**Checklist for Building and Maintaining Industry Partnerships**

Whether you are just getting started or looking to expand or refine an existing industry partnership program, use this checklist to guide your planning and work.

**Determine Student and Business Needs**

* Identify needs from the school or student perspective or areas that the student experience could be enriched. Think about local businesses that have the capability to supplement these skills.
* Reach out to local businesses to determine workforce skill needs and possible opportunities to support students or the school community.
* Survey recent graduates to identify skills and experiences they feel would have benefited their secondary learning in order to inform partnership goals.

**Identify & Connect with Possible Industry Partners**

* Develop an inventory of what business connections, sponsorships, and relationships already exist at the school or district level. Consider, for instance, looking at business participants in Career and Technical Student Organizations or Career and Technical Advisory groups.
* Consider connecting with local networks of business leaders including Chambers of Commerce, Kiwanis Clubs, Rotary Clubs, or other local professional organizations or unions.
* Survey parents to identify their connections or professional skill sets that might lead to potential business partnerships.
* Email or call potential partners to see if they might be interested in collaborating, and, if so, what opportunities they might be able to offer students or the school community. When doing this, describe the value and benefits of a potential partnership for both them, as a community business, and the school.
* Clearly post specific contact information on the school or district website in case a local business wants to reach out to express interest in collaborating with a school or district.

**Create a Clear & Cohesive Plan**

* Once a business has shown interest and willingness to partner, talk through options for the structure of the partnership.
* Clearly define the goals of the partnership for all stakeholders (including students, business partners, and the broader school community). Share how success in meeting these goals will be measured.
* Work to establish clear expectations for what requisite knowledge, skills, or other characteristics students would need to be successful (e.g., access to transportation, technical computer skills, or strong customer service capabilities).
* Clearly articulate the learning goals for the student to everyone involved. Define how the activities involved in the partnership will contribute towards this learning.

**Define Roles & Responsibilities**

* Create a list of necessary steps and documents required for district partners. This might include school or district policies, applications for background checks, student time sheets or evaluations, or other health and safety documentation.
* Identify the point person at the school and business, clearly define each role, and share contact information with all involved (including students and families).
* Be clear about what each partner will contribute in terms of time, resources, and support.
* Communicate regularly to ask for feedback and make adjustments when necessary.

**Building Goodwill & Sustaining Partnerships**

* Make sure to share gratitude and say thank you at various intervals throughout the year. Share positive feedback from students and families, and encourage students, themselves, to say thank you in writing.
* Publicly spotlight businesses that are partnering with your school or district. Invite local media to showcase these contributions and share the support in school or district newsletters and communications.
* Celebrate the success of these partnerships on school or district social media. Highlight skills or industry certifications students may have earned while interning at a local business. Share student perspectives on how the experience with a business partner benefited them.
* At the conclusion of a student internship or event, connect with the industry partner to talk about what went well and what could be changed to improve the process going forward.