Community Partnership Manual

DRAFT
January 2018

Questions for group:
1. Do we want to use “industry” or “business”? 

The subject draft is not to be circulated or used as an official document.

Prepared by
Nevada STEM Advisory Council
Community Partnership Subcommittee
Preface

The Community Partnership subcommittee of the Nevada STEM Advisory Council (NSAC) was established in March 2016. The purpose of the subcommittee is to advise the NSAC on issues pertaining to Community Partnerships.

Roles and Responsibilities for the Community Partnership Subcommittee:

1. To articulate the greater benefits for learning through meaningful Community Partnerships.

2. To assist with student engagement activities through community partnerships that provide a variety of learning experiences (e.g., field trips, job shadows, mock interviews, internships).

3. Identify best community partnership practices, and successful models, for productive and meaningful community partnerships.

4. Provide roadmap for how to establish a successful community partnership.

5. To assist and strengthen communications and desired outcomes of the diverse agencies, organizations, operators, and partners committed to improving learning in Nevada.

6. Provide one voice regarding the varied opportunities for Community Partnerships to support and benefit Nevada’s educational system resulting in strengthened student performance.

Relation of the Community Partnership Subcommittee in the NSAC (2017) Strategic Plan:

>>> FINISH THIS >>>

Priority 2: Quality and Scope (pg 9)
    Goal 1: Improve quality and quantity in schools
        Strategy 7: increase number of opportunities and expand

Priority 4: Engagement and Alignment (pg 15)
    Goal 2: Increase STEM education coordination
        Strategy 3: Incentivize time for teachers
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Target Audience

This document was generated to serve business and industry representatives interested in establishing, or improving, community partnerships with formal educators (i.e., schools and classroom teachers).

1.2 How does the Community Partnerships Subcommittee differ from the Informal STEM Learning Environments (ISLE) Subcommittee?

The focus of the ISLE subcommittee is how to define a successful informal learning program, and how that learning occurs. The Community Partnerships subcommittee is focused on how to establish partnerships to support learning, and how to evaluate partnerships to ensure they are meaningful.

1.3 Background

Business and industry leaders in Nevada are increasingly concerned about the lack of a highly skilled pool of workers for their companies. An unforeseen result of the former “No Child Left Behind Act” was that many schools in Nevada reduced or deleted instruction in science, not to mention technology, physical education, and the arts, to meet requirements in math and reading.

Nevada’s science scores lags behind the nation. Numerous national reports on Nevada have documented the lack of science and mathematics content knowledge and credential requirements of Nevada’s K-8 teachers, resulting in many Nevada teachers who do not have adequate skills for teaching science.

In addition, the adoption of the Nevada Academic Content Standards for Science (NVACSS), derived from the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), by the Nevada Department of Education (Feb 2014) reflects the reality that science is so much more than just the rigid Scientific Method and “hypothesis based” science that has historically been taught in schools. The NVACSS allows for integrated teaching of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines with reading, and encourages the application of practices and knowledge.

Given the challenges of limited qualified teachers and rising expectations, the importance of high-quality Community Partnerships has risen to a new high. The desire for partnerships that allows for the sharing of respective knowledge and the creation of authentic, fun and interesting curriculum is at a premium.

Through curriculum that is supported through Community Partnerships students will be able to move through the scientific and engineering practices (that is, the activities scientists and engineers do daily) identified by the National Research Council, the National Science Teachers Association, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (REF).

The identified practices represent skill sets such as asking questions, collecting and analyzing data, and communicating information, that are used by STEM Professionals. These skill sets are not necessarily
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the skill sets that traditional educators possess. The blend of specific skills when STEM professionals and classically trained educators collaborate is powerful. Collaboration is necessary to create effective lessons for Nevada’s students, and forging effective and productive community partnerships is a critical step to facilitate the blending of the necessary skill sets.

Community partnerships draw from a broad range of resources and expertise. Establishing new relationships with entities that are not familiar with the established educational system requires communication, training opportunities, and oversight. To successfully solve the complex challenge of raising student achievement an objective and systematic process should be implemented to continually assess if and how partners are improving learning in Nevada.

In support of the NSAC, and with a focus on Community Partnerships, this paper will:

- Begin to define the variety of community partnerships and review the critical role of community partnerships in the learning environment (Section 2)
- Review how academic standards can be used to strengthen community partnerships (Section 3)
- Provide suggestions for how to establish a community partnership (Sections 4 and 5)
- Provide a strategy to evaluate a community partnership (Section 6)

1.4 Established Community Partnership Programs in Nevada

Before community partnerships are dissected and defined (below), it is important to recognize that in Nevada there is great diversity regarding established community partnerships and partnership opportunities.

This document is generic and presents community partnerships from a high-level view and serves as a primer, but is certainly not comprehensive. Community partnerships will be different in each community. Those interested in establishing community partnerships are encouraged to learn from those population centers who have organized relationships or agencies that support partnerships. Four such organizations are highlighted below to provide examples of the breadth of community partnerships in Nevada. In addition, reading about these four very diverse examples serves as a primer to the variety of what community partnerships may look like. There is not a “right” or “wrong” community partnership; there is not a one-size-fits-all solution. What is important is that both partners are served, their expectations are met, and Nevada students benefit from the partnership.

- Connecting Hands: Offering Lifelong Learning Adventures (CHOLLA): CHOLLA “is a consortium of community agencies and the Clark County School District that collaborate to provide opportunities for connecting and extending classroom learning” (www.nvoutdoorkids.org/cholla2). The goals of CHOLLA are “to correlate educational experiences with State Standards, give students direct experiences with the real world, match the educational programs of agencies with school curricula, allow students to interact with professionals and see career opportunities, and...

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introduce students to lifelong voluntary self-directed learning”. CHERYL, PLEASE EDIT AND ADD YOUR THOUGHTS HERE

- School-Community Partnership Program, Clark County School District: The mission statement of the School-Community Partnership Program is to, “The mission of the School-Community Partnership Program is to improve academic achievement, foster successful individuals and enrich student experiences by connecting schools with business and community resources (http://ccsd.net/community/partnership/).” The Program has been in existence since 1983, and encompasses several programs including Focus School Project, Stay In School Mentoring, Reclaim Your Future Mentoring Project, Professionals and Youth Building a Commitment (PAYBAC), Safe Routes to School, Support a School Program, and numerous curriculum-based programs. CHERYL, PLEASE EDIT AND ADD YOUR THOUGHTS HERE

- Northwest Career and Technical Academy, Las Vegas, Internships: The mission and vision of the Northwest Career and Technical Academy is to, “To boldly educate today’s learners for tomorrow’s challenges by developing advanced skills through unique hands-on experiences in a professional setting, utilizing community partnerships, innovative ideas, and contemporary technologies.” Internships are used…DAVID, PLEASE EDIT AND ADD YOUR THOUGHTS HERE…

- Fernley Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Council: Established in 2013, the Fernley STEM Council is a volunteer group of citizens that sponsors the annual Fernley STEM Festival. Once a year the Fernley STEM Festival connects their rural community members to local businesses that practice STEM everyday through an evening of interactive and hands-on activities provided and staffed by the local business people. This event draws over 1,000 participants of all age ranges and exposes Fernley to the diversity of STEM in their local community. Past participants included Animal Care Center, Nevada Cement, Nevada Virtual Academy, Nevada State Bank, City of Fernley, Discovery Museum, Lyon County Sheriff Department, North Lyon County Fire Protection District, and others.

2. THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The learning environment, in its totality, is the path that moves a very important learner (an individual) to a known place they want to go (dreams and goals), throughout their lifetime (Figure 1). It compasses formal education (going to school), informal education (for example, going on a field trip or to a museum), family and spiritual experiences, and general life experiences and those related to on-the-job training. Each of these wheels move independently, but also in concert, to carry a person towards a destination. The hope is that the destination is positive and reflects the individual’s potential. However, it is all too often witnessed how one of the wheels may fail an individual and the resulting path is less than desirable. While community partnerships, per se, are not identified in Figure 1, there is an intrinsic-understanding that the community partnerships are there, providing learning opportunities within the stated categories. For example, evidence that can be used to support this assumption is that most students in Nevada have experienced a field trip to a museum or some activity, which is most likely the result of a community partnership.
A community partnership is a relationship between an entity or an individual with a very important learner, usually through or via another established entity (e.g., a school, museum, or employer), that provides or supports learning opportunities intended to move a learner towards a goal. The “who” of community partnerships is a wide net; there are numerous entities that provide learners with opportunities. Figure 2 presents some of the more common entities within the given roles (wheels, i.e., formal education, etc.), however, is in no way is it comprehensive. What Figure 2 does provide however, is a glimpse at the beginning of the complexity associated with defining or describing community partnerships; community partnerships can look very different. To further articulate the complexity of community partnerships so operational definitions can be established the following sections will continue to tease apart the “what”, “why”, “where”, “when”, and “how” to compete the picture.
The “who” can provide learning experiences (the “what”) to learners in a variety of forms (Figure 3).

Learning opportunities may be:
- Structured: in a classroom or in a formal education environment.
- Non-structured: free-flowing, self-directed learning
- Authentic: naturally evolved lessons from life

A single entity may provide one, or a combination, of the different types of learning experiences. For example, job training may have structured components (e.g., formal classroom training experiences), as well as non-structured learning experiences that are guided by the need-to-learn, and authentic learning experiences that can only occur while experience is being obtained in real-life scenarios.
2.3 The “Why”

The “Who” provides or supports opportunities for learning for a variety of reasons, the “why” (Figure 4).

For example, some community partnerships are financial relationships which support learning opportunities, but do not actually provide a learning experience per se. Whereas, other community partnerships are driven (established) by federal or state mandates, and funding may or may not be provided. Some community partners provide materials to be supportive of curriculum. Other community partners provide experiences through internships or other mechanisms to help expose learners to new information or to inspire/instill dreams and goals, or to promote future workforce development.

The “why” can also be multi-dimensional; there are usually several reasons why businesses want to contribute to learning. There is also the concept of “return on community” that reflects how a business is giving back to the community. When businesses partner with local schools they can have a positive impact on their local community by not only providing jobs, but by being actively involved in their community. Sharing their expertise, improving the future workforce, and inspiring the next generation are positive outcomes of community partnerships.
2.4 The “Where”

Community partnership learning opportunities occur in a variety of places (Figure 5). They may be place-based, such as at school, museum, or business. In the 21st century, much of our learning occurs via the virtual world, through the internet or games. Learning also can occur via materials such as books. Other powerful learning experience venues are competitions or theme-based event, such as festivals.
2.5 The “When”

Learning should be occurring throughout a learners’ lifetime (Figure 6). If community partnerships are limited to “school-age” then there are many years that are not considered.

Figure 6. The “Who” can reach learners throughout a lifetime.

2.6 The “How”

Finally, the “how”, or a time commitment, of a community partner to an individual can also vary greatly. For example, the engagement between a community partner and a learner may be through a special event, like a science fair. Or, the engagement may be a one-time experience, such as a guest lecture in a classroom, or a science seminar at a museum. Community partnerships may also be much longer term, providing mentoring that lasts for months or years.

2.7 Operational Community Partnership Types

There are numerous types of partnerships, as evidenced by the breakdown of the 5-W’s in the previous sections. Listed below are some typical partnership types. Partnerships may also be a combinatorial, meaning that a single partnership encompasses a combination of several types. Clearly identifying the partnership type is helpful, if for no other reason, for evaluative purposes. The different community partnership types are intrinsically attached to different expectations, and having “a name” on the partnership may help minimize unmet expectations.

2.7.1 Financial Partnership

Financial partners contribute money to an entity. The money may be used for a variety of purposes, but the partnership is exclusively monetary; there is no expectation that services, such as expertise or materials, will be provided.
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2.7.2 Material or Resource Partnership

Material or resource partners contribute materials or resources (supplies) to an educational entity.

2.7.3 Special Event Partnership

Special event partners serve at/for a particular event or host an event. Special events can be science fairs, science festivals, competitions (e.g., Lego League or Future Cities). A special event may also be a lecture or lecture series. Special event partners provide expertise, for example judges, or space, such as meeting space. Special event partners can also provide monetary support, in conjunction with other contributions.

2.7.4 Content Knowledge Partnership

A content knowledge partners provides expertise on a subject. For students, the outcome is usually in the form of a classroom lecture or field trip. For teachers, the outcome may be professional development on a subject or topic, or special training.

2.7.5 Career Awareness Partnership

A career awareness partner provides the opportunity for students to be exposed to careers. Activities such as career fair participation, mock interviews, internships, and field trips to businesses would align with a career awareness partnership.

2.7.6 Mentor Partnership

A mentor partner supports for an extended period of time and supports students (or teachers) in the production of a product or in support of a project.

2.7.7 Internship Partnership

Working together, educators and business leaders can work together to provide real-life experiences to students. Student internships are supervised work experiences, either part-time or full-time, and can be paid or unpaid. See Appendix C for internship brochures from Clark County School District.

3. UNDERSTANDING ACADEMIC STANDARDS TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Educators are familiar with academic standards; however, business and industry partners generally know very little about academic standards. Students benefit when partners understand the role of academic standards. An understanding of academic standards minimizes frustrations and helps to ensure alignment of activities and opportunities to academic standards, which then strengthens the academic performance of Nevada’s students and teachers.

3.1 What are Academic Standards?

Academic standards are the benchmarks or expectations for which learners are expected to learn. Academic standards generally are composed of practices, those things learners are expected to be able
to “do”, and content, the “knowledge” of a subject. Each academic discipline has “standards”. Standards are the basis of curriculum, or what is taught in a classroom.

The Common Core State Standards were drafted by educational and business experts including teachers at local levels. The Common Core State Standards provide clear and consistent guidelines for what every student should know and be able to do in math and English language arts from kindergarten through 12th grade. English language arts includes reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The standards are designed to ensure that students are prepared to enter entry-level careers, freshman-level college courses, and workforce training programs (Common Core 2018).

The Next Generation Science Standards are the coordinated effort of 26 Lead-State Partners, the National Research Council, the National Science Teachers Association, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. These standards identify the science all K-12 students should know upon completion of high school (NGSS 2018). The Next Generation Science Standards also includes engineering and the engineering design process.

The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) adopted the Common Core State Standards in 2010, and the Next Generation Science Standards in 2013. Nevada also has academic content standards for computer science, visual arts, music, theater, dance, and media arts. The academic content standards for Nevada schools can be found on the Nevada Department of Education website.

3.2 Why should businesses care about Academic Standards?

Business leaders should be interested in academic standards because the academic standards dictate what is being taught in the classroom, and therefore impacts the preparedness of the workforce and competition at local, national and international levels. When a business is invited into a classroom, the visit will be maximized if the business-person can support the educator in the teaching of the academic standards, not just entertain the students. Students need to see real-world connections to the things they are learning, and business partners can help provide these opportunities for students.

In addition, Nevada students and teachers benefit greatly from opportunities to practice academic language. Academic language are words and terms not used in casual or informal language situations. Examples of academic language include terms such as, summarize, evaluate, classify, contrast, compare, demonstrate, and estimate. Academic language is paramount within the academic standards, and is used in testing and assessment situations, but too often not practiced in our classrooms. The authentic experiences that community partnerships provide can bolster to the use of academic language in the classroom.

3.3 Correlating Academic Standards to Workforce Skills

Educators are highly trained individuals in teaching students, however, they do not necessarily have experiences outside classrooms and schools or understand how the knowledge is transferred or applied in workplaces. Therefore, business partners are critical for helping educators correlate academic standards into workforce skills. For example, a high school biology teacher can teach about photosynthesis, mitosis and meiosis, and genetics. But, it is a perhaps a greenhouse owner, and a genetic counselor that can help the students see how what they are learning applies to the real-world. Real-world connections provide the answers to the age-old question of “why we have to learn this?”.
As educators and business leaders begin to work together, there will be an improvement in the appreciation and understanding of the challenges and limitations associated with creating a productive member of society. Then, working together, the “developer” and the “user” can work together to overcome some the challenges and limitations so that there is an improved workforce ready and willing to serve their community when the K-12 education system “delivers” into the world.

4. HOW DO WE FORM A COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP? INDUSTRY TO EDUCATION

This section provides an overview of the steps and considerations to establish a community partnership, from industry reaching out to education.

STEP 1: Determine Your Partnership Interest

Based on the different types of partnerships (Section 2.8), decide what type of partnership best suits your business and prepare a listing of what you are willing to offer.

STEP 2: Consider how you are going to handle sensitive information and safety hazards

Inviting students and teachers into your workplace may provide unique challenges regarding trade secrets and/or safety. Considering these potential sticky-situations beforehand will help you be better prepared for visitors.

If people are not coming to you, but you are sending employees out to represent your company, consider providing guidelines for what can and cannot be shared.

STEP 3: Research your local area to determine if there is a formal Community Partnership Office for your local school district.

STEP 2a: If yes, contact them and…CHERYL ADD SOME THOUGHTS HERE..

STEP 2b: If no, contact the school of interest directly by…THOUGHTS?

STEP 4: Select Who to Send or Have Represent Your Business

Young, energetic and dynamic representatives are usually who you want to send to represent your business.

Topics to consider: Youth versus experience…how to balance that? Use of technology?

STEP 5: Prepare for Engagement

Connect with the teacher ahead of time and discuss expectations! Learn about what academic standards are associated with your invitation. Ask about academic language and work to incorporate it into your presentation/experience. Learn about what exposure the students will have had before your time with them, and how your visit will be followed-up in the classroom. This information can be used to help tie your presentation to previous knowledge or expectations.
LEAH...thoughts on this? On our last call you mentioned having a “tips” section, so this is where this came from...

Things to consider:
- Provide time for practice and dry-run. If you are doing an activity, if possible, practice with kids!!
- You will be amazed at how differently kids and adults think, process information, and move.
- What makes sense to you, or what your can easily do with your adult dexterity may not be true for kids.

Key characteristics for a successful classroom presentation are:
- Be a model for students by being familiar with laws, school and classroom rules and expectations.
- Interact with students on a personal level – have informal conversations relevant to what students are learning or expected to know and be able to do.
- Not afraid to go “off script” and allow the engagement to evolve where the students take it.
- Prepared and organized (may include contact information, handouts, etc)

Key characteristics for a successful field-trip experience are:
- Develop and maintain a schedule
- Have a back-up plan for unexpected events (like weather and transportation)
- Be sure everyone in the group can hear the presenter. For example, you may need to invest in portable audio-enhancement equipment.
- Be sure everyone can see what you are talking about. If a tour, walk through with a group ahead of time and be sure that a group can fit and see.
- Use written signs to reinforce information.

Key characteristics for... interview?? What other experiences do we want to provide tips for?

STEP 6: Evaluate the Experience

Importance of evaluation:
- of teacher/school you served – was it a fit? Repeat this experience? Lessons learned?
- Of presenter –
- Get student feedback, too often we don’t students what they thought!

DAVID AND CHERYL – add thoughts about evaluation here...

Section 6 provides insights on evaluation tools.
5. HOW DO WE FORM A COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP?  EDUCATION TO INDUSTRY

Schools in search of industry partners will benefit from this section. It provides an overview of the steps and considerations to establish a community partnership.

**STEP 1:** Clearly identify your need.

**STEP 2:** Determine what type of community partnership will fill your need.

**STEP 3:** Research your local area to determine if there is a formal Community Partnership Office for your local school district.

**STEP 3a:** if yes, CHERYL... PLEASE ADD

**STEP 3b:** if no, solicit through...???
Parents? Professional Organizations? STEM Ambassador Registration?

**STEP 4:** Prepare for Engagement

Connect with speaker ahead of time! Determine how you think standards align to what they can present. Consider the opportunities for team teaching for this presentation – how to increase the numbers of students opportunities to learn from this experience?

Plan and then prepare classroom extensions to prepare students and follow-up

**STEP 6:** Evaluate the Experience

Importance of evaluation:
- of your role? Pre-teaching and follow-up? Do it again? Lessons learned?
- Of presenter –
- Get student feedback, too often we don’t students what they thought?

DAVID AND CHERYL – add thoughts about evaluation here...

Section 6 provides insights on evaluation tools.

6. RUBRIC FOR PARTNERSHIP EVALUATION

This section will
- sets up generic criteria for a successful relationship
  - Link relationships to standards (reinforces what is happening in the classroom?)
  - Evidence of student learning
  - Evidence of cost-benefit relationship
- gets at the data that will need to be collected and how it can be used to make decisions.
APPENDIX A

REFERENCES


APPENDIX B

Established Community Partnerships within Nevada (as of XXXX)

Per the NSAC Strategic Plan (Priority 4, Goal 2, Strategy 4) this list of established Community Partnerships is provided to increase STEM education, workforce development and economic development coordination and cooperation.

**HOW TO BEST ARRANGE? By partnership type? By county? Info to include?**

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Glossary

**Acronyms/Abbreviations**

**NDE**
Nevada Department of Education

**NSAC**
Nevada STEM Advisory Council

**NVACS**
Nevada Academic Content Standards - Science

**Operational Definitions**

**Stakeholder:** An individual or group or organization who is impacted by a process or decision, but not necessarily actively involved [Source…..]

**Cooperator:** An entity actively partner involved in a process or decision-making activity and/or sharing of resources. Synonym: Partner [Source……]  

**Collaboration:** an open and inclusive process, a communication tool used by groups to engage a broad array of diverse entities that come together to find solutions for issues/problems as they _________ [Source……]

**Community Partnership:** A relationship between an entity or an individual with a very important learner, usually through or via another established entity (e.g., a school, museum, or employer), that provides or supports learning opportunities intended to move a learner towards a goal.

**Learning Environment:** In its totality, the path that moves a very important learner (a person) to a known place they want to go (dreams and goals), throughout their lifetime.

**Partnership:** shared values, shared goals, and active contribution [Source……] understand desired outcomes and federal and state accountability elements for students and schools.

**Provider:** [Source……]
Formal Education: Education occurring inside a traditional school setting [Free Dictionary]

Informal Education: Education (Learning) outside of a traditional school setting. This includes homeschooling, mass media, museums, libraries, zoos, after-school groups and other community-based and cultural institutions. [Free Dictionary] field trips? Excursions around schools and classrooms?