

ADOPT-A-SCHOOL TOOLKIT



Employer Guide


Workforce Solutions

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WHY ADOPT-A-SCHOOL

THE POSITIVE

Many industries, companies and employees are actively engaged in the educational institutions across our region. These engagements range from providing mentors for students to renovating the campuses for the children of tomorrow. Everyone will tell you that it is the “right thing to do” and “it feels good to give back.” Most of all, the students and teachers will say that it is very much appreciated and please do more. But did you know that Adopting a School can show a long term return on your investment? Your direct involvement in a school will help to develop a talent pipeline for your industry. This toolkit is designed to help you structure your involvement and to share with you the lessons learned by other Adopt-A-School programs.

THE CHALLENGE

In our pilot programs we have learned that adopting a school takes a lot of time and resources. We have also learned that not every great idea works and that timing is important. Schools are evolving in every district and it is crucial to make sure that the administrative leadership is actively engaged in your efforts. Immediate return is not always the best option. Consider how decisions might affect the long-term future, and remember that every school has its own unique culture. We strongly encourage companies to collaborate across their industry and establish multi-year plans for engagement with strong ties.

Think beyond the traditional; consider all options – no matter how seemingly absurd - before determining the best path forward. Innovation is not without challenges, and a venture into new territory often brings with it new risks. Share the knowledge, the risk, and the fulfillment of adopting a school through our program. On a regular basis, we will be adding information about employer and school initiatives to make it easier for you to leverage and engage in your area.



READINESS ASSESSMENT

Before you invest time and resources – do your homework.

10 QUESTIONS TO ANSWER BEFORE YOU CONTACT THE SCHOOL:

1. Why do you want to adopt-a-school?
2. What resources do you have available (people, time, money, equipment, knowledge)?
3. Have you developed a comprehensive plan and is it approved by your team?
4. Is it a multi-year plan?
5. Have the vision, mission, goals, and desired outcomes been documented?
6. Are there metrics to determine return on investments?
7. Has it been approved by your company executives?
8. Have you reviewed the safety and labor restrictions for your activities?
9. Have you reviewed the plan with the school administrative leadership? (Superintendent, Career & Technical Education, etc.)
10. Are there other companies working with the school and how do your activities blend with their efforts? Can you leverage or collaborate with them?

10 QUESTIONS TO ANSWER WITH THE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM:

1. Has the administrative leadership provided input to the plan and identified where/when to implement?
2. Has the administrative leadership provided the introductions to the school leadership team?
3. Has the school designated a focal point?
4. Does the school have a long term plan and do your activities fit into that plan?
5. How do the activities support the learning objectives as required by the district and state?
6. Do you understand the culture of the school and how it might change?
7. Is there a change management and communication plan for the activities?
8. Do you have student participation in the planning of the activities to ensure acceptance and success?
9. Have you developed a “Plan, Do, Check, Act” methodology to the implementation process?
10. Is there a recognition process to ensure that participants are provided with immediate and meaningful feedback?

MISSION, VISION, GOALS, METRICS

The mission should be short and concise

- Improve the welding classroom environment

The vision should be attainable

- All students have an opportunity to learn about welding in a safe environment

No more than 3 goals please

- Implement safety first practices in the welding classroom
- Provide paint, people and equipment
- Showcase the welding class projects to students, parents and local business owners

Metrics should be easy to track

- Audit welding classroom every 60 days
- Increase student participation in welding classes by 5% a year for the next 5 years
- All instructors are NCCER certified
- All students taking the classes are registered with NCCER or certifying agency
- Increase hiring of welding students who graduate or receive a GED by 10% per year for the next 5 years

CHANGE MANAGEMENT – 10 STEPS TO REMEMBER

1. Keep it simple
2. Remember “change is personal”
3. Be inclusive to create ownership and sustainability
4. Develop a multi-year plan to achieve success
5. Clearly understand roles and responsibilities
6. Address the culture change that will occur
7. Develop a Communication Plan to include:
 - Why Change?
 - What’s in it for Me?
 - What does success look like?
8. Reward and recognize the people who succeed during the change process
9. Create a winning environment because every idea will not be adopted nor will every activity be perfect
10. Learn from and document the challenges – pass on the knowledge to the next generation

COMMUNICATION

PLAN ELEMENTS

Stakeholder Analysis – Key players

- Who needs to know what you are doing because they will support or block the effort?
- What, when and how will you communicate to each one?

Strategic Assessment

- What forms of communication have been used in the past?
- What was successful and why?
- Are there new ways to communicate today?
- Are the preferred methods that should be used for each audience?
- Identify the influential communicators and assess why they are successful. Look for ways to incorporate them into your plans.

Mini-Plans – Develop a simple spreadsheet

- What is the activity/event and the timeline for it?
- Who needs to know about?
- How soon in advance should they be informed?
- What media is the best way to reach them?
- Who is going to prepare the messages?
- Who is going to deliver the messages and when?

Pre-Event planning and Post-Event Analysis is critical to improve and sustain the gain.

Solicit feedback when appropriate.

Don't be afraid to say: “ This didn't work and we won't do it again.” We learn from our mistakes and there maybe better ways to achieve the objectives.

SAFETY FIRST

SAFETY AND SECURITY ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT IN SCHOOLS TODAY.

A FEW POINTERS TO CONSIDER:

- Understand that every school is responsible for a safety and security plan
- Look for ways to help the administrative leadership fulfill the requirements of that plan
- Offer to provide safety and security equipment
- Offer to share your safety and security plans with school officials as appropriate
- Offer to help improve the school environment as needed
- Leverage ideas from other companies and other schools like:
 - Company safety glasses donated to welding and construction classes
 - Slightly used chafing dishes and cooking lesson donated to the culinary class
 - Hospital beds and a safety lesson about pinched fingers
 - Astronaut talks about fire in space
 - Remote Operating Vehicles project – emphasis on safety and competition
- Use the materials developed by OSHA, industry associations and other agencies

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

BOTH FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS APPLY TO HAVING CHILDREN IN THE WORKPLACE. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS PROVIDED AS A GUIDE ONLY.

- Consult the DOL Web site: www.dol.gov/dol/topic/youthlabor/index.htm
- Know that there are federal and state laws governing what duties a child can perform
www.youthrules.dol.gov/employers/default.htm
- Understand that these laws are designed to protect the children and you the employer
- Realize that you are responsible for the child's well being while they are at your place of business
- Ensure you have taken all precautions necessary to provide a safe and secure environment for that child
- Report any suspicious behavior or questions about children in the workplace to the proper authorities
- Ensure that students are eligible to work or study in your company by reviewing plans with HR and Legal departments
- Never suggest that a child should leave school and start working prior to graduation or completing a GED

GREAT IDEAS TO IMPLEMENT

Ideas List

1. Open Houses and Events
2. Counseling Students
3. Classroom Design
4. Enrichment Activities – Tutors, Mentors, and Technical Experts
5. Multi-discipline Projects
6. Field Trips
7. Career & Technical Education Day
8. It's Never Too Late – Career Days

OPEN HOUSES AND EVENTS

Do

- Develop a written plan with a timeline
 - Use tools like RACI http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RACI_diagram
 - Team involvement will improve success
 - Start early – the bigger the event, the more time needed to plan and execute properly
- Keep everybody in the loop at every levels of the organization
- Look for creative ways to communicate and involve the community
- Plan for the unexpected. Safety, security, and logistics are essential.
- Monitor the stress levels of team members (especially those with less experience)
- Engage students and parents openly – not from behind a table
- Remember to say thank you in a meaningful way

DON'T

- Underestimate the time and resources it will take to be successful
- Forget to document lessons learned and start planning for next year

COUNSELING STUDENTS ABOUT THE WORLD OF WORK

Do

- Offer to provide trained and qualified resources to talk about current or future jobs for your industry, coaching on interviewing skills, writing resumes, and starting work
- Contact closest Workforce Solutions Office to partner with them
- Ask and receive permission from school administrative leadership before you begin
- Develop materials and scripts for the audience
- Review all materials and scripts with school leadership team prior to use
- Look for ways to connect your jobs to the curriculum or lesson plans
- Talk with the counselors and teachers to ensure that you are reinforcing their roles/messages
- Properly screen all employees before sending them to the school

DON'T

- Over-step or suggest that your industry or company is the “only way to succeed in life”
- Hesitate to report any suspicious or unusual student behavior to the proper school authorities immediately

CLASSROOM DESIGN

Do

- Offer to help improve the classroom experience
- Offer to provide new or used equipment and ensure that it is approved by the school safety officials
- Offer to help design a safe classroom that models the work environment
- Offer to improve the obvious – paint, plants, stairwells, bathrooms, and hallways
- Collaborate with other companies to ensure consistency across the school district
- Work closely with the administrative leadership in addition to the individual teachers
- Celebrate and communicate the improvements to the community – especially parents
- Look for ways to involve students in the improvement process and provide them with meaningful recognition

DON'T

- Start from scratch – leverage best practices from other schools
- Forget to audit the results and stay engaged throughout the school year.

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES – TUTORS, MENTORS, TECHNICAL EXPERTS

Do

- Provide employees who are trained and motivated to work with the age group
- Work with the teacher/counselors to develop the materials and lesson plans
- Ensure that the lesson plan is approved by the administrative and curriculum leadership team prior to delivery
- Solicit feedback from students and capture ideas for improvement
- Work with school psychologists as appropriate
- Use technology to improve the learning experience
- Solicit participation from industry associations who have developed lesson plans on multiple topics
- Look for ways to engage students in the planning process and identify ways for them to tutor/mentor/teach younger audiences
- Properly screen all employees and report issues to proper school authorities immediately

DON'T

- Forget to audit results and recognize employee participation

MULTI-DISCIPLINE PROJECTS

Do

- Work with teachers and administrative leadership to identify projects
- Leverage projects that are already being used by multiple schools
- Emphasis safety in all projects
- Ensure that equipment and materials are pre-approved for use in the school environment
- Provide employees who are trained and motivated to assist with the specific technical aspects of the project
- Engage in projects that include both AP and CTE teachers and students
- Monitor the competitiveness of the team
- Emphasis teamwork skills and how their importance in your industry

DON'T

- Take over the project no matter how much fun you are having
- Forget to recognize performance and talk about how that is important in your company

FIELD TRIPS TO YOUR COMPANY

Do

- Ensure that you have company approval and have reviewed the logistics, safety and security plans with the company officials
- Ensure that the school administrative leadership has approved the field trip
- Ensure that all students have parental permission to participate
- Ensure that you have approval to take pictures of the students as they participate in the trip
- Properly screen all employees who will be interacting with students and school personnel
- Ensure that all persons entering your company have been properly briefed for emergencies
- Solicit feedback and look for ways to improve next year

DON'T

- Engage outside organizations who have not worked with children before such as van drivers, food services, etc.
- Underestimate the time and resources required to make the event meaningful

CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Do

- Develop a job shadowing or internship program for your company and work with local high school to implement
- Work with the school board and CTE Director to showcase current programs
- Work with the school and teachers to ensure that they are properly licensed and that the students receive credit for approved courses
- Provide assistance as requested during a CTE audit or post-audit review
- Identify resources that you can provide to the school program (people, time, equipment)
- Provide people to judge during CTE competitions
- Provide scholarships and recognition to students who participate in local, regional or national events
- Work with the Director to identify programs to develop students to be work ready upon graduation
- Work with the Director to provide industry experts for the classrooms as needed
- Work with administrative leadership to ensure that long term strategic plans are consistent with industry needs for the future workforce

DON'T

- Assume that the school is ready to be adopted but do make plans for next year
- Forget to include these students in multi-discipline projects

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE – CAREER DAYS

Do

- Work with school officials to provide employees for career days
- Look for creative ways to provide information to students and parents
- Work with counselors to provide up to date information about your company or industry
- With permission, work with teachers to provide speakers and interesting information to students
- Offer to be interviewed by students about your job, company, or industry
- Use technology to reach the current audience
- Update your web site with information for students, teachers and parents
- Produce a video explaining your jobs and provide it to the counselors/teachers
- Join a collaborative group in your community to work with the school

DON'T

- Think that it is too late to expose a child to your opportunities because you never know when someone will develop an interest.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

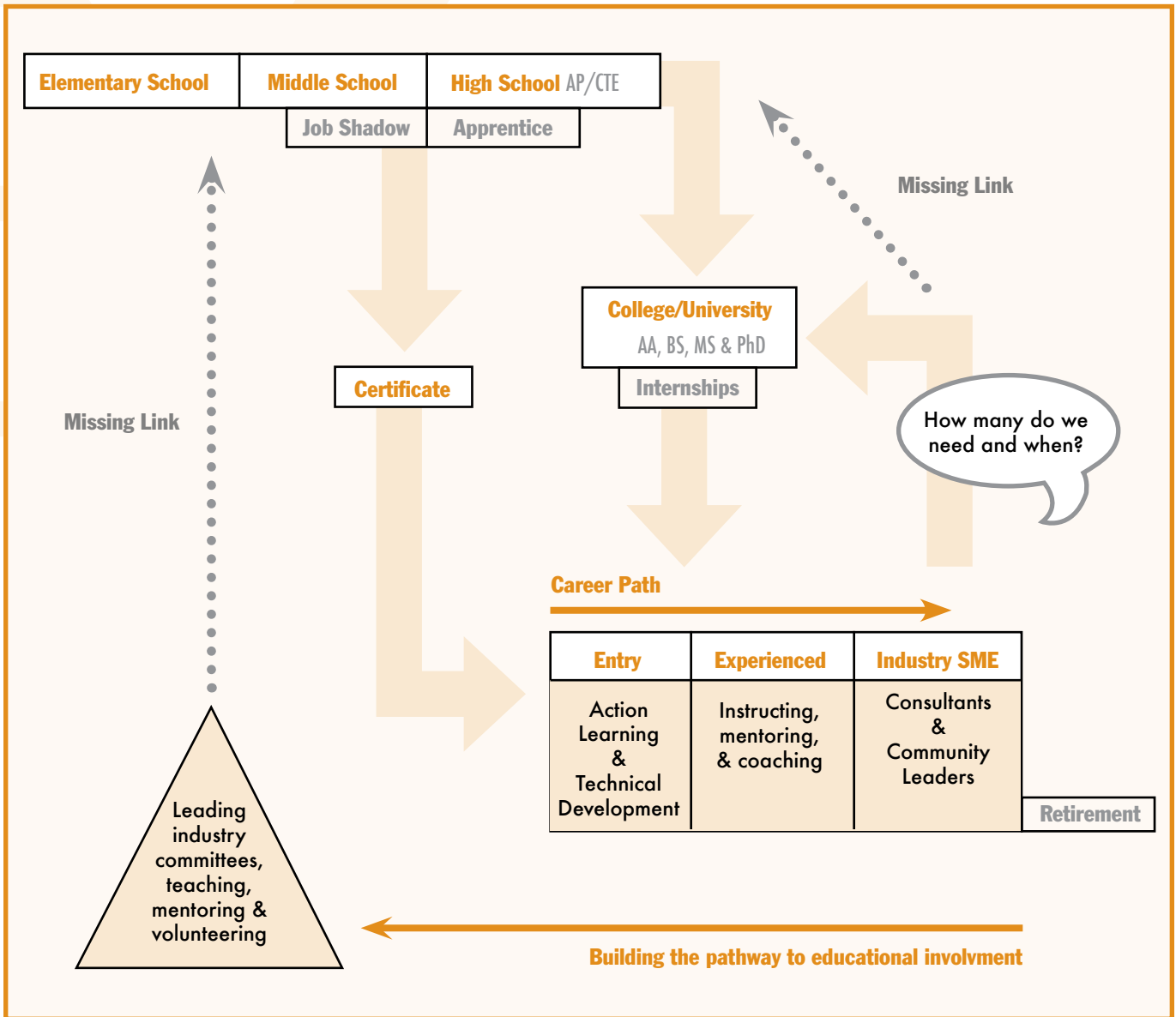
LOCAL

1. Sponsor Math, Engineering and Science Fairs
2. Support Industry and ISD Board membership / advisory groups
3. Develop and support Industry and Career and Technical Education planning groups
4. Support Industry and Community College Alliance / Advisory groups
5. Develop and support Teacher Externship and Awareness Activities
6. Integrate technical employees into Teacher Science and Math Camps
7. Sponsor Student Internship and Awareness Activities
8. Develop and support Student Science and Energy/Industry-related Camps
9. Support Student Scholarships for Industry-related Programs
10. Sponsor Parent and Student Education Programs (HSF Townhall/Success Programs)
11. Join or develop a Speakers Bureau (Greater Houston Partnership, Chamber of Commerce, or local educational institutions)
12. Develop Adopt-a-School Program
13. Leverage model After School science, math and reading program
14. Join Employee – Teacher Industry Networks
15. Encourage employees to become Substitute teachers or Non-credit teachers programs
16. Support Veterans recruiting and education efforts
17. Determine if community has a At Risk Youth education and recruiting effort
18. Locate and support area science and children's museums

STATE AND NATIONAL

1. Establish effective alliance with state education system
2. Develop matrix for curriculum that supports education about industry and prepares students to be job or college ready upon graduation
3. Support industry collaborative efforts
4. Encourage and work with educational organizations to develop lesson plans which support industry occupations (GCPTA model)
5. Support grant proposals from educational institutions if they meet the industry needs for improving employee or entry level skills
6. Support Monster.com Making it Count Program (API and Sponsoring companies)
7. Develop Internship and Scholarship programs with nationwide providers who have measurable results (UNCF, HSF, etc.)
8. Encourage Board members and technical teams to support National Science Teachers Association
9. Encourage board level membership with National Geographic and Smithsonian programs / magazines
10. Support industry associations with measurable educational / outreach efforts

TALENT DEVELOPMENT *a Diagram for Success*



BEST PRACTICE HIGHLIGHTS

BE A PART OF IT! SHARE YOUR IDEAS AND SUCCESSES!

COMING SOON: High Schools in the News

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