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**Partnership Checklist**

**□Step 1: Decide**

Decide that you want a school partner and can devote the time and effort to the relationship. Determine who should be involved in the management of the partnership. Name one person to be the contact for the school, or “Partnership Liaison.”

**□Step 2: Prioritize**

Prioritize school needs and determine how you want a partner to help. It is crucial that the school guide the activities for any partnership. The aim is to help the school improve student achievement. The school must be able to articulate specific ways the partner can help the school (e.g. provide a “menu of options”). Consider the input of staff, parents and students to widen options for a partner’s involvement. Talk with colleagues at other schools who have successful partnerships; they may have new ideas for you to consider. Check partnerships in action on www.GreatKidsUpClose.org.

School personnel should lay out their vision for the school and goals to reach this vision. Together, the partner and the school can determine how they can meet these goals to fulfill the vision. Be prepared with some concrete ideas and take into account the various potential resources that could be useful to your school (including human resources). It is recommended that you build a personal relationship through interactive volunteer experiences before asking for resources. You are more likely to create a stable and long lasting partnership this way.

**□Step 3: Meet**

Meet with the partner and get to know one another. Take them on a tour of the school. Tell the partner about your school and ask about their interest in your school. Learn what the partner wants from the relationship before launching into requests. Explain the school vision/goals and work together to find projects that are mutually beneficial. Consider volunteer, messaging/promotion ideas, and fundraising.

Do not be discouraged if the potential partner does not jump at your first suggestion. Keep working to find activities that fulfill the needs of the partner and the school. Establish a timeline of communication and contact people on both ends.

**□Step 4: Plan**

Create an action plan. Working with the school’s visions/goals, develop clear and realistic goals for the partnership. Create a reasonable measure for each goal. Use the resources of each partner and consider opportunities for student, parent and staff input.

**□Step 5: Commit**

Make the commitment. Sign a partnership agreement that incorporates the action plan with the roles and responsibilities of both parties outlined. Attach a calendar of events and distribute to both partners to keep everyone informed. Take into consideration opportunities to publicize the partnership.

**□Step 6: Implement**

Implement partnership activities. Involve employees, students, parents and staff in the implementation of partnership activities. The more people actively engaged - the more solid the partnership will become. Consider having a partnership “kick-off event” to make the school and community aware of the newly forged bond.

**□Step 7: Communicate**

Check in along the way. After every partnership activity, the school and partner should get together and debrief. Discuss what was successful and what can be improved for the next activity. Was everyone involved? Did it reach the students? Did it help to reach a previously stated goal? Is it helping each partner meet their needs? Let everyone give input. Be sure to thank the volunteers who participated - appreciation is extremely important.

**□Step 8: Evaluate**

Evaluate the partnership at the end of the year. Partners should revisit goals set at the outset of the partnership and determine if they have been successful in meeting them. Use the measure you established at the start of the year to decide if the goals have been completed or not. Try to have an honest discussion about the overall partnership and whether or not it is working for both partners. If both sides feel positive on the relationship, make a preliminary plan for the following year and set a time to meet to create a new action plan.

**□Step 9: Celebrate**

Celebrate your successes and thank your partner. It is important to celebrate the partnership and recognize the good work that both the school and the partner have done. Share your success with the entire school community and show appreciation for everyone’s contributions.