



Building Relationships with your Business Community

Public Schools Week 2019 is the perfect opportunity to call on potential partners from the business community. If you can find a mutual time to meet—either during the celebratory week of March 25-31 or afterward—it’s a great way to show your school to the representatives and glean insight into their needs and ways they can support your school and students.

Some ideas for people to contact include companies that are major employers in your area, have education initiatives or have expressed interest in working with schools, have existing partnerships with or support higher education institutions in the area, or those that may offer apprenticeships and internships.

You might already have contacts in community organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce or school district vendors. You also could find out where parents and the spouses of school staff work and see if they can make introductions.

Emphasize, if applicable, that you are not looking for a sales pitch but a mutually beneficial partnership.

Questions to ask interested representatives from the business world:

- What are the essential skills that you look for when hiring new employees?
- What are some of the jobs you’re hiring for, and which jobs do you have the hardest time finding qualified applicants?
- Do you offer any internships, apprenticeships, or job shadowing opportunities that would help students see the opportunities that your company/field offers and build the skills needed to work at our company/in your field?
- Would you consider offering “apprenticeships” or paid opportunities for teachers and other staff to work in your company to see the skills needed and opportunities available for their students?
- Would you consider allowing your employees to give presentations, mentor students, or do other volunteer duties at our school during their workday?

If you are able to secure a meeting, do your homework on the company and the types of products and services they sell. Know what drives their business and industry. Read up on news articles and other information about current trends or challenges they may face.

Further, think about whether you have any new programs that you would like to showcase—or if you have existing programs that could be of interest to this contact. Perhaps there is a particular school program that could use their advice or expertise?

Finally, be sure to thank the representative for their time and follow through with specific requests. They may not always be able to say yes, but the key is opening the door to building a long-term relationship.