

# Partnership Guide

*for College & Career Academies*



College & Career Academy Support Network

*High school: Make it fair, make it real.*

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## Introduction

Whether you are building a new California Partnership Academy (CPA) or are working to improve your current partnership structure, the business/post-secondary partnership model is an integral component to any thriving academy. Not only is the partnership component a required part of the Education Code regulating CPAs, but employer and college representative partners can serve a vital role in helping academy students to prepare for the real world outside of high school. Postsecondary partners have tremendous value to students by showcasing community college and four-year college options. Work-based learning through employer partnerships can also be valuable in terms of illustrating to students the vertical range of career possibilities in the field of their academy, as well as helping to develop skills that would be needed in any career path. Students working within this model develop real world skills, practical business connections, and the confidence and experience to take first steps into their chosen career path.

The majority of such support comes usually in the form of volunteered time: for committees, guest speakers, field trip hosts, mentors, and internship supervisors. Additionally, businesses may contribute curricular input and materials, equipment, supplies, facilities for meetings and other functions, and loaned employees to assist with work-based learning experiences.

(The California Education Code Section 54690-54697, which directs and regulates California Partnership Academies, can be found here: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/hs/cpagen.asp>)

## Forms of Employer and Higher Education Support

- Advisory Board (aka “Steering Committee” or “Advisory Committee”) member
- Input on technical curriculum
- Donations of equipment, curricular materials
- Host for meetings and activities
- Speakers and field trips
- Job shadowing
- Mentors for juniors
- Internship for seniors
- Community service opportunities

## **Academy Advisory Committees (aka “Advisory Boards” or “Steering Committees”)**

The Advisory Committee will play an incredibly valuable role in building and maintaining partner relationships and assuring the best possible experience for students. Structuring, developing, and utilizing such committees will provide invaluable support to your program, in the following ways:

### **Committee Membership**

- Employers, higher education representatives, business partners, community/government members/partners, parents, teachers, administrators, counselors
- Chair: Employer or Academy Program Coordinator/Lead (can be co-led)

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

- Joint decision-making, with school/district
- Providing a variety of resources, and meeting the required 100% match
- Partners’ volunteered time and expertise

### **Meetings**

- Frequency—bi-monthly, quarterly
- Where—high school, company, college, (can be rotating)
- Agendas—in advance, with outcomes & times (created by chair)

### **Task Force Responsibilities**

- Technical Curriculum
- Teacher Externships
- Facilities/Equipment/Materials
- Speakers/Field Trips
- Additional Resources

### **Communicating and Maintaining Positive Relationships With Partners**

- Maintain communication & say “thanks”
- An established academy liaison

- Thank-you notes (especially from students)
- Academy events
- Newsletter/other media

## **Speakers and Field Trips**

Speakers, field trips, and other activities are the highlights of successful academies for many students. These are powerful experiences that build student buy-in and excitement, and are some of the most memorable events for academy students. Arranging and coordinating these trips and activities can be challenging, but are worth the effort. The following are tips and considerations for such events:

### **Speaker and Field Trip Objectives:**

- Provide students with experience and information regarding the associated industry sector
- Provide valuable exposure to business/industry or college campus
- Showcase a range of jobs/professions/careers, and related training
- Provide intentional role models for students

### **Prepping Students for Field Trips and Speakers:**

- Have students research company or college
- Identify topics to cover/questions to ask
- Set, define, and review objectives for the trip/activity
- Determine the length of presentation or visit
- Determine departments to discuss/visit
- Identify questions to expect
- Lead a reflection on the event (post-event) to help students process what they have learned

### **Logistics to Set-Up With Partners:**

- Established liaisons on both sides (partner and high school)
- Scheduling and preparation
- Transportation (field trip)
- Food (field trip)

### **Follow-ups**

- Student follow-up report
- “Thank you” note to speaker/field trip host
- Gather feedback from students and speaker/host
- Refine procedures over time

## **Work-Based Learning Experiences: Job Shadowing, Mentorships, and Internships**

In eleventh grade, Academies are encourage to provide students with a job shadowing experience- typically a single day event intended to give students a first-hand introduction to the field. This is not a requirement for a California Partnership Academy, but it is often included and is usually a positive and important experience. A junior year mentorship and a senior year internship are required components of any Academy, and Academy partners also often serve important roles in these endeavors. Furthermore, the same suggestions below apply to each of these requirements, however, for more details on the mentorship and internship requirements and suggestions, CCASN has developed two other guides called the “Mentor Handbook for College & Career Academies” and the “Internship Handbook for College & Career Academies.” Together, these experiences provide students with an in-depth look at what occurs in a business/industry related to the student’s career interest and/or the Academy career focus. They generate excitement about the reality of the experiences ahead, and are tremendous tools to prepare students for future experiences. To help set up these experiences, consider the following suggestions:

### **Norms to Teach Students:**

- Initial and on-going communication (usually via email)
- Appropriate dress
- Appropriate speech
- General professionalism (shaking hands, eye contact, courtesy)
- Timeliness
- Rules and expectations of behavior
- Preparation of appropriate questions
- Creation of a “dos & don’ts” list
- Understanding your role as a representative for the entire Academy and school

### **Host Expectations:**

- Planning and pairing of students
- Logistical details
- Providing real learning experiences for students
- Awareness of adherence to safety and compliance issues (background checks, safety protocols in the workplace, etc.)
- Acting as a role model
- Creation of a “dos & don’ts” list

**Follow-Up:**

- “Thank you” notes to hosts (by students)
- Written assignment and/or presentation reflecting on what the students gained/learned
- Class discussion about the experience, questions, and setting next steps

**A Fifteen-Step Approach To Building And Maintaining A Large Partner Base**

The following was originally developed by Anne Scott, Principal, and Larry Stewart, Academy Director, Highland Energy/Environmental Technology Academy, in Bakersfield, CA. It has been adapted by CCASN staff and provides a more in-depth discussion of how to build partnerships in an Academy.

**Overview of 15 Steps:**

- Step 1: Define your potential partners
- Step 2: Recruit your first few partners
- Step 3: Organize and use your advisory board/committee
- Step 4: Define the partners' roles and responsibilities
- Step 5: Develop an activities calendar for the semester/year
- Step 6: Recruit classroom speakers
- Step 7: Recruit field trip sites
- Step 8: Recruit mentors
- Step 9: Develop formal partnerships
- Step 10: Make your local college a partner
- Step 11: View companies and colleges, not individuals, as partners
- Step 12: Respond to partner concerns
- Step 13: Publicize partner activities

Step 14: Continually expand partner contacts

Step 15: Value your partners

\* The terms “advisory committee,” “advisory board” and “steering committee” are used interchangeably.

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**Details:**

Step 1: Define your potential partners

- Assemble your academy team (teachers, counselors, administrators) and consider answers to the following questions:
  - How do you define your industry?
  - Who are some possible partners?
  - What local college programs are associated with this industry?
  - What personal connections do you have to this industry (parents, friends, school board members, current school business partners in other fields, etc.)?

Step 2: Recruit your first few partners

- To the best of your ability as a team, use high-ranking members of your team (i.e. your principal) to reach out to high-ranking members of the organization you are trying to recruit as a partner (i.e. an executive).
- Make a list, together with your team, of potential partners and their contact information.
- Design and produce printed and digital materials regarding your academy and have them ready for potential partners to review upon request.
- Develop a plan that assigns recruitment of specific potential business partners to members of your Academy team.

Step 3: Organize and use your advisory board/committee

- Include Academy faculty, counselors, administrators, office staff, business/community partners and college representatives. The business partner determines the employee(s) who will represent their organization on the steering committee or advisory board/committee.
- Hold an organizational meeting to determine place, time and frequency of meetings and

who will serve as chair. Set up a steering committee or advisory board/committee calendar for the year.

- Develop a process to keep the steering committee or advisory board/committee members informed.
- Define the responsibilities to be handled by the steering committee or advisory board/committee.
- Establish the topics that will be brought before the committee for review and approval.

Step 4: Define the partners' roles and responsibilities

- Identify areas of strength (i.e. what they have to offer) from each partner.
- Try to match your needs with the identified strengths of each partner.
- Assign roles/tasks based on a paring of identified needs of the Academy and identified strengths of each partner.

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- Additionally, determine which specific partners could be used for which specific Academy functions- guest speakers, field trips, etc.
- Avoid asking directly for money, unless absolutely necessary. Instead, when possible, ask for more “valuable contributions” such as time and individual talents.

Step 5: Develop an activities calendar for the semester/year

- Develop and print a calendar for each semester.
- Schedule monthly field trips, classroom activities, mentor activities, due dates for semester projects, parent meetings, student celebrations, and industry events.
- The Academy calendar is developed by the Academy faculty/staff.
- May also include evening meetings with parents and quarterly celebrations of student achievement.

Step 6: Recruit classroom speakers

- Identify (with input from the partners, themselves) the most appropriate partners/individuals to use as guest speakers.
- Determine what types of classroom activities you want guest speakers to provide: general information about their industry, support for the academic disciplines taught within the Academy, specialized training?
- Begin to arrange guest speaker visits and calendar these events.

Step 7: Recruit field trip sites

- Determine possible trip locations and events.
- Teachers may each volunteer to take the lead on different trips.
- Contact the business partner and arrange the date, place, and time of a trip.

- Arrange for food (many academy students will likely be on free and reduced lunch).
- Transportation costs are funded through the CPA grant.
- Arrange to have teacher and administrator chaperones for trips.
- Consider field trip requirements like academic standing, uniform, behavior policies, etc.

### Step 8: Recruit mentors

- Identify individuals from your pool of partnerships to serve as mentors for your mentorship program.
- Contact each potential mentor and invite them to come and see your school and academy.
- Create a list of expected roles and responsibilities for participating mentors.
- Ask for help from your school district (in the form of “district match”) if you need help with recruiting mentors.
- Once a pool of mentors has been established, ask each mentor if they would also be willing to provide a “job shadowing” experience for their mentee(s).

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### Step 9: Develop formal partnerships

- Consider partnerships with a specific business, an industry association, an intermediary organization such as a school-business alliance or Chamber of Commerce, or any other group that interfaces with that industry.
- Identify the value of a partnership that your program can offer.
  - Some potential partnership advantages:
    1. Access to all the employees and/or the roster of members so that you can then recruit individual business partners
    2. Specified annual commitments of personnel time and talent
    3. Grants, used equipment, instructional materials, and attendance at industry functions
    4. Status, as your partnership is publicized by the company
- Affiliate memberships in organizations may assist your Academy's growth, as well. You may want to become an affiliate member of an organization that can provide your academy with specialized knowledge and assistance.

### Step 10: Make your local college a partner

- Identify a local community college and a local four-year university or technical school (and more than one of each, if you so choose) to become partners.
- If they do not already exist within your Academy and its college partnerships, seek out opportunities for “dual enrollment” or articulation agreements with these schools.
- Identify individuals from these school partnerships to serve as advisory committee members, guest speakers, field trip hosts, etc.

- Ask for help from these school/college partners in helping students with learning the college application process, etc.

### Step 11: View companies and colleges, not individuals, as partners

- Be prepared to lose and replace contacts as changes occur within companies/organizations and schools.
- Build relationships beyond any single partner.

### Step 12: Respond to partner concerns

- Be ready to answer questions and address concerns from partners about working with teenagers, and have a process for answering these questions and addressing these concerns.
- Carefully choose a designated member (or members) of the Academy team to meticulously handle scheduling and other questions/concerns that may arise from partners.
- Be sure to allow administrators to handle questions/concerns that deal specifically with the school as a whole.

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### Step 13: Publicize partner activities

- Provide your business partners with positive publicity about the support they are providing your Academy.
- Help enhance the reputation of both the business and individuals supporting your program.
- Utilize a variety of school specific outlets to thank and support the business/organization or school supporting your program such as school newspaper, school site job fairs, etc.

### Step 14: Continually expand partner contacts

- Remember that change happens: companies dissolve or change their community focus, and individuals leave the company, or grow weary of their participation (usually because they are just too busy), and corporations continuously move their employees.
- Anticipate these potential changes and continuously seek to expand your potential partnership base.
- Create clusters with several mentors from one company/organization working with several students. If one employee is transferred, the other mentors agree to mentor the student(s) assigned to that employee, for example.

### Step 15: Value your partners

- Provide opportunities for your business partners to be thanked by the students, staff, parents and school (thank you letters, certificates of appreciation, celebrations, etc.)
- Provide opportunities for your business partners to learn about student success.

- Highlight specific impacts the business/organization has made for students.

## **Nine Principles for Sustaining Partner Support in a Career Academy**

1. Individualize partner roles/responsibilities. Involve partners in the way most appropriate for what they have to offer. Match your needs with their resources.
2. Establish communication channels. Identify specific points of contact for the employer and high school so there is an established channel of communication to plan activities and work out issues.
3. Value their time. Where meetings are involved, have an agenda and time limit and stick to them. Identify needed actions and next steps while keeping meetings concise and direct.
4. Give your partners jobs/tasks. Help them to contribute by assigning jobs/tasks appropriate to their skills and time availability.
5. Treat partners as colleagues. Ask them questions and learn from their expertise, while sharing yours. Work with them as fellow professionals.

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6. Introduce partners to students. Many industry volunteers are people who are interested in meeting and supporting the next generation. Their primary motivation is often to help kids, so try to structure activities that will facilitate contact with kids.
7. Expect change. Be adaptable. Employers experience staff turnover and industry adjustments, sometimes at an alarming rate. The specific people you work with may leave or move on; the company's resources may change. Nothing is permanent. Be cognizant of the adaptations you must make in order to keep your partnerships alive and sustainable.
8. Anticipate trends. Stay up to date regarding developments in your career field. Stay ahead of the curve. Locate new partners when necessary, and adapt when needed with existing partners.
9. Say "thank you" often. There are many ways to do this: thank-you notes (especially from students), recognition at academy events, certificates, social events, and publicity for the company.

## **CCASN "Guides"**

The College & Career Academy Support Network has assembled a host of guides and related materials on its website: <http://casn.berkeley.edu>, which also has a section specifically devoted to the California Partnership Academies. Under the heading "CCASN Library" is a section titled "Guides." In this section, you can find various documents useful for implementing various

components of an Academy. Many of these are related to involving partners in the kinds of activities discussed in this guide. All are available for free.

To put it another way, go steal this stuff! It is all in the public domain and there for precisely this purpose.