Office of Education Outreach (OEO), Brown University

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About the OEO

The Office of Education Outreach has the broad mission of facilitating partnerships between Brown and Rhode Island public school districts, primarily grades PK -12 within the Providence Public School District. The OEO believes that at the center of all successful education outreach is meaningful partnership.

At heart, partnerships are a straightforward concept: people working together to achieve goals that are meaningful to both of them. But the reality and details of establishing a good partnership with PK-12 education stakeholders can be tricky and complicated.

The Office of Education Outreach exists to help the Brown community establish in establishing meaningful relationships with Rhode Island Pk-12 stakeholders. Please feel free to be in touch with the OEO, as we are happy to assist you in connecting to the Rhode Island Pk-12 education stakeholder community. This document highlights a few principles of successful partnerships.

The Meaning of Partnership

The OEO uses the words “partnership” and “partners” in a broad way to describe relationships between the people, schools, school districts, organizations, agencies, and communities that work together and share interests.

However, it is important to understand that the word “partnership” also has a more precise meaning according to federal policy. Federal policy defines partnerships as “arrangements that are voluntary, mutually beneficial, and entered into for the purpose of mutually agreed upon objectives.” In this definition, “mutual benefit” specifically means that each partner shares in the benefits the project provides.

The terminology can be confusing because Brown University commonly uses the word “partnership” more loosely to refer to work with others where the benefits are not shared. For example, when the Brown Corporation gives grants to schools through the Fund for Providence Children, the primary benefit is to the schools. This type of formal arrangement is a partnership in the sense that they help each party achieve their goals and build skills, knowledge, and relationships that provide the foundation for future work together.

Brown also frequently works with partners through informal activities that may serve as springboards for formal arrangements in the future. For example, many Brown students, faculty and employees participate in community networks to offer educational events and share skills and expertise with various Rhode Island PK-12 stakeholders.
without a formal, documented arrangement. In practice, this broadens the meaning of partnership beyond the specific definition under federal policy and beyond formal arrangements.

**Documenting Partnerships**

Documenting a partnership is an important step because it clarifies objectives, describes roles and responsibilities, and ensures accountability by all parties. There are many types of formal arrangements, or “instruments,” to document work with others. The correct instrument to use depends primarily on whom the parties are, the type of project, who will benefit, and whether and how the parties exchange funds or other resources.

Here are a few examples of instruments that can be used to document partnerships that provide mutual benefit for each party:

- Mutual benefit Agreements
- Challenge Cost Share Agreement
- Participating Agreement
- Joint Venture Agreement
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
- Cooperative Research and Development Agreement
- Volunteer Agreement
- Collection Agreement
- Cost Reimbursable Agreement

**Note on Collaboration**

An integral part of many partnerships is a collaborative process. The term “collaboration,” though, often provokes confusion. Collaboration increasingly refers to a process where groups with different interests come together to address various issues embedded in outreach activities. Through collaboration, groups that may disagree explore their differences, identify common interests, and seek common-ground solutions. The goal of collaborative groups is to build and promote a collective vision for how to manage the relationship. Such relationships can lead to one or many partnership projects. A collaborative relationship may be documented through a formal arrangement, but often it is not. This means that a collaborative process is a type of partnership in the broad, rather than the strict, sense.

Another word on collaboration…

Since collaborative efforts commonly bring together stakeholders with a long history of conflict and mistrust, they face additional challenges in achieving a balanced group dynamic. Successful collaborative groups take care to provide the following elements:

- **Inclusion** – Collaborative planning for includes all parties with a stake in the results. The process treats all participants fairly and consistently. It allows participants to consult with relevant constituencies and to feel vested in all decisions made.

- **Incentives to participate** – Stakeholders in a collaborative effort have sufficient and continuing incentives to participate.

- **Accountable representation** – The participants who represent groups or organizations effectively speak for the interests they represent and are accountable to their constituency.

- **Equal access** – The collaborative group ensures equal opportunities to participate, access to relevant scientific and technical information, and skill-building for participants.
Building Relationships

Good relationships build trust and goodwill and provide a solid foundation for partners to work together to achieve mutual goals.

Elements of Success

Experience shows that successful partnerships and collaborative efforts exhibit the following features:

Clear objectives – The partnership lays out clear objectives that may include specific stewardship goals or building skills, relationships, and capacity.

Agreed-upon scope – Agreement on the scope of a partnership, including its scale, extent, and intent, focuses the partnership effort.

Sufficient resources and information – The partnership or collaboration has access to sufficient resources to ensure success. Resources include time, staff, information, data, skills, and money.

Mutual benefits and responsibility – All parties share in the decision-making process, responsibility for outcomes, and benefits of the partnership.

Respect – Partners not only respect each other but also understand and respect the missions, goals, and regulations of the organizations involved.

Good communication – Continuous communication and frequent opportunities to check progress build relationships that provide mutual, trust, and respect, and improve the capacity of participants to solve problems together.

Careful management – Essential elements include: 1) clearly defined participant roles and responsibilities; 2) clear ground rules and protocols; and 3) informal and formal communication links with the public, the media, and other government agencies.

Compliance with legal requirements - All partners should comply all with legal guidelines and policies that govern their status and partnership involvement. The partners are knowledgeable about legal authorities and constraints that may impact their decisions.

Planning for implementation and evaluation – Participants agree on the steps that each will take to implement their collective plan, and on measurable outcomes to gauge effectiveness. These features help to build the effectiveness of any partnership.
Resources.....

- Rhode Island has 36 public school districts
- There are 5 urban school districts in the state: Providence (largest district in the state), Pawtucket, Central Falls, Woonsocket and Newport.
- To learn more about the Rhode Island School System visit InfoWorks Live: http://infoworks.ride.ri.gov/. This site has lots of both district and school level data and even includes a school finder “searchable map”.
- To learn more about STEM PK-12 education agenda in Rhode Island contact: Peter McLearn (peter.mclaren@ride.ri.gov), STEM Specialist, Rhode Island Department of Education
- To learn more about the Career and Technical Education system in the state, visit: http://www.ride.ri.gov/adulteducation/cte.aspx , Contact: Vanessa Cooley (vanessa.cooley@ride.rigov), CTE Director, Rhode Island Department of Education
- To learn more about Rhode Island Charter Schools visit: http://www.ride.ri.gov/commissioner/charterschools/default.aspx Contact: Bryant Jones (bryant.jones@ride.ri.gov), Charter School Specialist, Rhode Island Department of Education
- To learn more about after school programs in the state visit, http://www.ride.ri.gov/HighSchoolReform/cclc/cclc.aspx. Contact: Jacqueline Ascrizzi (jackie.ascrizzi@ride.ri.gov), Administrator, 21st Century Grants, Rhode Island Department of Education

Providence Public School District
At-A-Glance

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total Enrollment</th>
<th># of Elementary School</th>
<th># of Middle Schools</th>
<th># of High Schools</th>
<th># of Charter Schools</th>
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<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Susan Lusi</td>
<td>23,561</td>
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<td>Chief Academic Officer (Acting)</td>
<td>Paula Shannon</td>
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<td>Executive Director of Curriculum Development and Implementation</td>
<td>Rachel Mellion</td>
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<td>Grants Writer and Director of Partnerships</td>
<td>Jennifer Steinfeld</td>
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<td>Director of Extended Learning</td>
<td>Patrick Duhon</td>
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- To learn more about PPSD visit: http://www.ppsd.org
- To learn more about the after school stakeholder community in Providence visit: http://www.mypasa.org/
- To learn more about both school and neighborhood data visit: http://provplan.org/