purpose-driven and results-oriented. All partners need to contribute to the relationship in a way that builds synergy and generates measurable outcomes. Partners must be willing to invest the necessary time and resources to learn about each other, to understand the issues, priorities, constraints, and needs each face with respect to their collaboration, and to develop a trusting and transparent relationship.⁴³ Strong commitment to the long-run success of the partnership is essential, as are engaged leaders and champions who advocate its value and explicitly support the collaboration's intervention strategies. The partnership also benefits when each member assigns a liaison whose role includes tracking the work of the partnership and its outcomes. All partners need to be involved from day one and ensure key stakeholders are on board and engaged and to understand that "they are allies and associates working together as equals."⁴⁴ It is imperative they also understand their stake in the partnership and the value they bring to realizing desired outcomes.



- **Cultivate Mutual Understanding and Respect...** Partnerships benefit when participants are open to understanding each operating culture and guided by trust and mutual respect. Employers, for their part, need to be sure they understand the ways in which the culture of business is different from that of education and to be aware of the many challenges and constraints under which schools and educators work each day.⁴⁵ A partnership is not about applying a business lens to education or vice versa. Educators, for their part, need to be sensitive to the business climate and keep in mind that companies work from a handbook of norms and assumptions typically different from that used in schools. They may employ a different vocabulary and conceptual frame to describe operations and challenges. It is important that educators appreciate business leaders and professionals for the capacity they add in support of academic achievement and personal development of young people.
- **Develop a Strategic Plan of Action...** Successful partnerships are those with a viable strategic plan of action that reflects the purpose of the partnership and what it is trying to accomplish. Even when a partnership revolves around a single intervention strategy, such as mentoring or job shadowing, or is limited in duration, an action plan that is mutually developed, coherent, and agreed upon by those involved can prove valuable for promoting effectiveness and commitment. A plan reduces the risk that disjointed programs or random strategies will be developed or well-conceived initiatives are poorly implemented and miss their mark. It also provides for clarity and precision when setting expectations and goals and when measuring outcomes. A partnership can be strengthened further if its plan of action is aligned with existing frameworks such as a school or district improvement plan.
- **Define Shared Goals and Interests...** In general, any collaborative effort is always more productive when processes and strategies are framed by achievable goals and are aligned with the partners' existing objectives, when roles and responsibilities are clearly delineated, and when a process for review is identified and supported by each partner. In addition, they need to fit with the norms and values of the community within which the partnership takes place and have broad stakeholder support. A strategic action plan frames these elements and lays the groundwork for long-term coordination and strategic communication, and a meaningful return on the partnership.
- **Integrate the Partnership into Operational Structures...** When a partnership or its intervention strategies are perceived as adjacent or peripheral to the operations of the partnering school or business they are likely to fall short of their desired outcomes. When integrated into the participants' operating structures, chances improve for effectiveness and sustainability. Meaningful integration sets the conditions for raising the profile of the partnership within the school and business, giving it greater value and legitimacy. This, in turn, can lead to heightened levels of buy-in and involvement as well as a stable flow of resources overtime to support activities.
- **Be Flexible and Open to Learning...** Partnerships benefit significantly when they rely on active communication and feedback as a base for continuous improvement and when they are willing to adapt intervention strategies and models as necessary to optimize efficacy. Taking a flexible approach and being open to learning, in other words, enables partners to adapt their strategies in concert and as conditions warrant. Ensuring that processes and activities are reviewed, outcomes tracked and measured, and feedback is openly shared and discussed, best facilitates partnership success.



Conclusion

As a nation, we have benefited greatly from fostering a strong and vibrant tradition of education and learning. A strong commitment to investing in the knowledge of our young people has always been central to the American prosperity story. We can take pride in having had the best-educated workforce in the world for most of the twentieth-century. We grew an educated middle class that became the backbone of a fast-expanding global economy and a vibrant and diverse civil society. We also understand that in the new knowledge-based economy, the key to success is a strong culture of inquiry and learning and a commitment to making quality K-12 and postsecondary education equally available to all young people. Education remains our greatest sources of economic and democratic strength.

It is clear that among our most important national priorities is ensuring schools across the country are effective and engaging environments for learning and personal development. This is critical not only for the success of the many students who sit in classrooms today, but also for industries and businesses who require a motivated and talented pipeline of young people to drive innovation, and for communities that depend on a productive citizenry for their sustainability. A strong education system built on a platform of rigor, relevancy, and readiness will, without question, make a positive and enduring contribution to both the public and private welfare.

A key challenge that remains for the nation today is that many schools are struggling to deliver on their mission. The reasons schools face the difficulties they do in educating the nation's young are numerous and complex. Most, for example, operate with limited resources and capacity that strain their ability to deliver quality education services and to support the skill enhancement of teachers and staff. They continuously face the challenge of adapting to shifting policy demands, managing new and expanding roles and expectations, and finding ways to respond to changing demographics and social norms.

Building effective school-business partnerships is a proven solution to these troublesome and stubborn challenges, and an enriching way to bring relevance and rigor to students' learning environments. It is clear that schools can no longer achieve their mission alone. An outside partner can provide the crucial resources and expertise to drive improvement in a high school and to strengthen student outcomes. Businesses, industry associations, and individual members of the business community are critical partners in educating America's young people.

There is no single model of partnership, nor one best way a business can be involved in the learning lives of students. Each partnership and activity works best when they reflect the needs of students and build upon the strengths and synergies of the partners. Partnerships will flourish when there is a strong commitment to engagement and a willingness to work together over the long-haul in support of common goals and interests. They are most effective when they place the student at the center of the learning experiences they create and strive to empower them toward a meaningful future.

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College Summit serves 50,000 students every year in 180 high schools in low-income districts across the country by providing a comprehensive system for improving college-going and success rates. By partnering with College Summit, high schools harness the power of student-led peer influence to increase their college enrollment and persistence rates. Learn more at www.collegesummit.org.

Citi Foundation



The Citi Foundation is committed to the economic empowerment and financial inclusion of low- to moderate-income individuals and families in the communities where we work so that they can improve their standard of living. Globally, the Citi Foundation targets its strategic giving to priority focus areas: Microfinance, Enterprise Development, College Success, and Financial Capability and Asset Building. In the United States, the Citi Foundation also supports Neighborhood Revitalization programs. The Citi Foundation works with its partners in Microfinance, Enterprise Development, and Neighborhood Revitalization to support environmental programs and innovations. Additional information can be found at www.citifoundation.com.