



*Cobb Chamber of Commerce Education Department
P.O. Box 671868 • Marietta, GA 30006
Ph: 770-859-2360 • Fax: 770-690-4028
partners@cobbchamber.org*

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School Handbook



**A Program of the Cobb Chamber of Commerce
for Cobb County and Marietta City Schools**

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Introduction

The quality of a community is defined by the strength of its public schools. While the most important “stakeholders” in our schools are the students, Cobb County businesses and organizations also have a vested interest in the success of schools. In order to enhance the quality of education, overcome obstacles such as the school systems’ challenging budget limitations, and recognize the benefits to schools and the community, businesses and community groups began establishing partnerships with local schools through the Cobb Chamber of Commerce in 1986. The Cobb Chamber Partners in Education Program (CCPIE) has grown and strengthened exponentially over the years as an increasing number of businesses and community groups understand and appreciate the impact that their involvement has on our educational systems.

This handbook was designed as a guide for effectively establishing and maintaining school-community partnerships. The Cobb Chamber encourages community partners and schools to learn from the success of others by reviewing and replicating the models provided in this handbook. A sampling of partnership activities and best practices were contributed by community partners and school partner liaisons to share with those who are exploring the program for the first time, those who are just getting started, and those who may be searching for ways to enhance their current partnerships.

Cobb Chamber Partners in Education

Cobb Chamber Partners in Education (CCPIE) is a program of the **Cobb Chamber of Commerce Education Department (CCED)** and **Cobb County and Marietta City Public School Systems**. A partnership is a voluntary relationship that is formed between a business or organization (**community partner**) and a school or school system. These relationships create support systems designed to meet the needs of the schools through the resources of the community partners to the benefit of both.

Then and Now

The Partners in Education Program is national in scope. CCPIE was established by the CCED in 1986 with five partners. Today the program has grown to around 1,300 partnerships, representing a total estimated value of more than **\$8.1 million** of time, money, goods, and services given back to our schools during the 2011-2012 school year.

CCPIE Mission

To establish and support partnerships that will utilize community resources to enrich and extend the education opportunities for Cobb County and Marietta City students.

CCPIE Goals

- Strengthen Cobb County's commitment to education
- Foster relationships between businesses and community groups and our educational systems
- Stimulate academic achievement and life-long learning

CCPIE Program Benefits

To the school

- Assistance in meeting school needs beyond available resources and in light of budget constraints
- Collaboration from the community in accomplishing the goals of annual school improvement plans
- Business expertise and technical support, providing a more complete education

To the business

- Presenting firsthand the requirements and expectations of the business world
- Heightening awareness of present and future job needs
- Understanding the quality and needs of the public school systems, whose health is vital to the community's economic well-being
- Building support for schools among employees and simultaneously boosting company morale
- Being recognized as a community-involved company, which adds to your public relations efforts
- Improved education of future employees and customers
- Donations may be considered charitable contributions

To the students


- Higher self-esteem
- Association with successful role models and mentors from the community
- Increased motivation to achieve success in the areas of academics, attendance, and character
- Enriched curriculum
- Individualized help with subjects outside of the classroom
- Education on the types of jobs in the workplace and how their academic skills apply

To the teachers

- Instructional support
- Improved morale
- Recognition for achievement
- Assistance in the classroom, allowing more time for planning and instructional activities
- Additional resources not provided for in the budget
- More contact with community members

To the community

- Increased communication among citizens
- Strengthened school systems
- Educated citizenry
- Well-prepared work force
- Improved economic development because lower dropout rates are tied to lower crime rates, less unemployment and fewer welfare recipients
- Ability to draw new businesses to the community



“We must have strong schools and families to be a strong nation. There are a lot of organizations trying a variety of things to improve the educational system in Georgia.”


Two Levels of Participation

Partner in Education:

A **Partner in Education (PIE)** is a business or an organization that partners with **one school** and commits to participate in at least one activity per quarter with that school. A business may become a PIE with up to three schools a calendar year as long as they meet the one activity per quarter requirement.

Partner at Large:

A **Partner at Large (PAL)** is a business or an organization that desires to form partnerships with **three or more schools within a school system** but *does not meet the one activity per quarter requirement*. The purpose of such a partnership is to allow a business or an organization to offer its resources for the benefit of Cobb County education systems in its entirety or multiple schools within one or both of the school systems.



“The key component to a successful partnership is first a desire to guide children and assist them in their years of growing as much as possible.”

How PIE Partnerships are Formed

1. A business or organization contacts the CCED sharing a desire to work with a Cobb County or Marietta City school.
2. The CCED supplies the business/organization with a community handbook, checklist and Partnership Plan. The school may also provide the business/organization with a Partnership Plan.

Note: If a business/organization approaches the school first, start at Step 3.

3. The business/organization contacts the school to discuss the needs of the school and the resources it can provide.

Note: PIE must commit to at least one activity a quarter with their partner school.

Quarters are Aug-Sept, Oct-Dec, Jan-Mar, Apr-May.

4. If the business/organization *and* the school believe the partnership is mutually beneficial, the Partnership Plan should be completed at this time (see PIE Partnership Plan on page 6). *If the partnership is not mutually beneficial, the CCED can help the business/organization select a new school.*
5. The business/organization and school should keep a copy of the Partnership Plan and fax a copy to the Cobb Chamber.
6. The Partnership Plan will be reviewed by the CCED once it is received. If the Partnership Plan is approved, the business/organization and the school will receive a confirmation e-mail from the CCED.
7. Once approved, the business/organization and the school should schedule a Signing Ceremony to formalize and publicize the partnership. See section notes on page 6 on how to plan a Signing Ceremony.

How to Plan a Signing Ceremony

1. The partner and the school should agree upon a date and time to hold a Signing Ceremony. The school is responsible for inviting its community partner to the signing. **When planning a signing ceremony, please contact the Cobb Chamber Education Department so representatives from the Cobb Chamber can be invited and plan to attend. Please plan signing ceremonies for weekdays before 4:00 p.m.**
2. Declarations of Partnership will be included with the school's new partner confirmation e-mail after a Partnership Plan has been processed. Please print two copies of each certificate, one for the partner and one for the school. Official Partner in Education seals will be mailed to the school shortly after the Partnership Plans have been processed. Please adhere the seals to the certificates.
3. Hard copy certificates are available upon request, the school should contact the CCED at partners@cobbchamber.org or 770-859-2360 to request Declarations of Partnership. Request should be made *two weeks* prior to the signing to allow time to prepare and mail the Declaration of Partnership certificates.
4. The school can mail signing invitations to their school district superintendent, area superintendent, area Board of Education member and other guests, if desired.
5. School administration should conduct the Signing Ceremony. Remember, the purpose of a Signing Ceremony is for the school to let their community partner(s) know that they are wanted, needed and appreciated. It is also an opportunity for the community partner to become acquainted with the school faculty, students and parents.

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The Cobb Chamber Partners in Education Program is coordinated by the Cobb Chamber of Commerce's Education Department for the Cobb County and Marietta City Schools. Our mission is to establish and support partnerships that utilize community resources to enrich and extend the education opportunities for Cobb County and Marietta City students.

Community Partner Contact Information

Business/Organization Name: _____

Contact Name: _____

Title: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zipcode: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Type of Business: _____

Website Address: _____

Partnership Activities (to be completed collaboratively by community partner and school representative)

This plan signifies a commitment to the partnership for a period of **one school year**. The plan should highlight the most significant activities/contributions planned as a result of the partnership. This document is a starting point for planning partnership activities and should not limit the activities of the partnership. Both parties should be aware that additional needs may arise. Please remember to include activities that the school can do for their partner. Feel free to add additional pages if necessary. Complete all information.

This plan represents partnership activities for the following school(s): _____

1st Quarter (August-September) Significant Activities

•

2nd Quarter (October-December) Significant Activities

•

3rd Quarter (January-March) Significant Activities

•

4th Quarter (April – May) Significant Activities

•

Authorizing individual: _____
Name School Phone

Authorizing individual: _____
Name Business Phone

Please email a copy of the completed form to partners@cobbchamber.org; fax to 770-690-4028 or mail to Cobb Chamber Education Department • P.O. Box 671868 • Marietta, GA 30006

How PAL Partnerships are Formed

1. A business or organization contacts the CCED sharing a desire to be involved with Cobb County school systems.
2. The CCED supplies the business/organization with a community handbook, checklist and Partnership Plan to be completed by the business/organization (see PAL Partnership Plan on page 8). The business/organization provides in writing what they intend to offer in the activity section of the Partnership Plan.
3. The business/organization makes a copy of the Partnership Plan for its records and then faxes a copy to the Cobb Chamber, wherein it will be reviewed and then sent to the appropriate school system(s).
4. The school system(s) will approve or deny the business' proposal to become a Partner at Large. The school systems' contacts inform the CCED of the decision.
5. The CCED will send an e-mail to the business/organization informing them of the decision. *Upon approval only* will the CCED send an e-mail to the appropriate school system(s) informing them of the new Partner at Large. All schools within the appropriate school system(s) will be notified of the new Partner at Large's contact information and details on proposed activities.

Note: Some partnerships may or may not serve to fill a need at a school or be beneficial to both parties, therefore each school and business/organization has the opportunity to accept or decline participation.

6. The business/organization then contacts and markets to the schools within the appropriate school system(s) as they see fit. Businesses/organizations are responsible for contacting and marketing to schools in order to give support and provide resources. The CCED is only responsible for e-mailing the appropriate school system(s) of the new Partner at Large, thus has no part in marketing or further contacting schools for Partners at Large.
7. Upon approval of the partnership, the new PAL will receive a Declaration of Partnership certificate that can be displayed at their office. Due to the nature of the Partner at Large level, Signing Ceremonies are generally not held for Partners at Large. Signing Ceremonies held for Partners at Large are at the sole discretion of the partner school(s).

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Community Partner Contact Information

Business/Organization Name: _____

Contact Name: _____

Title: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zipcode: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Type of Business: _____

Website Address: _____

Partnership Activities Section

(to be completed by community partner for approval by the Cobb Chamber and Cobb County Public School Systems)

The plan should highlight the most significant activities/contributions planned as a result of the partnership. This document is a starting point for planning partnership activities and should not limit the activities of the partnership. All parties should be aware that additional needs may arise. Complete all information.

Have you ever been a Partner in Education with Cobb County or Marietta City Schools?

☐ No ☐ Yes If so, specify which school(s) and for how long: _____

Would you like to work with: ☐ Cobb County Schools ☐ Marietta City Schools ☐ Both

In detail list activities you plan to do with your partner schools (use the back or the form or add additional pages as needed):

Authorizing individual: _____

Name

Business

Phone Number

Please email a copy of the completed form to partners@cobbchamber.org; fax to 770-690-4028 or mail to Cobb Chamber Education Department · P.O. Box 671868 · Marietta, GA 30006

Things to Keep in Mind When Completing a Partnership Plan

- **PIE** are required to commit to at least **one activity per quarter** with their partner school. If any given activity occurs consistently throughout the school year, you may indicate “ongoing” in the first activity section or rewrite the activity in each section.
- **PAL** are required to fill out the PAL Partnership Plan in its entirety and fax it to the CCED.
- Please give thought to specific activities and document one per quarter on your plan. Avoid generalizations such as “whatever we can do to help” and “we will assist in various ways.”
- Incomplete Partnership Plans will not be processed. To ensure that your plan is complete on the first turn-in, please check the following:
 1. Every section is filled out, including the sections in which you must check boxes
 2. The PIE Partnership Plan is signed by an authorizing party from the school **and** the business/organization

Partnership Reccommitments

In the spring of each school year, each school will be contacted by a member of the Cobb Chamber Partner in Education committee and receive a list of their current Partners in Education. The schools will be asked to contact their Partners in Education to verify that the business/organization wants to continue the partnership for the next school year and to confirm who the PIE representative for that business is. Changes will be made to the Partners in Education database as reported by the schools. Notification of any changes will be sent to the school and the business/organization. Each school will also receive a verification form for their PIE coordinator’s and principal’s contact information to complete.

Recommitments prevent partnerships from becoming inactive with time, provide opportunities to strengthen relationships and create “an out” for either party if there is no longer a desire to continue the relationship. Reccommitments provide the school and the Cobb Chamber of Commerce with the most up-to-date partner contact information and offer insight into which schools are in the greatest need of additional partners.

The Importance of Formalizing Partnerships

- To have well-informed partners who are educated on the program and familiar with its concepts; i.e., what constitutes a partnership, consideration points for new partners, best practices, obstacles to avoid, examples of partnerships activities, etc.
- To reduce the work and time required by the school to familiarize prospective and new partners to the program, train new partners, process paperwork, maintain records, etc.
- To allow your new partner to participate in a Signing Ceremony to publicize your partnership. New partners really appreciate the opportunity to be recognized and introduced to the school faculty, students and parents. **Note: Due to the nature of the Partner at Large level, Signing Ceremonies are generally not held for Partners at Large. Signing Ceremonies held for Partners at Large are at the sole discretion of the partner school(s). The CCED, however, provides Partners at Large with a Declaration of Partnership certificate once the partner has been approved by the school district.**
- To receive a Declaration of Partnership certificate to publicly display at the school to inform the school staff, students, parents, visitors and community-at-large of your partnership.
- To present your partner with a Declaration of Partnership certificate to display at their place of work to inform staff, clients, members, and the community-at-large of their commitment to your school.
- To allow your partner to be recognized as new or active participants in the CCPIE Program through Cobb Chamber publications, events, etc.
- To nominate your school’s outstanding partners for the distinguished Outstanding Partners in Education Awards that are presented to the top partners in Cobb County every year.
- To ensure that your partner is informed and invited to participate in other programs that the CCED coordinates for the school systems (i.e. Principal for A Day, Give Our Schools a Hand, etc.)

- To allow your partner to be acknowledged before the Cobb County and Marietta City Boards of Education for the contributions they provide to your school each year.

Partnership Activities

The community partner, school principal and/or school partner liaison will discuss goals and activities for the year at the initial meeting. At this time the Partnership Plan will be completed. **Partners in Education are required to commit to a minimum of one activity per quarter.** The following lists provide a sampling of the partnership activities that exist in our schools and that Partners in Education and Partners at Large are currently undertaking.

Support student achievement

- Volunteer for tutoring, reading, or mentoring
- Award good attendance, character, academic or extracurricular achievement with recognition, prizes, scholarships, etc.
- Provide food and refreshments for school events and programs
- Donate "Honor Student" bumper stickers
- Be an e-mail buddy
- Be a lunch buddy

School-to-Career

- Share a special skill with a class
- Share information specific to your vocation
- Speak at Career Day
- Create a mock business in a classroom
- Review applications and resumes and conduct mock interviews
- Offer job shadowing experiences for students and teachers
- Employ students in summer months or on a part-time basis

"There are children that never get talked to while they are at home. If a teacher doesn't talk to them directly during the day they may go all day without hearing their own name."

Encourage student performance and learning

- Display student artwork at your facility
- Display listings of student accomplishments at your facility (i.e. Reader of the Month)
- Host motivational programs and activities
- Invite students to perform for employees and customers
- Provide peppermints to students during testing periods
- Offer demonstrations and presentations on various topics. Suggested topics include, but are not limited to, drug awareness, health and nutrition, understanding of money and how to handle it, self-esteem, goal setting, problem solving, interviewing techniques, resume writing, backpack safety, etc.


Donate supplies and resources

- Basic school supplies
- Books for the school library
- Books for students to take home and keep to promote reading outside the classroom
- Copying equipment and paper for large projects
- Use of your facility for staff/PTA meetings, student activities
- Use of your facility for school nights and donate a portion of proceeds to school
- Use of your facility for community-based instruction for special education students
- Transportation, use of company vans
- Departmental supplies
- Printing services
- Funding to cover the cost of field trips for low-income students
- Purchase school uniforms
- Supply a classroom with newspapers (AJC News for Kids) or relevant trade publications
- Funding for a homework center to benefit ASP students

Partnership Activities (continued)

Support teachers and faculty

- Recognize and thank teachers during appreciation week and Give Our Schools a Hand Month (October)
- Donate teacher incentives, such as gift certificates or coupons for products and services
- Supply food and refreshments for appreciation events, meetings, and in-service workdays
- Offer teacher scholarships
- Provide staff development opportunities
- Host a best practices luncheon for school staff where they can discuss challenges they are facing and collaborate to find solutions
- Work with classroom teachers to develop lesson plans
- Be a Give Our Schools a Hand sponsor (Call the CCED for more information)



“Yes, we have an absenteeism problem: Our teachers are missing too many days.”

Support school programs

- School fundraisers - book drives, bake sales, fun runs, auctions, canned food drives, etc.
- Join the PTA
- Student performances
- Welcome program, orientation for new students & families
- Special school activities - Career Day, Field Day, Red Ribbon Week, fairs/carnivals, etc.
- Holiday celebrations
- Extracurricular activities; sponsor a club or sports team

Volunteer time

- Serve on the school council
- Translate or provide translators for parent/teacher meetings
- Serve as a school judge
- Assist with school newsletter, yearbook or other publications
- Work in classrooms, front office, media center, lunchroom or on bus duty
- Be a fieldtrip chaperone
- Work with students on community service projects

Assist with school improvement projects

- Landscaping
- Renovations
- Painting
- Playground needs
- Nature trails
- Outdoor classroom construction
- Furniture and décor donations

Partnership Activities by Business Category

Apartments

- Provide use of facilities for meetings

Attorneys

- Guest speaker for classes
- Stage mock trial or historical reenactment

Auto Dealers/Auto Services

- Internships, job shadow or field trips for auto tech classes

Bookstores/Booksellers

- Start a book club
- Guest reader for Read Across America
- Donate books to schools

Business Associations

- Present on entrepreneurship and other business related topics
- Produce a student created commercial with a business focus

Catering

- Help prepare students for culinary competitions
- Teach demos

Chiropractors

- Give spinal screenings, chair massages or massage gift certificates for teachers
- Establish a stretching program or fitness challenge
- Workshops on nutrition, stress management and relaxation

Churches

- Help maintain school grounds and plant flowers
- Volunteer to support teaching staff
- Provide use of facility/performance space for meetings and performances

Civic Groups/Organizations

- Create a program to recognize student or teacher achievement
- Internships and job shadows
- Start writing, reading or leadership programs

Community Groups/Organizations

- Workshops on study skills, goal setting and test taking
- Establish environmental awareness or recycling classes

Dentistry/Orthodontics

- Speak at Health Fair
- Give goody bags for Dental Health Month

Education/Educational Services

- Establish after school program
- Set up an information booth at Open House
- Offer study skills or SAT prep classes

Engineering

- Internships or career workshops
- Judge science fairs and other projects

Partnership Activities by Business Category *(continued)*

Financial Institutions

- Start school bank, banking days or school savings program
- Provide tax and financial seminars to parents and teachers
- Support field trips (i.e. Capital or Federal Reserve)

Florists

- Donate flowers for school events
- Give Teacher of the Month a bouquet of flowers

Government

- Police, fire and public safety presentations
- Speak at PTA meetings
- Serve on school council

Grocery

- Providing use of facilities for meetings and performances
- Cake decorating with students for events (i.e. Mother's Day)

Healthcare/Health & Wellness

- Develop programs that promote healthy habits
- Speak at Career Fair on related topics (i.e. Cancer Awareness)
- Donate medical or first aid supplies

Insurance

- Provide banking and money management kit
- Workshops for parents on related topics (i.e. money management)

Jeweler

- Be a guest speaker in a science class
- Implement a jewelry design contest

Landscaping

- Help clean up the school grounds
- Provide hanging baskets for school entrances
- Workshops on how to maintain plants and flowers

Martial Arts

- Demonstrations for Physical Education classes
- Create an anti-bullying program
- Self-defense classes for parents and teachers

Non-Profit

- Start an international pen pal program
- Job shadows and apprenticeships

Printing/Graphic Services

- Print copies of school newsletters
- Drawing, printing or graphics demos for students
- Provide event signage

Public Safety

- Establish youth development programs
- Safety presentations
- Provide crossing guards for school events (i.e. Open House)

Real Estate

- Workshops for parents on related topics (i.e. mortgages)
- Guest speaker in Math classes

Partnership Activities by Business Category *(continued)*

Recreation

- Participate in environmental programs
- Establish a Fine Arts program (i.e. Young Rembrandts)
- Volunteer with leadership and team building programs

Restaurant

- Create a “Partner in Education” discount for students and staff
- Send mascot to read to students or participate in school events
- Host or cater a faculty breakfast or School Spirit Night

Retail

- Present to Business classes
- Host field trips by topics (i.e. merchandising)

Retirement Home/Assisted Living

- Establish pen pal program
- Help decorate holiday cards with students

Salon & Spa Services

- Help with Prom fashion shows and expos
- Hair painting for festivals and other events

Technology

- Educational workshops on computers and new technology
- Presentation for Robotics teams and computer clubs
- Host field trips and job shadows

Theater/Performing Arts

- Start a drama club or a Performing Arts program
- Help produce school plays or provide playwrighting and workshops
- Host field trips to performances and venues


Best Practices

Preparing for new community partners

- Add all community partners and CCED staff to your “**safe sender list**” to avoid losing their messages to spam filters. Add your community partners to school and PTSA newsletter mailing lists to **keep them informed** of what is going on at the school.
- Determine if **partnership goals are appropriate and achievable**. Every partnership activity should have **clear objectives** and **on-going evaluation**.
 - Match partners to areas of interest within the school.
 - Make sure the partnership **represents the interests of all** involved.
- Send e-mails to your school staff, making them aware of who your community partners are and what they are doing in and for the school.

Establishing a relationship

- Create a climate conducive to community involvement, making it easy for your partner to feel at home in your school. **Involve your partners**. Invite them to school events and school council meetings.
 - Community partners should be viewed as an **integral part of the school** and included in the school's program planning.
 - **Make your partners feel welcome**, prior to an event, prepare a welcome sign so that your partners know that you are expecting them and are excited about their visit.
 - Never overlook an opportunity to **recognize and publicize** your partnerships.
- **Thank your partners often**. Appreciation from students and teachers is a big hit with partners. See page 17 for ideas!
- **Make sure the partnership is reciprocal**. Brainstorm partnership activities that you can do for your partners. See page 18 for ideas!
- Schools should focus on utilizing the **human resources** of the business: time, talents and expertise, not just their monetary contributions. Be willing to **accept whatever partners can offer** and understand that it may not always be monetary.
- Schools should **be sensitive about overburdening community partners with requests** that would jeopardize the relationship. This is the **number one cause of dissatisfaction** and could ultimately lead to a loss of that partnership. To avoid this pitfall, spend time discussing and developing your Partnership Plan for the year and commit to it.



“Communicate! Keep your Partners ‘plugged in’ to what is happening at the school.”

Best Practices (continued)

Communication

- **Employ a system of exchanging information** between the school and the community partner to ensure direct communications. If not the principal, a school representative should be designated as the **one point of contact (Partner in Education Coordinator)** and the community partner should be informed of who that person is and how to reach him/her. All communication and correspondence to the community partner should stem from this one source. A Partner in Education Coordinator may be an administrator, counselor, PTA leader, or teacher. Design a communication strategy and discuss it with your community partners.
- Schedule **regular meeting dates** with your partners (i.e. the second Tuesday of every month, 8 a.m. at the school). Meet several times a year at integral periods during the school year. Planning group meetings with all of your community partners allow needs and solutions to be discussed as a team.
- **Stay in touch!** Direct and consistent communication is a big contributor to successful partnerships.
 - Develop a **group message board** as a way to communicate with all your community partners simultaneously.
 - Send e-mail reminders to your community partners about upcoming events.

Obstacles to Avoid


- Placing too much emphasis on the monetary and material aspects of the partnership
- Using the program as a public relations stunt or method of scrutinizing the community
- Lack of involvement from administration
- Not seeing the value that community partners bring to the schools
- Not recognizing the Cobb Chamber's role in coordinating the program for all the Cobb County and Marietta City public schools, demonstrated by:
 - Not adhering to the Cobb Chamber's procedures for setting up partnerships
Schools should meet with all their partners to complete Partnership Plans (every school should have a copy) and return to the Cobb Chamber for processing.
 - Permitting "unofficial" partners
 - Not notifying the Cobb Chamber when Signing Ceremonies take place or not conducting Signing Ceremonies for new partners
 - Self-administering a partners program under the same or a different name
- Not initiating conversations/scheduling meetings with new partners or maintaining consistent contact throughout the year
- Not identifying areas where partners could assist and failing to communicate those needs to your community partners
- Not viewing partnerships as a two-way street
- Not letting your partners know how much they are wanted, needed and appreciated
- Not notifying the Cobb Chamber of changes to your partners' roster (i.e. when businesses close, when changes in management or contacts occur, when partners drop or become inactive at the school, etc.) With so many partnerships across 130 schools, maintenance efforts are more difficult without the schools' assistance.



"Look beyond the philanthropic capabilities of businesses and work to create 'a real relationship' that brings the resources of both parties together to enhance the student learning experience."

Ways to Say “Thank You” to Your Partners

- Thank them in person, by phone, by letter or by e-mail
- Write a “Welcome Back” letter to each partner at the beginning of the school year
- Recognize them at faculty and PTA meetings and at school assemblies or events
- Display their names/logos in PTSA newsletters, on school websites, on school bulletin boards, banners, marquees, and murals
- Create a “Wall of Fame” to display partner certificates/pictures
- Provide them with a special plaque to display at their business and display one at your school
- If a partner’s contribution directly impacts a class or program, encourage the students that were affected to write letters of appreciation
- Invite them to participate in special school activities and recognize their attendance
- Be tuned into publicity regarding your partners and offer them congratulations
- Do business with your partners whenever feasible
- Add your partners to the school mailing list to inform them of school news and events
- Provide a positive school climate and keep them informed on issues facing the education system
- Encourage teachers and staff to get to know your partners and greet them by name
- Nominate them for the Cobb Chamber Outstanding Partner Awards or for awards specific to your school



“It is so easy to feel appreciated by our school because the staff and the students have thanked us over and over again for taking time out of our day to come and help out.”

Making Partnerships a Two-Way Street

- Offer student artwork for them to display in their offices
- Have students submit entries/ art work to design the business's holiday card
- Have student leaders volunteer and serve customers at various business events
- Provide students to perform for their clients/customers
- Allow your partners to hold workshops/seminars at the school
- Provide complimentary tickets to school events ("Partner Passes")
- Allow your partners to speak at PTA meetings, booster club gatherings, or foundation meetings
- Invite them to eat lunch at your school or cater lunch at their facility
- Allow them to use the school facility
- Place partner logos on school t-shirts or list partners on school paper products
- Invite them to an annual Partners in Education appreciation/recommitment luncheon
- Participate in company events
- Give them small gifts, goodies, holiday cards
- Provide special recognition for partner employees (i.e. birthdays, special events, etc.)
- Assist partners with community service projects
- Offer opportunities to send fliers home with students
- Allow your partners to display materials in information centers at your school (i.e. front office, teacher lounge)
- Allow your partners to set up a "partner showcase" at school events (i.e. Meet & Greet, Sneak a Peak, Open House, Fall Festivals) to distribute business information and promotional items
- Submit pictures and stories about what you are doing for your partners (i.e. appreciation lunches, videos showcasing partner activities, etc.) for possible publication in the quarterly Partners in Education e-newsletter.

Prospecting and Recruiting New Partners

- First, determine the needs of the school.
- Examine existing resources/partnerships to see which needs are not being fulfilled.
- Pursue support for the most pressing needs first.
- Target businesses or organizations that you think are most appropriate or best positioned to assist.
 - For volunteers and mentors, target businesses and organizations with a large number of employees or members who are not as heavily customer oriented.
 - For incentives, target restaurants and places that your students frequent.
 - For curriculum support, target businesses that are natural fits (i.e. banks for math classes, doctors and dentists for health classes, gyms and recreational centers for physical education classes).
- Research targeted businesses and organizations before making contact.
- Be prepared to answer their questions.
 - How will their involvement benefit students? (see CCPIE Program Benefits, page 3)
 - What value does the partnership hold for them? (see CCPIE Program Benefits, page 3)
 - Familiarize yourself with the “frequently asked questions” section on pages 20-21.
- Explore different methods of recruiting.
 - Phone calls
 - Schedule an appointment with a company representative.
 - Invite a company representative to a school event, such as Open House, Career Fair, etc.
 - Letters
- Seek help with your recruitment efforts. Ask administrators, teachers, parents, volunteers, and your circles of influence for assistance.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can participate in the CCPIE program?

Businesses (small and large), civic groups, government agencies, churches, colleges and university organizations, non-profit agencies

Does a business/organization have to be located in Cobb County to participate in the CCPIE program?

No, as long as the business is partnering with a Cobb County or Marietta City School they can participate in the CCPIE program.

Is a Cobb Chamber membership needed to participate in CCPIE?

No, but the Cobb Chamber welcomes all interested businesses and community organizations.

Is there a minimum financial investment for partners?

There is **no cost** associated with establishing a partnership. Financial and in-kind donations are made at the discretion of the community partner.

What are the requirements for becoming an official Partner in Education (PIE) through the Cobb Chamber?

Every PIE should **complete a PIE Partnership Plan** with their partner school and commit a **minimum of one activity per quarter to their partner school**. Quarterly interaction helps build a relationship and contribute to sustainability, thus enhancing the quality of partnership. Partnership activities range from volunteering to donating goods and services (see pages 10-14 for ideas).

What are the requirements for becoming an official Partner at Large (PAL) through the Cobb Chamber?

Every PAL should **complete a PAL Partnership Plan** for the appropriate school system(s) and submit it to the Cobb Chamber. **Every PAL commits to partnering with three or more schools within a school system.**

Can community partners join more than one school in partnership?

The Cobb Chamber strongly encourages new **PIE** to only partner with one school at a time. This allows a community partner the opportunity to establish a strong relationship with one school before acquiring a partnership with an additional school. It also prevents time and resources from being spread too thinly among several schools, sacrificing the quality of all partnerships. However, **community partners may partner with up to three schools within one calendar year** as long as they meet the one activity per quarter requirement. Exceptions will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

The PAL category is designed for businesses that desire to work with three or more schools within a school system but do not meet the one activity per quarter requirement. The purpose of such a partnership is to allow a business to offer its resources for the benefit of Cobb County education systems in its entirety or multiple schools within one or both of the school systems. (Please refer to pages 4 and 7 for details)

Is there a bad time of year to enter into a partnership?

No; in fact, partnerships that begin late in the school year get the advantage of a “test drive” before planning their activities for the next year.

How long do partnerships last?

Most partnerships continue for as long as the relationship is beneficial and effective for all involved. The Cobb Chamber encourages community partners and schools to reevaluate their partnerships at the end of every school year.

Frequently Asked Questions (*continued*)

Do we have to renew our partnerships? How often?

In the spring of each school year, each school will be contacted by a member of the Cobb Chamber Partner in Education committee and receive a list of their current Partners in Education. The schools will be asked to contact their Partners in Education to verify that the business/organization wants to continue the partnership for the next school year and to confirm who the PIE representative for that business is. Changes will be made to the Partners in Education database as reported by the schools. Notification of any changes will be sent to the school and the business/organization. Each school will also receive a verification form for their PIE coordinator's and principal's contact information to complete.

Recommitments prevent partnerships from becoming inactive with time, provide opportunities to strengthen relationships and create "an out" for either party if there is no longer a desire to continue the relationship. Reccommitments provide the school and the Cobb Chamber of Commerce with the most up-to-date partner contact information and offer insight into which schools are in the greatest need of additional partners.

What are the benefits to completing the Partnership Plan?

Partners who complete the Partnership Plans are considered "official Cobb Chamber Partners in Education" and receive added recognition and exposure from the Cobb Chamber for their involvement in the program. For partners that are reluctant to complete the plan, we encourage them to read the "Importance of Formalizing Partnerships" section of the handbook (page 9).

How can small businesses participate in the program?

Many small businesses have successful partnerships with schools. The key is to know your limitations going into the relationship and committing to attainable activities that support student achievement. Partnership activities need to help students reach higher levels of achievement whether you provide volunteer time or financial (cash or in-kind) support. Many activities don't require an inordinate amount of time or, if time intensive, don't require many people. For example, programs requiring little time on the part of the community partner include: donating prizes to school incentive programs, participating in Career Day, judging. Other activities may require time, but don't necessarily require many people to which one volunteer is welcome. Many schools have an active mentoring program. While the program asks for a commitment of one hour per week for the school year, there are no requirements on the number of employees participating. Some partners engage in job shadows at their work sites. Employees who might not otherwise be able to leave work to volunteer are often able to host students at their office and provide them with a unique exposure to the business world.

What should I do if my partner isn't responsive?

Don't lose faith in your partnership if your partner does not return your phone call or e-mail immediately or does not honor every request you may ask of them. Please be patient and reevaluate the partnership to make sure that it represents the best interest of all involved. Examine the frequency and scope of your requests to determine whether they coincide with the commitments that were originally agreed upon in your Partnership Plan.

What should I do if my partnership becomes stagnant?

First try to determine the source of the problem and schedule an in-person meeting with your partner to share your concerns and discuss solutions. If outside counsel is needed, the CCPIE staff will help you evaluate the situation and recommend a course of action, in light of the circumstances.

What should I do if my partnership cannot be revitalized and needs to be dropped?

Notify the CCPIE staff and your partner.

The CCED's Role in the Partners Program

- To match schools and organizations in partnership
- To recruit new partners
- To provide information to prospective partners
- To serve as the liaison between community partners and schools
- To oversee a systematic process for establishing partnerships
- To prepare materials for establishing partnerships
- To educate new community partners and lay the foundation for successful partnerships
- To provide training sessions for community partners and schools
- To prepare Declarations of Partnership for new partners
- To recognize outstanding partners
- To recognize partners in our publications
- To recognize all partners before the Cobb County and Marietta City Boards of Education
- To promote the CCPIE program and recruit new community partners at Cobb Chamber events and out in the community

When to Contact the CCED

- To receive a Partners in Education Program handbook
- To report changes in your contact information
- To share your success stories and pictures for possible publication
- To report school needs
- To report changes in your partnership
- To discuss concerns or challenges
- To discuss partner recruitment strategy

Contact the Education Department at partners@cobbchamber.org or 770-859-2360

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