

## The Case for Comprehensive University/ K12 Partnerships

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Partnerships with local community based organizations, municipal and non-profit leaders, elected officials, funders, anchor institutions such as hospitals and healthcare systems, and especially institutions of higher education, are now seen as necessary in order to achieve the goals of K12 education. In addition, from the higher education side, connections with local K12 institutions are vital and can be a significant driver for recruitment of students and deeper local connections into the community.

However, while partnerships like this can be powerful and impactful for students and communities, they can also be overwhelming for K12 and University leaders to develop and maintain in the midst of their daily responsibilities. That is why Presidential Partners, LLC will work side by side with you, your leadership and your community, to develop a strategic partnership approach that will best serve your students and community. We will hear your vision, assess your needs, outline your goals, and develop with you a step-by-step strategy that will break down your vision into tangible action items, connected to local, regional and national resources and based on best practices, so that you will have a blueprint on how to move your plan into action. We will share with you case studies and national K12/University partnership models that will assist you in developing your partnerships that will include, staffing, program development, community engagement, financial resources, assessments and outcomes. We will provide support, coaching and feedback to assist you in staying focused on your plan to ensure each step leads to concrete actions that address your goals and advice when challenges arise and plans and approaches need to be adjusted.

Best practices for successful school leader/university partnerships suggest that the K12 Principal/Superintendent and the University President, while intimately involved in driving this partnership, understand the priority in engaging key members of their staffs and their faculties in this partnership from the outset. These leaders also understand the importance of clear and regular communication as the partnership develops, gains momentum and broadens. This open communication serves to inspire new ideas as smaller faculty committees begin their work while also making clear to all constituents the importance of this work. Presidential Partners will support these K12 leaders in communicating the Partnership Vision to all parties so that various K12 schools and University Departments can begin the work of envisioning their piece of the partnership. The goal is to empower faculty members of all levels so that they understand that they, along with their students, will collaborate to create new initiatives that will benefit the schools as well as the local community.

The changing landscape of K12 education across the country is requiring school systems to do more with less, and address all of the challenges and needs that children bring with them to school on a daily basis. These changes are forcing schoolteachers and administrators to be more than content area

specialists and pedagogical experts. Schools must now attend more closely to student's personal, social and emotional development, health and wellness needs, including mental health, and provide assistance to families that may experience challenges or barriers that may impact their children's ability to learn and thrive in a school setting. Add to this, rapidly changing demographics of K12 students as it relates to culture, religion, socioeconomics, and language, and this diversity is requiring all educators to rethink how we educate and support K12 students and their families today. The Community School movement across the country is a response to school leaders understanding the need to address these challenges.

The proverb "it takes a village" has never been more apt for K12 school leaders than at this moment. With increased national attention focused on whether students pass state mandated exams and graduate high school, college or career ready, especially in urban and metropolitan areas, school administrators must lean on partnerships and collaborations to ensure that their students are on track while they are in school and prepared to make the transition to life beyond high school. Moreover, school leaders must also make sure that their staff and administrators keep current with best practices so that they can be effective teachers and leaders, and have access to resources to support the educational and personal development of their students. This is why it is imperative for this work to be initiated and for these K12/University partnerships to be well organized and successful.