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A Facilitator's Guide

Partnerships and Advisory Groups

- Introduction to Partnerships and Advisory Groups
- Organizing Effectively
- Managing Effectively
- Promoting Your Partnership and Advisory Group

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS LABORATORY • UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-COLUMBIA

Partnerships and Advisory Groups: A Facilitator's Guide

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Section I: Introduction to Partnerships and Advisory Groups

Why Partnerships and Advisory Groups?

Why Partnerships and Advisory Groups are Needed

Partnerships can change the culture of a community so that businesses and schools become mutually supportive in providing opportunities. Today and for the future, the resources of the entire community are required to provide a quality education for our youth.

The problems surrounding workplace preparedness and the demands of the workplace of the future are too broad and complex for any one agency or institution to address. Educators, Chambers of Commerce, and parents cannot do it alone. Communities have the opportunity to collaborate through partnerships.

Each partnership experience is unique, but there are some common elements in many of the working partnerships that contribute to their success. The material presented in this guide is intended to give direction. Basic guidelines and suggestions are offered on establishing a partnership, building membership, establishing structure, conducting effective meetings, and promoting the partnership.

Partnership Definition

Definition of a Partnership

A partnership consists of individuals who play on the same side with each other in a game or share the challenges and successes. Community partnerships focus on its youth, community members, and educators while sharing the risks and benefits of investing in people's lives.

Partnerships are not new to the education arena. Since the early 1980s business and industry have served on advisory committees for vocational programs. Advisory groups are partnerships with a specialized focus. Both advisory groups and partnerships share common management strategies.

Benefits

Benefits of Partnerships and Advisory Groups

The greatest benefits achieved through partnerships are those gained by students through relevant education and opportunities for careers. The following are some other benefits of partnerships.

Provides the community a(n):

- Role in redesigning the focus of the schools.
- Public platform for identifying and reinforcing the educational and workplace competencies needed by students leaving the education system.
- Better prepared workforce with the skills to enable business to compete in the global marketplace.

- Opportunity to determine how tax dollars are used in preparing youth for life.

Provides the employer with:

- Higher-skilled entry-level employees.
- Effective tool for evaluating the qualifications of prospective employees.
- Enhanced pride and self-esteem of current employees resulting from their work with students.
- Improved skills of current employees through their training of students and as worksite mentors for teachers and counselors.
- Expanded relationships to help students, the community, and business/industry.
- A positive company image.

Provides businesses with:

- Improved community relations through services to education.
- Improved education and child development.
- Improved public awareness of its services and products.
- Assistance in improving, surviving, and innovating.
- Access to a pool of trained potential employees.
- An opportunity to inform teachers of recent innovations in business.
- Improve employee skills and morale by involvement in student services.

Provides the school with:

- Advice that is not easily obtainable elsewhere.
- An important public relations medium.
- Different points of view.
- Help in the placement of graduates.
- Assistance in keeping educational programs up to date.
- Assistance in professional development.

Benefits from early business/industry involvement:

- Increases the partnership's credibility and influence.
- Attracts other employers.
- Helps to clarify the roles of other partners.
- Validates the employer's commitment and leads to greater, more substantial support from the employer.
- Builds employer ownership in the initiative.
- Educates the employer, who can then become another recruiter-advocate.

Partnership Types

Types of Partnerships

Several types of partnerships require various levels of commitment and resources. Every type of partnership is important and provides input that the educational institution by itself would find difficult if not impossible to address. By creating a system that opens communication and understanding between business and education, everyone has a greater potential to gain. All types of partnerships, including advisory groups, share common management strategies.

Types of Partnerships for Community Involvement

Partners in Policy Legislative

Policy partnerships are collaborative efforts at the national, state, or local level, among businesses, schools, and public officials that shape public and political debate, bring about changes in state or federal legislation or local school governance and affect the overall direction of the educational system. Examples are: national or state task forces, private industry councils, and school boards.

Partners in Systemic Educational Improvement

Systemic educational improvement partnerships are those initiatives which business leaders, education officials, and other community leaders identify the need for reform or improvement in the educational system, and then work to make those major changes happen in the system. These partnerships generally affect a large number of youth, combine and channel resources in a different way, and bring about lasting institutional change. Examples are: community compacts, and consortia.

Partners in Management

Management assistance partnerships provide school officials with management support and business expertise in a range of areas. State and local school-to-work initiatives need business/industry partnerships to achieve this level. Examples are: management support and expertise in strategic planning, and goal setting.

Partners in Professional Development

Businesses involved in professional development provide opportunities for school personnel to update, upgrade or maintain their skills, or learn more about the labor market, industries and businesses in the community, workplace needs and career opportunities. Examples are: conferences, workshops, and inservice training activities.

Vocational Instructional Program Advisory Committees

Vocational instructional program advisory committees' principle purpose is to improve the quality and impact of instruction in programs that prepare workers for the targeted occupations. They promote constructive and necessary change within a specific program, generating and transmitting any ideas to the program from the employment community and vice versa. These councils are goal oriented and provide advice in areas such as occupational performance competencies, instructional objectives, equipment selection,

facility layout and modification, job requirements, credentials, program articulation, labor market needs as well as trends, career opportunities, instructor competencies and retraining strategies, and student recruitment and orientation. Examples are: Business Education Advisory Committee, and Health Occupations Advisory Committee.

Partners in the Classroom
Classroom partners are business volunteers who improve the learning environment by bringing their business or occupational expertise directly into the classroom for students and teachers or bringing the classroom to the business. Activities are planned and coordinated with the school staff, generally are tied to the school year or semester, and can focus on the needs of the school or of the individual students. Examples are: mentoring, tutoring, and extracurricular activities.

Partners in Special Events
Special events partnerships provide short-term project- or student-specific activities or resources to help with a specific need or problem. These partnerships are generally shorter term, are confined to one school, one teacher, or one class. Examples are: scholarships, fundraising, donating or sharing equipment or educational material, sponsoring career fairs, sponsoring student teams.

Today, many employers are prepared to make a substantial contribution to education, but they want to be equal partners and play a significant role. Effective partnerships are employer-directed.

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Operational Guidelines

Section II: Organizing Effectively

Establishing Operational Guidelines

Establishing an effective partnership begins by securing administrative approval. Once approved, a written statement of policy regarding the operating guidelines of the partnership should be written to ensure continuity in how the partnership is created and maintained. Formal policies also provide an important foundation if the process is challenged.

Operational guidelines consist of the goals, objectives, rules, and procedures of the partnership. The guidelines are developed initially by the local education agency during the planning and organizing for forming the partnership. During the first or second partnership meeting, the operational guidelines are finalized and adopted.

The operating guidelines should include the following:

- Name and purpose of the partnership
- Number of members
- Manner of selecting members
- Term limitation for membership
- Provision for eliminating inactive members
- School personnel representation at meetings
- Special working groups
- Officers and their duties
- Requirements of meeting minutes
- Number and frequency of meetings
- Length and time of meetings
- Place of meetings
- Preparation of the agenda for meetings
- Method of calling special meetings

See Figure 2.1 for sample operational guidelines.

Figure 2.1
Sample Operational Guidelines

Article I—Name and Purpose

Section 1: The Business/Industry Advisory Committee shall exist only during such time as it may be authorized to serve by the duly constituted school board.

Section 2: The purposes and duties of the named business/industry advisory committee shall be to:

a. _____
b. _____
c. _____
d. _____
e. _____

Article II—Business/Industry Advisory Committee Membership

Section 1: Appointments to the Business/Industry Advisory Committee shall be made by (appointing group).

Section 2: The Business/Industry Advisory Committee shall consist of a minimum of (number) members from the related industry in the community.

Section 3: The Business/Industry Advisory Committee membership shall be selected as representative of the interests in the area or region served.

Section 4: The term of appointment for members shall begin on (date).

Section 5: Members shall be appointed for terms for (length of time).

Article III—Leadership

Section 1: The officers of the Business/Industry Advisory Committee shall be the chairperson, vice-chairperson, and other officers as may be required.

Section 2: The election of officers shall be at the (month) meeting each year. The officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the committee membership.

Section 3: The chairperson shall:

a. preside at all committee meetings;
b. appoint special subcommittees as the need arises;
c. work closely with the school staff and administration in organizing committee activities; and,
d. represent the Business/Industry Advisory Committee at all meetings of the general advisory committee.

Operational Guidelines

Section 4: The vice-chairperson shall perform the duties of the chairperson in his or her absence.

Section 5: The (name) teacher will serve as facilitator. The facilitator shall:
a. keep records of attendance;
b. disseminate and organize minutes, meeting notices, agendas, and other documents;
c. maintain a permanent record of all committee activities.

Article IV—Meetings

Section 1: Number of regular and/or special meetings of the (name) Advisory Committee shall be held during the year.

Section 2: Written notices of committee meetings shall be mailed to all members at least (number) days before each meeting.

Section 3: Meetings shall be no more than (number) hours in length unless such meetings are continued by the vote of committee membership.

Section 4: Agendas shall be prepared and disseminated by the facilitator.

Section 5: Standing or special subcommittees shall be appointed by the chairperson as the need arises.

Article V—Amendments

Section 1: These operational guidelines may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of active members at any regular committee meeting, provided that notice of such proposed change has been included in the call of the meeting.

Meetings. Meetings should be held on a regular basis. During the group's forming stage, meetings should be held monthly. Once the group is established and depending upon the type of partnership, the number of meetings may decrease to three or four times a year with special meetings called as needed. Developing and publicizing a meeting schedule allows members to schedule their time and sense the importance and continuity of the group. It also assists in long-range planning.

Term Limitations. Appointments to serve on the committee should be rotated and for definite periods of time. One method of rotating the membership is to replace one-third of the members each year. Usually charter members are selected by lot for terms of one, two, and three years; and, thereafter, members are selected for a full three-year term. A second method is to appoint members for one-year renewable terms. It is valuable to recruit members regularly to bring in new ideas and perspectives and to increase awareness of the partnership in the community. Rotating membership helps prevent burn out.

Knowing the meeting times, dates, and term limitations prior to recruiting members is critical because people typically want to know the expected level of commitment before agreeing to participate in a group.

Identifying Potential Members

Community Partnerships

For the partnership to serve as an effective means of communication and understanding between schools and the community, the membership must be representative of the community. Wide representation enables the group to reflect the points of view of the entire community. Decide which citizens to approach by identifying the people who are most representative of the community or most likely to be strong partners.

In deciding which local businesses to recruit, analyze the local labor market and state or national trends. Examine the local labor market to identify the skills needed for the workplace. List and analyze the categories of stakeholders who should be represented in the partnership. The Chamber of Commerce economic development boards, along with labor organizations, business-professional associations, and business-education coalitions help identify and provide members for the partnerships.

The following list of categories, adapted from the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994, suggests that partnership members be representative of the following areas:

- Employers or employer organizations
- Secondary and postsecondary institutions (teachers, counselors, and administrators)
- Former and current students and their parents
- Labor organizations
- Nonmanagerial employee representatives
- Community-based organizations
- National trade organizations at local level
- Industrial extension centers
- Rehabilitation agencies
- Registered apprenticeship agencies
- Local vocational education entities
- Proprietary educational institutions
- Local government agencies
- Parent organizations
- Teacher organizations
- Vocational student organizations
- Private industry councils/Workforce Development Boards
- Various religious, political, and nationality groups

Advisory Groups

Vocational Advisory Groups

A vocational advisory group is a more area-specific partnership with a specific focus in a vocational area. When identifying members for a vocational advisory council, the vocational program area is one of the most important factors to consider. For example, if the vocational program area is agriculture, council members' expertise should lie in agriculture or a related area. In addition, a school administrator and teacher serves on the council as nonvoting consulting members. School board members and other school administrators or officials should serve on an ex-officio basis. Parents, former students, and current students also may serve as advisory council members; however, they should be in addition to the members from business and industry.

The size of the partnership will vary by community, type of partnership formed, and scope of the education offering. The group must be large enough to reflect the diversity of the community, yet small enough to be managed effectively. Members may be representative of more than one of the groups listed above. However, members should think of themselves as representing the whole community, not a particular group.

Although many successful vocational advisory councils have ranged in size from five to fifteen members, a community partnership may be much larger. Fewer than five members for an advisory council has been found to limit the council's perspective and resources. An odd number is suggested to follow parliamentary procedure.

Recruiting Members

Recruiting Members

After identifying potential members, the next step is to invite them to serve, which can be done in person or in writing. See Figure 2.2 for a sample invitation letter. Try to obtain the following information prior to approaching prospective members:

- Company history
- Economic impact on local communities
- Industry outlook (forecasts, developments, etc.)
- Related occupations
- Employment outlook (per related occupation)
- History of involvement in partnerships
- Civic leadership (major commitments)
- Educational leadership (major commitments)
- Mission statement
- Strategic goals/objectives (if available)
- A description of the product or service
- Industry designation
- Number of employees
- Unions represented, if applicable

Figure 2.2
Sample Letter of Invitation to Join Partnership

[Partnership Letterhead]

Date

Ms. Jane Doe
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Ms. Doe:

Your name has been put forward for membership on the Local **(name)** Partnership for **(name)** . Your extensive experience and exemplary reputation in the field recommend you highly.

The **(name)** partnership is composed of outstanding business, educational, industry, and civic members of the community and works to build cooperation between business and education by improving the practical training of its students and participants.

Your demonstrated knowledge of the skills needed to succeed in the current competitive marketplace would be of great value to this partnership. The goal of this partnership is to prepare students and participants to meet these ever-changing demands.

The partnership understands that your time is limited and has planned meetings and member responsibilities to be as purposeful and necessary as possible. The three-year term consists of **(number)** meetings annually.

On behalf of the **(name)** Partnership, we invite you to attend the next meeting, scheduled for **(date)** at **(time)**. If you agree to serve, your term will begin on the first of next month. Please consider this invitation and notify us of your decision by **(date)**. We look forward to working with you on this very important project.

Sincerely,

Administrator/Board Member

The following resources may be helpful in gaining information:

- Annual reports and other company literature
- Profiles/stories in local media
- Trade publications
- Employer personnel and public information offices
- Chamber of Commerce
- Current and former employees
- Existing intermediaries/networks
- Area vocational-technical schools
- Surveys
- Interviews with business leaders/representatives conducted by existing partners, including teachers

Once the prospective members have been identified, meet with them individually or send a letter that outlines general expectations for involvement. See Figure 2.3 for a sample member appointment letter.

Management Team Duties

Outlining Duties of Management Team

In large measure, the success of the partnership depends on the leadership. A management team provides a structure for shared partnership. The management team may consist of a chairperson, vice-chairperson, recorder or secretary, and facilitator.

Election of officers may be either at the last or first meeting of the school year. However, elections held during the last meeting of the school year are preferable for the following reasons:

- The new officers can plan for the next year during the summer and start the year ready to work rather than ready to organize.
- The first meeting of the new year can be reserved for orienting new members and for establishing the work plan for the new year.
- Officers should be selected from among the experienced membership and based upon past performance, which would be easiest to recall at the end of a term rather than the beginning of another year.

The chairperson should:

- Provide leadership at all meetings.
- Demonstrate public speaking and human relations skills and the ability to organize and conduct orderly and productive meetings.
- Demonstrate ability to delegate responsibility as well as willingness to accept responsibility for the group's actions.
- Involve all members in the decision-making process.
- Not be a member or employee of the education agency.

The vice-chairperson should:

- Serve in the absence of the chairperson
- Assist in the planning and developing regular meetings and activities.

The recorder or secretary should:

- Record the minutes of each meeting.

The facilitator should:

- Be a member or employee of the education agency.
- Serve as a liaison between the school and the partnership.
- Assist members in carrying out their goals and purposes.
- Coordinate the logistics of meetings, especially when held on the school site.
- Not direct or assume leadership of the partnership.
- Prepare and mail the minutes, meeting agenda, and correspondence at the direction of the recorder or secretary.
- Arrange for refreshments.
- Manage the budget.

...the success of the partnership depends upon the leadership.

Figure 2.3
Sample Member Appointment Letter

[Advisory Committee Letterhead]

Date

Ms. Jane Doe
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Ms. Doe:

Congratulations on your appointment to the **(name)** Local Advisory Committee for **(program)** at **(organization)**. Your three-year term begins on **(date)**. Thank you for your willingness to serve on this important local committee. Your efforts will help keep this program vital and current, and your service will benefit this community.

Your first official meeting as a committee member will be held on **(date)** at **(time)**. A preliminary agenda and other advisory group information will be mailed to you before the meeting.

On behalf of the **(name)** Advisory Committee for **(program)**, we thank you again for your interest in serving. We look forward to working with you on this very important project. Please call if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Administrator/Board Member

Section III: Managing Effectively

Planning Meetings

Planning Meetings

Organized meetings are the key to a successful partnership. The frequency of meetings should be determined by the members. Considerations must be given to the frequency of meetings, a regularly scheduled meeting date, and a well-planned agenda for each meeting.

Members should be notified of the established meeting date well in advance. See Figure 3.1 for a sample letter notifying members of a meeting. The recorder should send members a written reminder of the meeting along with a proposed agenda. In addition, a phone call or personal contact either before or after the written reminder is an effective memory jog and encourages attendance.

The management team usually prepares the agenda (Figure 3.2). Agendas should be sent to members prior to the meeting to spark interest and allow members time to think about the upcoming discussion items and bring any materials that may be needed.

Agenda items should include:

- Roll call
- Approval of previous minutes
- Introduction of guests
- Financial Report, if any
- Old business summarization
- New business and reports of special interest
- Miscellaneous discussion
- Adjournment

The recorder often uses the agenda as a tool for organizing the minutes. Minutes generally include a listing of those who attended the meeting, a summary of each issue that was discussed, and any decisions or recommendations that were made. As the official record of the group's activities, minutes keep interested individuals and groups informed about the group's concerns, decisions, and activities. See Figure 3.3 for sample minutes.

Figure 3.1
Sample Letter Notifying Members of a Meeting

[Partnership Letterhead]

Date

Partnership Member
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Partnership Member:

Activities are well underway for the new year and all reports so far are positive. The growth potential for the participants is very encouraging. Thank you for making this year's opportunities possible. Your work for the **(blank)** Partnership is much appreciated.

To begin work on next year's projects and to monitor this year's progress, the first **(blank)** Partnership meeting will be held at **(time)** on **(date)** at **(location)**. Light refreshments will be served. Items for discussion include: placement of participants completing the program, work-site training, salaries, equipment needs, among others.

Thank you again for your dedication. Your active support of the **(blank)** project is appreciated. Your commitment to this process and to our community is very valuable. I look forward to working with your during the year.

Please confirm your attendance at the first **(blank)** Partnership meeting on **(date)** by calling **(phone number)**. Thank you again for your good work.

Sincerely,

Partnership Officer

Figure 3.2
Sample Agenda

Agenda Sample

Agenda of the (name) Partnership

Date: **Time:** 7 to 9 p.m.

Refreshments

1. **Meeting is called to order:** 7:00 p.m.
   Welcome and opening remarks by administrators.

2. **Minutes of last meeting are approved:** 7:10 p.m.
   Read minutes of last meeting; these are then approved or corrected by partnership vote.

3. **Introductions are performed, including guests:** 7:20 p.m.
   Introductions and brief biographies of partnership members and any guests.

4. **Old business is summarized:** 7:45 p.m.

5. **New business and reports of special interest are reviewed:** 7:55 p.m.
   Define, discuss, and vote on each item. Such items may include:
   - *Statement of the partnership's role:* How does it propose to be of assistance to the specific organization?
   - A brief background summary of the history of the organization and its current objectives
   - Goals and objectives of a specific program
   - Enrollment/recruitment plans for the program
   - Participant and program accomplishments
   - Participant placement
   - Visiting instructors, suggested field trips, donations to the program
   - Future plans for the growth of the program or institution
   - Budget/equipment needs

6. **Next meeting's agenda is set:** 8:45 p.m.
   Review date and time of next meeting, work of subcommittees, program needs

7. **Miscellaneous items are brought up:** 8:50 p.m.
   Announcements

8. **Call to adjourn meeting:** 8:55 p.m.

Minutes Sample

Figure 3.3
Sample Minutes

Health Occupations Advisory Committee Meeting

Date:

Members Present: Helen Chen, Chuck Dunn, Cecilia Gay, Carrie Johnson, Kris Kristoph, Karen Long, Lane Nelson, Carl Cox, and Mattie Walk
Members Absent: Elizabeth Alexander, Brad Luftus
Others Present: Phyllis Beckman, Principal of Easton Health Occupations Center

Welcome

A warm welcome was extended by Chair Long. She expressed appreciation for attendance and participation. She stressed how important the Committee's continuing support, assistance and input are to keeping the program viable and up to date. Dr. Phyllis Beckman, Principal of Easton Area Health Occupations Center, greeted the Committee. Her greeting further assured the Committee of its importance to educational goals and program vitality.

Minutes

Carl Cox read the minutes of the last meeting, and they were approved.

Old Business

No old business was brought before the Committee.

New Business

Chair Long asked the Committee to make suggestions about how it might improve or upgrade the program. The specific concern addressed was:

- What new requirements does the health field ask of entry-level employees?

Mr. Nelson indicated that a computer or data processing background would be helpful for employees of M.L. King Medical Center, since most tasks require the use of a central computer connecting all county hospitals. The need for computer training was further emphasized by Ms. Johnson of the Royal Medical Group, Inc. She indicated that an employee would be more skilled with prior computer knowledge. It was, therefore, the consensus of the Committee that computer training should be added to the Health Occupations Center program as soon as possible.

Having agreed upon the need to add computer training to the instructional program, the discussion turned to those systems most commonly found in various facilities. Brands suggested were Hewlett-Packard, IBM, and Wang. The chair was asked to appoint a subcommittee prior to the next meeting to investigate several kinds of computers and software for possible purchase.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Meeting logistics also must be arranged. The social aspects of the meeting, such as simple refreshments, contribute to group morale and commitment. Some meetings should be held away from the school to encourage a community atmosphere. Among the logistics that should be arranged and confirmed for each meeting are the following:

- Establish and publicize time, date, and location of each meeting.
- Arrange for meeting room and equipment.
- Notify members and appropriate school officials in writing of meeting date and agenda.
- Arrange for social amenities (refreshments, meals, special presentations, etc.).
- Confirm all arrangements several days before meeting.
- Call members and staff to remind them of meeting.
- Secure and prepare necessary background materials for issues to be addressed.

Some form of meeting management must be in place to ensure a productive meeting. Often, groups adopt *Robert's Rules of Order* as the parliamentary authority or similar written rules of procedure. Other groups hold relatively informal meetings, but they follow a routine. In informal meetings, decisions or recommendations are reached by consensus. The method that works best for a group will depend on the personalities of the leadership and the dynamics of the group. The chairperson and facilitator should consistently exercise judgment and tact in steering the group to follow the agenda, reach decisions, and make recommendations where appropriate.

Suggestions for Effective Meeting Management

The following guidelines are useful for managing group activity and interaction at meetings:

- State the purpose of the meeting and review the agenda at the outset. Some groups set goals or objectives as a way to focus each meeting.
- Encourage all members to speak and respect the rights and opinions of each individual.
- Ask clarifying questions.
- Periodically summarize discussion and point out the connections and contradictions between points.
- Use a set procedure for decisions; encourage open and informal discussion. The majority rules, but the minority opinion must be heard.
- Consider and resolve one issue at a time.
- Explore and encourage all points of view in working toward consensus.
- Show strong interest in attendance, ideas, and the work plan.
- Distribute work assignments throughout the group.
- Make assignments and work tasks clear and specific; explain expectations, time lines and products. Discuss background of issues so that everyone shares a common understanding of the terms and importance of the problems.

Effective Meeting Management

- Structure the meeting to avoid wasted time. This conveys a sense of organization, purpose, and productivity.
- Keep members informed of activities and progress.
- Recognize and reward members. Even a simple thank you note is an effective reinforcement.
- Evaluate the group's work regularly.

Reminders:

- Take action.
- Don't talk too much.
- Take action.

Plan of Work

Developing a Plan of Work

An effective group is one that knows in advance that something positive will occur as a result of its work. To have something occur, the group must be goal-directed. Addressing real situations, issues, or concerns is one of the best ways to encourage attendance and participation.

Once the partnership has identified its goals, the discussion should become more specific in terms of exactly what it is the group will accomplish. These goals should be determined at the first or second meeting and developed into a formal plan of work for the year. The activities on the plan of work should then be incorporated into the agendas for each meeting.

Supportive Atmosphere

Establishing A Supportive Atmosphere

The atmosphere for interaction is especially critical because discussion is the medium through which members present views and develop findings while moving toward consensus. The most productive atmosphere in a meeting is a supportive one, and the least productive atmosphere is a defensive one. Creating a productive atmosphere is time well spent.

The tone of the year is typically set by the first or second meeting. The following ideas help establish a positive tone:

- Concentrate on establishing a friendly atmosphere, coupled with a seriousness of purpose and the background information necessary to begin the job.
- Emphasize that the members' knowledge and experience is unique and of great potential value to the program.
- Tour the facilities.
- Meet students enrolled in the education system.
- Provide the opportunity for members to begin to know each other in a social context, perhaps during a meal or social time.
- Discuss the expectations for the group's work.
- Discuss future meetings, school needs, and past work.
- Begin meetings and adjourn at the appointed times.

The chairperson should move through the agenda in a businesslike manner, allowing sufficient discussion and closure. A meeting that lasts more than two hours should be rescheduled.

Suggested Objectives and Activities

These activities are intended to generate ideas for ways to use members of a partnership for greatest benefit to the local education program.

Objectives and Activities

Objectives	Suggested Activities
Assist in promoting career education in the school and community	• Provide news stories concerning career education programs to the local news media. • Participate in radio and television programs designed to promote career education. • Testify in support of career education at meetings which may be called by local and state officials, boards, and legislative groups. • Encourage other businesses to stimulate development of work experience programs. • Build interest and understanding between the school and community organizations. • Serve as a liaison between rural and urban interests. • Arrange meetings for educators to establish relationships between the schools and business and industry.
Assist in providing evaluations and recommendations	• Provide objectively written evaluations and recommendations on needed program improvements for the local board of education. • Evaluate actions concerning previous recommendations. • Evaluate effectiveness and direction of committee activities.
Provide local education agencies with written recommendations	• Prepare an annual report to the local board of education stating the observations, findings, and recommendations of the committee majority and include supportive data.
Advise on the development of short- and long-range plans for school-to-work education	• Review existing local and state board of education policies on career education. • Review local district annual and long-range (2-3 year) education plan. • Help schools set priorities for budgetary expenditures. • Review local district annual and long-range technical education plan. • Review local needs assessment and recommend actions based upon the findings. • Assist local board of education with development of program evaluation procedures.
Assist in providing current occupational information for student counseling purposes	• Establish and maintain a current library of visual aids, magazines, and books concerning career opportunities. • Provide relevant information to school personnel concerning desirable aptitudes, education, and experience which applicants need for entry-level jobs.

Reference: Clay, Ben. *Program Advisory Committees*. Topeka, KS: Washburn University-SAS, 1996.

Objectives and Activities

Objectives	Suggested Activities
Assist in determining job opportunities	• Assist in surveying manpower needs and emerging occupations. • Advise on the changing nature of the competencies in occupational fields. • Assist in placing graduates.
Assist in maintaining and improving instructional and learning experiences	• Advise on methods of instruction most appropriate for course content. • Provide tours and field experiences for students and teachers. • Identify or suggest resource personnel to enrich the instructional content. Promote student organization activities. • Conduct clinics and inservice and preservice training programs for teachers.
Evaluate the physical condition of facilities and technology of equipment	• Review existing equipment, facilities, and resources. • Review lab equipment and compare with current and future technology and industry standards. • Review lab safety program. • Review lab/room layout, space requirements, workstations, lighting, ventilation, etc., and compare with industry norms.
Analyze the course content to ensure the changing needs of the businesses and industries are known	• Review and suggest content for courses of study and standards of proficiency in areas which are essential to becoming successfully employed in a career path. • Review sequence of courses that comprise the program. • Review course outlines, occupational, program and course competencies, and workplace basic skills. • Help develop educational objectives. • Review software packages, textbooks and other supplementary materials. • Advise on the extent to which basic skills and work attitudes should be taught. • Review career exploration and awareness courses. • Recommend standards for work-based learning experiences and programs. • Inform the school of opportunities to place students in full- or part-time jobs as part of their School-to-Work transition program.

Reference: Clay, Ben. *Program Advisory Committees.* Topeka, KS: Washburn University-SAS, 1996.

Suggested Activities for the First and Second Meetings

Suggested Activities

The partnership's first two meetings are crucial to its overall success. Take the time to create a positive first impression by exhibiting careful planning and skillful organization and providing a sufficient amount of orientation.

One of the goals of the first meeting for a new partnership should be to conduct a needs assessment of the community that will help bring the various sectors together. From the needs assessment, develop a community profile to identify key categories of actions that could be taken to address the needs and concerns expressed by various sectors of the community. Distribute the profile to educators, businesspeople, and other interested parties. Begin formalizing the partnership structure. Develop working groups to address each of the key issues in the community profile. Working groups should be a mix of business owners, employees, teachers, and administrators. This bottom-up approach provides stability and gives members a sense of ownership of projects and activities.

First Meeting

First Meeting

A school district representative serves as temporary chairperson and appoints a temporary recorder. (Ideally, the Management Team would be appointed at the final meeting of the previous year.)

Introduce all persons present.

The temporary chairperson explains the purpose and functions of the partnership and the activities with which it will be concerned.

A representative of the board of education informs the group of its relationship to the district. Distribute copies of the school board's statement of policy.

A representative of the school district describes the programs in the school. The temporary chairperson may distribute a sample of rules of operations, such as:

- Time and length of meetings
- Method of notifying members
- Method of calling special meetings
- Method of developing agenda for meetings
- Establish priorities

Establish the date, time, and place of the next meeting indicating that permanent officers will be elected at that time.

Provide a tour of the facilities.

Second Meeting

Second Meeting

Temporary chairperson calls meeting to order.

Roll call by temporary recorder.

Approval of Minutes.

Election of permanent officers; temporary officers serve until end of meeting.

Adopt operational guidelines.

Determine permanent rules of operation including meeting time, place, and dates.

Plan long-range program of work.

Set up priority areas to be considered.

Assess program components and requirements; make recommendations.

Establish working groups to assess the program components (optional).

Arrange for Management Team meeting before next regular meeting.

Suggestions

Presenting and Responding to Suggestions

Presentation of suggestions should:

- Be brief, clear and concise.
- Tell the school/program instructor(s) the specific action the committee wants considered.
- Be preceded by a rationale.
- Be viewed as advisory in nature.

Administrative Response

Administrative Response to Suggestions

Partnership input is important and valued. School officials should take the time and effort to review and consider their suggestions and respond accordingly. The official response to suggestions should be written and sent to the partnership as soon as possible. Any denial of a suggestion should include the administration's reasons and alternatives for meeting the intent of the suggestion.

Responses may take one of the following forms:

- Adoption of the suggestion(s) as presented.
- Adoption of the suggestion(s) with modification (reasons for the modification should be reported).
- Rejection of the suggestion(s) with the reasons for the rejection.

Evaluation

Evaluating Effectiveness

A periodic review of the group and its activities can help determine the:

- Extent to which the group is accomplishing its goals.
- Extent to which the recommendations and actions have strengthened the education program.
- Future direction and activities for the committee.

This review can be either formal or informal. The goal of the review is to help the committee determine its overall effectiveness.

Section IV: Promoting Effectively

To share the work of the partnership in the community and maintain enthusiasm for the partnership, consider ways to promote the activities and their benefits. The partnership is affecting the lives of our youth and the future of our community. Recognizing members is one of the best ways to promote the partnership and create goodwill. Always remember to thank and recognize the members of the group for their investment of time, effort, resources, and ideas. See Figure 4.1 for a sample thank you letter.

Recognizing Members

Members are not paid, so reward and recognition become critical. The best types of rewards or recognition are those that can increase productivity, improve the group's interaction, and increase member satisfaction. The strategies do not need to be elaborate. Most members are willing to attend regularly and work hard as long as their talents are used in tasks that involve them in the group, their recommendations are seriously considered, and they are given feedback about their recommendations and efforts. One of the best rewards is to ask for advice and respond to it.

The following strategies are some that have been used by partnerships to reward and recognize members:

- Issue press release and photographs announcing member appointments.
- Report at meetings the ways the group has been of service.
- Invite members to visit programs to see the results of recommendations.
- Invite members to attend special events.
- Send personal letters to members about the results of their advice and recommendations.
- Place members' names on a display board or plaque at the school.
- Be sure the announcements and reports made by administrators about the partnership include references to the members.
- Send a personal note in recognition of special events such as birthdays, and promotions.
- Hold a recognition dinner or reception each year to thank members.
- Send a letter of appreciation to each member's supervisor and/or company, explaining the good job being done by the member and thanking the company for its support.

Recognizing Members

Figure 4.1
Expiration of Term Membership Thank You Letter

[Partnership Letterhead]

Date

Ms. Jane Doe
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Ms. Doe:

This is to express my sincere gratitude for your contributions to the **(name)** Partnership.

Your expertise has been appreciated by all who have worked with you, and the program has benefited tremendously from your work. Your support has enabled us to put forward many proposals for the growth of education in our community.

On behalf of the **(name)** Partnership, we thank you again for your commitment to the work of the **(blank)** Partnership. We look forward to working with you again in the future.

Sincerely,

Partnership Officer

cc: Administrator/Board Member

Creating Public Awareness

Public Awareness

Partnerships sponsor and contribute to many activities during the year. Some of the easiest ways to promote events and recognize the group's contributions are:

Displays, exhibits, open house, and tours
- All are excellent ways to attract attention for the partnership. Video tapes and slide presentations of these events could be used at other times.

Newsletters
- Can be used to promote activities, schedule of events, and partnership updates. Distribute newsletters on a regular basis, whether monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly. Send copies to students, parents of students, community members, partnership members, and any other stakeholders.

Newspaper Publicity
- Publicity is free while advertising is purchased. Invite the press to newsworthy events such as open house, legislative visits or tours, and skills contests. Custom write news releases to your local newspapers' specifications and find out their deadline dates.

Radio and Television
- Use public service announcements. Find radio and television stations that promote community events. Use the community's education cable television station.

The group may want to develop a formal promotional plan at the beginning of the year and assign responsibilities to members. A promotional plan typically consists of the following information:

Identify the audience.
- Who are we trying to reach? students, parents, partnership members, all stakeholders.

Set goals and objectives for the promotional plan.
- Will it recognize members' contributions, changes made due to the group's recommendations; partnership sponsored activities?

Describe the plan succinctly and put the plan in writing.
- Not all activities or contributions will need to be publicized. Choose two or three that showcase the partnership and decide how and when to promote those.

Develop a promotional budget.
- Consider in the planning stage what costs may be incurred such as, how will postage and paper costs be paid? Who will pay the cost of a reception or dinner?

Decide on the appropriate types of communication to be used.
- If you are having an open house, will you use all public service announcements, a flyer, a newsletter, invitations or a combination?

Outline performance indicators for evaluating the promotion plan.
- How many people attended the open house? How did they hear about it—invitation, radio, newsletter?