



Adopt-A-School Partnership Guide for Schools and Businesses

Created by:

**The Business Education Partnership Foundation
at the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce
Rutherford County, TN**

In Cooperation With:

**Rutherford County Board of Education
Murfreesboro City Schools
&
The Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce**



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Adopt-A-School Partnership Memorandum of Understanding

The following points are the minimum requirements of a good partnership between a school and a business or community organization. These points were developed at an open forum between representatives of the Rutherford County Board of Education, Murfreesboro City Schools, the Business Education Partnership (BEP) Foundation at the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce, and business leaders who have either been involved in a long term adoption, or are interested in developing a community partnership with a school.

- The focus must be on what is best for the children.
- There must be buy-in and commitment from both the principal/ administration of the school AND from the management of the business or organization.
- Adoption must be a committed partnership over time by both parties. It is suggested that the partnership be for not less than a year, although a preferred minimum adoption period is three years.
- There must be a specific, identified contact at both the school and the business or organization. It is suggested that these representatives each have a backup who is kept involved in the relationship in case of a personnel change occurring at either location. Consistency is important.
- There must be communication of needs and resources. It is suggested that there be a minimum of two meetings a year between the partners – a planning meeting at the beginning of the year and a debriefing at the end of the year. Additional meetings could enhance the partnership.
- At the end of the year an “Annual Report” will be completed and sent to the BEP to use in developing an annual “Celebration Banquet.” The “Annual Report” will be developed by the school and approved by the businesses.
- The partnership is best if it includes a commitment of time and money, but time, supplies and access to special knowledge and skills are most useful. It is suggested that the adopting business supply a minimum of \$5,000 in *money and time*. It is up to the business to value their employees’ contribution of time. Many businesses (especially small ones) will find that their contributions in cash are very small, but their time/service contribution adds up quickly. See the list of “Suggestions for Business Participation.”
- The partnership will only work if there is a two-way commitment. Schools must give something to their adopter. See the list of “Suggestions for School Participation.” Before approaching multiple adopters, schools should make sure that they can support each one in a way that is

meaningful to the adopter. Every business and organization has different needs, just like different schools have different needs.

- Educators need to take the lead to inform businesses about their needs, but it is best if they can learn to communicate in a way that businesses can understand (i.e., be able to describe the expected measurable outcome produced by the donation of time, supplies or money).
- Educators must understand that businesses have limited resources and will not be able to fund everything a school needs. That is why it is important to negotiate an agreement from the start, matching needs to resources, and to maintain that agreement unless the business makes it known that they have additional resources.
- Partners need to make sure there is a “fit” between both parties. A questionnaire is supplied in the “Adoption Agreement Worksheet.”



Adopt-A-School Partnership Suggestions for School Participation with Businesses

- Ask business to help prepare curriculum
- Have students from the school talk to employees about “How parents can help their kids and what to expect as kids are growing from the student’s point of view”
- Have teachers from the school talk to employees about “How parents can help their kids and what to expect as kids are growing from the teacher’s point of view”
- Help with recruitment (what matters and get information out, i e job descriptions, applications, internship information)
- Teach kids about how to interview, dress, fill applications, first impressions, teamwork, communicate
- Communication
- Recognition/PR (promotion acknowledgement, t shirts, banners, signs, website, newsletter)
- Entertainment
 - Offer talents to business for corporate events
- Facility sharing
- Support business in other community efforts
 - Student volunteers for activities
- Youth audience for business input (poll, market research of a specific focus group)
- Community involvement opportunities
- Plaque and/or certificate of appreciation
- Student artwork
- Thank-you notes

- Celebration/ Thank-you lunches
- Sponsorship of programs with special interest to company
- “Fast Forward” increases focus/memory for business people
- School helps celebrate corporate success
- Joint ventures
- Educate public as to what a school report card truly means
- Promote business through school
- Culinary/Hosting Events

NOTE: Underlined items were recognized as high priority needs by the majority of businesses who participated in the Forum



Adopt-A-School Partnership Suggestions for Business Participation with Schools

- Employee Release Time/Representatives on Campus Regularly
 - Mentoring contract (consistent, binding professional agreement)
 - Role models/motivation
 - Help borderline kids/inspirational
 - Tutoring
 - Reading buddies
 - Math buddies
 - Play pals
 - Cafeteria monitors
 - Teacher support

- Support for Education Programs
 - Support field trips -- financial
 - Tours
 - Speakers/special events
 - Career Guidance Days
 - Job needs/types
 - Explain the importance of math/technology/science classes in the “real world.”
 - Relate learned/textbook knowledge to business
 - Provide “experts” on issues
 - Morale/self confidence
 - Goal setting
 - Reinforcing life skills
 - Show the students how quality process is implemented
 - After-school programs
 - Job shadowing
 - Leadership conferences

- Materials/Supplies
 - Have the business let the school know of what they no longer need
 - Furniture
 - Tools for maintaining building
 - Technology
 - Equipment/material donations
 - Books

- Paper/pens/highlighters
 - Photo copy supplies
- Public Relations
- Security
- Maintenance
- Chair a School Improvement Committee
- Teacher Professional Development Opportunities
 - Motivational training
 - Team building skills
 - In-service sponsors/speakers
- Rewards/Recognition/Incentives for Teachers and Students (attendance, grades, character education)
 - Gift cards
 - Tickets to sporting events
 - Food/treats
 - Lunch with outstanding students
 - Tickets to special events
- Money/General Donations
- Help with Athletic Programs
- Coordinate Fundraisers
 - Serve on committee to review annually
- Career Awareness/Opportunities
- Help with Summer Workshops (food, facilities, experts)
- Printing
 - School newsletters
 - Agenda Books
 - Athletic programs
- Scholarships
- Landscaping
- Feedback

- Celebrations
 - Mutual forming of traditions
 - Special events sponsorships/student or teacher related

NOTE: Underlined items were recognized as high priority needs by the majority of schools who participated in the Forum.



Adopt-A-School Partnership BEP Responsibilities

To aid the development of Adopt-A-School Partnerships, the BEP will:

- Supply a list of Chamber of Commerce businesses.
- Recognize partnerships through annual Adopt-A-School Celebration Ceremony.
- Provide the following documents for Adopt-A-School Partnerships:
 - Memorandum of Understanding*
 - Suggestions for School Participation*
 - Suggestions for Business Participation*
 - Basic Proposal Format*
 - Adoption Proposal Worksheet*
 - Final Adoption Agreement*
 - Annual Report of Accomplishments Format*
 - Adoption Certificate*
 - Notice of Adoption Termination*
- Annually list current Adopt-A-School Partnerships in Chamber of Commerce *Business Pulse* newsletter, and maintain an updated list on the BEP website www.rutherfordbep.org.
- Provide expertise when a school and potential business partner are in the negotiation process.



**Adopt-A-School Partnership
Basic School Proposal Format**

School Mission:

Goals Proposed:

Desired Business Support:

Proposed School Support:

School Representatives

School Principal _____

School Address _____

School Representative Name _____

School Representative Telephone Number _____

School Representative E-Mail Address _____

Back-up Representative Name _____

Back-up Representative Telephone Number _____

Back-up Representative E-Mail Address _____



**Adopt-A-School Partnership
Business Resources Available**

Business' Mission:

Business' Proposed Goals:

Resources Available for Schools:

Business Representatives

Business Officer _____

Business Address _____

Business Representative Name _____

Business Representative Telephone Number _____

Business Representative E-Mail Address _____

Back-up Representative Name _____

Back-up Representative Telephone Number _____

Back-up Representative E-Mail Address _____



Adopt-A-School Partnership Adoption Proposal Worksheet

Preliminary Planning

_____ Determine how the partnership could enhance student learning

- Identify unmet/underfunded needs – students
- Identify unmet/underfunded needs – schools
- Identify special projects

_____ Identify potential partners

- Research local business or schools
- Reach out to parents and PTO groups
- Empower employees to look for partnerships
- Look at school vendors
- Look where parents and employees shop
- Look at churches
- Look at civic organizations
- Use Chamber of Commerce business listing
- Get help from Business Education Partnership

_____ Understand your core values

- What do you want this relationship to achieve over time
- How does an adoption fit into the school's goals
- Would a specific type of business be more helpful than another?

_____ Draft a “Basic Proposal.” This should include needs and resources. Resources include things schools can offer the adopter for their efforts.

Laying the Foundation

_____ Set up a meeting between a senior executive from the business and the school principal. Include employees who will be acting as the actual contacts so they can be part of the relationship from the beginning. Meet not later than one month before the beginning of the academic year.

_____ Provide adopter with the “Basic Proposal.”

_____ Adopter brings a list of “Resources Available.”

_____ Have a frank discussion about values, goals and needs.

- Create an understanding of each partner’s desired level of involvement
- Assess the impact of the partnership on students
- Ensure that students and members of the community are engaged
- Define quantifiable goals
- Determine duration of the partnership
- Identify partnership activities
- Note alignment of activities to goals of the school district
- Schools should understand that businesses do not have unlimited resources, so they need to plan ahead

_____ Develop a written agreement based on negotiations between the two parties taking into account the school’s “Basic Proposal” and the business’ “Resources Available.” Use the “Suggestions for Business Participation” and “Suggestions for School Participation” to help with brainstorming.

_____ Send a copy of the “Final Adoption Agreement” to the Business Education Partnership (BEP), Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce, 501 Memorial Blvd., Murfreesboro, TN 37129 or e-mail to lrennick@rutherfordchamber.org.

Implementation

_____ Ensure activities are integrated into the school and business culture.

_____ Ensure that activities provide an opportunity for students, teachers and business employees to interact with each other and, if possible, the community.

_____ Make sure there is a formal management structure.

_____ As personnel changes occur, make sure to establish relationships with new employees.

_____ Provide business partner representatives with any needed training.

_____ BEP will provide the official “Adoption Certificate.”

Sustaining the Partnership

_____ Secure explicit support and concurrence for the partnership at all levels of the school and business.

- Ensure top management is on board
- Ensure staff are informed and involved

_____ Provide the school community with an opportunity to review and contribute.

_____ Construct communication plans.

- Communicate regularly about intended and actual outcomes
- Provide BEP with pictures and stories of accomplishments to be used in the *Business Pulse*, the Chamber of Commerce's newsletter.
- Check off goals as they are completed
- Send an "Annual Report of Accomplishments" to the BEP for use at the annual "Celebration of Achievement."

_____ Ensure that both partners are publicly and privately recognized.

_____ Provide the BEP with a list of names of those who need to be invited to the annual "Adopt-A-School Celebration Ceremony."

_____ Schools and adopters will be noted annually in the *Business Pulse*, and a current list maintained on the BEP's website, www.rutherfordbep.org.

Evaluation

_____ Conduct regular evaluations and monitoring

_____ If partnership ends, have a quick debriefing

- Determine satisfaction and effectiveness
- Complete "Notice of Adoption Termination" and send to the BEP.



Adopt-A-School Partnership Final Adoption Agreement

_____ (Business) and _____ (School)
enter into this partnership agreement where each will provide the other with the benefits of team
interaction, allowing each to be more than they could be as separate entities.

Proposed Goals for Adoption Period

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

Business Support

- _____ Will Provide:
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
 - 6.
 - 7.
 - 8.

Business Representatives

Business Officer _____

Business Address _____

Business Representative Name _____

Business Representative Telephone Number _____

Business Representative E-Mail Address _____

Back-up Representative Name _____

Back-up Representative Telephone Number _____

Back-up Representative E-Mail Address _____

School Support

_____ Will Provide:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

School Representatives

School Principal _____

School Address _____

School Representative Name _____

School Representative Telephone Number _____

School Representative E-Mail Address _____

Back-up Representative Name _____

Back-up Representative Telephone Number _____

Back-up Representative E-Mail Address _____

Acceptance of Agreement

The participants noted above agree to this partnership on the _____ day of _____ (month),
_____ (year) to be reviewed on _____ (date), _____ (month) by
both parties before continuation of the partnership.

Business Officer _____ Date _____, _____

School Principal _____ Date _____, _____

Business Education Partnership Representative _____

***Be it noted that this partnership is in agreement
within the guidelines of the
Business Education Partnership Foundation
of the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce
3050 Medical Center Parkway
Murfreesboro, TN 37129
www.rutherfordbep.org.
(615) 278-2008***



**Adopt-A-School Partnership
Annual Report of Accomplishments Format**

School Mission:

Goals Proposed:

Goals Achieved:

Business Support:

School Support:

School Representatives

School Principal _____

School Address _____

School Representative Name _____

School Representative Telephone Number _____

School Representative E-Mail Address _____

Back-up Representative Name _____

Back-up Representative Telephone Number _____

Back-up Representative E-Mail Address _____

Business Representatives

Business Officer _____

Business Address _____

Business Representative Name _____

Business Representative Telephone Number _____

Business Representative E-Mail Address _____

Back-up Representative Name _____

Back-up Representative Telephone Number _____

Back-up Representative E-Mail Address _____