NEWS

Virginia Exchange Teams:

Region VII sponsored the first Virginia Exchange Team meeting in April 2008. Region III is in the process of sponsoring professional development through their Exchange Team. If you are interested in attending your Regions Exchange Team meeting this fall, please contact: PJ Dempsey, pjf5a@virginia.edu

Curriki:

Our site name has been changed. Please become a member of Curriki to share in the many professional development activities already being provided online. VAExchangeTeam.groups.curriki.org

Planning Nontraditional Events for 08-09:

It is time to begin thinking about your events for this year. Please contact us if you would like assistance or have questions.

RESOURCES

Ideas about sponsorships from the Fairfax County Public Schools Office of Business and Industry Relations: www.fcps.edu/supt/busindustrelations/

Find the 50 largest employers in your county or city: www.vec.virginia.gov/vecportal/lbrmkt/plugins/lmiapp.cfm/top50

Find local employers who hire people in specific occupations: www.acinet.org/acinet/employerlocator/employerlocator.asp

Reading List

School-Business Partnerships That Work www.education-world.com/a_admin/admin/admin323.shtml

School-Business Partnerships: Seven Strategies for Success www.danielsfund.org/sevenstrategies/

Smart Choices: A Guide for Creating School-Business Partnerships www.corpschoolpartners.org/guide.shtml

Sponsorship—Not Charity, not Donation. Ideas from Australia about building partnerships www.ourcommunity.com.au/business/view_article.jsp?articleId=1115

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Business partners can help fund activities to recruit & retain nontraditional students

Seven Steps to a Business Partnership

Recruiting business/community sponsors starts with believing that they benefit from contributing to your projects. Businesses and organizations benefit because:

- They are contributing to a deeper pool of capable, potential employees
- Public awareness of their company increases
- They may gain consumers/customers
- It gives a new way for employees to volunteer
- They satisfy their desire to help the community

Once you've convinced yourself that you have a great and worthy project you need to:

1. Put together a list of what you need (if you are asking for gifts-in-kind) or a budget (if you are asking for cash). Gifts in kind are usually easier to obtain – everything from mentors to gift certificates to pizza are easier to get than cash.

2. Make a list of target companies that have what you need (or organizations, such as Rotary, that might give you cash). Try to select one that could sponsor the whole thing – to keep your life simpler. If they can only do part (or nothing) identify two or three others to approach.

3. Make a plan for recognizing their involvement so you can tell potential sponsors what you will do. For example all the materials about your project will include their logo. Their support will be recognized on your school website and in letters home to parents.

4. Write down "talking points" about your project. They should include:

- A one-sentence (no more than 15 words) description of what it is, for example: "a one-day career education program to encourage girls to study science";
- A couple of facts about why this matters (nationally and locally) "girls are studying science less now than in the past. Here in Midtown, boys outnumber girls two to one in our science programs"; and,
- What you hope to accomplish – be as specific and measurable as you can: "I want to recruit ten girls to start a school chapter of IGNITE so we can recruit more girls into engineering classes over the next two years. Here's what we could do if we had a chapter".

5. Write down and practice your "ask"; "We'd like to call this the Joe's Garage Day for Female Auto Technicians. Would you be our partner by letting us use your name, send some of your employees to talk with us, and pay $500 for pizza?" List the ways you might recognize their involvement – and you can even ask them to suggest ways they would like to be recognized.

6. Find the right person to talk to. At small companies, it may be "the boss". At large companies, start with someone in corporate or community relations, public relations, or community service. Make some phone calls or ask around the community (e.g. the Chamber of Commerce) whom to contact. If you get the wrong person at a company, ask them who to call.

7. MAKE THE CALL – do not do this by letter, at least not ONLY by letter. If you must do a letter, send it in advance and say you will be calling later to schedule a brief appointment to meet with them about this. Or, just call and say "My name is Sally Doright, and I am a teacher at Midtown Middle School. I'm working on a project I think Joe's Garage might find interesting. Can you spare about 15 minutes in the next week or so to talk about this with me?" Then, schedule the appointment, call before you go to confirm the meeting, be on time, take a folder of any information you have about what you are planning, and make the "ask". Even if they say no, follow up with a thank you note – they might say yes next time.

8. Have a plan if they say YES. Make arrangements for how and when to get what they donate.

Plan how to *KEEP THEM INVOLVED* – be sure to invite them to the event, send them clippings from the paper if it is written up (make sure they are mentioned in the article), send them copies of things you print with their name on it, get students to write thank you notes, send a brief report on how it went. Write a letter to their CEO about how much you appreciate it. Send a letter to the editor of the local paper about their great community spirit. You don't have to do all these things, but, once you've done the hard parts of finding the right people and making the contact – why waste it. Keep them primed for the next time.

It takes years to build a successful nontraditional program. Long-term partnerships can help.

Keeping Up With Your Partners

Ideas for Recognizing Business Partners

- Recognize business partners on your website, in the school newsletter and on bulletin boards
- Include their name as a sponsor on all materials concerned with the project
- Write letters to newspapers thanking them for their support
- Send letters to them directly from principal, teachers, students and parents
- Recognition at assemblies, on school Web site and in school newsletter
- Annual district award for outstanding partner
- Recognition at school board meetings

How businesses can help you to recruit & retain nontraditional students?

- Provide mentors or tutors for students
- Provide on the job training, job shadows, internships
- Make class presentations on careers in their business
- Help with special school programs like Engineering Week & Career Fairs
- Assist with Student Recognition
- Assist with Staff Recognition

What are some of the ways schools give back to businesses?

- Recognize them everywhere you can. Help spread their good name in the community
- Introduce your business partners to students, staff and community
- Plan a special business partners day in which the whole school participates

- Assign students to write "thank you notes"
- Give business partners access to school during non-school time
- Work with the partner on other community service events they sponsor, such as walk-a-thons

Who should you ask to be your partner?

- Start with parents and your PTA
- Businesses near your school. Students & parents drive by these businesses every day so they are potential customers
- Businesses that hire your CTE graduates

Recruiting Partners

Work closely with local Chamber of Commerce, education organizations, business groups, city and county governmental entities and other groups to recruit partners for schools. Partners can also be recruited through:

- Civic organizations, such as Rotary and Kiwanis
- Parents in the school
- Staff members in the school
- Businesses in the school's neighborhood

When seeking partners, consider choosing companies that promote academics. Seeking input from staff, parents and community leaders is also helpful.

Before partners are recruited, create a menu of options, guidelines on recognizing partners, a volunteer screening policy, an informational packet and a program Web site. All of these materials will help partners better understand their role.

STARTING A PROJECT TO RECRUIT STUDENTS IN SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY? HERE ARE SOME "TALKING POINTS"

America imports high tech talent—and doesn't train enough of our own.

The U.S. government issues over 65,000 visas every year to import specialized talent such as scientists, engineers and programmers. Despite this need for high tech workers, the number of girls and young women pursuing training and careers in high-tech fields has remained low.

2007 Employment	Percent Female
Computer scientists	27%
Computer programmers	25%
Computer software engineers	21%
Computer support specialists	30%

Source: www.bls.gov/cps/

We have a huge nursing shortage—yet men still aren't entering these fields in sufficient numbers.

2007 Employment	Percent Male
Registered nurses	8%
Occupational therapists	14%
Dental hygienists	1%

Source: www.bls.gov/cps/

ACT research suggests that, at the very time our nation most needs promising students to enter STEM majors and careers, students' interest in these fields is on the decline.

Over the past ten years, the percentage of ACT-tested students who said they were interested in majoring in engineering has dropped steadily from 7.6 percent to 4.9 percent.
Over the past five years, the percentage of ACT-tested students who said they were interested in majoring in computer and information science has dropped steadily from 4.5 percent to 2.9 percent.

Source: www.act.org/research/

JUST GO OUT AND ASK!

"Business partnerships are waiting in the community — the businesses just need to be asked to help in specific ways," said Patricia Green.

"The biggest factor in getting businesses involved is the asking," agreed Allan Weiner. "The worst that can happen is that they say no. Usually businesses are eager to help, and then the work begins." . . .

"I find that when I take a minute or two to introduce myself to the manager of a local business, and ask if there is any way they might join me in helping the children of the community, they usually can offer something," added Nancy Jenkins.

"Most businesses would love to get involved if we would just reach out to them," said Tony Pallija. "The problem is that most of us don't have an avenue for getting together."

"Sometimes principals just have to walk around the block and say hello," Pallija added. "They might be surprised to find how many people are out there to help."

"School Business Partnerships That Work", *Education World*