

Contributing Factors to Successfully Maintaining School Partnerships with External  
Partners

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## **Dedication**

The author wishes to dedicate this dissertation to the children and young adults in her life. You remind me to dream, inspire me with your fight and determination, and touch my heart with love and laughter. Shelby, may you always follow your heart, work to make your dreams come true, and celebrate your successes. Whitney, Tiffaney, and Dion keep working towards your goals. Daddy and I are so proud of you. Your hard work will surely bear fruit. Dwayne Jr, Allegra, Mercedes, Chinyere, Garrett, Devin, Bethany, Ngozi, Nadxyzavie, Ihem, Chiem, and Madison, it continues to be a joy to watch you grow and develop into whom you were meant to be. Reach high, work hard, and celebrate. Remember that all things are possible, push forward, do the work, and make your dreams your reality. You are all smart and tenacious and I marvel as I watch you discover your own paths. I love and am proud of you all.

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## **Abstract of the Dissertation**

### **Contributing Factors to Successfully Maintaining School Partnerships with External Partners**

Human capital, financial support, and other resources are often provided to schools by private organizations such as corporations, community organizations, universities, and governments. There is a wealth of research on the benefits of public school-external partnerships (Barnett, Hall, Berg, & Macarena, 2010; Gardner, 2011; Norman, 2009, Semke & Sheridan, 2012), however, there is little information on the sustainability of public school's external partnerships. Beabout (2010) argued that external relationships can be difficult for school leaders to establish and maintain. Since partnerships are essential to offset school shortage and provide opportunities for students, it is crucial to expand our understanding of how schools maintain their external partnerships.

This qualitative study involving interviews of 23 partnership organizers examined how schools maintained their long-term partnerships. This study explored institutional theory as a theoretical framework to examine how schools and organizations function as institutions. Powell and DiMaggio (1991) and Selznick (1957) stated that as an organization is "institutionalized" it tends to take on a special character and to achieve a distinctive competence, in other words, a trained or built-in incapacity. The study drew on Bolman and Deal's (2003) four frames for how people view the world: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic.

Partnership organizers described effective communication as an important factor in maintaining partnerships. Key factors in effective communication were establishing points of contact for both the school and the partner, understanding each other's roles,

and having clear expectations. Partnership organizers shared that collaboration that moves the partnerships forward were key. That kind of collaboration involved understanding and respecting the school culture and procedures as well as building buy-in for the school and the organization stakeholders and it offered real world experiences to students. Participants cited a commitment to working through barriers with a focus on commitment, flexibility, and dedication as key factor.

Based on the partnership organizers experiences, this study offers a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to maintaining public school-external partnerships, with implications for existing and future school partnerships. This study also offers implications for policy on school partnerships.

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much”

— Helen Keller

“Genuine collaboration is an environment that promotes communication, learning, maximum contribution, and innovation.”

— Jane Ripley,

### Subjectivity Statement

The impact that can be achieved by successfully maintaining school partnerships was evident to me when I first went to work for a community-based organization (CBO) after college. I saw children receiving additional classroom support by budding teachers, I saw elementary schools able to provide enrichment activities and programs funded by the CBO, I saw health and nutritional programs offered at schools who had high asthma and obesity rates, I saw potential first generation college students begin their college exploration in the fourth grade. I not only saw the benefits that schools were receiving by partnering with external partners. I was part of the network of support that provided human capital, social services, food, as well as academic, experiential, and financial resources our local schools. I worked for a mid-Atlantic community-based organization that provided support to local elementary schools for thirteen years. I served as a foster-care prevention social work, volunteer coordinator, program coordinator, program director, and agency-wide director of education. While not working directly for the school system, my work, for the duration of my thirteen years of employment with the CBO, included supporting neighborhood schools. In my varying roles, I provided support to the local public schools and the students and families who were a part of them.

I moved to another mid-Atlantic state and for more than ten years, I have served students and their families by working directly for the school system there with much of that time spend on cultivating and maintaining external partnerships to provide academic and college and career awareness and exploration opportunities for students. Having served schools as a representative of an external partner and as a representative for the school system, I have learned to appreciate the value of school partnerships. My involvement in school partnerships is expanded in Chapter 3. These experiences have been significant in leading to my research inquiry into how schools can maintain their external partnerships.

### **Overview**

Human capital, financial support, and other resources are often provided to schools by private organizations such as corporations, community organizations, universities, and governments. Schools can benefit from understanding not only how to obtain partnerships, but how to sustain them over time. While there is research on the types of school partnerships (Epstein, 2002; Norman, 2009; Sanders, 2002), there is little research available on how such partnerships are maintained. As Isbell, Wood, Mehlbrech, Hegwer-DiVita, and Stanton-Anderson (2004) state,

At times, partnerships between school districts and universities are like a long road trip, complete with kids, dog, and even the mother-in-law. The destination itself can be exciting, even breathtaking, but the challenges lie in the journey, and it can prove tedious—most tedious in fact, when much of the trip is mapped out by people who have never before traveled the road. (pp. 99–100)

There are rewards and challenges that public schools face as they build relationships and maintain partnerships with private organizations. Given the growing popularity of partnerships, it is important to examine how partnerships are successfully maintained.

Barnett, Hall, Berg, and Camarena (2010) state that school partnerships are seen by many as the ultimate cure for all of the ills of education. Further, the belief in the promise of school partnerships has become so strong that partnerships are used increasingly as the conduit for reform within and between agencies, institutions, organizations, individuals, and groups (Barnett et al., 2010). Public schools and private partners became linked in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century but gained popularity late in the 20<sup>th</sup> century according to Grobe (1993). Corporations have invested in education since the late 1800s, as swift industrial changes required the creation of educational programs and institutions that could respond to the changing needs of the labor force. In the late 1970s, when the term “partnership” first became a popular notion and expression, partnership efforts were motivated largely by public relations and the desire for urban-located corporations to be good neighbors (Grobe, 1993). Relave and Deich (2007) define the public-private partnership in the following way:

A public-private partnership exists when the public sector—federal, tribal, state, or local officials and agencies—joins with the private sector—families, employers, citizens, philanthropies, the media, civic groups, service providers, and community-based organizations— to pursue a common goal. (p. 8)

According to Relave and Deich, all effective public-external partnerships share the following characteristics:

- representatives from both public and private spheres coalesce around shared goals
- partners contribute time, money, expertise, and other resources to the partnership
- partners work together toward common goals or objectives
- partners share decision-making and management responsibilities.

Although the parties share these four characteristics in most effective projects, the goals, structure, and organization of partnerships can vary widely. For example, the types

and amount of resources contributed by the partners will differ according to their abilities. Similarly, the extent of shared decision-making will depend on the resources and constraints of the partners, including technical expertise, fundraising capability, potential conflicts of interest, legal responsibility for the oversight of public funds, and other factors (Relave & Deich, 2007, p. 8). Relave and Deich found that while certain characteristics of partnerships are widely shared, partnerships still have differences in terms of goals, structures, and organization.

At the close of the 1990s, the public and government officials viewed partnerships so positively that they appeared as mandates in federal statutes, such as the Higher Education Act of 1998 and the re-authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, also known as No Child Left Behind (2001). Partnerships were, and continue to be, viewed as a valuable resource for schools, providing support such as materials, financing, and additional adults in the building to monitor children. Sanders and Harvey (2002) state that current education reform emphasizes the need for schools to partner with families, communities, universities, and corporations to create more challenging, responsive, and supportive learning environments. Ideally, schools and private organizations will develop shared goals, and public-external partnerships will fulfill the individual needs and goals of both the school and the partner while working to accomplish a shared mission.

### **School Partnerships Defined**

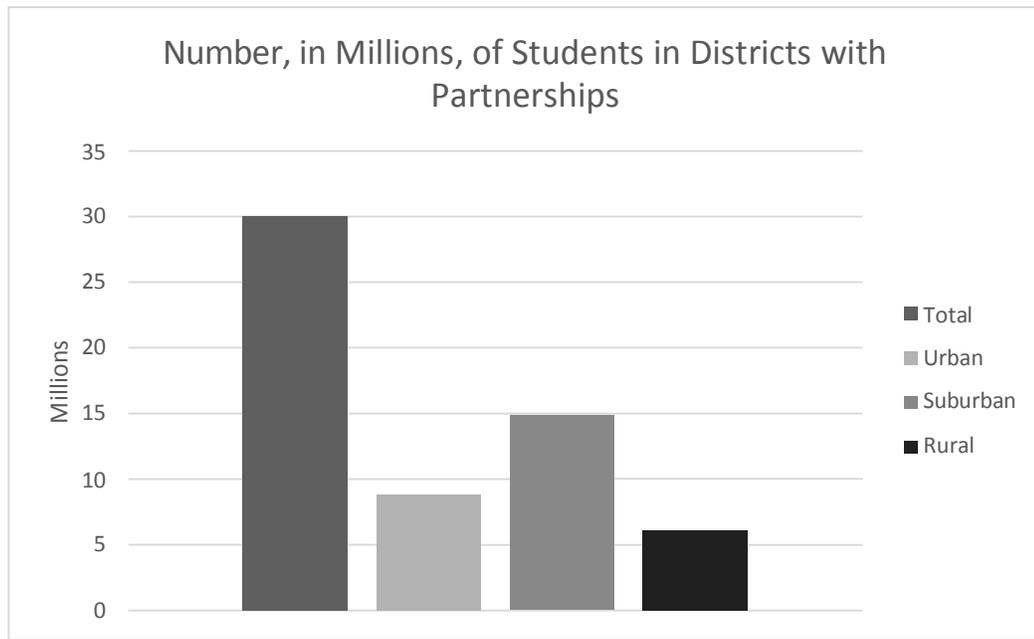
There are many terms used to describe the collaborative relationship between people or organizations. Gadjia (2004) defines “collaboration” as “any relationship between two entities . . . that seek to combine into a single organizational unit, or three

high schools who look to make schools safer” (p. 65). Melville and Blank (1998) define school-community partnerships as purposeful efforts to create and sustain relationships among a K-12 school or school district and a variety of both formal and informal organizations in the community. Similarly, the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA (2002) describes community partnerships as optimally blending the resources of one school or a group of schools with the resources of a neighborhood or larger community. Based on these definitions, this study defines school partnerships with external partners as private individuals, communities, organizations, corporations and/or institutions, colleges or universities, and/or local, state, or national government working with schools to provide resources directly or indirectly to schools for the purpose of the improvement of student educational experiences in schools.

### **The Importance of School Partnerships**

After extensive research and correspondence with government offices on educational programs and statistics, the researcher found that there is limited research on the use of school partnerships. The most recent research found on the quantity of partnerships across the United States was from the National Association of Partners in Education, Inc. (1991). The National Association of Partners in Education, Inc. (NAPE) survey results confirmed that “educational partnerships are rapidly becoming a significant component of elementary and secondary schools throughout the United States. Over half of America’s school districts (51%) have active partnership programs” (National Association of Partners in Education, 1991 p. 12). NAPE further estimated that “29.7 million students or 65 percent of the total number of American students, attend school districts that have educational partnerships” (National Association of Partners in

Education, 1991 p. 12). Of the nearly 30 million students that attended school districts with partnerships in 1991, 30 percent of these students lived in urban areas; 50 percent lived in suburban areas, and 20 percent lived in rural areas (see figure 1).



*Figure 1.* Number of Students in Districts with Partnerships (NAPE, 1991).

Although there is limited research on the number of school partnerships that exist and the data obtained reflect the number of partnerships in school districts. The research does demonstrate the importance of partnerships over time. As stated by Barnett et. al. (2010) school partnerships were formed as early as the 19<sup>th</sup> century and continue to be viewed as a means to support schools by providing connections to the workforce and offsetting school shortages.

Partnerships are formed with other community stakeholders and are important for schools especially when budget cutbacks leave schools short of funding. Without adequate funding, public schools are forced to go without needed staff and materials.

Partnerships can give schools additional adults in the classroom, supplies, and goods and services. In addition, they can provide students with experiential opportunities, build community, and create a productive pipeline for students from secondary education to college and/or the workforce. Current educational reforms emphasize the need for schools, especially those serving poor and minority students, to partner with families and communities to create more challenging, responsive, and supportive learning environments (Sanders & Harvey, 2002) in order to meet the needs of their schools.

Partnerships also give corporations, universities, communities, foundations, and government organizations opportunities to invest in their local communities. An early example of this was the Adopt-A-School program (Grobe, 1993), pioneered in 1981 by Dr. Ruth Love, then head of the Oakland, California school system, which focused on donating money and equipment to area schools. The program eventually achieved success in numerous urban districts nationwide, achieved national recognition, and won the support of major corporations such as Sara Lee Corporation. School partnerships also serve as protective factors for children at risk of academic failure (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Pianta & Walsh, 1996, 1998).

Because private partners benefit corporations by developing their future workforce, neighborhoods, and customer bases, it is essential that schools build and maintain their external partnerships (Grobe, 1993). For corporations, investing in public schools has been not only an altruistic proposition, but has helped them grow their workforce and build customer bases in the communities in which they are located.

## **Statement of the Problem**

There is little information on the sustainability of school partnerships. Without a roadmap to sustaining long-term partnerships, schools can face significant challenges maintaining partnerships that prepare students for the future. The role that leaders play in a school's partnerships is not always clear. Unclear goals, lack of communication, inconsistent points of contact, and failure to navigate through challenges that arise in the relationship between the school and the organization, can hamper a partnership's success.

Partnerships are helpful to schools because they provide academic, recreational, and social experiences. Schools need support to address various challenges, the most important of which is helping students become academically successful and preparing them for college and/or the workforce. The challenges facing American youth are great. Dropout rates are staggeringly high, and too few young people enter and succeed in post-secondary education and training. Too many children live in poverty, while the achievement gap for poor and minority students continues to rise. Truancy, juvenile arrest, and juvenile victims of crime are also increasing. These conditions have lifelong, damaging effects on youth (Axelroth, 2009, p. 1).

Students enter schools daily burdened by the effects of poverty, crime, and low academic achievement. School systems across the nation are challenged to address a myriad of issues that have nothing to do with education, yet impact students' ability to learn and focus free of the stressors that accompany poverty and crime. Students are graduating from high school, but often are neither college- nor career-ready. Not only are students lacking in the skills necessary to succeed in college, but also they are not prepared to hold a 21<sup>st</sup> century job. Schools are stretched by their students' many needs,

and they require financial assistance in order to provide goods and services that support families in non-academic but impactful ways such as food and social services.

School partnerships positively impact elementary and secondary education because private organizations are able to furnish an array of services, from goods and materials, to staffing support in the classroom, to hands-on job training.

Private corporations strive to create a budding labor force, and are therefore willing to support schools and create opportunities for students to become more college- and career-ready. Although corporations and other partners may be willing to support schools, consistent planning and implementation of the programs is sometimes lacking. As a result, private organizations may struggle to reach their end goal: a pipeline of future employees or consumers. For example, across school districts, there is little consistency in how school partnerships are created and maintained.

Beabout (2010) argues that external relationships can be difficult for school leaders to establish and maintain. Although school leaders understand the need for collaboration, partnerships are often established informally, and without setting clear goals and benchmarks. Further, some corporations are using different standards to evaluate their charitable contributions as corporate principals identify new motivations for giving and expect, increasingly, for such efforts to produce measurable results (Mullens, 1997). Establishing meaningful relationships with corporations and other community organizations is challenging, and difficult to sustain. Schools must earn their relationships by meeting the expected results as dictated by the corporation. School partnerships are often created without any end goal in mind, and happen informally when a community-based organization, corporation, or university representative expresses

interest in collaborating with the school. Having a long-term plan with partnering organizations, however, creates consistency and allows students to fully participate and enjoy the benefits of the programs.

### **Statement of the Research Problem**

Research has consistently indicated that schools face shortages in finances and other resources (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Grobe, 1993; Pianta & Walsh, 1998). Studies also state the benefits of school partnerships (Barnett et. al., 2010; No Child Left Behind, 2001; Sanders & Harvey, 2002; Semke & Sheridan, 2012). Challenges that schools face maintaining their relationships with private partners is worthy of scholarly research according to Relave & Deich, (2007). This research explored how schools can maintain their relationships with their external partners. Studies have shown that schools benefit from having partnerships with external organizations thus the ability to maintain beneficial partnerships is advantageous to schools.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to understand the ways in which schools maintain their external partnerships. The study emphasizes the importance of communication, collaboration, and negotiation between the partnership organizers in the school and their private industry partners. Although extensive literature on the benefits of external partnerships for public schools exists (Barnett, Hall, Berg, & Macarena, 2010; Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, 2002; Dyson, 1999; Epstein, 2001; Gardner, 2011; Johnson, Pugach, & Hawkins, 2004; Melaville & Blank, 1998; Merz & Furman, 1997; Norman, 2009; Sanders & Harvey, 2002; Sconzert & Wenzel, 2004; Semke & Sheridan,

2012; Sheffner & Cobb, 2002; Turnbull & Turnbull, 2001), there has been limited research on how school organizers can maintain and strengthen these partnerships.

To ensure success, schools must put in place measures to sustain the partnerships, address conflicts that may arise during the collaboration, and work cooperatively throughout the duration of the partnership to maintain healthy, productive relationships with the private sector. Achieving these goals is necessary in order to develop procedures for negotiating with private partners and maintaining relationships to offset limited resources and provide students with enriching experiential opportunities. Schools and private partners must work together in ways that will allow them to retain their individual goals and address conflicts so that they are able to maintain a shared space that fosters growth and sustainability for their partnerships. Successful negotiations will provide opportunities for schools to capitalize on the financial resources, goods, and human capital offered by such relationships. In order for schools to achieve long-term partnerships, they must keep key people involved and promote shared values and commitment to maintaining the partnerships with their schools. School leaders often rely on other staff to manage the partnership programs in the school. Partnership organizers within the school are often teachers who agree to sponsor a particular program.

Both the schools and the private partners enter into relationships with the intention of serving the school and the students and accomplishing objectives for the private organization; thus, both the school and the organization must find ways to accomplish their shared goals, as well as each individual partner's goals. The researcher studied methods in which the school negotiated with representatives from the partnering organizations in order to meet the goals of the school. The school made concessions to

maintain their partnerships but also worked to maintain the vision of the school and hold true to its core values and goals. These mutual and individual goals were studied during the course of the research. Interviewing representatives of the partnering organizations, the researcher examined ways in which the partnering organizations maintained their vision while negotiating and compromising with the school.

### **Research Questions**

The research question and sub-questions that framed this interview-based qualitative study was: What factors contribute to successfully maintaining school partnerships with external partners?

1a. What barriers have you encountered when implementing or sustaining your partnerships?

1b. How did you resolve the barriers?

The study explored the question from the perspective of the partnership organizers both within and outside of the school selected for the study.

### **Statement of Significance**

The significance of this study was that it provided school principals with insight into the maintenance of viable external partnerships, and how to negotiate through barriers that may have been detrimental to the partnerships. Partnerships are important for schools because routine budget cutbacks leave schools short of funding. Without adequate funding, public schools are forced to go without needed staff and materials. Partnerships give schools opportunities to place additional adults in the classroom, supply needed goods and services, provide experiential opportunities for students, build community and foster a pipeline from secondary education to college and/or the

workforce. Partnerships also enable corporations, universities, communities, foundations, and government organizations to invest in the communities where they are located and/or where they see a need. Private partners benefit by growing their future workforce, neighborhoods, and customer bases. As a result, it is important that schools build and maintain their external partnerships.

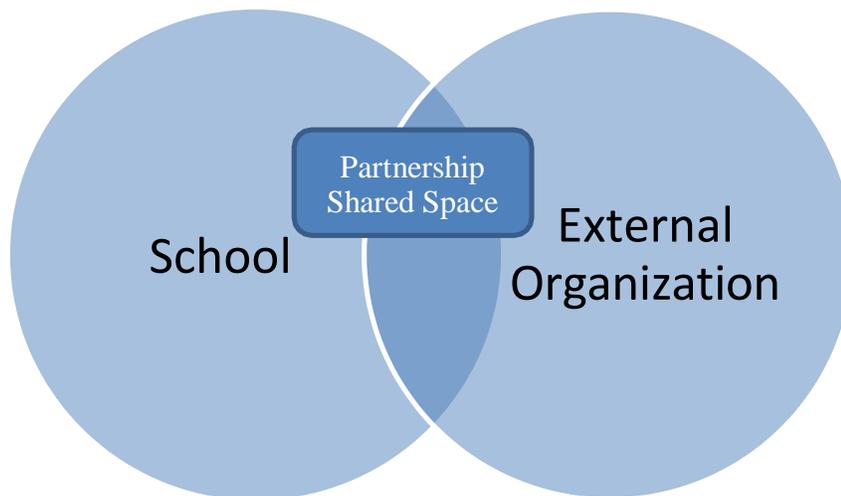
This study will aid school leaders in understanding resources that are available to them to offset the lack of resources that most public schools face. Not only does this study identify the types and benefits of partnerships, but it also provides information on how to maintain viable partnerships. In order for schools to gain meaningful outcomes, they need to sustain relationships over time. This study aids school leaders in understanding what is needed to preserve external partnerships over the long-term. This study's significance is evident through its conveyance to school leaders of how to gain insight to sustain the relationship with their partners so they may achieve long-term benefits for their students.

### **Institutional Theoretical Framework**

This research study utilized institutional theory to examine school partnerships. Institutional theory is employed as a means of understanding how schools and private partners function collaboratively and individually as the partnership organizers employ communication, collaboration, and the navigation of barriers to maintain long-term partnerships. According to Powell and DiMaggio (1991) "institutional explanations are those featuring institutional effects, or that weight institutional effects highly relative to other effects, or that isolate institutionally caused features of an analytical object. Institutional theories, then, are those that feature institutional explanations" (p. 153).

Selznick (1957) suggests a distinction between “organization” and “institution.” As an organization becomes “institutionalized,” it tends to take on a special character and to achieve a distinctive competence or, perhaps, a trained or built-in incapacity. Researchers have been viewing partnerships through the lens of institutional theory for nearly 60 years. Both Powell and DiMaggio (1991) and Selznick (1957) described institutional theory wherein the organizations lose some form of their own individuality and adopt the characteristics of the shared space of the partnership.

Figure 2 shows the school, the external partner, and between them the mutually shared space that is partnership. Selznick (1957) and Powell and DiMaggio (1991) both describe the shared space as the institution. The shared space belongs to neither the school nor the partnering organization individually but mutually belong to both the school and the partner.



*Figure 2.* The school, the external organization, and their mutually shared space that consists of the partnership.

Monitoring the process of institutionalization—its costs as well as benefits—is a major responsibility of leadership. Thus, institutional theory traces the creation of distinctive forms, processes, strategies, outlooks, and competences as they emerge from patterns of organizational interaction and adaptation. These patterns should be understood as responses to both internal and external environments. As Selznick (1957) pointed out, “distinctiveness” should not be taken too literally. Selznick may be describing the formation of a certain kind of institution. Simply put, institutionalization is a neutral idea, which can be defined as “the emergence of orderly, stable, socially integrating patterns out of unstable, loosely organized, or narrowly technical activities.”

There is a unique space that comes from the partnership. It requires that both the school and the partnering organization give up some part of itself and take on the merged identity, which is the “institution.” In this context, the organization refers to a community, corporation, university, government or other private entity that partners with a school. The institution is not a physical place but rather the “space” created by the two organizations coming together. North (1990) explained, an institution assumes some form of organization and vice versa. Therefore, an organization attempts to become an institution; organizations are established to represent values, and can consequently be seen as instruments for institutionalization. Institutionalization can be viewed, in other words, as a value-consolidating process, the aim of which is to transform an organization into an institution. Jepperson (in DiMaggio and Powell, 1991, p. 150) further asserts that institutionalization is best represented as a particular state, or property, of a social pattern.

It is the trends in social pattern, structure, and human frames that tie the theoretical framework of institutional theory with Bolman and Deal’s (2003) conceptual

framework of four frames. Meyers (1997) further defines institutional theory as a means of changing organizations into institutions. Serving as the building blocks for social, behavioral, and organizational life, institutions shape perceptions, behaviors, and choices. They act as the backbone of organizations and develop norms and governance of organizations. Institutions may not always be efficient but they do establish structure and a status quo for how organizational structures persist. New technology, governance, policies, and rules may be germane to the organization but will only be adopted ceremoniously if they are not aligned with the institutional aspects of the organizations. External norms to the institution, known as rationalized myths, create a loose coupling between structure and action. Institutions rise, change, or persist in the context of regulative, coercive compliance based on expediency, normative compliance coercion forced by social obligations, accreditations, and certifications, and cognitive compliance.

### **Conceptual Framework**

School leaders must be goal-oriented and uphold rules, build and maintain relationships, navigate politics and conflicts, and promote culture and rituals to encourage and celebrate shared values. Bolman and Deal's (2003) four frames of Reframing Organizations served as the conceptual framework for the study. Their four frames can be used to diagnose the school's needs, identify challenges, and develop appropriate assessments and actions as they take on the challenges of maintaining partnerships. Bolman and Deal's (1997) four frames are:

- **Structural:** Leaders using this approach focus on the structural elements within the partnership as well as strategy, implementation, and adaptation. This process is

accomplished by structuring the goals and tasks, and structuring roles and lines of communication. This approach may be best used when goals and structure are clear. The focus remains on facts and goals, not on the people involved.

- **Human Resource:** This approach centers on people and stresses support, empowerment, staff development, and the relationship between people and organizations. A distributed leadership method might be utilized in the human resource approach. In Bolman and Deal's (1997) Human Resource Frame, a good fit is achieved when the individual is engaged in meaningful work and the organization gets the talent and energy necessary to succeed. This frame revolves around the needs, skills, and relationships between the people and the organization. The leader can assess the human resource frame to promote the organization as a family, aligning organizational and human needs and satisfying work, and organizations get the talent and energy they need to succeed. School partnerships are organizations within the larger organization of the school. There are unique relationships between the principal and staff assigned to the partnership programs and the representative of the partnering organization. Both sides of the partnership should be engaged in meaningful work that benefits the students. Both sides of the partnership must be willing to commit time, talent, and energy to the partnership.
- **Political:** Leaders that utilize the political frame focus on the political realities that exist within the partnership, with the partner, and/or with the school. This approach deals with the partners and their particular interests as well as those of

the school. When resources are scarce and the goals and values of the school and partner conflict, the political frame approach may be appropriate.

The Political Frame, as outlined in Bolman and Deal (1997), represents the opportunity to gain or exercise power and form coalitions. School leaders must deal with the politics involved in school partnerships. Patterson (2004) found that when early childhood stakeholders courted the business sector to gain support for their program, their actions resulted in unintended consequences including the elevation of business perspectives above those of parents, service providers, and other stakeholders. Through strategic planning, leaders can utilize the political frame to air conflict, exercise power, and coerce partners and subordinates to work in ways that the leader finds most helpful to the school. Schools and partners must stay true to their individual missions while simultaneously making concessions in order to reach a common goal for the partnership.

- Symbolic: This approach focuses on vision and inspiration. The goal is to get involved parties to believe that their contributions to the partnership and the school are important and meaningful. “Symbols are the basic building blocks of the meaning systems or cultures that we inhabit” (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 240). The Symbolic Frame is the cultural side of the organization. In the symbolic frame, organizations are theaters or temples. The leader creates opportunities for bonding by promoting a school culture that is strong in meaning, metaphor, and rituals. School leaders try to understand the multiple meanings so that it will help them to understand the people with whom they work; much of what occurs in schools must be interpreted in the context of the school’s culture. Events have

multiple meanings because the experiences of the individuals differ. According to Bolman and Deal (2003), school leaders address conflict by developing shared values, and use conflict to negotiate meaning.

The overview of the four-frame model shows that each of the frames has its own image of reality. Bolman and Deal's frames (2003) serve as blueprints that generate options and guide the actions of the leaders as they strive to maintain their long-term partnerships. Leaders can act in new ways by choosing new scripts, which create new possibilities. There are distinct advantages and disadvantages to each frame. All frames may be used in an organization, however, the leader may choose to focus on one or two frames based on the circumstances of the problem. Reframing an organization requires that the leader look at the school in more than one way. In working with private partners, leaders must choose a frame that works for them and their scenario.

Shinners (2001) stated that partners must first know why they want to collaborate. In Bolman and Deal's (2003) structural frame, schools are viewed as factories or machines. School leaders must instill goals, policies, and rules. They must see the schools as machines. To accomplish goals, the leader must standardize structure according to task, technology, and environment. In the structural frame, the leader focuses on data, logic, structure, plans, and policies to maintain long-term external partnerships. Hoy and Miskel (2013) described the structural nature of schools as bureaucratic and authoritarian. While there are goals and facts associated with sustaining school partnerships, leaders may have to combine frames to best address the needs of the partnerships and to determine their roles in sustaining the school partnerships. From a political and human resource frame, school leaders consider the interests, needs and goals

of stakeholders on the school side as well as those on the private side. Further, Hoy and Miskel state that the hope is that leaders and teachers will make schools more professional and less authoritarian. The researchers stressed the importance of finding balance between too much order and too much chaos, which is an ongoing affair that changes with the members of the organization and external forces, including policy makers, parents, the community, and the economy. The structure of the partnerships is determined by the goals and nature of the partnerships, and therefore, both the school and the partnering organization affect the overall structure of the partnership.

Examples of successful school partnerships may be different for the private partner than for the school leader or other school personnel. It is important to understand what the leader and the partnering organizations view as successful partnerships. What do successful partnerships look like to each of them? It is equally important to understand the shared symbols of successful school partnerships as viewed by both the school leader and the partnership representatives. Bolman and Deal (1997) further state that organization ethics must be ultimately grounded in “soul”—an organization’s understanding of its deeply held identity, beliefs, and values.

Both institutional theory (Powell & DiMaggio, 1991) and Bolman and Deal’s (2003) frames focus on the partnership as an institution. The leader must create structure, goals, and roles, while at the same time taking into consideration the people that represent the partnership as an institution, as well as appreciating the school and partnering organization as separate organizations that have goals and roles and also need to feel connected and vested in the partnerships. While this study attempted to answer the question of how schools maintain their external partnerships, the school leader, using the

human resource frame and institutional theory, is positioned to acknowledge and validate the role that others play in sustaining the school partnership.

### **Summary of the Methodology**

To answer the research question, this study used a qualitative research methodology with an interpretivist epistemology. According to Meriam (2009, p. 19), qualitative research focuses on understanding the meaning of experience. Interpretivist research assumes that reality is socially constructed, that there is no single, observable reality (Merriam, 2009, p. 8). The researcher is the primary instrument in data collection and analysis, which, according to Merriam (2009, p. 15), allows for immediate responsiveness, processing of information, and accuracy by checking with respondents for the interpretation. The data collection instruments were interviews with a purposeful criterion-based sampling of 23 participants. The interviewees were sampled purposefully to ensure that participants were connected to the school's partnership programs. The criterion for participation in the research was that schools and organizations be partners for three or more years. The interviews were conducted at the conclusion of the school year when partnership organizers, both within and outside of the school, are likely to reflect on the partnership and plan for the next year. Maxwell (1996) states that "selecting those times, settings, and individuals that can provide you with the information that you need in order to answer your research questions is the most important consideration in qualitative sampling decisions" (p. 70).

### **Limitations**

Limitations in this research included: the absence of all school partnership organizers outside of the school, and the inability to interview the athletic coordinator.

While the study gained saturation by interviewing 23 participants, there were some interviews in which the partnership organizer within the school, but not the related partnership organizer outside of the school, was able to be interviewed. It was challenging to contact and get commitments from partnership organizers outside of the school. Saturation, however, was achieved, as evidenced by the replication of old findings through newer interviews. As the interviews progressed, partnership programs, partnership organizers, and research findings began to repeat.

The absence of the athletic coordinator's interview is a limitation because the principal, assistant principal, and three of the partnership organizers within the school listed the athletic coordinator as being responsible for monitoring the school partnerships. It appeared, based on interviews by many of the participants, that the athletic coordinator was responsible for all of the partnership programs that required facilities inside of the building, thus making him an important candidate to be interviewed. Although an interview was requested of the athletic coordinator, a response indicating willingness or denial was never granted. The researcher sent two emails, and made two calls to the principal and partnership organizer within the school requesting support in reaching the athletic coordinator, but to no avail.

### **Delimitations**

The results of this study may be limited because the research was limited to one public school in a mid-Atlantic school district, and the partnerships studied were those suggested by the principal and other interviewees. The researcher was the instrument for data collection. While the researcher did not know the partnership organizers, the researcher interacted professionally with the three administrators in the study: the

principal, assistant principal, and guidance chair. While the researcher did not work at the school, the researcher did work in the district office and had some interactions with the school. The study utilized purposeful criterion-based sampling, which allowed the researcher to interview participants who were actually involved in the school partnerships. It also led to collecting rich, thick descriptions about the school partnerships.

### **Definitions of Key Terms**

The following terms are defined to ensure consistency of interpretation throughout the study. The research-developed definitions are not accompanied by a citation.

*Administrator:* For the purpose of this study, the terms administrator, school leader, and school principal will be used interchangeably. All terms for school administrator shall refer either to an elementary or secondary school principal.

*External Partner:* For the purpose of this study, the term external partner refers to any corporation, university/college, or community-based organization that partners with the school

*Interpretivism:* To find meaning in an action from the subject's unchanged viewpoints, feelings, and experiences (Schwandt, 2000).

*Institutional Theory:* According to Powell and DiMaggio (1991), institutional theory is an emerging perspective in organization theory that seeks cognitive and cultural explanations of social and organizational phenomena by considering the properties of supra-individual units of analysis, which cannot be reduced to aggregations or direct consequences of individuals' attributes or motives.

*Participant:* The participant is the interviewee. The participant/interviewee is also the partnership organizer, within or outside of the school, or a school administrator.

*Partnership:* For this study, partnerships shall mean the relationship between the host school and an organization that they are working with for some purpose that should either be directly or indirectly improving the school.

*Public- private partnership:* For this study, public-private partnership refers to the relationship between the public school and the private organization with whom the school is collaborating.

*Partnership organizer:* A person who is the primary organizer and coordinator of the school partnerships.

*Partnership organizer within the school:* A person inside the school who is the primary person organizing and coordinating the school partnerships. This person is typically a teacher who sponsors one or more of the school partnerships.

*Partnership organizer outside of the school:* A person representing the partnering organization who serves as the primary point of contact for the partnership organizer within the school on matters related to the school partnerships.

## **Summary**

In summary, school partnerships can include an array of stakeholders, such as parents, community members and organizations, corporations, government organizations, foundations, colleges and universities, and religious and private institutions. While the need and types of partnerships are known, much work is still needed in helping school leaders understand how to maintain long-term external partnerships. In the 1980s, partnerships were developed between schools and corporations in an attempt to make

corporations good neighbors. Partnerships have long since become viable ways to offset shortages in funding and human resources. Schools form partnerships with private organizations to create goals, structures, programs, and to offer goods and financial support to the schools. Private organizations may work with schools for a varied length of time but this study seeks to understand how schools maintain long-term partnerships for a period of three years or more. There is a wealth of data on the types of partnerships and rationales for why partnerships are needed, but there is very little data on how schools can maintain their viable external partnerships. The financial struggles that schools face are publicized nationally. Universities, corporations, foundations, governments, communities and families all use their resources to support schools through human capital, facilities, and finances, among other goods. In order to maximize this support and ensure long-lasting beneficial relationships with their partnering organizations, schools must understand how to maximize these relationships over time.

The interpretivist epistemological stance (Schwandt, 2000), Powell and DiMaggio's (1991) Institutional Theory, and Bolman and Deal's (2003) four frames are the conceptual and theoretical lens by which partnership organizers' perceptions of partnership maintenance over time was viewed. Criterion-based purposeful sampling was conducted to collect data related to the school's partnerships.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

Current educational reform emphasizes the need for schools, especially those serving poor and minority students, to partner with families and communities to create more challenging, responsive, and supportive learning environments (Sanders & Harvey, 2002). School leaders also partner with corporations, colleges and universities, and government agencies in order to meet the needs of their schools. This chapter reviews the research utilizing ERIC, JSTOR, Academic Premier and other databases available through The George Washington University Library online research resources. Key search terms included school partnerships, public schools, private partners, business partners, and community. This review of the literature focuses on the key elements of partnerships between schools and other entities.

This chapter begins by covering the need for, and types of, school partnerships; leadership of school partnerships are explored as well. Maintaining long-term partnerships and negotiation is known, however, much work is still needed so that school leaders can understand how to maintain long-term external partnerships. The researcher searched for empirical peer-reviewed articles on maintaining long-term partnerships and on the roles that leaders play in maintaining school partnerships and found that there is limited information on both topics. Studies on schools' ability to maintain long-term public-external partnerships have been limited. There is also limited research available on the role that leaders play in these partnerships, and on who manages and maintains the schools' partnerships. As a result, a review of the types of partnerships, management and coordination of the partnerships, and the maintenance of partnerships through negotiation of barriers, was included, as these factors play a role in maintaining school partnerships.

As there is limited research on the contributing factors to maintain school partnerships, there is a need for further study on the factors that contribute to maintaining school partnerships and the leader's use of staff in the building to support the school partnerships.

This literature review is divided into sections: types of school partnerships, leader's utilization of support in the school to help maintain the school's partnerships, leader's negotiation with private partners to achieve the school's goals, the leader's maintenance of the school's vision amidst partnership negotiations, and related theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

### **Types of School Partnerships**

According to Gray (1989, p. 5), public/external partnerships typically consist of voluntary, continuing arrangements that involve significant levels of resource-sharing and joint decision-making. Schools partner with families, communities and community-based organizations, corporations, colleges and universities, and governmental agencies to provide additional adult support, financial help, and other goods and services. Schools partner with a variety of organizations for varying reasons. This study explores school partnerships with families, communities, corporations, universities, and government organizations.

Facilities, finance, and human resources are provided to schools by collaborating with the corporations, university, and community sectors. These relationships give much needed support to schools. Current educational reform emphasizes the need for schools, especially those serving poor and minority students, to collaborate with families and communities to create more challenging, responsive, and supportive learning

environments (Sanders & Harvey, 2002). Likewise, Beabout (2010) argues that external relationships can be difficult for school leaders to establish and maintain, but they have, in some forms, the potential to give schools the ideas, resources, and feedback they need to be viable social institutions. Beabout (2010, p. 16) conducted a phenomenological study of the lived experiences of 10 principals between 2006 and 2007 by using iterative interviews totaling 29 interviews of 10 principals. Beabout's study showed how principals in post-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans formed connections with external organizations—to charitable, technical, and other supports—to offset the needs of their schools. With a sample size of principals from only eight schools across elementary, middle, and high schools, it is challenging to generalize Beabout's findings, however, they do support that external partners provided needed supports to schools. Similarly, schools are finding it increasingly difficult to create educational programs to address the diverse needs of their students (Merz & Furman, 1997) given the available finances and resources. Consequently, some school personnel are seeking outside support to provide financial and material resources, as well as social support and educational experiences to supplement students' in-school learning opportunities. While schools are, at times, unable to provide all of the support that they feel students need, they can be resourceful by reaching out to the private sector for support.

### **Family and Community Partnerships**

Turnbull and Turnbull (2001) state that families are “equal and full partners with educators and school systems,” and that this relationship “will benefit the student and the entire school system.” Because of this, it is imperative that schools partner with communities that include parents to ensure that students' academic endeavors are

supported outside of the school building. Similarly, Semke and Sheridan (2012) conducted 18 primarily descriptive studies, and concluded that parental participation and cooperation in children's educational experiences is positively related to major student outcomes. Semke and Sheridan go on to state that it is becoming more and more apparent that context is a significant factor in understanding academic achievement; the setting in which a child, family, and school are situated is among the salient factors that affects performance.

Auerbach (2009) agrees on the importance of true family-school partnerships. Auerbach says that family and community engagement are increasingly seen as powerful tools for making schools more equitable, culturally responsive, and collaborative. The commitment of school leaders is vital to school-community connections, yet the importance and the means of creating these relationships are not adequately addressed in training for administrators. Auerbach conducts a qualitative study to explore the question, "What steps do committed administrators take to promote meaningful family engagement in urban schools?" Auerbach conducts qualitative research among several critical cases in Los Angeles with two purposes: (1) to illustrate what is possible in this neglected arena of leadership, even among overburdened leaders in underachieving schools; and (2) to inform policy and practice in democratic school reform and leadership preparation. Auerbach criticizes school leaders, stating that many of them "talk the talk" of school-family partnerships, but do not "walk the walk," in large part due to competing pressures that they face, particularly in large urban school districts.

Auerbach's (2009) case study of a purposeful subsample of four from a larger study of 35 administrators in the Los Angeles Unified School District (Auerbach,

2007) offers contextualized portraits of four school principals notable for their proactive, community-oriented approach. Data is centered on the administrators' role in promoting activities (including an annual conference with elected officials), the Parents as Authors Program, community organizing-style "house meetings" in classrooms, and home visits. Findings suggest that these principals actively pursued family engagement as part of a broader moral commitment to social justice and educational equity for disenfranchised Latino families. Inspired by various family engagement models but distrustful of traditional parent involvement structures in the district, they shaped activities to the needs of their particular communities. Implications for principal preparation programs were discussed, for instance, the need for more hands-on experience working with parents, and apprenticeships with community-oriented school principals. Auerbach's study stated the moral obligations on behalf of the school to engage parents as partners. This study pointed out some of the barriers between the school and the community that must be addressed to maintain successful partnerships.

School partnerships with communities include association with parents, communities and community organizations. According to Johnson, Pugach, and Hawkins (2004), developing partnerships with parents is one of the most important goals that schools can undertake. The researchers further found that the individual primary needs of students are met mostly through their families. Without an active partnership with families, schools will always be limited in what they can accomplish. A collaborative school must include active partnerships with families; after all, students are members of families first, and schools second. Consequently, the most lasting and powerful influence on a child's development comes from families. Therefore, forming meaningful

partnerships with families is one of the most important collaborations teachers can pursue.

Likewise, Semke and Sheridan (2012), in a review of articles on family-school partnerships from 1995–2010, found positive results from family–school connections and interventions on student, family, and school outcomes. Indeed, the fundamental rationale for establishing family-school connections and testing their efficacy concerns the enhancement of rural students’ academic, social-emotional, and behavioral outcomes. The research on family-school interventions produced a broad array of positive results for student learning and adaptation. It also noted that much family-school research has demonstrated positive effects for schools, teachers, and families. Semke and Sheridan (2012) recommend additional studies with greater levels of high quality research, and offer cautious optimism for the current research, which is focused on the potential for family-school connections in rural settings. Semke and Sheridan have shown that parent connections have a positive impact on the students’ school experiences. While the parent is the child’s first teacher, connecting home and school has been demonstrated to provide valuable support for students.

In another context, Redding (2002) found, primarily through surveys, that the Laboratory for Student Success project, which is part of the Alliance for Achievement project that serves as a guide for constructing a school community, and which takes into account influences of the home on school performance, yielded inconclusive results about the successful inclusion of parents in the creation of school partnerships. These findings were the result of 7,600 school-community surveys given to parents and 1,860 given to teachers as part of the evaluation process of the Laboratory for Student Success project of

1996–1998. It should also be noted that real implementation rests on a superintendent’s endorsement for actualizing the program. District support is needed for the Laboratory for Student Success.

Shively’s (1997) qualitative study, however, shows that students were empowered and actively participated in the problems plaguing their school, the local Boys’ and Girls’ Club, and the surrounding community associations. This was demonstrated through the anti-graffiti initiative that the students started in the community with school and local support. As community members in the school, club, and associations, parents were asked about the necessities of work and other attributes that they would like to see in these settings. Some parents were members of the community associations but the most successful association enrolled members by invitation only. Although parents were involved in the creation of partnerships, their roles were much more marginalized than those of school, club, and association leaders, and even those of their children. Shively’s study shows mixed results when schools partnered with the students, parents, and local community organizations. Parents were not treated as true partners in school improvement.

In contrast, case studies by Bingle (2002) and interviews by Arriaza (2004) find that partnerships between schools and parents are growing in meaningful ways. Bingle asserts that schools and communities are increasingly rising to the challenge of engaging the entire community in the design of schools that foster community. Schools and communities are,

exploring a new model of planning and decision-making. They’re assembling committees that are truly representative, including parents, teachers, and students, as well as business and community members. And they are empowering this group to review data, investigate options, and make firm recommendations to

school boards about everything from curriculum to school size to the design of the facility itself (p. 4).

The historical analysis of the Mexican American parent community involvement in the Salinas High School district, in California, supports the argument that school reform initiatives, particularly at the high school level, have greater chances of staying in place when the community actively participates as an empowered change agent. A consent decree was handed down after a four-year arduous litigation between the Mexican American community and the Salinas Union High School District in November 1975 (Arriaza, 2004). Despite the length and difficult process, the court case demonstrated the power of parents and the importance of including them in decisions that will affect their children.

A supportive, nurturing environment goes beyond the student's family and includes the community. Wiseman (2010) incorporates differing voices in her case study illustration of the complexities of designing and implementing a program to increase the involvement of families in a junior high school. She includes the perspective of the administrator from the sponsoring coffeehouse, the students, the community poet involved in the program, and the classroom teacher.

Collaboration between schools and community partners augment both secondary and university student learning and allows business and industry to give something back to the community from which they benefit. According to Hill and Smith (1998) school and community cooperation to deliver technological education programs at both secondary school and teacher education levels in Ontario, Canada, has documented that such collaborative classroom practice is not only possible in technological education, but

is highly desirable because many modern theories of learning are seen in this educational practice.

School partnerships with communities include association with parents, communities and community organizations. Partnering with communities allows invested residents to engage their neighborhood schools by creating a symbiotic relationship that is mutually beneficial. Power et al. (2004) researched the process of using a participatory intervention model to establish a partnership-based community-assisted early intervention literacy program. This study showed benefits to having tutors based in the community reducing the risk of reading failure in culturally diverse, urban communities. Similar to Brown (2007), the researchers show that using the community is a strength of the program.

Power et al. (2005) believes that students can gain support from community members, stating,

one method of expanding the instructional workforce and engaging students in attachments with caring adults in a culturally relevant context is to establish a community-assisted tutoring program that is a program implemented by residents from the community who work in the school (p. 497).

In collaboration, families are “equal and full partners with educators and school systems” and this relationship “will benefit the student and the entire school system” (Turnbull & Turnbull, 2001, p. 13).

Community support of schools can, and has, led to increased school facility options. Bingler (2002) conducted case studies in three different communities to address school facilities shortages, although the research was limited by a small sample size (N=3) across varying communities. The findings suggested that the community members were able to aid in the shortage of facilities by providing space options. All schools can

benefit from community support but those with low test scores and teacher shortages can especially profit. According to Power et al. (2004, p. 93), “many schools particularly those in low-income, urban neighborhoods serving children from diverse backgrounds, have a high percentage of students with literary deficits and limited resources for providing remedial services.” With training, community members can support teachers as instructional aids tutoring students in needed areas. The Participatory Intervention Model (PIM), Nastasi et al., (2000) is a partnership-based model that promotes the formation and continual development of non-hierarchical, collaborative relationships between community partners and school staff. These relationships are designed to support schools and engage parents and community members in the culture of the school.

Similarly, the Southern Regional Education Board (1999) profiles its partnership with Wallace-Rose High School in Teachey, North Carolina. The partnership is designed to aid the school in improving academic outcomes for its students as part of the High Schools That Work (HSTW) Initiative. The case study examines ways that the partnership improves student learning. Helping the school to identify classrooms practices that work, providing data to help the school measure its progress, identify its challenges and plan for the future, and providing staff-development workshops and technical assistance are some of the ways that the public agency is able to assist the school in improving academic outcomes.

Although the focus of school-community partnerships is often academic, there are other common issues that both schools and communities must address. One issue that both groups must address is safety. Communities are often faced with the same safety issues that plague the local schools. Shively (1997) studies the Pio Pico experience in

Santa Ana, California, where gangs, graffiti, and safety were concerns for the Pio Pico Elementary School, Santa Ana Boys' and Girls' Club, and the surrounding community associations. Shively states,

Safety, critical democracy, inclusion, voice, care, community, education, time, personal safety, social action, leadership and personal responsibility are all values already mentioned that are active in this setting [this neighborhood in central Santa Ana in the heart of the barrio].

The community and school must work together to ensure the safety of everyone who lives and goes to school in the area. The issue of safety affects all stakeholders, and is something that can be addressed holistically when all parties are involved in the process.

### **Summary**

Family and community partnerships bring a wealth of support to schools including caring and invested adults, shared concerns, and academic and other supports. This group is often overlooked as stakeholders but, because they are the parents and local support systems of the students, they may be the most important. There are numerous studies that show improvement in student academic outcomes (Arriaza 2004; Bingler, 2002; Norman, 2009; and Schulte, 2004). Having community members, which includes parents, engage in students' learning shows the importance of learning and provides much needed support to students. Community members also provide a wealth of expertise that can be helpful to schools as they work to educate students.

Scholars have shown mixed findings on studies involving parent and student participation in the creation of school partnerships. The study by Hanford, Houck, Iller and Morgan (2007) found the inclusion of parents and students absent, while Shively's (1997) study shows that the inclusion of parents is increasing but not comparable to other

stakeholders. Meanwhile, Bingler (2002) enthusiastically proclaims a growing trend in viable partnerships between parents and schools.

Relationships between schools and communities fluctuate between abundant and thriving to strained and non-existing. Some of the relationships are voluntary while others are forced through community activism and legal recourse. Meaningful interaction occurs when relationships are developed and sustained in the best interest of students and community members are part of the decision-making bodies actively engaged in determining the agenda setting and goals of the school. Arriaza (2004) states that “school reform initiatives—particularly those aimed at high schools—have greater chances of staying made when the community actively participates as an empowered change agent.” While a number of articles suggest the importance and benefits of school and family/community partnerships (Arriaza, 2004; Auerbach, 2009; Bingler, 2002; Brown, 2007; Johnson, Pugach, & Hawkins, 2004; Semke & Sheridan, 2012; Shively, 1997; Wiseman, 2010), the challenges to sustain these partnerships in meaningful ways is also evident (Auerbach, 2009; Power et al., 2004; Redding, 2002; Shively, 1997).

### **Corporate Partners**

As public schools continue to be faced with monetary, instructional, and facility shortages, they have increasingly sought partnerships with local and national corporations to meet some of their needs. Corporate partnerships provide schools with academic and non-academic support, resources, materials, experiential opportunities for students and faculty and can also lead to a professional pipeline for internships and employment. Corporate or business partnerships include large corporations as well as small privately owned companies. School partnerships provide fiscal support, materials and goods, adult

supervision, tutoring, and mentoring, job training, professional development for teachers, pipelines to work and college for students and a host of other experiential opportunities for students. In turn, corporate partners get to support and train their staff, hone their crafts, demonstrate community service, and create a pipeline of employees and/or consumer bases.

Facilities, finances, and human resources are some of the examples of services provided to schools by collaborating with the business sector. Siegel (1998) studied the Leadership Education and Development (LEAD) Program in Business that is targeted to underrepresented high schools to assess the inter-organization partnership developed to create a pipeline of students going into the business jobs. These organizations offer a variety of goods and services that are beneficial to schools and help to prepare students to go to work or college with an understanding of their chosen field. Student experiences and opportunities are enhanced by these relationships and create a readiness in young people to pursue further knowledge and experience through college and/or career opportunities. Corporations seek a positive return on their investments and foster collaborative relationships with schools that are mutually beneficial. Assuming that the students will someday enter the labor force and potentially become future employees or customers, Patterson (2004) found that business are investing in schools with the anticipation that they are growing their own work force or customer base.

Academic support is one of the reasons that schools and business began to partner. This is shown by additional adults supporting instruction in the classroom as well as by student experiential opportunities provided by the business partner. As Ferguson (2001) suggested, the need for business support is particularly important as schools are

being asked to meet higher academic standards while consistently lacking financial, human, and administrative resources. Ferguson's study of school partnerships showed the significant expansion of partnerships and involvement of community development, technology, standards, and literacy. Similarly, Wechter (2004) found that with attention to identifying the skills required by the corporate partners and the corporate sponsors, meaningful relationships resulted in an improved academic and school climate.

Although The Chicago Annenberg Challenge was designed for schools and corporations to network to improve instruction, it was not successful. Sconzert, Smykie and Wenzel's (2004) case study reveals that The Chicago Annenberg Challenge was organized around a strategy that called for schools with common interests and needs to form networks and work with external partners to improve classroom practice and strengthen community relationships. The Challenge supported the same 45 networks and external partners from spring 1999 through 2001, having initially funded thirty-four networks between 1995 and 1996, as well as new funding ventures in 1997. Nearly 100 years of experience was accumulated by the 19 partners working with the 45 networks that were sustained over the six years of the Challenge. The researchers found that Annenberg's partners were not particularly successful in promoting improvement across the large number of schools. Most information was provided through self-reports and reflections of Annenberg's external partners regarding what they did, thought, and saw. Self-reporting bias was a limitation of the study. Like the Greenwald (1999) study, external corporate partners formed networks with schools to improve school climate and student outcomes. Unlike the Greenwald study, the partners were not proven to be successful in promoting academic success.

Similar to Patterson's focus on corporations as financial supporters of schools, Wechter (2004) found that shrinking budgets prompted high school leaders to explore the idea of corporate partnerships to close the gap in academic achievement, garner financial support, and provide direction for high schools struggling to meet the workforce development demands. Addressing the unintended outcome in the study by Patterson (2004), this study set out to identify the skills and knowledge that high school leaders and their corporate partners need to create an equitable relationship. This mixed methods study conducted a quantitative study with interviewing high school leaders from three school districts in the state of Florida. One principal from each Florida district was randomly selected for an interview from amongst those who returned the surveys agreeing to be interviewed. Additionally, a photo matrix was created by visiting each high school campus in which the principals agreed to be interviewed in order to collect data of corporations that had visible name recognition. The top six corporate partners were selected from the matrix and contacted for an interview based upon frequency of appearance or as indicated by the principal. A pilot study was conducted with regards to the questions and format of the in-depth interviews. Three high school leaders and three equivalent-level individuals from the business sector were evaluated using the instrument developed. A quantitative survey instrument and qualitative interviews were conducted with high school leaders and their corporate partners. The quantitative survey instrument used was developed by Brinson (1996) to determine the knowledge level of high school leaders in three selected Florida school districts with regard to corporate partnerships. As an employee in a public high school working directly with the corporate partners, the researcher had biases that presented a limitation to the study. The small sample size of

leaders and corporate partners interviewed were also a limitation. The researcher found that leaders have been willing to sell off partners of their school campuses in exchange for money and other tangible supports that were distributed at the leader's discretion. A second type of benevolent win-win placed the greater importance on enhancing student achievement through contact with the business partner. Leaders work closely with the partners to develop an industry-standard academic curriculum that would positively impact students. The researchers found the partner, in contrast to those in Patterson's (2004) study, to be caring and supportive.

Contrarily, Beabout (2010) found that school-corporate partnerships, as one example of an external relationship, generally have little to do with school improvement. Charitable relationships and technical support relationships are classified by Beabout as low-risk relationships in that they have little to do with core operating procedures related to teaching and learning. Nursing and social work are worthy services to offer to students and their families but have nothing to do with teaching and learning. Furthermore, according to Beabout, what is important about low-risk relationships is that they have little chance of engaging the educators at the school in an honest and critical examination of teaching and learning processes. They "help out" instead of "dig in" and do not necessarily produce sustained improvement. Although Beabout's research includes 29 interviews of school ten principals, it is limited by the sample size of eight schools in an interpretive study in a school district that traditionally has 100 schools.

There may be discrepancies in the academic benefits of partnering with corporations, but corporations definitely play a critical role in the success of public schools. Whether their impact on academics is profound or merely supportive, public

schools continue to seek out corporate partnerships. Facilities and financial and human resources are provided to schools by collaborating with the business sector. In turn, corporations also seek opportunities to partner with public schools. The opportunity to support schools and communities gives corporations a chance to give back and create positive rapport with future customers. Corporations seek return on their investments by fostering relationships that are mutually beneficial, such as having their staff's children attend the schools that they support, and obtaining priority in decision making (Patterson, 2004). Fundamentally, they plan for a long-term return on their investments by assuming that these students will someday enter the labor force and possibly becoming their future employee or customer.

School facilities are often in short supply, inadequate, or deteriorating, something that explains the need for public schools to partner with corporations, who themselves sometimes seek benefits from school partnerships. Taylor and Snell (2000) researched the ways corporations are supplying alternative means to address the needs of adequate space for schools. In a case study, the researchers examine school-corporate partnerships in the Des Moines, Iowa downtown area, as well as downtown Tampa and Miami-Dade County in Florida. The downtown model features a mall school, is funded by downtown corporations, and provides school facilities for children of downtown employees. The mall school targets students that want an alternative education with job training. The airport model provides a school on airport grounds for the children of employees as well as neighborhood children. While these models provide nontraditional space helping to alleviate overcrowding in the traditional school settings, they also provide benefits to their staff by allowing them to enroll their children in schools where they work. The

school-corporate partners challenged schools in unexpected ways. One of these ways was mandating that the school enroll the children of their employees.

## **Summary**

The term “partnership” became popular in the late 1970s, when partnership efforts were motivated largely by public relations and the desire for corporations in or near urban communities to be good neighbors (Grobe, 1993). Corporations continue to be “good neighbors” by providing an alternative source to meet the needs of schools (Ferguson, 2001; Sanders & Harvey, 2002; Taylor & Snell, 2000). Their support may be in the form of experiential opportunities for students, support for core academic areas, or other goods and services. The partnering of school districts has been designed to improve graduation rates, school-to-work transition, and civic engagement (Ferguson, 2001). Although partnerships with community organizations are expanding, small businesses along with parent organizations are now the most common school partners. Designed to ease, among other stressors, the financial burdens on schools, corporations also cause schools to defer in unintended ways to political pressure and corporate policy desires in order to gain and/or sustain financial support. Corporations also engage in school partnerships because they see themselves creating pipelines encouraging students to become future employees and/or consumers. Although still partnering to invest in the community schools, corporations began to seek other investments such as growing a pipeline from the schools to their workforce (Patterson, 2004). While the opportunity for experiential engagement for students was an asset for the schools as well, both parties were put in positions to navigate barriers in their partnerships. The corporations were often described as providing non-academic supports, which puts the school in the position of assessing

whether the services offered match the needs of the school. Partnerships between schools and corporations were explored in single and mixed method studies to determine the role and effect of the relationships. Greenwald's (1999) mixed method international study and Sconzert, Smykie and Wenzel's (2004) study of schools and external partners did not always prove to be beneficial in terms of academic gains or school climate. Patterson (2004) found that schools sometimes had to defer in unintended ways to the desires of the corporations in order to gain and/or sustain their financial support. In contrast to Greenwald, Sconzert, Smykie and Wenzel, Wechter found that with attention to identifying the skills required by the corporate partners and the corporate sponsors, meaningful relationships resulted in improved academic achievement and school climate. Limitations of the studies involve small sample sizes and the possibility of research bias. Further studies should involve representative sample sizes.

### **University Partnerships**

Baker (2011) states that American universities are among the best in the world. They have leading experts in every imaginable field of study, including the technical knowledge needed to improve public schools. Low performing schools in high needs communities desperately need access to such world-class experts. Given the abundance of human resources in the university and the ongoing struggles in P-12 schools, it makes sense to create partnerships between these two institutions.

Baker (2011) also explored the complexity of school-university partnerships by studying structural arrangements that describe positions and roles that educators occupy as they come together in joint endeavors. According to Baker, there are three points of inquiry in the search for school-university partnership organizational arrangements: (a)

schools/districts, (b) universities/colleges, and (c) the joint entity recognized as the partnership. This joint entity, the partnership, is almost always a small piece of the school district and the university. In some cases, a few dozen people are involved in a partnership that represents thousands of professional educators in the two respective institutions. The benefits to schools include professional academicians serving as additional instructional resources in the classroom, the creation of pipelines for students going from high school to college, and life-skills training for students.

University-school partnerships make available a variety of resources, such as training for teachers, additional adult supervision in classrooms, and on-site tutorials for students to foster academic improvement. According to NYNSR (1999) and Sorenson (1998), partnerships between schools and universities have led to increased academic scores and parent satisfaction with the quality of teaching and learning. Tutorial services are a benefit that schools receive from their university partnerships, according to Hess (2000) and Sorenson (1998). Training for university students, laboratories for university professors, and a pipeline of students for universities are among the benefits that universities receive from their partnerships with public schools. College and university partnerships include high school students participating in university events as well as college students and faculty participating in student and faculty work in schools. These relationships provide free services to the schools and research and training opportunities for the university staff. University partnerships also provide teacher training, Schools are learning environments that help to turn new teachers into experienced educators (Bissaker, 2005).

One of the advantages to school-university partnerships is increasing the recruitment of students of color. Ayalon (2004) found that combining the research on recruitment of students of color into teaching and school-university collaborations indicates that recruitment might be more effective when both institutions share the need and belief in the importance of recruiting minority students as teachers, when top leaders of both institutions support this goal, and when both institutions are willing to be selfless and communicate frequently about this matter.

Ayalon (2004) has contributed to the topic on creating school-university partnerships to encourage students of color to enter the field of teaching. The researcher focuses on increasing the number of qualified teachers in urban settings. Ayalon's study demonstrates techniques to recruit persons of color, who share ethnicity, culture, and race with the students they are teaching. Using qualitative methods, the researcher engaged the pre-service teachers in interviews, observations, and data collection about their experiences in the program.

Universities partner with schools to provide enrichment opportunities that have a profound impact on the students by teaching them life skills as well as traditional academic coursework (Schug & Hagedorn, 2006). To address the problem of financial mismanagement plaguing minority populations in urban settings—including a greater number of bankruptcies, accumulations of large amounts of credit debit, and low rates of personal savings—as well as an increasing complex range of financial instruments and services, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in partnership with NCEE, state government, private not-for profit organizations, foundations, and the local public schools, engage ninth and tenth grade students annually in its program designed to

increase students' financial knowledge and encourage them to invest in "their own human capital" by getting a good education (Schug & Hagedorn, 1996). In other words, students are encouraged to value their own self-worth. This study of a university enrichment program supports public school partnerships that help to prepare students for some of adulthood responsibilities, and impresses upon them the importance of doing well academically.

Improving school climate is another way that university partnerships can enrich schools and enhance school climate, which was the objective of the university and school partnership research by Achilles (1993). Using a mixed methodology study including interview data, questionnaires from teachers and leaders, and archival measures, the researcher studied the students' and adults' attitudes about school discipline and other climate-related issues. Similar to the study by Schug and Hagedorn (2006), this study evaluated school-university partnerships on their contributions to schools that might be beneficial yet not directly address academic concerns. Achilles' study showed how partnerships with colleges and universities have benefited schools in ways besides academics.

Academic support provided by universities not only enriches the experiences of the public school students, but it serves as a training ground for innovation and invigoration of university staff and college students. University partners provide schools with a variety of resources such as training for staff and on-site tutorials for students designed for academic improvement. These relationships provide free services to the schools and research and training opportunities for the university staff. Lieberman (1998, in McGrath) find that energizing and renewing the spirit of university faculty is one of

the unexpected outcomes of school-university partnerships. Staff typically responds creatively to the challenges that arise from these partnerships and find great stimulation in solving the academic challenges presented. Furthermore, school-university partnerships and two-to-four-year collaborations have been very successful in enhancing motivation and increasing the number of students receiving baccalaureate degrees.

In response to a perceived lack of connection between university preparation programs for teachers and administrators in the field, some universities have initiated partnerships with local school districts to strengthen programs and provide greater relevance to the work in schools, and increase the number of qualified candidates for the principalship (Whitaker & Barnett, 1999). Similarly, Gardner (2011) explored university school partnerships and found that the scholarship on partnerships is descriptive and colored by high hopes about what partnerships can accomplish. The author found that it is necessary to use that optimistic lens to characterize the collaborative processes, which convene partners to improve student learning and achievement.

## **Summary**

As demonstrated in studies by Hess (2000), Sorenson (1998), Schug and Hagedorn (2006) and Achilles (1993), university staff are often experts in the field and provide an array of supports to schools including academic tutorial services for students, tutoring and life skills workshops on non-academic subjects such as finance, and the creation of high school-to-college pipelines. While corporate partnerships often support schools in non-academic ways, university partnerships are often focused on academic goals. In a collaborative effort, these partnerships were often designed to provide academic support to the public schools and to the universities who are training college

students. Furthermore, they provide training for school staff on academic topics and can invigorate school staff and improve the school climate.

The universities themselves can be energized by working directly with students and staff and are able to combine theory and practice. Public schools are training grounds for both faculty and college students. By creating pipelines to college, they begin to make connections and lay foundations for future college careers.

### **Government Partnerships**

In addition to private corporations and universities, schools partner with public agencies such as national and local governmental, department of education, and social services to use their expertise in enriching academic programs for students, professional development for staff and evaluation components for administrators. According to Siegel (2008), “Equalization of opportunity for racial and ethnic minorities in the United States has been a consistent public policy and education imperative for several decades, and yet significant disparities persist” (p. 195).

Schools partner with government offices to secure grants and other funding, goods, and services. In order to address the scarcity of resources that schools face, school leaders must form collaborations on local and national fronts.

There is limited research available on government partnerships with public schools. There are institutions such as the government-sponsored museums that partner with schools. According to King (1998), a handful of government-run museums and school districts across the nation have come together in community partnerships, in response to the past ten years of reform efforts, to create an innovation that blends formal and informal learning: the museum school. The museum school consists of projects

between at least one museum and one school district in order to create a curriculum that embeds the district-mandated learning goals into long term projects in which students are required to create objects, exhibits, or museums.

Formal instruction in the arts, integrated with core-subject instruction shows students that knowledge is transferable and applicable to multiple situations, according to Norman's (2009) case study on The Multicultural Arts School. Long-term, artistic, and shared relationships between schools and arts organizations and institutions allow artists and educators to trace the benefits of arts activities on students' development over time. When partnerships involve classroom teachers, professional teaching artists, community members, and educational and cultural educational institutions, learning outcomes can improve, and the experience can become more beneficial for everyone involved.

### **Summary**

The research on government-sponsored public school partnerships is not as widespread as that for partnerships with communities, corporations, or universities. Governments often are involved partners with schools through networks that include community organizations, corporations, and/or universities. The benefits to schools such as academic and experiential support for students are similar.

### **Summary**

There are sundry opportunities for organizations that are readily agreeable to partner with schools. After identifying their need and researching institutions offering assistance, schools can utilize the supports available to fill the void caused by limited school budgets. Schools benefit from association with various partners. Corporate and university partners are valuable resources providing schools with financial assistance,

human resources, academic support, evaluation measures, and professional development training for staff. Public agencies provide some of the same services and often engage in viable relationships with schools. Community partners include parents, associations, and community organizations providing caring, invested adults who should not be overlooked as stakeholders.

Similar to services offered by colleges and universities, public agencies benefit schools by making academic, professional development, and evaluative resources available. These organizations bring innovation, resources, and professional adult support to schools. They provide professional development, student workshops, and in-class activities. Although they provide similar support to schools as other types of partnerships, it is local support that helps to support the school and local community.

Siegel (2008) studies government, corporate, and university organizations that strive to introduce underrepresented high school students to business education and careers in business as part of the LEAD (Leadership Education and Development) program. The researcher conducted 33 semi-structured interviews of university, corporate, governmental staff to learn more about the collaborative effort to create a pipeline for underrepresented students. The researcher finds that by working together, the organizations studied are able to provide pipelines for underserved young people to have professional experiential opportunities. Suggesting that more research is needed on the success of related government, corporate, and university collaboration. Greenberg (2004) states that more research is needed to evaluate partnerships of evidenced-based programs that utilize government, business, and universities to support schools and communities.

There are benefits to all types of school partnerships. All have the potential to offer financial, material, and human resource support to schools. Varying partnerships also have unique benefits. Corporations can create a pipeline with schools to build their future workforce. Likewise, universities pipeline would lead to future college students. Parents, community members, and community organizations have more direct and long lasting impact on students when they live with or among and serve students and their community over long periods, serving and empowering them for years to come.

According to Sanders and Harvey (2002), current educational reforms emphasize the need for schools, especially those serving poor and minority students, to partner with families and communities to create more challenging, responsive, and supportive learning environments. School leaders partner with families and communities, corporations, colleges and universities, and government agencies to gain support in meeting the needs of their schools. Community-based organizations, corporations, universities, and government are a wealth of resources for schools requiring financial, goods, human capital, and space to fill the needs created by fiscally trying times. With the belief that they are investing in their community, potentially growing their future labor and consumer markets, and taking advantage of altruistic opportunities, community organizations, corporations, and governmental organizations support schools. The schools and the private partners must work together to move their partnerships forward by sharing common goals.

## **School Leaders Delegate and Define Roles**

“Surround yourself with the best people you can find, delegate authority, and don't interfere.”

—Ronald Reagan

Leaders have many instructional and managerial tasks in order to accomplish their schools' goals. In particular, they must learn to delegate responsibility to teachers and subordinate administrators. Lovely (2005) says,

When shared responsibility flows through the arteries of a school, the wisdom of working as a whole supersedes any desire for individual triumph. Teachers understand what is necessary to bring out the best in students, and leaders recognize what they must do to bring out the best in teachers. In championship schools, everyone is in sync.

Furthermore, according to Lovely,

There's plenty of work to be done in schools. Delegation affords a larger number of teachers the chance to assume formal leadership roles, permits several assignments to be done simultaneously, and increases the quality of the end result. Leaders who activate team talents and delegate without guilt are able to distribute responsibility equitably—not equally—among those with a vested interest in increased student learning. They are sure to see changes rivaling the Boston Celtics. The act of delegating combats employee isolation, reduces job overload, and lessens the chance for burnout. What better way to keep both school leaders and teachers from spreading themselves too thin?

Lovely provides a checklist to assist principals with their delegation plans. The research on leader delegation provides blueprints for principals who are interested in developing their delegation techniques.

In order to sustain partnerships and do the numerous tasks that leaders must complete on a daily basis, leaders must become good delegators. Delegating leadership roles to others in the building also empowers staff and engages them in multiple ways

within the school. Leaders also show recognition of the strength and leadership of staff members by empowering them to coordinate partnerships and other projects.

Epstein, Coates, and Sanders (2002) say that school leaders are essential members of a school's Action Team for Partnerships (ATP). Through case studies, the authors show how leaders support and guide the ATP's connections to the School Council or a similar body. Middle and high school level leaders may delegate the school administrator's responsibility to an assistant. Most principals do not serve as the overall chair of the ATP; that leadership role is generally left to a teacher or to teacher-parent co-chairs. According to Epstein et al., some principals serve as chair or co-chair of an ATP committee for one of the six types (Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision Making, Collaborating with the Community) or for one of the targeted school goals. Although principals delegate some responsibility to assistant principals and teachers, Epstein et. al (2002) state that leadership includes such duties as calling all teachers' attention to the importance of planning and conducting school, family, and community partnerships with their students' families and allocating funds for the planned program of school, family, and community partnerships. The funds are included as a line item in the annual school budget. The school leader also provides time and space for ATP meetings, arranges for teachers on the ATP to meet at the same time or provisions for the school to be open for meetings before or after school hours, and encourages all educators and families to participate in activities to develop a welcoming school climate and a sense of community. Publicizing scheduled involvement activities throughout the school year; evaluating each teacher's activities to involve families as part of an annual or periodic professional review; guiding the ATP in making periodic reports to the School Council or

School Improvement Team on plans and accomplishments; and working with community groups and leaders to locate resources that will enrich the curriculum and help students, teachers, and parents in important ways are additional duties assumed by the school principal. In addition, the principal is responsible for recognizing and thanking ATP leaders and team members, active family volunteers, and other participants in involvement activities; and is expected to work with school district facilitators, district administrators, and leaders from other schools to understand and improve school, family, and community partnerships.

Involving key stakeholders such as parents and community members is one way that school leaders engage partners over time. Wiseman (2010) incorporated differing voices in her illustration of the complexities of designing and implementing a program to increase the involvement of families in a junior high school. She includes the perspective of the administrator from the sponsoring coffeehouse, the students, the community poet who was involved in the program, and the classroom teacher. School leaders, while essential to the development of school partnerships, must empower teachers and others in order to balance the administrative load, increase the capacity of the faculty, and provide more programming for students (Lovely, 2005).

### **Maintaining Long-term Partnerships**

Beabout (2010) states that a vital component of sustained school improvement is the ability of schools to reach out to their external environment for new ideas, information, and resources. Feedback relationships may be an important source. They can result in large changes to the operation of the school, producing short-term disruptions that eventually give way to long-term success. In fact, entering only into low-risk

partnerships is certainly the riskier approach if sustainable long-term change is the goal. Seeking out feedback relationships based on trust and a commitment to improving teaching and learning appears to be a prudent investment for schools. This is especially important in those schools (urban, high poverty) that feel threatened by the current policy environment, which can lead to rigid, reactive teaching practices that focuses on short-term gains rather than creating sustainable improvement (Olsen & Sexton, 2009). School leaders engage their partners in discourse to improve the school but also to improve the partnership.

According to Grobe (1993) some partnerships start small, providing services to select student groups or individual classrooms, and over time, expanding to address increasingly difficult issues and concerns. Some partnerships stay small but effective. Others are initiated at the beginning to bring about system-wide change. Multi-dimensional partnerships can be found at any level; in general, however, “the higher the level of participation and commitment in education, the greater the opportunity to bring about lasting improvements in education and the greater the likelihood of significantly improving the workforce readiness of young people. Furthermore, Grobe (1993) outlines six levels of partnerships that school leaders can have when partnering with private organizations:

- Partners in Special Services: Special Services partnerships “provide short-term, project-or student-specific activities or resources to help with a specific problem or need.”
- Partners in the Classroom: Classroom partners are volunteers who “improve the learning environment by bringing their business or occupational expertise directly

into the classroom for students and teachers, or bringing the classroom to the business.”

- **Partners in Teacher Training and Development:** Partners in teacher training and development provide “opportunities to update, upgrade, or maintain skills (for example, to learn the latest development in science or mathematics,) or learn more about the labor market . . . workplace needs . . . career opportunities” or developments in allied fields.
- **Partners in Management:** “Management assistance partnerships provide school officials with management support and business expertise in a broad range of areas, such as increased leader or teacher autonomy, labor management relations, flexible personnel and incentive systems, purchasing efficiencies, plant and equipment issues, management information systems, strategic planning,” etc.
- **Partners in Systemic Educational Improvement:** Systemic partnerships are change initiatives in which “corporations, education officials, and other community principals identify the need for reform or improvement in the educational system, and then work over the long term to make those changes happen.”
- **Partners in Policy:** “Policy partnerships are collaborative efforts at the national, state, or local level, among corporations, schools, and public officials that shape the public and political debate, bring about substantive changes in state or federal legislation or local school governance, and affect the overall direction of the educational system.”

## **Negotiating with Partners**

Schools enter partnerships with private organizations and must make some concessions in order for the partner to view the relationship as mutually beneficial. Beabout (2010) examines the external partnerships of eight post-Katrina New Orleans schools as they created (or in some cases re-created) their identity as organizations within the broader societal context of how individual school leaders prioritize and engage in their private partnership relationships without the intervening influences of central office directives.

According to Beabout (2010), schools' external partnerships in contexts of change identify theoretical and empirical support for schools to forge long-term relationships with external partners as part of their overall change strategy. Benefits such as accessing community feedback, being buffered from political forces, gaining access to new information, and discovering broader bases of community engagement with schooling are acknowledged, however, there are challenges to this approach, include inviting too much conflicting information to the school, the varied ability of schools to manage these relationships, and the individual-group pressures that persist when organizations agree to come together.

Facilities, financing, and human resources are provided to schools by collaborating with the business/corporate sector. These relationships give much needed support to schools. Corporations seek return on their investments by fostering relationships that are mutually beneficial, such as having their staff's children attend the schools that they support, and obtaining priority in decision making (Patterson, 2004). According to Patterson, corporations partner with schools planning for a long-term return

on their investments, assuming that the students will someday enter the labor force and possibly become their future employee or customers. Yet Patterson also found that when early childhood stakeholders courted the corporate sector to gain support for their program, their actions resulted in unintended consequences including the elevation of the corporate perspectives above those of parents, service providers, and other stakeholders. Deferring to corporate expertise and courting their engagement in the partnership initiative revealed that business was not always willing to engage in partnerships for children for philanthropic reasons but were, at times, looking to protect their “bottom line.” Patterson found that corporations were less interested in issues such as school climate; they wanted to see the potential of getting a “return on their investment.” It informed the school that corporations were not involved in one-way partnerships in which their only role was to fund school-directed programs.

Wechter (2004) found that shrinking budgets prompted high school leaders to explore the idea of corporate partnerships to close the gap in academic achievement, garner financial support and provide direction for high schools struggling to meet the workforce development demands. Wechter’s mixed methodology study, conducted in three large Southeast Florida districts, included results from the Brinson (1996) quantitative survey instrument, which was used in a similar study in Georgia seven years prior. Results suggested that corporate partners were perceived as positive role models and beneficial as volunteers and mentors. However, those findings are inconclusive because barriers for a random sample occurred when the district prevented the researchers from including 16 schools in a particular district in the study. Pressure felt by leaders not to speak negatively about their corporate partners for fear of embarrassment

or loss of funding also proved to be a barrier in this study. It is unclear whether the schools benefited from the relationship.

Wiseman (2010) found that a poetry program designed and funded to involve junior high school students' parents with the school began to have a different purpose for students and the community artist who worked with them. Although the poetry program was designed to support students performing for their parents as a means of engaging parents, it became a safe space for students to discuss feelings that they did not necessarily feel comfortable with or want to talk about with their parents. The various perspectives and approaches to families demonstrate some of the complexities of collaboration as well as the difficulties of increasing parent involvement for adolescent children. It is important to note that understanding the roles and systems of family support for adolescents is a complex and important consideration. Further studies on successful parent engagement and strategies to address varying perspectives are crucial to parental involvement.

Power et al. (2004) researched the process of using a participatory intervention model to establish a partnership-based, community-assisted early intervention literacy program. This study showed benefits to having tutors based in the community, reducing the risk of reading failure in culturally diverse, urban communities. Similar to Brown (2007), the researchers show that using the community is the strength of the program. Limitations to this study include the small sample size of conducting case studies on two community partners. Having the community partners and the school psychologist rate their tutoring sessions also brings challenges to the validity of the study. The researchers acknowledge that the effectiveness of the community-assisted approach studied might be

improved if group designs were utilized involving random assignment to experimental and control groups.

Baker (2011) found that school-university relationships are often described with terms like mutual trust, collaboration, and simultaneous renewal, which appeal to people because they are similar to desirable qualities that everyone supports. Value is seen in strong school-university relationships, but global language offers neither insight nor clarity about what is actually happening in the ongoing relationships among people who must negotiate their differences, allocate resources, set goals, coordinate tasks, measure outcomes, and revise plans that did not work out as originally anticipated. Baker defines school-university partnerships as complex and multi-dimensional settings requiring careful scrutiny of the many roles and relationships that bring the two institutions together.

Similarly, Watt-Malcolm (2011) describe divergent goals of universities and schools as it relates to dual credit (also known as dual enrollment, which clearly delineates credit for college courses taken by high school students) for high school students enrolled in universities. Dual credit initiatives challenge traditional boundaries, the institutionalization of defined organizational fields, and the historical educational and subsequent funding divisions between secondary and post-secondary institutions, in addition to the relationships among school districts, unions, employers, and schools. While interviewing participants on how to organize and manage dual credit programs, Watt-Malcolm found embedded jurisdictional issues in the participants' responses. Additional barriers to dual credit initiatives include perceived threats to control, standards, and funding. In some locations, local secondary schools, colleges, and

employers have found ways to work with the policies in place while other locations are in the process of seeking solutions to their particular partnership dynamics.

Watt-Malcolm's research explores perspectives from some of the partners engaged in dual credit initiatives related to college courses and apprenticeship training. While focused primarily on two Canadian provinces, this explanation of the barriers to more school-university partnerships focused on dual credit provides a starting point for school partnerships, in the United States or Canada, to address the issues outlined in hopes of preventing barriers to such partnerships.

Basom (2004) found that district administrators acting as adjunct professors in a school district-university leader preparation partnership had different views from the traditional university faculty of what aspiring leaders should be taught. University faculty is prone to teach traditional curriculum while adjuncts from the school district want to teach district practices. Forming productive partnerships requires some blending of the two or acceptance for which methods will be taught. Beabout warns that, "while the external partnership is serving as a source of new information (new teaching techniques and content knowledge), there is also an element of buffering as this relationship provides continuity and political support."

Bodilly, Chun, Ikemoto, and Stockly (2004) identify negative consequences to schools of the opposite case: when too many uncoordinated reforms are allowed to work at cross-purposes. While there is some reason to be wary of excessive business influence on our public schools (Apple, 2001; Cuban, 2004), schools and their leaders should be able to weigh the benefits and risks of such a relationship.

Contrarily, Toomey (2007) sees the school university partnership as a means of helping teachers sharpen their skills and assist schools with developing a culture of peer coaching with the end goal of providing individual and group support to a majority of English Language learners. During learning walks, teachers visit each other's classrooms, share positive views, and inquire about what they saw during their observation. Toomey offers examples of a non-punitive learning environment that works.

### **Maintaining School's Vision Amidst Partnership Negotiations**

Understanding and keeping the reason for partnering at the forefront is essential to school leaders maintaining their vision for their school amidst the challenges and negotiations of partnering. Shinnars (2001) says, "in any type of collaboration, partners must first know why they want to collaborate. They must know what they want for themselves and why collaboration will help them achieve it." It is the leader's responsibility to maintain the school's vision while negotiating with partners in order to provide services to schools. Failure to keep the school's vision at the forefront may result in unintended consequences. Patterson (2004) states that unintended consequences, including privileging the perspectives of business persons above those of parents, service providers, and other stakeholders in early childhood initiatives, were the result of courting the business sector to gain programmatic support. In such cases, the Executive Directors of the early childhood initiatives had naïve expectations of their relationships with the business counterparts. They made unanticipated trade-offs in order to secure funding from the business sector, invariably creating disillusionment on behalf of staff and parents.

## **Summary**

Leaders have an array of private partnership resources available to them to offset the shortages that their schools may be facing. These partnerships provide financial assistance, adult supervision, and content expertise, facilities, and other goods and services to aid schools in preparing students for success in high school and beyond. In order to effectively manage their resources, leaders must know the needs of their schools and align their organizational collaborations in accordance. Schools must align themselves with private partners that provide innovation and experiential opportunities (Beabout, 2010). In order to sustain their partnerships, leaders must negotiate their working relations with the communities, corporations, and universities. While doing so, leaders must delegate members of their own staff to empower staff, gain buy-in from their own team of teachers and administrators, and avoid their own burnout (Lovely, 2005).

### CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

Qualitative research investigates the why and how behind human behavior and interprets individuals' experiences (Merriam, 2009). It makes sense of the way that people construct their worlds and the meaning that they attach to their experiences. All characteristics of qualitative inquiry emphasize "experience, understanding, and meaning-making" (Merriam, 2009, p. 19). This study was designed as a qualitative interview-based study to uncover the factors that contribute to the maintenance of successful school-external partnerships. Merriam argues that the researcher wants to find out what is "in and on someone else's mind" (as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 341). As Patton explains:

We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe. . . . We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings that attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective (pp. 340–341).

Merriam and Patton explain how interviewing gives us data that we, otherwise, would not have access. The only way to truly understand someone's thoughts and intentions is to ask.

This interpretivist (Schwandt, 2000, p. 3) viewpoint distinguishes human (social) action from the movement of physical objects with human actions as being inherently meaningful. Human actions are dependent on the context and intentions of the actor. Schwandt further explains that "to find meaning in an action, or to say one understands what a particular action means, requires that one interpret in a particular way what the actors are doing (Schwandt, 2000, p. 3). "Interpretivists argue that it is possible to

understand the subjective meaning of action (grasps the actor's beliefs, desires, and so on) yet do so in an objective manner" (Schwandt, 2000, p. 5).

Qualitative research makes meaning of how we interpret the world. Interpretivism translates meaning as intended by the actor. Objectively, the researcher reproduces the original meaning meant by the actor. This qualitative research is consistent with all other forms of qualitative study, with the researcher acting as the primary instrument for data collection. The benefits of having the researcher as the data collector allowed for immediate response and adaptations to occur prior to, simultaneously, and after data collection and analysis. Although having the researcher serve as the data collector may introduce certain biases, this study identified the potential biases so that they would not impact the purpose of this study which was to examine the factors that contribute to the maintenance of public school-external partnerships.

Prior research suggests that there is a vast amount of evidence on the need and benefits of school partnerships (Gardner, 2011; Greenwald, 1999; Shefner & Cobb, 2002). Current educational reform emphasizes the need for schools, especially those serving poor and minority students, to collaborate with families and communities to create more challenging, responsive, and supportive learning environments (Sanders & Harvey, 2002). Accordingly, it addressed the following research question and sub-questions:

1. What factors contribute to successfully maintaining school partnerships with external partners?
  - 1a. What barriers have you encountered when implementing or sustaining your partnerships?

1b. How did you resolve the barriers?

These questions will be explored from the perspective of the partnership organizers both within and outside of the school selected for this study.

The following sections describe this study's methodology used to answer the research question, and includes the epistemology, research design, theoretical constructs, site and participation selections, and the procedures for data collection and data analysis. The chapter concludes with the researcher's subjectivity statement and a description of the trustworthiness techniques and the ethical considerations of this study. The epistemological stance towards the process of interest is that of an interpretivist. Epistemology refers to how we come to know what we know. In research, our epistemology shapes how we investigate a phenomenon of interest. Crotty (2003, p. 8) explains epistemology as a way of looking at the world and making sense of it. Similarly, Hamlyn (1995, p. 242) describes epistemology as dealing with "the nature of knowledge, its possibility, scope and general basis". "Interpretive research, which is where qualitative research is most often located, assumes that reality is socially constructed, that is, there is no single, observable reality. Rather, there are multiple realities, or interpretations, of a single event" (Merriam, 2009, p. 8).

The epistemological stance of interpretivism is appropriate for this study because the purpose of the research is to understand what factors contribute to successful school partnerships. Interpretivism allows the researcher to interpret the perspectives of the partnership organizers' views on contributions to school partnerships. Literature has determined that schools face academic, financial, and other shortages, and that those shortages can be offset by partnering with private organizations. Research has shown that

partnerships between schools and private organizations positively impact student achievement (Auerbach, 2009; Christensen, 2004; Epstein, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Merz & Furman, 1997; Turnbull & Turnbull, 2001). Partnerships serve as protective factors for children at risk of academic failure according to (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Pianta & Walsh, 1998). In addition, research has shown that partnerships provide financial donations and equipment to schools by giving corporations, universities, communities, foundations, and government organizations opportunities to invest in the communities where they are located (Bingler, 2002; Grobe, 1993; Patterson, 2004; Sanders & Harvey, 2002). Research denotes the importance of further study on evaluation factors that lead to maintain successful school partnerships. Patterson (2004) found that schools sometimes had to make unwanted concessions to the corporations in order to gain or sustain financial support.

The epistemology in this study on the school partnerships is interpretivism. The research was designed to understand the way that schools work with their partners to maintain relationships with organizations for three years or more. The researcher studied the school's interactions with representatives from external partnerships.

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks**

Powell and DiMaggio's (1991) institutional theory suggested that organizations that have formed partnerships develop institutions, which take on distinctive characteristics, influenced both by the school and private partner. Institutionalization can, in other words, be viewed as a value-consolidating process, whose aim is to transform an organization into an institution, according to North (1990). Powell and DiMaggio (1991) explain that institutions rise, change, or persist based on regulative, coercive compliance

rooted in expediency, normative compliance coercion forced by social obligations, accreditations, and certifications and cognitive compliance. This study utilized these theoretical concepts to explain how the school and its partners created an institution to maintain their partnerships based on effective communication, collaboration that moves partnerships forward, and commitment to navigating through barriers.

Bolman and Deal (1997) present four frames, structural, human, political, and symbol, which were used in this study to demonstrate how both the school and the private enterprise approached the partnership. This study used a qualitative methodology to understand and interpret the factors that contribute to maintaining long-term partnerships. As “the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis” (Merriam, 2009, p. 15), qualitative research can be responsive and adaptive. This design is significantly relevant to this study because it is crucial to gaining understanding of how school partnerships are sustained and maintained. Specifically, partnership organizers’ self-reported experiences will help identify communication and collaboration; navigating barriers influences their ability to maintain the relationships between the school and the partnering organizations.

This study aimed to facilitate understanding of the perspectives of the partnership organizers and school leadership (Barnett, Hall, Berg, & Camarena, 2009; Relave & Deich, 2007; Johnson, Pugach, and Hawkins, 2004).

### **Site and Participation Selection**

#### **Sampling Strategy**

Purposeful sampling, specifically, criterion based sampling, was used in this study. LeCompte and Preissle (1993, p. 69), describe criterion-based sampling according

to two main steps: “create a list of the attributes essential” to your study, and then “proceed to find or locate a unit matching the list.” The criterion selected for the criterion-based sampling directly reflects the purpose for the study and guides the researcher in identification of information-rich cases. The criteria that were used to select partnerships were those that the school and partners had been offering for a minimum of three years. With a minimum of three years of partnering, the partnership organizers on both the school and the organization side have been around long enough to be “successful,” and partnership organizers are able to describe ways that they have maintained the partnership over time.

Maxwell expands on purposeful sampling as a qualitative research strategy “. . . in which particular settings, person, or events are selected deliberately in order to provide important information that can’t be gotten as well from other choices” (Maxwell, 1996, p. 70). Maxwell shared that purposeful sampling is useful in discovering normality among individuals, settings, and events (Maxwell, 2005). Purposeful sampling allowed the researcher to note homogenous and heterogeneous themes in the research findings.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend sampling until a point of saturation or redundancy is reached. The study included 23 participants and concluded when salient themes were repeated and the study reached saturation. The sample was selected through a criterion-based sampling method. Schools and organizations had to be partners for a minimum of three years. The partnerships had to have been around long enough to be successful and partnership organizers had to be able to describe ways they had maintained the partnerships over time. Interviews were conducted from April 6, 2016 through July 13, 2016.

## **Site Selection**

The site of the research took place in a large urban/suburban school in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The school has a diverse population and offers varied partnership programs. This site was chosen because the school is a community school with partnerships focused on academics, health and social services, and community engagement. The school had more than 20 partnerships and clubs posted on its website. This site is also a large school serving more than 2,000 students. Because of its population size and the number of businesses in the area, the site provided a greater possibility of partnership programs.

## **Data Collection**

Prior to collecting data, I received approval to conduct research by The George Washington University. Once approved, Initial contact was made to the school principal to identify partnership organizers. The principal suggested several interview candidates also referred to as participants. Those participants suggested other partnership organizers to be interviewed. The researcher then e-mailed identified partnership organizers inviting them to participate in the study, using the letter that appears in Appendix B. Once it was determined that the partnership organizer was interested in participating in the study and that they met the study's eligibility criteria, the researcher established a time and location for the interview with the partnership organizer.

## **Participant Characteristics**

Twenty-three participants involved in leading partnerships in one mid-Atlantic high school volunteered to participate in this study. Twenty-one of the 23 participants met the selection criteria use of being involved in at least one partnership with the school

for three or more years. Thus, the researcher assumed the partnerships were beneficial to the school community. This is consistent with prior literature. The definition is consistent with prior literature on school partnerships (Epstein, 2002; Johnson, Pugach, & Hawkins, 2004; McLean & Behringer, 2008; Norman, 2009; Rasch, 1999; Sanders & Harvey, 2002). Participants' characteristics are summarized in the following table. Participants, and individuals referenced in participants' responses, selected school site, and participating organizations, were all assigned pseudonyms to protect their privacy.

The study included a variety of kinds of partnerships including academic partnerships (National Honor Society), business partnerships (Chamber of Commerce, Future Business Leaders of America), civic partnerships (Student Government Association), environmental partnerships (The Green Team), experiential partnerships. Participants represented a variety of kinds of programs including business affiliations, environmental, (ProStart), and military (Navy JROTC), The chart identifies the kinds of partnerships that participants in the study supported (see Figure 1. Participant Profile).

- Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber of Commerce is made up of members with common interests and concerns related to the business environment in the area. They are the primary professional trade organization in the area dedicated to the protection, enhancement and success of good business in our community. The Chamber also facilitates a Youth Leadership Program and seeks student applicants from the school in the study. Students have to be rising 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders, complete an application and secure two teacher recommendations to be considered for the program.

- Green Team

The Green Team led the high school in the study to be certified as a Green School in 2016. The Green Schools Program is a nationally recognized sustainable schools program. The program, founded in 1999, Through the Green Team, the school applied for Green School certification. The application includes data metrics showing how the school meets the environmental requirements to be a Green School. The sponsoring agency provides educational opportunities for pre-K-12 schools that promote responsible environmental stewardship practices and increase awareness of how our relationship with the environment ultimately impacts public health and society.

- Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA)

Future Business Leaders of America is a non-profit organization for students preparing for career and business related fields. Schools must apply for membership and schools and students must pay annual dues to keep their membership current.

- Military (focus on Navy JROTC)

Navy JROTC has an active program on campus of the high school in the research study. Other military branches visit the school periodically to recruit high school seniors into the military upon graduation. The goal of the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) is to provide secondary school students the opportunity to become informed, responsible citizens prepared for challenges beyond high school graduation and prepared to enter the workforce. The curriculums focus on academics including United States military history; exploration of national

security issues; the study of meteorology and astronomy; communications and advanced technologies employed by the Armed Services; navigation and survival skills; healthy lifestyles and physical fitness; organizational skills and financial management; career exploration in a wide variety of fields (military and non-military) and the foundations of responsible leadership. Schools have to apply to offer JROTC and must meet the guidelines set forth by their branch of government. Cadets have to pass academic and physical evaluations and learn and continue to develop leadership skills and application of military courtesies and customs as they complete each year of their JROTC programs.

- National Honor Society (NHS)

The National Honor Society is the nation's premier organization established to recognize outstanding high school students. Four main purposes have guided chapters of NHS from the beginning: to create enthusiasm for scholarship; to stimulate a desire to render service; to promote leadership; and to develop character in the students of secondary schools. Membership into the National Honor Society is managed through the school chapter and guidelines. There are mandatory cumulative grade point average requirements.

- ProStart

ProStart's industry-driven curriculum provides real-life experience opportunities from culinary techniques to management skills, and builds practical skills and a foundation that will last a lifetime. By bringing together the industry and the classroom, ProStart students are given a platform to discover new interests and talents to open doors for fulfilling careers. The

ProStart curriculum includes all facets of the industry, and set a high standard of excellence for students and the industry. An industry-recognized certificate – the ProStart National Certificate of Achievement Students, are awarded to students who have completed the requirements of the ProStart program. To earn their certification, students pass two national exams, demonstrate a proficiency of foundational skills and work 400 hours in the industry.

- ProStart students who receive the certificate are eligible for NRAEF scholarship opportunities and course credits at numerous of the country's leading hospitality and culinary arts colleges and universities. Student Government Association  
The Student Government Association is a national organization with high school and college chapters. The high school wherein the research took place charges it's SGA to plan and lead school projects such as Homecoming, Homecoming party, advertising, and fundraising.
- Parent, Teacher, Student Organization (PTSO)  
Parent, Teacher, Student Organizations are similar to Parent, Teacher Associations (PTAs) in that they consist of parents and teachers of the school and sometimes students. Unlike the national PTA, Parent, Teacher Organizations, are independent. They do not pay national dues nor participate in the national PTA events. Their focus, is similar, in support of the school that the members' children's attend.
- Public Library  
The public library is free to all participants and supported by the county government. The library that participated in this study is located in walking

distance from the high school and offer a number of academic and experiential programs for students.

Table 1. *Participant Profiles*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Kind of Partnerships</b>	<b>Year Partnership Began</b>
Kerrie	Partner- Parent	Academic/ Experiential- PTSO President	2003
Mat (Alumni)	School- Teacher/Coordinator	Academic- National Honor Society/ gentleman's club	prior to 2010/ 2010
Chuck	Partner	Academic- Public Library	2014
Principal Dabney	School Principal	All - Administrator	NA
Bettye	School-Assistant Principal	All - Administrator	NA
Johnny	School- Counseling Chair	All - Administrator	NA
Emma	Partner	Business- Chamber of Commerce	1983 (on and off), 2014
Gillian	School- Teacher/Coordinator	Business- FBLA	1970
Alana	School- Teacher/Coordinator	Civic- Student Government Association	2009
Manuel	Partner	Civic- Student Government Association	
Daisy	School- Teacher/Coordinator	Experiential- Art program	2013
Jaime	School- Teacher/Coordinator	Experiential- Childcare Training	1991
Abby	School- Teacher/Coordinator	Experiential- Environmental- /Gardening/Green team	2009
Sandy	School- Teacher/Coordinator	Experiential- Music program	1999
Peter (Alumni)	Partner	Experiential- Music/Business entrepreneur	1999
Annie	School- Teacher/Coordinator	Experiential- ProStart	2008
Georgia	Partner	Experiential- Performing Arts Center	2009
Marcus	School- Special Education Teacher/Coordinator	Experiential- Work-study	2012
Damien	School- Special Education Teacher/Coordinator	Experiential Work-study	2012
Deborah	School- Counselor	Guidance liaison to Navy JROTC and military campus recruiters	over 10 years
Ruth	Partner	Social Service- City youth & family services organization	2002
Dre	Partner	Social Service- City youth & family services organization	2002
Dee	Partner	Social Service- City youth & family services organization	2002

Initial contact with the school principal was made to identify partnership organizers. The principal suggested several interview candidates, also referred to as “participants.” Those participants suggested other partnership organizers to be interviewed. The researcher then e-mailed identified partnership organizers and invited them to participate in the study, using the letter that appears in Appendix B. Once it was determined that the partnership organizer was interested in participating in the study and that they met the study’s eligibility criteria, the researcher established a time and location for the interview with the partnership organizer.

### **Instrumentation**

Interviews were chosen as the methodology to answer the research question of how schools successfully maintain long-term partnerships with external partners. Interviews allowed the participant organizers, both inside and outside of the school, to share their views, as coordinators of the programs, on what factors successfully enable them to maintain long-term partnerships: “In qualitative research, interviewing is often the major source of the qualitative data needed for understanding the phenomenon of the study” (Merriam, 2009, p. 114). Semi structured interview questions, with additional probes where appropriate, were used to collect data from the participants.

The research question that guided the instrumentation of this study was: What factors contribute to successfully maintaining public school partnerships with external partners? What factors contribute to successful school partnerships with external partners?

The research sub-questions were:

1a. What barriers have you encountered when implementing or sustaining your partnerships?

1b. How did you resolve the barriers?

The question was also explored from the perspective of the partnership organizers both within and outside of the school selected for this study.

### **Interview Protocol for Participants**

1. Describe the partnerships that you are involved in.
2. How did this partnership get started? Were you involved with the partnership from the beginning?
3. What is your opinion of partnerships? How do they contribute to the school mission of educating children?
4. What is your role with regards to school partnerships?
5. Which partnership or partnerships are you involved with?
6. How did you become involved with this partnership?
7. What is your perception of the success of this partnership? (If involved with more than one partnership, do you feel that the partnerships have varying levels of success?)
8. List three factors that you feel contribute to the success of the partnership.
9. Are these three factors equal or is there one factor that is the most important among them? Which one?
10. What barriers have you encountered when implementing or sustaining this partnership? What was the biggest barrier?
11. How did you resolve it?

12. How is your partnership evaluated?
13. What is the school's role in the partnership? (What is the external organization's role in the partnership?)
14. Have there been instances where you had to fulfill the other organization's role?  
How did that go?

### **Interview Protocol for School Principal**

1. Warm-up: How long have you been the principal at your school? Probe: Were you a principal or assistant principal at your school or another school prior to this appointment?
2. What type of school partnerships exist in your school? Probe: Did you choose these partnerships?
3. What factors do you believe contribute to successful school external partnerships? Probe: Are these factors given equal weight?
4. How do you recruit private organizations to partner with your school?
5. What role do you play in maintaining external partnerships?
6. Who do you empower to manage the private partnership? Probe: How do you stay informed and/or connected to the private partner if someone else in your building maintains the partnership?
7. What are your expectations for your private partners?
8. What expectations have your private partner had for the school?
9. What 'trade-offs' or concessions have you had to make for your private partnership?
10. Wrap-up: Is there anything that you would like to add?

An interview design was selected for this study to gain partnership organizers' perspective on contributing factors to sustaining school partnerships. I conducted interviews with the school principals, an assistant principal, and the school counseling chair, a school counselor, and partnership organizers within and outside of the school. One-on-one interviews were conducted at the school unless another location was requested by the interviewee. As Creswell (1998) suggests, the interviews were audio taped, using a voice recorder, in a quiet location free from distractions. The interviews were recorded long-hand to capture notes and nuances that may not be captured on the tape. This also served as a backup for the tape recorder. The interview protocol contained approximately ten open-ended questions with ample space to write responses from the interviewee (Creswell, 1998, p. 124).

The interviewees were required to sign a consent form and return it prior to conducting the interviews. Once the consent forms had been signed and returned, the interviews commenced. All interviews began with an introduction of the researcher and an explanation of the study. The interviews were strictly voluntary and confidential. Interviewees were made aware that they could pull out of the interviews at any time. The researcher then began the interview utilizing the Interview Protocol questions. Interviews were taped and then transcribed. Pseudonyms were used for the school, interviewees, and partnering organizations.

The goal of this study was to ascertain how schools sustained their school partnerships over long periods. In order to understand how the school sustained their partnership and the role that the leader plays, the data collection method that was used

was interviewing. Semi-structured interviews were included in the study. The field work was conducted over a period of two months; interviews were conducted from April 6, 2016 through July 13, 2016. Twenty-two of the three interviews were conducted in person and one was conducted over the phone. Interviews were digitally recorded with the consent of the participants. A small digital voice recorder was used so the researcher can later transcribe the interview on a password-protected computer using pseudonyms for the participants.

Peter, the entrepreneur, was out-of-town and only available via telephone. The researcher met with all but two of the interviewees at their places of business, whether in their classroom or their office at the school, or at their business office. One interviewee requested that that interview be conducted at a different high school in the county as he already had a meeting scheduled there. Another interviewee asked to conduct the interview at the local Starbuck's coffee shop.

### **Data Analysis**

This research study focused on the partnering organizations and how they maintain their unique identity and accomplish their individual goals while negotiating the shared space that allows the partnerships to be preserved and grow over time. Interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed. The transcriptions were backed up on an encrypted hard drive and portable memory stick and both will be stored in separate places. Some interviews were sent out for transcription. The transcription company was asked to destroy all documentation related to the interviews once the transcriptions were verified for accuracy. A password-protected computer was used to transcribe and store all of the interview data.

Creswell (1998) makes the following suggestions regarding data storage:

1. Always develop backup copies of computer files (Davidson, 1996).
2. Use high quality tapes for audio-recording information during the interviews.  
Also, make sure that the size of the tapes fits the transcriber's machine.
3. Develop a master list of types of information gathered.
4. Protect the anonymity of participants by masking their names in the data.
5. Convert word processing files over to ASCII files for easy entry into some qualitative computer programs.
6. Develop a data collection matrix as a visual means of locating and identifying information for a study.

These safeguards, along with printing out the document for coding and decoding, aid the researcher in ensuring accuracy yet anonymity. Member-checks of interview transcripts and field notes were conducted if deemed necessary by the researcher. The researcher actively sought discrepant evidence by using informed interviewing techniques and emphasizing discrepant evidence in member checks, specifically, seeking informed input from a colleague and committee members while undertaking reflection and analysis of interview transcripts. Creswell (1998) states that the process of triangulation involves corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective.

As part of data analysis, Creswell (2007) suggested open coding wherein the researcher examines the transcript for categories of information that are supported by the text. The researcher constantly compares and contrasts the categories while continuing to interview and examine the transcripts until categories and subcategories that focus on the “core phenomenon” emerge. Creswell (2007) also suggest self-reflective memos to

document and enhance the analytic process in order to make the implicit thoughts explicit and to expand the data. Completing analytic memos that question, muse, or speculate about the data.

An interview design was selected for this study to understand the perspectives of the school and the external partnership organizers. Merriam (2009) describes qualitative research as a method of delving deeper into the data to understand concepts and build hypothesis. In order to achieve saturation, I interviewed 23 participants. Interviewing participant organizers from the school and the external partner organization provided an additional means of triangulation.

### **Subjectivity Statement**

In qualitative research “the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection analysis” (Merriam, 2009, p. 15). This is ideal because the researcher is able to be responsive and adaptive in collecting and analyzing data immediately, process data immediately, clarify and summarize information and follow-up with respondents for accuracy. Merriam (2009) also emphasizes the importance for the researcher to identify and monitoring bias.

From my personal perspective, I am an African-American from the mid-Atlantic who spent 13 years representing a community-based organization that partnered with local public schools. I saw how the involvement with a community-based organization provided academic support, social services, recreation, socialization, and transportation to schools. These services and programs provided additional stability for families and allowed students to better focus in school. This experience may have impacted my views on the benefits of public schools and external partnerships. I have appreciated the added

support and opportunities that I have seen external partners provide to schools, students, and parents. I have also worked for a large public school district for over ten years helping to develop experiential opportunities for students from urban, suburban, and rural communities. As the researcher, I went into this study with the understanding that maintaining long-term partnerships between schools and private organizations provides a wealth of resources and supports for school requires; as a result of my research, I realize the effort and commitment that are required on behalf of the school administrators and appointed partnerships organizer and the external partnering organization external partnerships. Through my professional experiences, I have seen how maintaining partnerships with external organizations adds a great deal to schools by increasing financial, human resources, facilities, and other forms of material support.

### **Trustworthiness**

In a qualitative study, potential researcher bias is paramount to its credibility. This must be addressed since the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection (Merriam, 2009). Biases can potentially occur throughout each step of the research process: design, conduct, and/or analysis.

Trustworthiness of qualitative studies gets a great deal of attention from researchers and critics. The trustworthiness technique of saturation (adequate engagement in data collection); rich, thick description; maximum variation (including discrepant or negative cases) in a researcher's position or reflexivity; and peer review/examination are the most prevalent trustworthiness techniques in qualitative research, and these are what were used for this study.

Rich, thick description is a trustworthiness technique that is used in the data representation stage of research. By presenting large blocks of quotes from surveys and/or interviews or large chunks of observational data, the researcher suggested that the resulting interpretations are based on thick swatches of data—not a quote pulled from here and there. This rich, thick description was incorporated into this research study on school partnerships.

Data triangulation, according to Johnson (1997), describes the use of multiple data sources to understand a phenomenon. It is a form of cross-checking through multiple sources. In this case, the sources were interviews of the school administration, and partnership organizers within and outside of the school.

Researcher bias, or reflexivity, was another technique that I incorporated in order to be aware of and attempt to control for my own bias. Johnson (1997) suggested analysis of research bias as a means of becoming aware and controlling for one's own bias. As a former director of a community-based organization who represented our organization in our work with schools, I acknowledge my bias in respect to the expectations that I have of schools to actively engage in partnerships with private organizations. I expect there to be tradeoffs for schools such as space, design of the partnership, and sharing of data. To obtain validity, I substantiated the information by interviewing multiple participants in the partnership (school administrators, teachers who serve as partnership organizers and partner organizers who represented the organizations). I used participant feedback as Johnson (1997) referred to it; or member checking as others have called it (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 in Johnson, 1997). I expected to clear up misconceptions that have come from interviewing school personnel by using that information to help probe other school

personnel, private partners, and student stakeholders. While this strategy is not perfect, I did gain useful information and cleared up some inaccuracies. I utilized an interpretivist method to accomplish this study.

### **Ethical Considerations**

According to Merriam (2009, p. 161) ethical issues relating to protection of the participants are of concern in any qualitative study. Ethical dilemmas are likely to emerge with regard to the collection of data and in the dissemination of findings (Merriam, 2009, p. 230). Precautions were taken to reduce any possible negative effects of conducting this case study. The research inquiry focused on factors that the participant believed contributed to successful school partnerships. The interviews did not focus on participant failures or shortcomings.

Only volunteer participants were interviewed. Written permission to interview was obtained from participants before beginning the interviews. Confidentiality for every interview participant has been observed. The records of this study are kept private. In any publication or presentations, the researcher will not include any information that would make it possible to identify the individual subjects. Research records are stored securely, and only the researcher has access to them.

This study posed minimal risks but those risks have been shared with the participants. The risks of this study may have included some emotional stress or discomfort answering the interview questions. Participants had the opportunity to skip any questions or stop the interview at any point. Risks also included the chance that someone could find out that a participant took part in this study and identify that person. The following steps were taken to reduce this risk:

1) The records of this study are kept private and stored on a single digital device used only for this research.

2) Pseudonyms were used in the final report and would be used in any future publication of this research. Any data referencing participants was identified only by position title. Any codes used to identify participants are kept in a locked location separate from the actual files.

3) The transcription service was asked to destroy records after they had been confirmed for accuracy. The computer used for this research study is password-protected.

Participants for this study did not benefit directly from this research study, but school leadership in that district as well as other school districts may benefit from the information garnered through this study as the corporation of external partnerships increases in schools around the country.

The study was approved by The George Washington University Institutional Review Board (IRB), by the school district where the selected school is located, and by the presiding principal of the school at the time the study began. All participants provided signed consent, using the form in Appendix A.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS**

The purpose of this interview-based interpretivist study was to examine the factors that contributed to maintaining successful public school-external partnerships as described by participants who participated in one mid-Atlantic high school's partnership programs. Specifically, this study attempted to understand the factors by which the school facilitated successful partnership programs for three years or more. The three factors examined in this study were effective communication, collaboration that moves the partnerships forward, and commitment to working through barriers. All three factors are discussed in length after the participant characteristics are explored. The participant characteristics explore who the partnership organizers are and how they became the primary sponsor to develop and/or maintain the school's external partnerships. The researcher used personal semi-structured interviews to interview the participants. The interviews address the overarching research question of how school partnerships with external partners are successfully maintained. This chapter presents the participant characteristics and then reviews the salient themes in detail.

### **Participant Characteristics**

Twenty-three participants involved in leading partnerships in one mid-Atlantic high school volunteered to participate in this study. Twenty-one of the 23 participants met the selection criteria use of being involved in at least one partnership with the school for three or more years. The other two participants had partnerships that were less than two years but added meaningfully to the research on factors that contribute to maintaining school partnership. Thus, the researcher assumed the partnerships were beneficial to the school community. This is consistent with prior literature on school

partnerships (Epstein, 2002; Johnson, Pugach. & Hawkins, 2004; McLean, & Behringer, 2008; Norman, 2009; Rasch, 1999; Sanders. & Harvey, 2002). Participants' characteristics are summarized in the following table.

Table 1. *Participant Profiles*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Kind of Partnerships</b>	<b>Year Partnership Began</b>
Kerrie	Partner- Parent	Academic/ Experiential- PTSO President	2003
Mat (Alumni)	School- Teacher/Coordinator	Academic- National Honor Society/ gentleman's club	prior to 2010/ 2010
Chuck	Partner	Academic- Public Library	2014
Principal Dabney	School Principal	All - Administrator	NA
Bettye	School-Assistant Principal	All - Administrator	NA
Johnny	School- Counseling Chair	All - Administrator	NA
Emma	Partner	Business- Chamber of Commerce	1983 (on and off), 2014
Gillian	School- Teacher/Coordinator	Business- FBLA	1970
Alana	School- Teacher/Coordinator	Civic- Student Government Association	2009
Manuel	Partner	Civic- Student Government Association	
Daisy	School- Teacher/Coordinator	Experiential- Art program	2013
Jaime	School- Teacher/Coordinator	Experiential- Childcare Training	1991
Abby	School- Teacher/Coordinator	Experiential- Environmental- /Gardening/Green team	2009
Sandy	School- Teacher/Coordinator	Experiential- Music program	1999
Peter (Alumni)	Partner	Experiential- Music/Business entrepreneur	1999
Annie	School- Teacher/Coordinator	Experiential- ProStart	2008
Georgia	Partner	Experiential- Performing Arts Center	2009
Marcus	School- Special Education Teacher/Coordinator	Experiential- Work-study	2012
Damien	School- Special Education Teacher/Coordinator	Experiential Work-study	2012

Deborah	School- Counselor	Guidance liaison to Navy JROTC and military campus recruiters	over 10 years
Ruth	Partner	Social Service- City youth & family services organization	2002
Dre	Partner	Social Service- City youth & family services organization	2002
Dee	Partner	Social Service- City youth & family services organization	2002

As Table 1 shows, three high school administrators and 20 partnership organizers from one school were interviewed for this study. They represented various programs that had been at the school for a range spanning 2 to 46 years. All but one of the partnerships were three years or older. Although the criterion for the study was a minimum of three years, the participant, Chuck, who had only partnered with the school for two years, was included as the library appeared to be developing long-term ties to the school. Thus, the data provided represented a valuable contribution to the research due to factors that lead to the long-term sustainability of school partnerships. Some of the partnership organizers began the programs at the school, others inherited them when taking on the job of their predecessors, and another group was asked to take on their roles by their principal or colleagues because of a perceived skill set in that area. How the partnership organizers came to the program may have influenced their views on the maintenance of the program and is important to discuss. Working with predecessors created opportunities to train on the needs of the partnerships while others were asked to serve as the partnership organizer without prior knowledge or training. There were some partnership organizers who created the programs from scratch based on a perceived need of the school.

Peter and Sandy's program at the school began in 1999 when Sandy asked Peter to come back to his alma mater as a successful entrepreneur and talk with her students.

Sandy asked me to come and talk to the kids, and I've always wanted to go back and teach at Bay. Look, I didn't have a very good experience there, and it wasn't the school. I want the kids to get the information that I didn't get. I want someone to believe in what they want. (Peter)

Ruth's part-time newly created position, from 13 years ago, has become a full-time job finding, matching, and sustaining mentor relationships between students and volunteer mentors.

I knew Dre as friends outside of the job, and we were talking one day and I was getting my degree in education. I'm retired military, so I had just retired from the Navy, and I was going to college, and working part time, and I wanted another little part time job that would help me in the education environment, and she said, "Oh, we just so happen to have this," and it just started. I'm like, "Oh, okay." I think I started at 15 hours a week, and now I'm full time, running a full time program. That's how I personally got here. I thought I wanted to be a teacher, but I found through this program, I'm working with kids and I'm still in that environment, doing what I want to do, just not in the classroom. My very first year of being with the program was probably 2003. (Ruth)

Matt, Manuel, Chuck, and Kerrie replaced their predecessors. There was a learning curve and a need to make acquaintance with the point of contact at the school.

Mr. Mel was doing National Honors and he was retiring. I knew it so I worked with him for two years and I took over when he retired. He was also doing the Gentleman's Club so it just worked out and I kept that too. (Mat)  
I didn't do SGA when I was a student. I kind of inherited it so when I came into the position, I had to learn a lot like "how to run a meeting" and Robert's rules of order. (Manuel)

The way I got involved with the high school was through my former supervisor who was doing a lot of work with the PTSO and we she decided to move on, she put me in contact with the PTSO leader and the PTSO president has been the main point of contact for me at this school. (Chuck)

Emily was the former PTSO president and her child graduated in 2014. No one else volunteered so it was me. I've been the president for the last two school years. 2014 to 2015 and then 2015 to 2016. (Kerrie)

Alana was encouraged to take the position heading up SGA by her principal while Gillian took on the role because of the support of her colleagues, over time; Abby had both groups encouraging her to lead up the environmental programs at the school.

I did student government when I was back in Allen City, and I guess Mrs. Jesuit, at the time she was the principal, saw that in my resume. I said to her, "You need to stop going through my resume," because every time she goes through my resume, I get pulled in. I enjoy it! I really enjoy it! It's just ... I think I just, I took it and ran with it. It's like my baby! (Alana)

FBLA has been at the school for 46 years. I was voted in by colleagues because I spent 12 years coordinating FBLA at Greenpoint High School, ran lots of business clubs, and was a FBLA student as a child. (Gillian)

The PTSO came to me about a green team and gardening project for the school with city and neighborhood organizations. This is a two-year project of clean-up and green-up that qualified us as a green school. (Abby)

In 2011, a national climate organization made their presentation for schools. I was invited to a smaller session afterwards as part of the beautification committee. The top person was retiring and the next person was thinking about retiring so they said, "It has to be you". We did green week/spirit week for a couple of years. It fell by the waste side for a year but then Principal. Dabney asked me, since I had been involved in the green team events before, if I was interested in being involved in the green school. The nice thing is by then the current superintendent had come in and he believed in the green initiative and he put a bit of money into it and it helped us to do more environmental things such as recycling, and a butterfly garden. We also started a school garden and qualified our courtyard as a national wildlife habitat. (Abby)

Annie, a ProStart teacher, brought in additional support to areas where her knowledge was limited.

My husband works in the IT industry so when it comes to the business management, my husband helps every year with the business management teams because I know very little about the business management side and he knows a lot about the business side. I tend to help with the front end culinary team and he usually does most of the business work with the team - so we usually have both running at the same time. (Annie)

Georgia was the first executive director and self-trained on the Joint Use Agreement of the performing arts center, and he helped craft the position. He expressed

frustration that it was not as understood or utilized in the way it was intended so he became an expert on the agreement.

I was hired as the executive director to get the place up and running. One of my very early jobs was to become the expert in the joint use agreement and making sure that everyone in the partnership is aware of it. (Georgia)

As a whole, participants shared that they had a successful transition in their roles. Some participants acquired their current role coordinating the partnership because they played some role relative to their current assignment earlier on. Participants were trained, self-trained, or developed the necessary skills to perform their roles or, like Annie, brought in additional facilitators to address specific needs. How the partnership organizers assumed their roles demonstrated the continuity in managing and maintaining the school partnerships. A key component to retaining relationships between the school and the partnering organizations is having a designated partnership organizer within the school and representing the organizations that work with the schools.

### **Findings**

The research question that guided this inquiry was:

What factors contribute to successfully maintaining school partnerships with external partners?

1a. What barriers have you encountered when implementing or sustaining your partnerships?

1b. How did you resolve the barriers?

There were numerous partnership programs offered at Bay High School. The programs were typically organized and maintained by a member of the Bay High School teaching staff who worked, in some capacity, with community partners. The programs have, in

most cases, been in existence well over the three years expected for inclusion in this study. Three themes emerged from this research study: (a) effective communication, (b) collaboration that moves the partnerships forward, and (c) commitment to working through barriers. The research consistently supported aspects of all three themes, and encouraged the continued partnerships between the high school and community organizations.

### **Effective Communication**

The partnerships between the school and its community facilitated better understanding and support between the school and the local business partners. Prior studies have highlighted how purposeful efforts to create and sustain relationships amongst schools and organizations in the community have led to successful school-community partnerships (Christenson, 2004; Melaville & Blank, 1998; Sanders & Harvey, 2002). Building community relations between the school and the surrounding businesses created a sense of ownership and responsibility in both parties as well as a desire to support the projects.

A common theme described by participants was the need for effective communication between the school and the partners. Effective communication allowed both the school and the partner to discuss things that were working well, as well those that were not, and for both parties to develop resolutions for problems that occurred. Open, effective communication also built trust and set expectations. Points of contact, understanding of roles, and clear expectations were the elements of communication sought and appreciated by participants.

Communication is when we just open up and express what's going on, what are the changes, what is it that they need to get hired in your school or what is it they need to pass the teachers' exam. (Jaime)

Networking. It's so important about networking. Making those connections known yourself. You can't just sit back and build your reputation and trust with people. What I was proud of was when I got this job was that a lot of folks at the high school remembered me from [my last job] and what I did there so there was a connection that I had already built that way. I wasn't just sitting at the Chamber waiting for Bay High to call me. We were kind of courting each other to say, "please join and they finally did". It was just talking and thinking about opportunities that were available to them. I like to think part of it was, it's about, I like to the kids, the connections that you make now. These students will be remembered for how they approach people. The respect that they give and the respect that they get and it's really neat when you see them go through events and the people that they meet know that they are great kids and they would offer them a job right now if they could. It's about building a reputation. (Emma)

Yeah, we're constantly in contact to make sure that it is going well, and if the mentors are having a problem meeting with their student, then it's my job to find out why. It might be the student and the mentor just aren't connecting, or the student felt pushed into the program and doesn't really want to be here. We work through those problems. (Ruth)

Marcus and Jamie spoke specifically about how open communication helped them to keep good rapport with their partners and act in the best interest of students.

They know that if there is an issue that I'm not just going to send them anybody that I work with my students so they know expectations about how you're supposed to act in the workplace. The communication is always open. (Marcus)

When it comes to communication, that's being able to talk. What's working well at college, what's working well at the high school? What can we do to come to an agreement that will be best for the person who is going through the internship? (Jaime)

Being open-minded on both ends. It's not about you in a school; it's about the students. Maybe you don't personally agree with something but you're making the information available to students; it's not for you. When we take ourselves out of things, it makes it farther reaching and better. (Deborah)

According to participants, open communication may lead to student and family engagement.

Parents and students need to know about the different events, or opportunities that are available to them. (Kerrie)

Participants explained that one of the most important factors in a school partnership is effective communication and a key to effective communication is having consistent points of contact. Participants shared that having a point of contact helps partners navigate to the right channels for particular projects, provides easier access for building use, and helps garner continued support for their programs. Several outside partners have learned to network with several points of contact in the school.

We have a number of points of contact. Dr. Dabney, Principal, and Mrs. Kiefer, 9th grade Assistant Principal, the secretary of the 9th grade, the guidance secretary, the guidance counselor, Dr. Johnny, the head of guidance, and Mrs. White at the front desk have been very helpful with helping us to figure out who we need to talk to if something comes up. (Dee)

The principal should give the final approval but the principal is only one person. You have to have different points of contact in the school and be willing to say, "I can't meet with you but I'm going to have you meet with my assistant principal or my sponsor for such and such. We can go from there. I am active in some groups more than others but I have learned from being really, really involved and not having the time to get other things done as opposed to delegate. Having some type of structure, protocol in place because once you are not there for them, they are going to become disengaged. If it appears that you brushed them off or don't have enough time for them, they will be onto the next one. (Principal Dabney)

Other partnerships have one direct connection on each side. While one-to-one representatives between the school and the partner increase understanding, they may not lead to continuity should one of the parties leave the partnering school or institution.

The only barrier here is people not understanding - I don't know if I'd still do it if Sandy wasn't there. I have no idea. I can't say that. (Peter)

Participants shared the importance of understanding roles for communication to be successful. Many of the participants saw themselves as advisors, mentors, or liaisons.

My role is to lead, to make information known and accessible, provide resources for students such as military standards and information for admissions. (Deborah)

My role, like I said, is to kind of be that liaison or that connecting factor for the students. (Marcus)

Participants had ideas on how they saw the respective roles of the school, school district, and program partners.

The school's role is to get us students and space, and then they support the mentor when they're there, too, because like I said, when the mentor walks in the door to meet their student, they have to go through the front office, and so that front office knows that this is a mentor, not a parent. They get to know our mentors, so that's another way that they support the mentors because I can't be there every day. I can't be in three buildings, knowing which mentor is coming and going. The school staff really welcomes the mentors as a visitor in their school. (Ruth)

I would think it's everybody on the board's role to try to reach out to partnership. Everybody on the board works a full time job and we're all volunteers. Reaching out to businesses during work hours is difficult, because we all have full time jobs. I think it would be great if at the county level, if they would get more involved in partnerships, as part of the job description. Then they would be available during the day to meet with businesses. The parents are at work and when they get off and get home, it's already 6:30, 7:00 at night and businesses are closed at that point. (Kerrie)

Even before the current advisor, it's always been a very easy relationship. There is a regional advisor for each Student Government Association and that's me. That's my role for the county. The advisors tend to understand the role, have a dedication to the students, know what SGA is about, encourage student to run for county and state office. It makes the county look good when the president from an entire state youth organization is from one of its schools. (Manuel)

The partner's role, I think, is that if they have issues with the kids that once they get hired or while they're training, they actually talk to me about this and what the student needs to work on, or why we can't keep them, or this is what type of child or what type of individual we're looking for. (Marcus)

The role there is to make sure that we are together, not one person is doing one thing and the other person is doing the other. The role is to always stay in communication with each other that when we see a student who is having some issues, we can see what we can do together to help. (Jaime)

Participants viewed clear expectations as an essential part of effective communication. This consisted of all parties understanding the goals. Participants

believed that students could be at a disadvantage if expectations were not clear and, at times, took on the role of clarifying goals and expectations.

A good partnership is one where you understand the goal as well as are willing to participate and ensure that it benefits students. (Johnny)

There are times when I may have to go and develop that relationship and speak to the people face-to-face, and say, “This is what I need from you. This is what we’re doing and this is what I need”. (Ruth)

When you work with people who are not in the system, the accountability is different. You have to take the time to collaborate and let them know that we do want to collaborate with you; we do want to work with you because it is all about the students. (Principal Dabney)

Mat shared an example of what has happened in the absence of clear expectations.

If we had a closer relationship with the businesses around here, our kids could work but also it would give businesses more motivation to follow the rules. A lot of these businesses are asking our kids to work 10 hours a day when they are not allowed to do it. They schedule them sometimes when they are supposed to be in school and of course the kid can’t say anything or they will just get fired. When you have business partnerships, businesses are more inclined to abide by the rules. (Mat)

Manuel, Mat, and Jaime shared expectations of empowerment for the students through the partnership programs.

SGA came out so that students could have a voice in their education. I don’t mean food in the cafeteria but meaningful decisions that affect their future. Student government at the school level and the county level is really an organization that came about to give students a voice and to also keep them engaged, focused on civics, and help them become civic minded. The expectation is that SGA, not only do homecoming and spring fling but they have a responsibility to represent all of the students in this county. They have a responsibility to give back to the community. They should engage politically but they should also be doing for the homeless. We adopted a state and local homeless charity. (Manuel)

I consider myself a facilitator because I want the kids reaching out. How dynamic is it when the kids reach out? When the adults see, the kids identifying a need, it endears the community to our children. I am also here for the logistics, to see if it’s feasible for us. If it’s not feasible, what can we do to make it work in the future? I throw my ideas into the bag as well but usually I like to help them with the logistics and the paperwork. Usually I sit them down and have them do the paperwork as well and say if you have a question, ask me. That’s the community thing learning paperwork that they will have to do once they get into the real

world. It drives their learning as well and prepares them for the future. They will have to do these things when they get into the real world anyway. (Mat)

The professors are very visible from the university; they are very visible in our high school. They come in; they are known through the hall. We introduce our students to them because we know that they are interesting in becoming teachers. By the next year, when we look at our students they are more relaxed when they enter their teaching field at the university because they have had that relationship with their professors prior to going into college. (Jaime)

It's a unique way to network and it's another resource. AP Bettye can just say, "Emma, can you do this?" The Chamber can be like comfort food. We know we can rely on them. AP Bettye knows that she can call if she needs anything and I will do all that I can to help her. When you have someone like AP Bettye, that comforting too. You're not dealing with people who said, "Okay, I joined your membership, now do everything for us". It's not like that. (Emma)

Dre and Manuel shared the clear expectations of the youth leadership, and that services partnerships are designed to navigate students from engaging in risky behaviors and to empower them.

The partnerships are prevention oriented in the sense that they are to promote assets that have been identified through research to help kids succeed and to avoid issues of mental health problems, family problems, problems in the community-juvenile delinquency, dropout, and later in life kinds of challenges. We go from a positive angle and try to build assets in the areas of decision-making, mindfulness. Mindfulness being the ability for a young person to be present in the current moment and to be aware of what they are doing, have an awareness about the decisions they are making, the words they are choosing, and the actions that they are choosing to develop a strong locus of control. Mindfulness helps with that. (Dre)

I think partnerships are critical. Just looking at it from my office, my perspective, we don't have a clinician in our office any longer and I'm a former English teacher. Managing the office is one thing but if you have students that are addicted to alcohol or other drugs, they have to get help and without partnerships in the community, we couldn't provide those resources. Partnering with a homeless shelter for youth, for the PGRAS students to go to the shelter decorate Christmas trees and collect toiletries for them- I think a partnership like helps benefits the students. To do the kinds of things we expect. Not just making money for SGA but giving back to the community. I do think that partnerships are beneficial. (Manuel)

Participants explained that improved relations between the school and the community changed the preconceptions that may have been held on either side. It also promoted better citizenship on behalf of the students encouraging them to not only be part of their school community but also to see themselves as part of the community at-large. Participants believed that students developed a stronger sense of citizenship when they are engaged in programs with the community. Participants shared the necessity of school partnerships and the benefits that both the school and the partner could garner from the relationship. Participants further explained that communities have a better perception of students when they are involved in the schools. Participants believe that school partnerships are essential to build community and citizenship as well as to provide experiential opportunities for students.

When we come along and we're working with our students, it does help our students see that, "Oh, there is a bigger, wider community. It's a bigger world than I think it is," and I think that helps create a better community to say that, "Yeah, there are others out there" not that tunnel vision, "It's just me". There's this city that cares about me and I can care about my city too. (Ruth)

The proximity of the library to the high school led to large numbers of students going to the library after school but it did not necessarily bridge the two entities into a shared community. Chuck had shared that although students were going inside of the library facility after school, they were not necessarily utilizing the library for quiet research as normally intended. The library staff decided to use the unexpected volume of high school students to promote teen programming.

We kind of have an accidental partnership just because of the placement of our library. Whether we want them to or not, we get flooded by the high schoolers every day, so it's kind of, we can either ignore them or we can try to help them. Obviously, we want to try to help them. We want to work with the students and directly from that it helped us to develop a better relationship with the high school. (Chuck)

Participants have shared that the school and its community partners must be part of helping students understand that they are part of a larger community.

These partnerships should help our children learn citizenship. (Mat)

If you expect students at the end of the day to be productive citizens, partnerships on the outside are ways to engage those kinds of things that will help students to be creative and productive citizens. (Manuel)

Nobody can do anything on their own anymore. (Emma)

Partnerships bring schools and communities together. (Kerrie)

Participants saw school partnerships as beneficial in providing a sense of community and citizenship. Whether sought-after or accidental, partnerships provided opportunities for organizations to impact positively on students. Although they have been seen favorably and desired by schools and organizations, it takes time and effort to build partnerships. One partnership, however, can open the door to others.

School partnerships are hard to get. The city wasn't returning calls. There was a lot of talk about what they wanted to happen but nothing was happening. It was really difficult at first. Establishing a partnership with a local gardening club gave momentum. (Abby)

My opinion? Oh, gosh. First, I think we need to come together within. There has to be a clear understanding of the roles. What's my role? What's my responsibility in that school? Then, what is the school's role and responsibility to us and to our program. I think clear roles and clear responsibilities is probably, I think, one of the most important things. That we understand the common goal we're working towards, and then how are we going to get there. (Ruth)

Abby shared that her larger environmental partnership began by connecting with a smaller club, which also had inroads to the programs she had been seeking. The participants encouraged patience when building and sustaining partnerships because the benefits could be far reaching. Besides community and citizenship, participants viewed partnerships as a resource for providing experiential opportunities for students.

## **Collaboration that Moves the Partnerships Forward**

Participants further described partnerships as a means of building community. They also stated that real world experiences are needed, and that they are best provided by the business community. Participants expressed a critical need for business partners to provide experiential opportunities to students and viewed internships as extremely valuable even if they are unpaid.

I work with business community partners to access students to different work-study jobs. I also work with business community leaders to get in-service hours as well as for them to come in and do professional development with our students to acclimate them to what is needed in business and also in the college environment. (Damien)

Participants indicated that the partnerships provide exposure to students and opportunities for employers to give back and invest in their community school.

Participants viewed partnerships with clear, mutual objectives as valuable vehicles through which students can be given experiential opportunities that schools are unable to provide on their own.

Partnerships are necessary for real world experiences! They form relationships, expand opportunities for our students, and increase their understanding of how the world works. We need partnerships to thrive. Partnerships prepare global citizens and prepare our students for secondary life: careers, college, whatever comes next. We can't just have graduation requirements without supplementary programs! We supplement based on student interest. (Deborah)

Partnerships are absolutely necessary. We should be going to businesses and ask what they would like to see. We should team up with them on certain events, like our 5K event. We don't do that. We should have business partnerships team up with us and increase our scholarship fund. (Mat)

If we can get outside partnerships to expose the students to career options, my focus would be on careers and career readiness and college readiness. (Kerrie)

Getting the students out to architectural firms, getting them out to the back offices of museums and having them actually see what it takes and what makes a

museum work, what does it actually take to make an architectural firm click, what are the cogs to make that happen and to see that people are making such great living, such good salaries in those examples. I don't know that the colleges are doing enough to get that happening from the students out into the world. (Daisy)

Being able to set up tiers. Where should a senior high school be so that their sophomore year (college) they are ready to seek out that internship or apprenticeship? The right school teacher knowing what the tiers are [to apprenticeship]. (Daisy)

For the students who come into my program and they are hardcore set on going to the Culinary Institute of America or Johnson and Whales (those are the two big schools that really want students to make sure before you go to those schools, because they are expensive, I want to make sure that you go through every single thing that I can expose you to because I don't want you to get up there and spend all this money and invest this time and sit there and think that 'this is not at all what I thought it was going to be like'. I want you to know what it's going to be like. I really want you to know! I don't want to sugar coat it. I don't want you to think that it's going to be like the Food Network shows because it's not going to be that way. - I want you to make sure that's what you really want to do. (Annie)

Business partnerships are critical when it comes to preparing students for careers. Basically, it's not just about service, education, and progress. It's about developing, not only technical skills, but social skills and helping students to focus on things that develop their character, life, effort, attitude, and being respectful, being a person of integrity. (Gillian)

Participants shared that they would like to see more partners with the school specifically to provide experiential opportunities for students.

There should be more internships, even if they are free, unpaid. It would give our students an opportunity to see how the government works and to see if that is something that they want to do. (Mat)

If you partner with an organization like Habitat for Humanity and you spend four Saturdays in a row, then you're learning something about the world, economics. There is so much that partnerships do that I think help fulfill the mission of what education is supposed to be about. Mentoring partnerships are also really, really important. I think that partnerships do a lot to support the overall mission of what education is supposed to be about. (Manuel)

I would really like to see more involvement from private businesses when it comes to partnering with the high schools. (Gillian)

Participants stated that business partnerships are especially critical when it comes to preparing students for college and careers.

I think that when you have somebody who actually has that position like - a marketing director, someone that is an accountant, somebody that works as an office manager even or have their own business. When they come in and they talk to students it's not like the same... in their minds, they actually have somebody who is not the teacher per say, not in the field of education, but they're actually out there doing something they enjoy doing and they're sharing the requirements for that position. Something that they are doing and hopefully have a passion for. That's all the difference; it makes a lot of difference. (Gillian)

I think it is successful because the students that come from Riverside State University That intern over here, a lot of them are hired as full time employees the next year if there are any openings. We have over 20 interns hired in the last 15 years. I know every year since I've been the coordinator, we've been getting at least 10 interns from Riverside State. Out of those 10, there's a guaranteed one or two that's hired at Bay High School. (Jaime)

I also have a partnership with the community college. I encourage my students to go to the community college in their senior year of high school and start taking some concurrent enrollment and take course so that they do qualify to get these three credits free. That's like double dipping! They get three credits in high school and they take the same credit and go over to the community college and they get the course that will be free because they've already taken it through the high school level. That's three free credits that they can get starting them off in college. How many of my students do that? I've had at least five a year since 2008. (Jaime)

The partnerships that are strong at working with the school, this particular school, are the university. I guess that's because they are part of the Professional Development Schools and they are right down the street. We work closely together; we can get on the phone. They set up programs that the students need help on, the teacher's exams or something. Everything that we need, the university has assisted us. (Jaime)

Peter exclaimed that the students, themselves, are desperate for opportunities to experience the world for first-hand.

These kids are hungry to learn. They want information so much; I've never seen such a hunger. It's a food you can't buy at the grocery store. They want a road map of how the world works. (Peter)

Some participants were approached with experiential opportunities for students, others sought them out.

We approached them rather than approaching us. We knew it existed. We competed with them the first year. They didn't come in search of us. We competed with them and it was a tough time because it's a brutal competition. They are very, very hard when they critique you, looking at everything you're doing wrong, telling you everything that you are doing wrong and because we had never competed in that, it was very brutal! After we went there for the first time, we got all kinds of help but nobody came to seek us out to bring us to that competition. (Annie)

As a whole, participants shared the benefits of improved school-community relations, stronger citizenship from the students, and real world experiential opportunities provided by community organizations that give hands-on knowledge to students prior to entering the workforce as adults. In addition, participants not only reported their view of partnerships and the need for them, but also that they have actively sought these experiences for their students. According to the participants, these were not only their goals for their students, but also the students' goals for themselves. Participants believed in a cyclical realm of connecting schools and communities thus encouraging institutions, schools and organizations, to share some of it and take on some part of the other. It was the participant's beliefs that better connections between the school and the community would increase the students' buy-in of the community and in turn, the community's buy-in of the school and therefore the students. That community buy-ins increase motivation would be shown by the provision of experiential opportunities for students which further strengthens the bond between the school and the community.

Participants believed that sustaining successful partnerships come through collaboration. Schools must collaborate with organizations in the community to provide enriching experiences for students. Organizations must be respectful of the school culture

and procedures. Participants believe that both parties must show a willingness to collaborate.

The school's willingness to partner, it's willingness to collaborate makes a difference. I've heard potential partners say that they don't go to certain schools because they don't feel like it's open. They don't feel like they can get in to meet with the school leader. School leaders have to sift through what's legitimate, what's not legitimate. It's a lot but the school's willingness to partner makes a big difference. (Principal Dabney)

You can't execute something if you're not willing to collaborate and organizations know that you're not willing to make things happen. (Principal Dabney)

I think that partnerships are great if both parties are willing to work together. (Marcus)

The biggest factor is reciprocity. When they give and we give, so it's a give and take kind of relationship. (AP Bettye)

I think that some partnerships contribute monetary gifts, and give of their time, which is true, which I think that partnerships ... I think that they want something from us, and we ... It's almost like a two-way, we want something from them. A lot of times, it's not going to always be about money, but having that name recognition and having that contact with people, various people from all avenues. (Alanna)

As a former administrator from another school I would say that partnerships are very essential to running a school and working closely with the community. When Hilary Clinton just made mention some years ago it takes a village to raise a child, that's very true. I think you need to have stakeholders in every aspect of the community, and within the school. We need your feedback; we need your input. (Alanna)

Be very respectful of that school environment. You're an adult and you're in their house, so this is how they do things and this is the way we're going to do it whether we understand it or agree with it. I think that's very important (Ruth).

Being curious and placing value on what other people do is essential. Placing value on their priorities just means that I get to know them. I am curious about them. There is also a shared mission between the school and our agency in seeing the kids succeed both a home and at school and being prepared for the future. There is that shared ground. I try to look for ways to help them accomplish their goals too. (Dre)

Dre shared the importance of strengthening collaboration by finding commonalities in the organization's goals and the school's goals.

I meet every year with the guidance counselor at the school to be aware of their agendas. They have things that they are responsible for every year- curriculum and that type of thing. I try very hard to support them and to find common ground that they consider to be prevention. Prevention projects change from period to period. They change from year to year. We are in very changing times because the testing requirements are so demanding. (Dre)

Participants continuously plan for the future for new or expanding collaborations.

One of goals in the next coming year is to form more partnerships with businesses and with community members and also to increase parent participation. (Kerrie)

In the existing year, I like to say, "maybe next year we can do this or we can do that". I like to see a continuum of programming. (Dre)

We do have a lot of meetings with the university and we sit down and we discuss what's going on what can work what works well, what needs to be changed, what's coming down the line, what's coming up for the next year. They do align their curriculum to meet the public school. Support is if we need anything. Dr. Smith who runs the PDS is here. He's from the college. (Jaime)

We contribute by making our space available by bringing in events specifically tailored to the school system. (Georgia)

Whatever the objective, looking for ways to engage as many parties as possible- students, parents, the business community, the city. Resources, strategies, results. What are the resources that we have? What does everybody have to contribute? What strategies can we implement with those strategies, and what are the results that we are going for? (Dre)

It is important to be open-minded on both ends (school and organization). It is not about you; it is about what's best for students. When we take ourselves out, we are farther reaching. (Deborah)

Participants shared that collaboration allows schools to provide students with nontraditional but needed skills.

You need people who are business-minded, who know how things work in order for there to be progress. It takes education, it takes knowledge, it takes development of skills, and it takes individuals willing to have a service attitude to be service-minded. (Gillian)

All I know is that I go back to Bay and I teach. I do it and I'm allowed to do a non-curricular activity with these kids about trying to get them to change their minds about work ethic and integrity. (Peter)

Riverside State University's teacher internship- their students are doing their internship which is their last stage upon receiving their degree. These students are teacher candidates. They observe the teachers and they go to faculty meetings, department meetings, they go to parent-teacher conferences and after the 6 weeks of doing observations, they take over and begin teaching the class on their own. (Jaime)

The private partners come into play when we have leaders in the industry that come and they judge the events so they get to meet people in banking, they get to meet people who are in marketing, individuals who are in retail businesses or business manufacturing companies. We have different sponsors like Dell, Microsoft, HP and it's a great opportunity for all of the business students who are active members. (Gillian)

### **Commitment to Working Through Barriers**

According to participants, collaboration requires flexibility on the part of the school and the organization.

We recently started a partnership with the public library. How that partnership is going to change for the new school year, is we have a new librarian who has a passion for youth, and she has coordinated a bunch of life skill workshops. A few that she held after school this year, which were not highly attended, because kids need to get on the school bus. We had gotten permission from Principal Dabney to have her offer these workshops during the lunch periods. We think that's going to greatly improve the attendance and the participation, because the workshops are actually going to be held during the lunch periods and kids don't have to worry about trying to figure out how to get home. (Kerrie)

I have been on-hand to provide advice on any kind of research things that they might need, support research needs that they might have. I have a program called Professional 101 to give teens the tools that they might need. I have been working with the PTSO to bring that into the schools to get better attendance. We were doing that here at the library but they weren't really coming to it so we're working with them to get better attendance because it is a valuable set of skills that they will need so I have been working with them (PTSO) to bring it there. - They had a career fair for students who might not be going to college right after graduating so I helped them plan that career fair and one of the components of it is that we did the Professional 101 program during lunch periods, before, and after school so that students could be prepared to give it to employers and they

have been telling them all the time that you can go to the library and that Chuck is the resource for writing your resume and any other questions that you might have. Come to the library and take advantage of those resources. (Kerrie)

Teens are not little children itching to come to a birthday party, they are looking for ways to become adults but they don't have a safe environment in which to do it. What I really like at the high school level is to engage students in ways that are meaningful to them and to infuse life skills into the process of coming up with a plan so I basically go to the high school with a very open mind, in some ways, about what it's going to look like this year. I go to the principals and ask what they are seeing. I go to the guidance counselors and ask what are they seeing. I go to the students and say this is what they are seeing, what do you think or think that we can do about that? I said to the principal last year, what do you want. She said some way for students to be more engaged in something that wasn't academically driven. She wanted to get honest feedback from the students on how they saw their school and how they thought it could be better. She wanted to engage the students in the environment better. She and I came up with an idea (and) I engaged Riverside State University students in the language. We started with a youth forum. We asked students to come and be a part of making their voice matter. (Dre)

Participants saw commitment and dedication as salient sub-themes in working through barriers to sustain successful partnerships over time. Participants believed that buy-in, awareness, and interest from students, school staff, and community partners were important components of sustainable school partnerships. Commitment from the school and organization was sought by partnership organizers in and outside of the school regardless of whether an employee left the school or the organization. Both parties wanted assurances that their partnering organization was committed even when there was staff turnover of the partnership organizer. They wanted commitment and consistency from the organization and their point of contacts.

The principal's role is to delegate and help make sure that what is planned is actually executed. (Principal Dabney)

I've learned that people, who are interested in partnerships, pick it up and the ones, who aren't, hand it off. - I've actually been the only one that does any of this stuff, because I think it's so important. (AP Bettye)

There is a lot of why it can't be done. Community partnerships require more effort. It's harder to work with other people than it is to do everything yourself but it's so much more productive. Over time, it's hugely valuable. I'm known by the schools, there's a level of trust with anything that I would bring to them. (Dre)

Buy-in on the part of the student, school staff, and administration and partnering organization has been described by participants as necessary for successful school partnerships. Participants contribute lack of buy-in to lack of awareness or interest.

The principal sets the (tone) for the school, so if she accepts us and wants us in there... the rest of the staff just open up, and says, "Yes, this is a good thing". (Ruth)

The school being into it, the kids being into it, and the people who are on the outside being into it. When I say into it, I'm talking about putting some real care and attention into me caring, the kids caring, once they're involved, and the school caring, fundamentally, and the people who are involved in the partnership caring about these kids. (Peter)

[The students] taking it seriously and [the businesses] interaction with the students (Sandy)

Dre assessed why buy-in may have been low.

My challenge now is to find ways to engage students. It's all about student development and engagement. We had some scheduling problems. We couldn't get the momentum that we needed to engage students. (Dre)

Jaime viewed lack of students' buy-in as a result of her being mandated by parents to remain in a program in which the student is no longer interested.

They've declared a teacher academic program; they realize getting there this is not something they want to do. I had a student that had a conflict with her mother. A barrier could be that they feel stuck in the program. (Jaime)

Kerrie describes the PTSO membership at less than 10% of the school population.

We only have about 135 members pay their dues and there are over 2,000 students at the school. (Kerrie)

Needing buy-in from the school. That's the greatest barrier! The greatest barrier is to make sure that you have a contact in the school. (Kerrie)

Buy-in with the partnerships, is building some level of student buy-in to get them motivated to participate. That goes hand-in-hand as well. Not just to have the partnerships on the industry side but to have the students buy-in. (Damien)

Participants viewed overworked staff and turnover of partnership liaisons or administrators on the school or organization as possible causes for diminished buy-in and lack of commitment.

Dedication because sometimes if you're involved in too many activities, you don't have the time to do the things that you wanted to do. My phone calls to the city were never returned. I don't think it was a lack of dedication, I think that it was being stretched too thin. (Abby)

Kerrie shared that the long-time resident, community liaison who unexpectedly passed away left a void in the school's ability to reach out for community points of contact.

We miss Ms. Myra because she was actually at the performing arts center. With her death, it's been a huge loss. She was everything. You've seen that Movie, 'It's a Wonderful Life?' You know who George Bailey is? He is everything for Bedford Falls. If Bay (City) is Bedford Falls, Myra is George Bailey. You can't replace Myra. She lived here since 1966. She had relationships with everyone. She could just pick up the phone and get donations, get commitments from people, politicians to the average person. Everyone knew Myra. No one has been able to start to make those connections. (Kerrie)

Kerrie further shared that the librarian's departure after a two-year tenure, despite having a successor, was unfortunate for the teen programs:

They have what's called a Teen Zone, which was started in 2014 by a new librarian that also started over there, Jackie Joyner. She really did a lot of changes to the library. Unfortunately, she just left to go to a different public library, so she's going to be greatly missed. But Chuck has stepped up in her shoes and is the one that we're going to be working directly with. Chuck is the one that's going to be helping plan the workshops during the lunch periods. (Kerrie)

Although staff is replaced or programs are reassigned, participants shared that continuity is still diminished, if not lost.

Organizations pitching possible partnerships to schools that do not come to fruition are another example described by participants as lack of commitment to the partnerships.

The credit union actually wanted to, four or five years ago, set up a banking center here for the students and it would be run by the students, but that failed due to cracks that didn't really go anywhere. They were out. They really sold to have a partnership here, but I guess that plan didn't work- We tried it about 2009-2010 but it didn't really work out. They were going to set up a little office like in the cafeteria on the stage so that during lunch students could make deposits or withdrawals and things like that. That wasn't really successful. They didn't really have an individual that could be here the whole lunch time so we needed more staff involvement. Then the staff wasn't really willing to, because we have limited time during our planning period anyway, because we have cafeteria duty and bus duty and what not. Everybody is busy and we got a lot of other things to take care of because I don't think that we had enough time to really dedicate. (Gillian)

They need to be strengthened. We started from ground zero for a lot of them. I am excited about the opportunity. Through a lot of transition in the school and roles changing, we haven't maintained that. I think it's important to establish, not just establish but to then set a plan in place to maintain the partnership. (Damien)

That word partner is really more involved and we tend to use it loosely. There's one thing to have people volunteer but then there is another to have an established relationship where you look to have them participate in an ongoing basis. I don't think that the partnerships are solidified. I think its if I have time this year possibly. There's no commitment. We should be able to pull from (Damien)

It depends on the partnerships involve. What both parties need. (Marcus)

When you have breaks. There should be something written up. A framework for what the partnerships should be and I don't think we have that. (Damien)

Dependability, communication. Dependability on both sides. So we know what to expect from them and they know what to expect from us. If you have access to someone and they have access to us and there's an issue, they can call or I can call and we can say "Whoa!" and for instances a kid is failing a class. We can make sure that they don't get pulled out of a class that they are failing so how can we figure that out, because how it works is that we pull them out of lunch and 15 minutes of the subsequence class. (Dee)

Sometimes there are space issues that we have to negotiate because there are a lot of people over there and not as much space so that takes some back and forth. (Dee)

Just general attention to the needs of the kids versus the administrative needs and that can happen really easily in a big bureaucracy and even in a small one like ours. Just the remembering - what we're doing this for, who we're doing this for. (Dee)

Partnership organizers both identified barriers and resolutions to them. We need more parental support, as far as ... If we could get as many people that we see at home, at graduation, get half the people to come in, support our kids. When the kids have their games, oh yes, you have parents there, but it would be nice to have ... We had the ... When you give the awards. Awards night. It would be nice to see the performing arts center filled to the capacity to have your students' parents there. You have some, but you don't have everybody. A lot of kids walk across that stage and receive their award, but there's nobody there on their behalf. (Annie)

Of course not enough resources. I think that would be the number one barrier is not enough resources, because everywhere we go, people are like, "Oh, can you come mentor in our school? Can you do this?" It's just not enough resources, time, and people in the day to get this done, so that's one of them. Another barrier, it was space. It's really, really hard to find a good space in a school that's got a priority, is to teach students. We're not the priority for space. That was a challenge of many, many years until Principal Dabney said, "We're going to get rid of these trailers. Would you like one?" I'm like, "Yes," so we got a whole trailer. That was very exciting to me, because usually every year, we have to go in there and say, "Okay, where are we going to sit this year?" That was a great challenge and a barrier to what we were doing. (Ruth)

I think they are difficult to get [school partnerships]. Getting questions answered. Getting them to return calls was difficult. (Abby)

They talked a lot about what they wanted to accomplish but it really was not happening. I had gone to a couple of meetings for the green team representing our schools and these companies would come saying that they wanted to collect [the recyclables] but what would happen is we would have collected up all of milk cartons but then nobody would come to pick them up. It was really difficult at first. (Abby)

Flexibility [is an important factor in breaking down barriers]. You work on someone else's timeline and it teaches you to go with the flow a little bit better. If you can with their flow, they will work with you on their end. You can foster a relationship when you look like you're willing to work with me and vice versa and just being positive about the type of impact that you can have to make it positive and beneficial. (Deborah)

Dre has had a lot of barrier with the Hear You program. It's a program by which the kids can give feedback to the school administration about what they would like to see in their school and their community and at the end of each year we do a survey to see what's most important to the kids. We want to give them a place to talk as a group. We plan to have follow-up meeting in January, and then again in March or April and again in the spring, and a big thing in June again and nothing ever happened. We got kicked out of our space and our other space, and then told that we had to wait until next month, and then the next month and nothing ever happened and so I felt like, even though kids weren't knocking down the doors and saying why can we do this, I felt like, they [the kids] felt that way. We have to be intentional about what we offer kids! It's disappointing when we can't do what we say we're going to do. We had a follow-up. a big event in June and so it will be really important for us to be able to deliver to the kids next school year, otherwise we shouldn't do it anymore. I think it's really worse to promise them things that don't happen than it is That's very disappointing to kids. It cements the idea that we really don't care. I don't want that to happen! (Dee)

Sometimes things don't go well the first time you try them and administration of these things is very hard for the schools and Principal Dabney was away for most of the school year and that was part of the issue and that wasn't her doing so there are lots of reasonable reasons so the idea is to figure out those things that went wrong and see what is in our power to correct those things the next time. (Dee)

The mentoring program goes very smoothly and it's been there for 14 years now and again, once expectations are set, it's so much easier. People know what you're doing- it's very smooth. It's established so it happens. (Dee)

Being able to resolve problems quickly was identified as a need by participants.

Participants also stated that the school district should offset staff and financial shortages to build up the community partnerships in the schools.

I believe that the County should almost have a Community Outreach person in every building. If they want to build partnerships, this is how you build it- by every school reaching out to their community stakeholders and make sure that they build those partnerships, and that includes internships, jobs, and job shadowing opportunities, especially for high schools. I mean, every single high school should have some kind of community partnership. (Deborah)

The way that the school district (this is one of the issues with the place) has us organized is that they treat us as if we are part of Bay High School which is kind of fascinating because according to our governance board, we're not. It's just the school system, for their administrative purposes, has deemed that this is the way that it's going to be. It's problematic on both ends. Don't get me wrong the place works despite this. One of the barriers is the institutional knowledge of the Joint

Use Agreement. Which is pretty specific for how we are supposed to be treated. One of my early jobs became being the expert in the joint use agreement and making sure that everyone else is aware of the Joint Use Agreement and making sure that everyone that I have to deal with at the school system is aware of it and that no, we are not just another department, we're not part of the school, we're not part of the school system. I have to argue with people that we are not part of the school. (Georgia)

Participants viewed evaluations as a means of reflecting on the programs to determine areas of improvement and increasing stakeholder buy-in and commitment.

At the end of the year, there is a survey that the company fills out. And I kind of evaluate in that the next year if I try to place somebody or I recommend students to go there and they say they have no positions, that they really don't want us back. (Marcus)

Mentoring program- we get a lot of praise for the program- heartbreaking praise. We had a 10th year reunion and 100s of people came. We have lots of informal data but we don't have any formal data. (Dee)

While governmental partnerships are evaluated formally, our partnerships with the university and college are evaluated by the state. (Jaime)

Participants evaluate local program participation by attendance at an event or via an informal group dialogue.

People showed up! (Kerrie)

At the end of the year, there's feedback on how well the program went the students like "What did you learn?" What are the advantages, disadvantages?" We do an open discuss doing our club meeting. We evaluate from the students' perspective. (Gillian)

### **Implications for Theoretical Perspectives**

The purpose of this research was to better understand the factors that contribute to successful public school-external partnerships. Data analysis for this question was guided by DiMaggio & Powell's (1991) institutional theory wherein the deep resilient aspects of social structure become authoritative guides for social behavior. Following DiMaggio &

Powell's perspective on institutional theory, this study examined school partnerships as described by the participants. DiMaggio and Powell (1991) and Meyer and Rowan (1977) focused on the institutional environment's influence on formal structures. An institution assumes some form of an organization and vice versa, according to North (1990), and as such, an organization can become an institution.

Using the institutional theory framework, three themes emerged: (a) effective communication, (b) collaborations that move the partnership forward, and (c) commitment to working through barriers. DiMaggio and Powell's (1991) definition of social structure becoming an authoritative guide for social behavior was evident in the new institution that developed through the collaboration between the school and the external partners. An example of this is evident through the running of the Student Government Association (SGA), when Manuel stated that he "had to learn to run a meeting" and that he had to learn to follow Robert's Rules of Order. Having worked for 12 years and taught prior to serving as the regional director of SGA, Manuel has to learn the established rules, norms, and social constructs of running a meeting. Robert's Rules of Order outline all motions, from introducing business ("I move that . . ."), to Adjournment, which requires a majority vote.

According to institutional theorists Meyer and Rowan (1977), an institutional environment can strongly influence the development of formal structures in an organization, often making it "irrational and negligent" not to adopt them, as in the custom of now engaging students in experiential learning opportunities while still completing their secondary education. Schools are strongly encouraged to partner with business organizations so that students are engaged in activities outside of traditional

education. Regardless of whether the work-based learning experiences have any bearing on student's college or career choices or future occupations, schools have been encouraged to engage community partners into their school communities. Abby shared her challenges pursuing environmental partnerships for Bay High School. In order to be successful, she sought a small partnership with a local gardening club while she strategized to get the one she was initially seeking in order to gain support for larger environmental partnerships. According to Johnson, Pugach, and Hawkins (2004), developing partnerships is viewed as one of the most important goals that schools can undertake.

This study on the success of school partnerships has been examined using institutional theory. Institutional theory is defined by DiMaggio and Powell (1991) as the theory that feature institutional explanations. The focus of institutional theory is on processes of mutual influence among organizations. Institutional theory is mainly concerned, according to DiMaggio and Powell, with how the institutional environment—comprised of socially created beliefs and cognitions widely held in society, and reinforced by corporate actors—affect organizations.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this interview-based qualitative study was to examine the contributing factors of school partnership participants who participated in a school-level school partnership program. During the investigation, the researcher learned that participants who served the school programs as partnership organizers experienced successful school partnerships. Participants shared three salient themes that supported their successful school partnerships: effective communication, collaboration that moves

the partnerships forward, and commitment to working through barriers. Partnership program best practices found in prior research were reported to be in alignment with these findings. Participants reported that these factors assisted them with the maintenance to continue to move their school partnerships forward successfully. Participants also reported benefitting from the shared benefits of successful school partnerships. Unintended benefits such as ensuring that all parties follow their clear expectations, develop points of contact, exhibit flexibility and follow-through, and work for the betterment of students were found to be impactful in facilitating partnerships with organizations. These findings are essential as they can inform future research, policy, and practice, as discussed in Chapter Five.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors that schools incorporate to maintain their long-term (three years or longer) external partnerships. The problem addressed in this study is that there is little information on the sustainability of school partnerships. Despite prior research demonstrating the types, needs, and benefits for school partners (Barnett, Hall, & Camarena, 2010; Epstein, 2002; Norman, 2009; Sanders, 2002; Semke & Sheridan, 2012), there is little research on how schools can sustain their partnerships over time. External partnerships can be difficult for schools to maintain (Beabout, 2010). Without a roadmap to sustaining long-term partnerships, schools can face significant challenges keeping partners that help prepare students for the future. The role that leaders play in the school's partnership is not always clear. Lack of

sustainability for partnerships and lack of clarity on the role that the school leader plays in the partnership may hinder the potential success that the partnership could obtain.

Specifically, this study identified three factors that supported the successful school partnerships: effective communication, collaboration that moves the partnership forward, and commitment to working through barriers. Participants were interviewed and the following research questions were addressed:

1. What factors contribute to successfully maintain school partnerships with external partners?
  - 1a. What barriers have you encountered when implementing or sustaining your partnerships?
  - 1b. How did you resolve the barriers?

This study utilized a basic qualitative interview-based research design to understand the meaning of contributing factors of successful school partnerships (Merriam, 2009). Participants included 23 individuals who were partnership organizers for the school and traditionally employed at the school as teachers or school administrators, as well as partnership organizers who represent the participating organizations. The conceptual framework for the study included Bolman and Deal's (2008) four frames: structural, human resources, political, and symbolic. Schools' ability to successfully maintain its external partnerships was viewed through the lens informed by Powell and DiMaggio's (1991) institutional theory to understand the institutionalization of the shared space that results in two separate entities coming together in partnership.

As indicated by participants, factors that contribute to schools maintaining their external partnerships were: (a) effective communication, (b) collaboration that moves the partnerships forward, and (c) commitment to working through barriers. Although participants described their partnerships as successful, growth in exhibiting clear communication, shared goals, flexibility, and commitment were additional goals that they sought for their programs.

The findings of this study inform school district administrators and school administrators on the ways to maintain successful school partnerships. The findings encourage school administrators and private organization representatives to clarify goals, points of contacts, means of communication, and methods of collaboration when designing partnership programs. It also suggests developing an evaluation system that is aligned to the intended goals and outcomes, and using the evaluation to ensure that the goals are met and that barriers to the partnerships are addressed and removed.

### **Implications for Maintaining School Partnerships**

Based on the findings related to the school's ability to maintain successful school partnerships, this study makes the following five recommendations:

**1. The school and the partnering organizations should appoint designated point persons on both sides.**

Effective communication begins with having a designated person, a partnership organizer, responsible for organizing and maintaining the program. This person is also responsible for keeping leadership abreast of changes and needs of the partnership, and engages leadership in resolving barriers when they arise. Alternative representatives for both the partnership organizer in the school and the partnership organizer outside of the

school are suggested in order to encourage continuity during absences or school/organization separation. Partnership organizers who had either a consistent point of contact or a reliable list of contacts, reported more instances of effective communication.

Bolman and Deal's (2008) structural and human resource frame provide lens from which to view the importance of designated points of contact. The structural frame identifies the need for specialized roles and formal relationships. Both the school and the external partner need clear guidelines as to who represents each party and to define the role of each organization in the partnership. The structural frame outlines an appointed person for the school and the organization as part of the partnership policies which are meant to keep the partnership moving forward by organizing roles and aligning them to the objectives of the organization.

During her participation in the study, Principal Dabney shared the importance of structuring other points of contact for external partners as the principal has a number of duties and cannot be the point of contact for all partnerships.

The principal should give the final approval but the principal is only one person. You have to have different points of contact in the school and be willing to say, "I can't meet with you but I'm going to have you meet with my assistant principal or my sponsor for such and such. We can go from there". I am active in some groups more than others but I have learned from being really, really involved and not having the time to get other things done as opposed to delegate. Having some type of structure, protocol in place because once you are not there for them, they are going to become disengaged. If it appears that you brushed them off or don't have enough time for them, they will be onto the next one. (Principal Dabney)

While Bolman and Deal's (2008) structural frame sets objectives and coordinates resources, the human resource frame shows that assigning points of contact and other specific roles promote participation, identifies decision makers, and promote growth and

self- actualization of the identified partnership organizers. In my research, participants stated that they had developed relationships with several contacts within the school. Those relationships kept people on both the school and the partnership side involved and they kept the communication open between both parties.

We have a number of points of contact. Dr. Dabney, Principal, and Mrs. Kiefer, 9th grade Assistant Principal, the secretary of the 9th grade, the guidance secretary, the guidance counselor, Dr. Johnny, the head of guidance, and Mrs. White at the front desk have been very helpful with helping us to figure out who we need to talk to if something comes up. (Dee)

Dee realized early the importance of having a point of contact and developed a wider group of contacts to assist her if she had difficulty reaching her primary contact. By doing so, she is able to follow through with the goals of the partnerships by utilizing other points of contact.

## **2. The school and the partnering organization should develop shared goals.**

This recommendation is based on partnership organizers' responses and the alignment of best practice descriptors found in prior research (Relave & Deich, 2007; Sanders & Harvey, 2002). Both the school and the organization should have their desired goals for the partnership and then should share these goals, together determining the commonalities and creating a shared plan. The goals should be outlined prior to starting the partnerships and should be beneficial to both parties.

Prior research by Shively (1997) stated that the Pio Pico Elementary School, the boys and girls club, and the surrounding community centers, worked together on the shared goals of safety, community, education, social action as well as principal and personal responsibility. However, research by Greenwald (1999); Patterson (2004); and Sconzert, Smykie, & Wenzel (2004) found that goals between the school and its external

partnerships were not always shared. Partnerships were sometime more beneficial to the external partner than the school and resulted in unintended consequences on behalf of the school. It is suggested that shared goals between the school and the external partner prior to the beginning of the partnership program to build a relationship with both parties focused on shared goals.

Bolman and Deal's (2008) structural frame exhibits decision making through rational sequence to produce the right decisions. The structural frame clarifies organizational goals and develop agendas for the partnership focused on tasks, facts, and logic. Use structural frame of the structural frame requires clear communication of goals and mission. It also promotes clarity and makes it easier to neutralize conflict.

### **3. The school and their partnering organization should implement shared decision making.**

This recommendation is based on participants' responses and is aligned with best practices found in prior research (Grobe, 1993). When both parties have a stake in the partnership and believe there is reciprocity, they are more vested and more likely to negotiate barriers when they arise

In Bolman and Deal's (2008) political frame, the political reality of the partnership is understood by the principal. The principal understands how important special interest groups are, and is aware that each of the special interest group has its own agenda. The principal is able to navigate the strife of the workplace, manage conflict among individual and groups and understands the importance of interest groups and the necessity to build coalitions among them. Bolman and Deal's symbolic frame also

**4. The school and its partnering organization should develop an evaluation of the partnership goals and conduct the evaluation on a systematic schedule.**

Partnership evaluations should be planned along with the goals. Developing evaluations at the onset and conducting them on a routine schedule assesses if the partnership is meeting the goals that it was developed to achieve. Formal and deliberate evaluations of partnerships ensure that the needs that the partnership were designed to address are being met.

Bolman and Deal's (2008) structural frame lead to goals that are structured and fit the environment of the partnership. Responsibilities, rules, policies, and procedures are structured as is the corresponding evaluation prior to the beginning of the partnership program. Participants continuously plan for the future for new or expanding collaborations and begin the programs with a structured evaluation in place. The evaluation is based on the goals that the partners have set for the program.

One of goals in the coming year is to form more partnerships with businesses and with community members and also to increase parent participation. (Kerrie)

In the existing year, I like to say, "maybe next year we can do this or we can do that". I like to see a continuum of programming. (Dre)

**5. The school and its partnership organization should develop plans to address barriers to the partnership continuity.**

Putting resolutions in place for anticipated barriers helps to make partnerships function more smoothly. It also prepares the partnership organizers to address the various issues that may arise. This helps to address the fact that external relationships can be difficult for schools to maintain (Beabout, 2010). Partnership programs should implement strategies that include effective communicating, collaboration, ongoing

negotiation, and comprehensive support. The Human Resource Frame (Bolman & Deal, 2008) are lens through which individuals are recognized as having needs, prejudices, skills and limitations. This frame also reminds participants of the capacity to learn and the capacity to defend old attitudes and beliefs.

Flexibility [is an important factor in breaking down barriers]. You work on someone else's timeline and it teaches you to go with the flow a little bit better. If you can work with their flow, they will work with you on their end. You can foster a relationship when you look like you're willing to work with me and vice versa and just being positive about the type of impact that you can have to make it positive and beneficial. (Deborah)

In the study, Deborah showed that through flexibility, barriers can be broken down and people can be viewed as individuals and result in effective communication, collaborative efforts on both the part of the school and the external organizations.

### **Implications for Future Research**

There are several limitations to the research that should be acknowledged. This study was limited to one mid-Atlantic high school. Partnership organizers within the school and outside of the school were the only individuals interviewed. Of the 23 participants interviewed, 14 were partnership organizers within the school. More research on the views of potential community partners could be beneficial to growing more school partnerships. A review of the evaluations used on the partnerships in the school could be beneficial in helping the school determine if the partnership is achieving its goals.

Interviewing multiple schools and their partnering organizations on contributing factors for maintaining school partnerships might provide additional information on ways that school leaders can improve and maintain their partnerships. Additional perspectives could be gained by interviewing other stakeholders in the same school such as parents and students.

Future research on how partnership organizers are chosen for both the school and the organization would help to match the roles and the duties associated with the partnership programs to the skill set of the partnership organizer. Developing training and a resource of materials designed to assist a new partnership organizer would help to promote continuity of the partnership program with minimal interruptions. With an ever-changing workforce, partnership organizers leave the program for a variety of reasons. Developing a system for acquainting the successors to the program with their roles and responsibilities will foster continuation of the programs with limited disruption.

Developing an evaluation system for the partnerships, outlined during the partnership planning phase and reviewed on an annual, if not quarterly basis, would aid the partnership organizers and administrators in ensuring that the actions related to the partnerships are aligned with the goals.

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**APPENDIX A:**  
**INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

*IRB # 031635*

*Contributing Factors to Maintaining Successful School-External partnerships*

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Dr. Susan Swayze of the Department of Educational Leadership Graduate School of Education, the George Washington University. You are being asked if you want to take part in this study because you are involved with the private school partnerships at the school in this study. Please read this form and ask any questions that will help you decide if you want to be in the study. Taking part is completely voluntary and your standing with the school, partnering organization and program will not, in any way, be affected, should you choose not to participate or to withdraw at any time.

The purpose of this research is to understand the ways that school leaders develop ways to maintain their school's long-term partnerships. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to take part in a face-to-face interview that will take 45-60 minutes to complete. The interview will be located at Bowie High School's main building. All participants must be 18 years or older and be connected to the school's external partnerships. You will be asked questions regarding your participation and opinion of the partnerships. The interview will be audio recorded only and a verbatim transcript will be created.

Your participation is voluntary and your transcript will be kept confidential. If you decide to participate initially and later change your mind, you may withdraw participation at any time. Your interview transcript will not include your name or the high school that offers the partnerships. All participants will be ascribed an alpha numeric code to minimize risk and ensure confidentiality. When results from the study are communicated, all participants and their individual comments will be identified by pseudonym. If any identifying information arises during the course of the interview, it will be removed from the transcript. Your transcript will be destroyed once the research study is complete.

**Participant initial acknowledgments below:**

I \_\_\_\_\_ verify that I am age 18 or older. (Initial/\_\_\_\_\_).  
(First and Last Name)

I \_\_\_\_\_ acknowledge that: pseudonyms will be used when  
(First and Last Name)  
reporting results; the interview will be recorded; interview transcript and reported results  
will not include participant's name or high school that they attended; participant can  
review transcript for accuracy. (Initial/\_\_\_\_\_).

I \_\_\_\_\_ acknowledge that participation is voluntary and that there  
(First and Last Name)  
are no negative consequences for not participating or for withdrawing from study at any  
time. (Initial/\_\_\_\_\_).

**Consent**

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give  
my consent to participate in this study.

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact information**

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please  
contact the principal investigator, Dr. Susan Swayze at The George Washington  
University at (571) 553-3773, [swayze@gwu.edu](mailto:swayze@gwu.edu) or the principal contact, Regina Spruill  
at (917) 533-8384 or [rgarrettspruill@gmail.com](mailto:rgarrettspruill@gmail.com). If you have questions or comments  
regarding your rights as a participant in this research, please contact the GWU Office of  
Human Research at 202-994-2715 or [ohrib@gwu.edu](mailto:ohrib@gwu.edu).

**APPENDIX B:**

## **PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT INVITATION EMAIL**

Subject: Research Participation Needed

Dear [Name],

I am requesting your participation in my dissertation research study. Please read below for more information. The interview will probably last around 30 minutes.

The purpose of this dissertation research study is to explore contributing factors to successful school-external partnerships.

If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to do the following:

1. Participate in a recorded interview session with the researcher for approximately one hour.
2. Allow the researcher to follow up with you via telephone or email if it is necessary to clarify any information from the initial interview.

Additional information:

1. Each participant in this study will be assigned a pseudonym and will remain anonymous.
2. Recordings of the interviews will be erased once they have been transcribed and the researcher has completed the requirements for the doctoral degree.
3. Participation in this study is voluntary. In addition, you are free to withdraw at any time.
4. The risks in this study are minimal. All results will be published without names or identifying characteristics.
5. The results of this study will benefit all who are currently involved in school partnerships including school administrators, partnership program coordinators, students, and private partners.

Thank you for your willingness to contribute to this research. If you are interested in participating in my research study, please respond to this email with the information you would like me to use to connect with you. Please let me know if you agree and the time and location of your availability.

I can be reached to answer questions about the research, research subjects' rights or related matters using the contact information below:

Regina G. Spruill, The George Washington University

[rgarrettspruill@gmail.com](mailto:rgarrettspruill@gmail.com)

[\(917\) 533-8384](tel:(917)533-8384)

You may also contact:

Dr. Susan Swayze, Associate Professor of Educational Research at The George

Washington University at [swayze@gwu.edu](mailto:swayze@gwu.edu) or at [\(571\) 553-3773](tel:(571)553-3773)..

Or

The Office of Human Research, [ohrib@gwu.edu](mailto:ohrib@gwu.edu) or [\(202\)994-2715](tel:(202)994-2715)

## APPENDIX C:

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR PARTICIPANTS

Name of Participant (Pseudonym): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School District: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Interview Introduction:**

—Thank interviewee for participation and review that their participation is voluntary

—Review purpose of the study

—Review structure of interview questions

—Review confidentiality of data and student identities as well as the importance of confidentiality for other students participating in the study.

1. What factors contribute to successful public school- external partnerships?
2. Describe the partnerships that you are involved in.
3. How did this partnership get started? Were you involved with the partnership from the beginning?
4. What is your opinion of partnerships? How do they contribute to the school mission of educating children?
5. What is your role in regard to school partnerships?
6. Which partnership or partnerships are you involved with?
7. How did you become involved with this partnership?

8. What is your perception of the success of this partnership? (If involved with more than one partnership, do you feel that the partnerships have varying levels of success?)
9. List three factors that you feel contribute to the success of the partnership. Are these three factors equal or is there one factor that is the most important among them? Which one?
10. What barriers have you encountered when implementing or sustaining this partnership? What was the biggest barrier?
11. How did you resolve it?
12. How is your partnership evaluated?
13. What is the school's role in the partnership? (What is the external organization's role in the partnership?)
14. Have there been instances where you had to fulfill the other organization's role? How did that go?

**APPENDIX D:**

**INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**

Name of Participant (Pseudonym): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School District: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

**Interview Introduction:**

—Thank interviewee for participation and review that their participation is voluntary

—Review purpose of the study

—Review structure of interview questions

—Review confidentiality of data and student identities as well as the importance of confidentiality for other students participating in the study.

1. Warm-up: How long have you been the principal at your school? Probe: Were you a principal or assistant principal at your school or another school prior to this appointment?
2. What type of school partnerships exist in your school? Probe: Did you choose these partnerships?
3. What factors do you believe contribute to successful school external partnerships? Probe: Are these factors given equal weight?
4. How do you recruit private organizations to partner with your school?
5. What role do you play in maintaining external partnerships?

6. Who do you empower to manage the private partnership? Probe: How do you stay informed and/or connected to the private partner if someone else in your building maintains the partnership.
7. What are your expectations for your private partners?
8. What expectations have your private partner had for the school?
9. What ‘trade-offs’ or concessions have you had to make for your private partnership?
10. Wrap-up: Is there anything that you would like to add?