

Education Elevators

Business Implementation Manual



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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in forming a partnership with Education Elevators. This guide is designed for business leaders who are interested in setting up a business-school partnership. Education Elevators facilitates the development of a mutually supportive relationship between a business and a school in which the partners commit themselves to specific goals and activities outlined to benefit the school, business and community.

Our Vision

Our vision is for every child to reach their unique potential.

Our Mission

Our mission is to elevate West Virginia children by fostering mentoring relationships that fuel their curiosity and support their abilities to learn and thrive.

Our History

In 2007, Tom McJunkin, a partner at Jackson Kelly and a long-time advocate of education, encouraged the firm to take their existing partnership with Piedmont to a new level by implementing an innovative new program that would allow attorneys and staff from the firm to mentor students at Piedmont Elementary.

McJunkin believed that there was “no mission more important than the education of our youth” and thought that it was imperative for businesses to take an active role in local education. McJunkin realized that by providing the “human energy” to support, motivate and inspire students, businesses could have a positive impact on communities and make a real investment in our future.

With those ideas in mind, McJunkin created Education Elevators – a program that offered businesses a cost-effective way to be part of the solution.

Since McJunkin’s untimely death in 2011, Education Elevators has expanded to other schools and businesses throughout WV, and continues to gather steam.

Case for Business Partnership

A business-school partnership through the Education Elevators Foundation is an ongoing program in which a business gives assistance directly to a selected school. This assistance can take many forms including both volunteer assistance and monetary assistance. Each partnership is unique and designed based on the school and business needs and resources. Cost and time commitments also vary from program to program.

Benefits to the Students and School

- Increases resources to enhance education of students
- Provides adult role models otherwise not available in the classroom
- Demonstrates to students how basic skills are used in the workplace
- Increases student and staff understanding of business world
- Teaches students responsibility
- Promotes the positive development of youth through developing competence, confidence, connection, character, caring and curiosity

Benefits to Business and Employees

- Offers opportunities for employee volunteerism
- Helps attract and retain diverse talent
- Offers opportunity to engage and develop employees in areas outside of their normal roles
- Build strategic partnerships in the community
- Increases interaction with employees in other departments
- Increases understanding of inclusion and diversity
- Increases employee motivation, performance and retention
- Improves local school programs and future workforce
- Positive public relations and recognition in the community

“If the business community fails to become actively involved to help public education succeed, in less than two decades the American economy will run out of its most essential energy source—human energy.” Tom McJunkin

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of Business

- Designate a business coordinator (and/or committee) who will have primary responsibility for program promotion, employee recruitment and communication with Education Elevators
- Ensure that upper management is informed and on board
- Send a clear message to all levels of staff that the business supports the partnership and encourages employee participation
- Provide an opportunity for employees to attend informational sessions and introductory trainings
- Post program information in common areas and work site locations
- Promote and publicly recognize school partner and include information on Education Elevators on company website, newsletters etc.
- Provide funds and/or supplies for the Elevator area and other program activities (lunch and learning, trainings, etc.)

Role of Business Coordinator(s)

- Serve as the liaison between the business, the school and Education Elevators
- Recruit new Elevators each year
- Work with Program Coordinator to schedule Lunch & Learns and Trainings; print out materials for folders and assist with audio visual tools
- Communicate with Communications & Logistics Manager as to who attended trainings, and any needs of Elevators
- Communicate with Elevators regularly and seek assistance as needed
- Schedule joint meetings with the EE coordinator throughout the year
- Inform SC, EEC & CLM of any Elevator transfers or changes in status (ie. will no longer be able to continue being an Elevator)
- Seek donations (books, games, art supplies, costumes, cameras, sports equipment, etc.) from staff and employees
- Elicit opportunities for employee feedback
- Provide Elevators information about school closures or events
- Work with school and Program Coordinator to determine other opportunities for employee engagement
- Complete evaluation tools and provide feedback

“There could not be a more relevant mission for our state. We must invest in our youth, inspire them and heighten their educational aspirations.”

Dr. Gordon Gee, President WVU

Setting Up a Partnership

A partnership with a school through Education Elevators should fit in with your organization's strategic plan. Below is a checklist to help you take the steps to set up a partnership. Critical to this process is identifying the unmet needs of your business and determining whether a school partnership will meet those needs. Additionally, determine the time, resources and monetary contributions your business will be able to commit to. Every business-school partnership is unique with varying levels of expectations.

Education Elevators will help you find a school partner that will be the best fit for your business based on your business's and the school's needs, goals and resources. We will set up a meeting with you and your partner so you can discuss the exact outcomes desired from the partnership. At this time, you will set specific goals and expectations.

After a specific plan is set, it is critical that the partnership plan receives approval from executive/upper-level management before being implemented. Management support is critical for a successful implementation of the partnership. It is recommended to get management involved as soon as possible in order to establish the best outcome for the partnership.

Establish Partnership Governance

A key element in creating a successful program is establishing partnership governance. This should be a formal, written management structure for the program with specific individuals or committees assigned to ensure accountability and program success.

There should be one individual assigned to be the primary contact for the partnership. There should be either an individual or a committee assigned to be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the program and ultimately ensuring that the partnership goals are met.

The type and size of business may dictate who serves as the contact person and whether or not a committee is established.

Governance Sustainability

In order to ensure the governance of the program is sustained through time and/or employee transitions, it is recommended that the contact person and committee members (if applicable) serve a term period, after which responsibility is transferred to another person. Additionally, if the company brings in new leadership, be sure to inform the new leader of the partnership and its success as soon as possible.

Budget

The Education Elevators program can be tailored to fit any and all budgets. Here is a list of some of the items businesses may want to contribute to as part of an Education Elevator partnership:

- Food for Lunch & Learns and Trainings
- Fee for background checks for Elevators (approximately \$27 per Elevator)
- Supplies for Elevators at school (board games, books, art supplies, sports equipment)
- Funds to host a Career Day for students- bring students to work day, if desired.
- End of year events for Elevators and students

The business can pay for those things directly or provide funding to Education Elevators for that purpose. Education Elevators does not require business partners to provide funds or make donations to the

Foundation directly but most business partners do once they set how the program is beneficial to the Elevators, the business, the community and, most importantly, students.

Recruitment

Here is a list of ideas to communicate the program to employees and recruit Elevators:

- Email blast announcing program
- Fliers around office announcing program
- Host a Lunch and Learn
- Utilize existing communication tools – internal internet site, office bulletin boards, TV screens, newsletters, etc.
- Draft email for managers to send to their departments (establishes management support for program and may encourage more employees to volunteer)
- Speak at beginning of team meetings
- Consider putting information about the Education Elevators Program in your New Hire Package.

It is recommended that the business use a mix of at least three different forms of communication to reach employees. Follow up is key!

Suggested Timeline

- Launch program within business – Spring
- Schedule Lunch and learn and Solicit Elevators – Spring through early Summer
- Elevator background checks, forms, etc. – June-July
- Elevator training – July-August
- Elevators begin at school – September

Setting up a Partnership Checklist

___ Contact Education Elevators to communicate interest in getting involved (If you're reading this, you can probably check this one off).

___ Designate a Business Coordinator or Co-Coordinators.

___ Work with School and EE Coordinator to outline partnership parameters. Sign MOU.

___ Identify and agree on specific terms the business could commit to, events, monetary support, etc. Establish a budget.

___ Determine communication structure with school and other Elevators regarding absences and how information like school closures and school events will be communicated to Elevators.

___ Work with management to show company support (email of support from management).

___ Work with Education Elevators Foundation to schedule a Lunch & Learn and Training.

___ Solicit Elevators (recruiting email, posters in the break room, etc).

Sustaining the Partnership

Support Elevators

Education Elevators and the school are responsible for supporting Elevators, but the program works even better if the business coordinator can check in with Elevators on occasion.

- Provide Elevators information about school closures or events in the form of a monthly calendar.
- When possible, conduct informal checks-ins with Elevators to see how things are going.
- Schedule time periodically for the Elevators to get together and share experiences and techniques that are working.

Communicate with Education Elevators regularly

Communication with the Program Coordinator is critical for an effective program.

- Schedule joint meetings with the school and the Program Coordinator throughout the year to discuss successes and failures.
- Let the Program Coordinator know immediately if an Elevator is having an issue or needs to end a relationship with a student.
- Seek assistance from Education Elevators as needed.
- If an Elevator is leaving the business, the Business Coordinator should provide forwarding contact information.

Determine other ways to support the partnership

The best partnerships are those that allow opportunities for the business and its employees to be involved.

- Seek donations (books, games, art supplies, costumes, cameras, sports equipment etc.) from staff and employees.
- Work with school to determine other opportunities for employee engagement, such as field trips, job shadow days, career days.

Evaluate and Promote the partnership

- Celebrate successes and evaluate any issues.
- Submit articles about the partnership or specific Elevators to your business' home page or web site.
- Complete evaluation tools and provide feedback.
- Consider providing funds for end-of-the-year celebration events. Involve your staff in the planning.

Continue to grow the partnership

Once the partnership is launched, it's critical that steps are taken to continue to cultivate it.

- Hold annual Elevator drives to promote the business relationship and recruit new Elevators.
- Include information about the partnership in company newsletters or on the website.
- Consider putting information about the Education Elevators Program in your New Hire Package.

Other Partnership Activities

Not every employee has the time or interest in becoming an Elevator. However, there are many ways in addition to mentoring, that businesses and their employees can enhance the student learning experience, and contribute to the school-business partnership.

Here is a list of common activities:

- Encourage employees to participate in a Read Aloud Program or to be Enrichment Volunteers (People who make a one time commitment to do a class presentation on special subjects/topics).
- Start a lunch buddies program where employees participate in “reward” activities for students who had good attendance or good behavior.
- Host a "Career Day" where students have the opportunity to tour your business and learn about different career opportunities.
- Allow employees the opportunity to judge a Science Fair or participate in a Career Fair.
- Provide computers or other supplies.
- Ask employees to donate supplies (books, puzzles, games, costumes, sports equipment, old cameras etc.) to be used in the Elevator Area.
- Sponsor a Back to School Backpack program.
- Donate money generated from vending machine.
- Provide funds to students in need for field trips. Make them contingent on an interview and an essay to enhance student writing and interview skills.
- Assist with the development of a service project through which students and your business could give back to the community, e.g., community clean ups, garden projects.
- Have a booth or station at the Open House, Carnival or other school events.
- Participate in school events like a “Walk to School Day.”
- Provide awards for students who maintain perfect attendance or exhibited good behavior.
- Contribute to a student scholarship fund.

Partnership activities can change every year depending on the needs and interests of the school and business.



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Purpose

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes a mutual understanding between:

EDUCATION ELEVATORS and (Business Partner or Organization) and (School District, School or Community Partner).

Scope

All parties recognize the importance of education as well as the development of the social, emotional and career aspirations of young students in West Virginia. The implementation of this MOU supports the missions of the partner institutions and organizations to ensure that every child has access to a positive role model in life. For a child, the sky's the limit only if the child believes that he or she can reach the stars. The parties to this agreement are committing to providing positive influences to an individual child or a small group of identified children. The partners will agree to work together to meet the five goals of the Elevator program that include: (1) Caring: sense of empathy and sympathy for others; (2) Character: respect for societal and cultural norms, possession of standards for correct behaviors, a sense of right and wrong, and integrity; (3) Connection: positive bonds with people and institutions that are reflected in exchanges between the individual and her peers, family, school, and community; (4) Confidence: internal sense of overall positive self-worth and self-efficacy; and (5) Competence: positive view of one's actions in specific areas, including social, academic, cognitive, health, and vocational. Children who display these five characteristics are more likely to be successful in academics, social situations, and life in general.

This MOU is non-binding, but is intended to establish guidelines for cooperation among the parties.

Education Elevators will:

- Provide program materials, best practices guidelines, sample forms and resources.
- Provide training and training materials.
- Ensure that Elevators have satisfied all program, school and BOE requirements.
- Ensure that Elevators have passed background checks
- Provide on-going program support and guidance

- Conduct evaluations of program effectiveness
- Promote and publicly recognize the partnership amongst Education Elevators, the school and business partner or organization

Business / Organization will:

- Designate a Business Coordinator who will have primary responsibility for program promotion, employee recruitment, and communication with school.
- Encourage employees to participate in the Elevator program.
- Allow employees to spend an hour (during school hours and potentially during the business operation hours) each week meeting the goals outlined above.
- Provide an opportunity for introductory training.
- Support the background check verification process.
- Allow marketing materials to be posted at work sites or handed out at meetings.
- Participate in media events and media releases.
- Provide monetary support for the program (supplies, trainings, background checks) as needed.
- Complete evaluation tools and provide feedback.
- Promote and publicly recognize the partnership.

School/Community Organization will:

- Designate a Coordinator who will work hand-in-hand with EEF's Program Coordinator and have primary responsibility for program administration
- Allow the school coordinator time to attend training, if possible
- Create a committee to assist the School Coordinator with program administration, if necessary
- Educate staff, students, parents and other stakeholders about the Elevator program
- Identify the students who would benefit most from the program & match student to Elevator
- Obtain parental permission for program participation & keep all documents in a student file
- Designate a space for Elevators and students to meet
- Host an orientation for Elevators to familiarize them with policies and procedures
- Inform Elevators and students about their match
- Manage, monitor and support the student-Elevator relationship, in conjunction with EEF
- Conduct informal checks-ins with students, Elevators and staff
- Facilitate communication with staff and Elevators
- Provide Elevators with support to strengthen their relationship with students
- Notify EE Program Coordinator when a student transfers to a new school and provide a point of contact at the new school.
- Document the Elevator and student relationship with photos and videos
- Complete evaluation tools and provide feedback about the program to Education Elevators
- Recognize Elevators and the Business Partner

Effective Date

This MOU will become effective on the date signed by representatives of all parties.

Duration

This MOU remains in effect until one of the three parties terminates this MOU. This MOU will be signed each year by all parties prior to the commencement of the school year.

Termination

Any of the parties hereto may terminate this MOU upon 30 day notice to the other parties.

We have discussed the rules and responsibilities and agree to use them to guide our partnership.

School/Organization

Representative: _____

Date: _____

Business

Representative: _____

Date: _____

Education Elevators

Representative: _____

Date: _____