



Adopt-A-School 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 the two school systems 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 and 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 Business Education Partnership at the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce 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 of the two, time, supplies and access to special knowledge and skills is 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 employee’s 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. Attached is a list of “Suggestions for Business Interaction.”

The partnership will only work if there is a two-way commitment. Schools must give something to their adopter. Attached is a list of “Suggestions for School Interaction.” Before approaching multiple adopters, make sure your school 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, but it is best if they can learn to communicate in a way that business can understand (ie. the expected measurable outcome produced by the donation of time, supplies or money).

Partners need to make sure there is a “fit” between both parties. A questionnaire is supplied in the attached “Adoption Agreement Check-List.”