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**Boys & Girls Clubs Partnerships with Local School districts COVID-19 Toolkit**

**Contents**

[**Guidance for Boys & Girls Clubs on Education Partnerships with School Districts Given Covid-19** 2](#_Toc38631472)

[**Club Education Partner Template Letter to School Districts** 4](#_Toc38631473)

[**LEA Existing Partner Letter Template- Summer and Fall** 6](#_Toc38631474)

[**Boys & Girls Club School Engagement Plan (Advocacy Plan) (Sample)** 9](#_Toc38631475)

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# **Guidance for Boys & Girls Clubs on Education Partnerships with School districts for COVID-19**

**Background:**

The challenges faced by youth, families and communities due to the COVID-19 crisis present an opportunity for Clubs and local education agencies (LEAs/school districts) to find new ways to collaborate to provide a robust set of needed services, potentially funded by shared resources. Local education agencies (LEAs/school districts) and Charter schools that are Local education agencies will soon receive Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) dollars, funded through the CARES Act that can be used for summer learning and afterschool programs, among other COVID-19 response activities. School districts will receive these funds soon and may partner with Clubs to provide services. Funds must be used within 12 months, but immediate needs exist, so immediate action is recommended. In addition, school districts may be redirecting existing funding to address new needs; be willing to coordinate services through other related funding streams they receive; and/or partner with Clubs to pursue new funding opportunities.

**What Steps Can You Take?**

* **Develop your School Engagement/Advocacy Plan**: School districts are making plans now to address student learning loss and other support needs for summer and when schools re-open. Identify how best to engage as soon as possible with school district superintendents and school district leaders to be included in that planning. If you do not already have a relationship, are there Board members, donors or community leaders that are “influencers” of the superintendent and/or district leadership that can arrange a meeting? And, can they advocate for the school district to partner with your Club on services you are uniquely qualified to provide in the summer and afterschool? Plan your approach and **reach out to school district and/or charter schools to request a meeting to discuss student and families’ needs, the programs and services each of you are currently providing, gaps that exist and how you can fill those gaps collaboratively now, in the summer and into the fall.**

**Prepare Your Case**: Gather information and strategize:

* What are the demographics and characteristics of your Club members, particularly those that attend district schools? How many live in poverty, or have specific needs, including those that are minority, English Language Learners, homeless or in foster care? Are underperforming in school?
* How has your Club already been responding to student and family needs? By serving food, providing virtual programming, making check-in calls, etc.?
* What risks do students/families still face, especially now given the Coronavirus crisis? Examples include increased learning loss, social-emotional and mental health issues, food insecurity, lack of technology, etc?
* What gaps exist in addressing students/families’ needs now, in the summer and potentially this fall? What challenges might the school district face in filling those gaps and how can the Club help?

**Propose Club/District Collaborative Solutions:**

1. **Propose summer and afterschool services** that address students’ learning loss, academic and social-emotional needs and other identified needs and service gaps. Capitalize on Club strengths: Club staff provide students with another caring adult to support learning and emotional well-being; Club programs are engaging and designed for out-of-school time learning; Clubs have proven outcomes and many are evidence or research-based; and Club facilities may provide a resource for school districts afterschool or during the school day, potentially, if school buildings are not equipped to serve all students due to social distancing requirements.

**Funding:** The school district’s new ESSER funds may be used for these summer and afterschool programs and should be prioritized as other District funds may be allocated. Clubs can advocate for that decision through engaging your champions and describing your Club’s experience, capacity, program quality, outcomes and proposed services. The District’s existing Title 1 and Title IV A funds may also be used for programs; those funds may be available for reallocation if they are underspent due to school closures. Other Title funds may also be available for serving English Language Learners, migrant students and joint professional development. Districts with 21st Century grants, whether or not the Club is a current partner, may also find that Clubs can provide valuable services in this new environment. Consider proposing:

* + Virtual programming, in the summer, afterschool and possibly during the school-day
  + Summer Brain Gain, Project Learn, STEM and college and career preparedness, to support student learning
  + Social-emotional wellness and family support programs and activities; social connectedness opportunities
  + Technology access and training
  + Health and physical fitness programs
  + (If applicable) Enhancement of the District’s 21st Century programs through utilizing Club programs, staff and/or new methods to reach youth/families, including virtually
  + Outreach and programs targeted to low-income, minority, ELL, homeless and foster care students
  + Summer meals for students, especially low-income students
  + Planning, professional development and sanitation of facilities, also allowed under ESSER, may present opportunities for collaboration.

1. **Coordinate services using existing funding streams and resources**: Clubs and School districts each may have existing funding streams and resources in place that present opportunities for collaboration and allow you to more effectively jointly address youth and family needs. In addition to considering school district funding streams and resources, consider also the Club’s current funding, allowable uses of those funds, and potential flexibilities offered by funders due to the coronavirus. Also consider Club resources, including staff, facilities, programs, etc. How might you propose sharing Club resources and/or coordinating funding to fill gaps or address school district challenges? What difficulties are they struggling with? Offering to assist the school district with its priorities will position you to discuss with them the types of services you can provide and request they share or coordinate their resources with your Club. Below are several federal funding streams the District or Club may already have that could be coordinated:

* U.S. Dept. of Education Title funds provided to School districts, which serve a variety of purposes, particularly Title I which assists low-income students
* The Higher Education Act provides funding for educational programs including TRIO and GEAR UP; the federal work study program can support college tutors
* Career and Technical Education allows funding for afterschool and summer opportunities
* USDA food program provides free meals and snacks before school, after school and in the summer. School districts use the USDA program to feed students during the school year. Clubs can apply to provide food afterschool and in the summer with possible additional flexibilities allowed due to the crisis
* Federal TANF, CCDBG (Childcare) and Community Development Block grant funds

1. **Partner and apply for new funding:** Consider funding opportunities that are strengthened through a partnership with the school district and other educational entities including colleges, such as the 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant, TRIO and GEAR UP as well as other local or state opportunities.

* The 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant from the U.S. Dept. of Education through state education agencies prioritizes proposals including a partnership between a school district and a community-based organization. It is aimed at high poverty, underperforming school populations with a goal of improving academic achievement through a broad set of services afterschool and in the summer and is a primary source of funding for many Clubs’ school-based sites. Programs may also be located at Club facilities, if certain criteria are met.
* U.S. Dept. of Education grant programs including GEAR UP and TRIO, which includes Upward Bound and Talent Search programs, provide education support to low-income students.

**Talking Points for School district Discussions:**

* **Our Club has moved quickly to adapt to the needs of families in this crisis while taking precautions to keep kids safe, by (providing virtual education and social-emotional programming daily to x # of youth; serving meals daily to x # youth; providing childcare to x # of essential workers at X # of Club sites, etc.). (Add any additional Club response items here).**
* **However, in this unprecedented time and with summer approaching, our kids face learning and opportunity gaps along with a need for innovative approaches. We would like to work with the school district to plan new strategies for collaboration this summer and fall to best serve the needs of students and families, particularly those most in need. Finding ways to utilize our collective resources effectively will result in greater benefits for the students and families we both serve.**
* We look forward to meeting soon to discuss how we can work together to best meet the needs of students and families now and in the summer and fall, given the current crisis.

# **Club Education Partner Template Letter to School districts**

**Date**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Supt.)**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_School district (Name of School district)**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(Address of your School district)**

**Dear Dr./Supt. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,**

**We appreciate the (longstanding) partnership of the school district with the Boys & Girls Club of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and our history of collaboration focused on meeting the needs of students and families in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(community name). Thank you for the leadership the school district has demonstrated to ensure students and families are supported during this difficult time.**

**Given the Coronavirus crisis and the ongoing challenges students and families face, we would like to (expand our partnership) partner with the school district to ensure that students have the well-rounded support and robust set of services they need to re-engage in learning this summer and next school year. We ask that we meet soon to discuss needs and the programs and services we can provide, both immediately and in the summer in collaboration with the school district, to address the challenges students and families face.**

**As a leader in providing out-of-school time services in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (community), focused on the healthy development and education of \_\_\_\_\_youth Club members aged 6-18, \_\_\_\_\_of which attend district schools, we are in a unique position to partner to help maximize services to students and families, especially as they face significant out-of-school time this summer and a potential new learning environment in the fall. Some key facts about our youth Club members:**

* 4 out of 5 Club members are isolated at home during this crisis, facing learning loss challenges coupled with a lack of technology access and capabilities
* 4 out of 5 Club families live in poverty; their lack of resources puts youth at risk for increased mental health and emotional issues and a heightened risk of abuse and neglect
* 4 out of 5 Club members face hunger and food insecurity
* X% of Club members are minorities, X% are homeless or in foster care, x % are English Language Learners

**Our Club has moved quickly to adapt to the needs of families in this crisis while taking precautions to keep kids safe, by (providing virtual education and social-emotional programming daily to x # of youth ; serving drive-through meals daily to x # youth; providing childcare to x # of essential workers at X # of Club sites, etc.). (Add any additional Club response items here)**

**However, in this unprecedented time and with summer approaching, learning and opportunity gaps exist along with a need for innovative approaches. We ask that we work together to discuss new possible strategies for collaboration this summer and fall to best serve the needs of students and families, particularly those most in need. Finding ways to utilize our collective resources effectively will result in greater benefits for the students and families we both serve. In advance of our discussion, below are some services the Club is providing and could expand or launch:**

* Online/virtual learning and enrichment programs to support student learning in the summer and afterschool during the school year; including STEM; high-yield learning activities aligned to student’s learning goals; homework help; college and career preparedness for teens – either as full or partial day programming
* Summer Brain Gain, an engaging evidence-based curriculum to prevent summer learning loss specifically designed for out-of-school time
* (Only if applicable) Enhancement of (the school district’s) 21st Century programs through utilizing Club program, staff and/or new program delivery methods the Club has created
* Social-emotional wellness support programs, including trauma-informed care and virtual mentoring
* Health and physical fitness programs, including virtually
* Outreach programs targeted to low-income students, minorities and English Language Learners, homeless and foster care students
* Technology and technology training for students
* Summer meals for students, especially low-income students

We look forward to meeting soon to discuss how we can collaboratively meet the needs of students and families now, in the summer and in the fall, especially given the current crisis. I will reach out soon and hope to find a time for us to begin this important discussion. Again, thank you for being a supportive partner and the significant work the school district is doing on behalf of kids and families in our community, especially during this difficult time.

**Sincerely,**

**Club CEO**

# **LEA Existing Partner Letter Template- Summer and Fall**

Date

\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Supt.)

\_\_\_\_\_\_School district (Name of School district)

\_\_\_\_\_\_(Address of your School district)

Dear Dr./Supt. \_\_\_ ,

I hope you and your family are well during these challenging times. I’d like to personally express my appreciation for the school district's ongoing efforts to help students adapt to the closure of school sites and subsequent participation in distance learning. (add one more sentence about something specific the district has done if appropriate).

Boys & Girls Clubs of \_\_\_\_\_ has also been working diligently to address the needs of children and families during the COVID-19 pandemic. While we are not providing services at our facilities, we continue to serve youth and families by (providing virtual education/social-emotional programming/mentoring daily to x # of youth; serving drive-through meals daily to x # youth; providing child care to x # of essential workers at X # of Club sites, etc.). (Add any additional Club response items here)

I’m writing to request a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss potential areas of collaboration for summer and fall activities. Providing students with enriching programming and supports during this time is critical if we are to prevent this pandemic from derailing student performance and progress. Based on our history of effective partnership, I believe that by working together we can significantly reduce negative impacts on students and find ways to help them grow and thrive despite the challenges they face.

In advance of our discussion, below are services that Boys & Girls Clubs of \_\_\_\_\_ is in a position to provide and/or expand upon for summer and fall programming:

* **Online/virtual learning and enrichment programs** to support student learning, including STEM activities, high-yield learning activities, homework help, and college/career preparedness for teens.
* **Summer Brain Gain**, an engaging project-based learning program designed to prevent summer learning loss.
* **Social-emotional wellness programs**, including trauma-informed care and virtual mentoring
* **Health and physical fitness programs** provided virtually utilizing various online formats
* **Outreach and programs targeted to specific subgroups of students**, including low-income students, minorities and English Language Learners, homeless and foster care students
* **Technology and technology** training for students
* **Summer meals for students**, especially low-income students
* **Enhancements to current 21st CCLC programs** (if applicable)

As you may be aware, the emergency funding streams now available to local educational agencies can be utilized to support many of these activities. The CARES Act explicitly includes support for afterschool and summer programs through the Elementary & Secondary School Relief Fund along with the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund which can support those programs as well.

I will reach out to you soon and hope to find a time for us to begin this important discussion. With our collective resources, as well as the resources that Congress has made available to our community, I know that together we can help ensure our students and their families can weather these trying times and stay on track for positive futures.

Sincerely,

Club CEO

# **Boys & Girls Club School Engagement/Advocacy Plan Sample**

**Determine the issue(s)**

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| **Top Issue(s) for Youth in your Community :** |
| * Supporting youth impacted by COVID-19. Academic slip/COVID SLIP/Summer slip. Virtual Learning resources and academic support. Growing need of food insecurities. Trauma-informed care for youth and families impacted by COVID 19. |

**Set Goals and Align Your Issue**

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| **12-Month Goal-Setting** |
| Develop SMART goals to address your Club’s issue(s). Your Clubs’ Advocacy Goal(s) for the next 12 months:   * By 7/30/20 create and mobilize school district and county collaborative to engage in putting together plan to serve youth most impacted by COVID 19 crises for school year 20-21. |

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| **Agenda for America’s Youth:** Which issues align with your local strategies and/or needs of the youth in your community? How will you align with this issue to form your own **Agenda for YOUR CITY’s Youth**? Is there a specific sub-issue under one of these you’d like to focus on? (ex. Workforce Development under Education, Career & Leadership Development). |
| **Out of School Time:**  Elevating the need for quality out-of-school time programs that can through partnerships support families that are recovering from impact of COVID-19. |
| **Safer Childhoods:**  Social-emotional learning and trauma-informed care will be critical to support youth most impacted, partnerships with behavior health organizations and community committees will be critical. The increased demand for afterschool or out-of-school programs as ratio requirements may limit numbers creating a community capacity situation. |
| **Health & Wellness:** |
| **Education, Career & Leadership Development:**  Academic success for youth needing to catch up from time away from the classroom, the impact youth from virtual learning gaps will require full community support especially those from socioeconomic situations less than optimal. |
| **Equity & Inclusion:** |
| **Other Local Issue Area:** |

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| **Key Messages** |
| What are the key talking points or messages that establish your Club as the leader to solve for this issue?   * The Boys & Girls Club has the capacity and experience and community trust help pull together a cross community collaborative group to plan a collaborative approach to ensuring kids in most need do not fall through the cracks during the recovery from COVID-19. * Without a community approach to this crisis, kids will fall through the cracks and the impact on our social services, our schools, our programs and our community will be felt long into the future. * Boys & Girls Club can leverage public dollars, elevate urgent and upcoming needs and leverage combined assets. |

**Targets, Tactics and Action Plan**

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| **Who are your targets?** |
| Determine your targets you want to influence. Targets are typically decision makers (individuals or groups who have the power to make decisions and give you what you want) or influencers (individuals or groups who have access to decision makers and who may be able to influence them). Examples include:   * County Administrator * Superintendent Public Schools * Executive Director BASC * Executive Director United Way * Nielson Foundation * Superintendent of St. Phillips Catholic Schools * Superintendents of Charter Schools |

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| **Is there opportunity to organize like-minded partners around this issue?** |
| Is there value to work in partnership on this goal? Include current or potential partners to involve.   * School district/ County * Peace Makers Community Organization * BASC Mental Health Organization * United Way |

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| **What assets are at your disposal?** |
| What assets does your Club already have or need to acquire to meet your goals?   * Cyber Club House for Youth to access immediately * Capacity to check in with 200+ families * Facility and space to serve youth during school days/Saturdays or summer programming pending CDC guidance * Community trust as a youth development organization. * Licensed kitchen and current contract as vendor for USDA CACFP and SFSP programs * Ability to leverage private funding dollars/funding partners * Trauma-informed care trained staff |

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| **What tactics/action steps must take place for you to accomplish your goal(s), considering your targets, like-minded partners and assets possessed and needed?** |
| Develop tactics in the areas of organizing, outreach, relationship-building and grassroots engagement.   * Meet with public schools and understand planning process for re-opening for school year and how the Club can be supportive. Discuss process and challenges of serving youth under current CDC guidance. Discuss potential scenarios of schools in session in summer & fall with CDC guidelines. * Be invited and participate in planning with the school district for summer and school year, bringing assets to help meet academic needs, food insecurity needs and other supportive programs. * Meet with United Way to coordinate efforts to support families. * Meet with BASC to discuss what they view as breaching needs and concerns of youth from COVID crises. * Bring together stakeholders to help develop plan to serve youth and families most effected by COVID. * Conduct strategic planning and mapping of needs and assets to meet increased need with CDC regulations. |

**Implementation Plan**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Organizing** | **Timeline** | **Lead** | **Measurable Result** |
| Meet with superintendent of public schools |  |  | Understanding of school district’s current needs/planning process/decision tree for summer and school year. Gain support for planning committee for putting together plan for youth in most need. |
| Elevate need and buy-in for planning process and needs of youth to key partners that include BASC/Peacemakers and United Way and County. |  |  | Key partners will agree to meet to plan to address needs of youth. |
| Meet with superintendent of Catholic schools |  |  | Understanding of school district's current needs/planning process/decision tree. Gain support for planning committee for putting together plan for Youth in most need |
| Meet with superintendents of 3 charter schools |  |  | Understanding of school district’s current needs/planning process/decision tree. Gain support for planning committee for putting together plan for Youth in most need |
| Convene selected partners with school leadership to create shared plan to support youth in most need. |  |  |  |

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| **Grassroots Engagement** | **Timeline** | **Lead** | **Measurable Result** |
| Educate Nielson Foundation through Club ask of planning discussions/identified youth needs etc. |  |  | Funding proposal presented for 2020-21 program cycle including setting up further discussion for increased funding to meet further needs of youth forming from crisis. |
| Meet with BASC (Community Mental Health organization) |  |  | Information gathering/ Partner Development |
| Meet with United Way |  |  | Information gathering/Partner Development |
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| **Outreach/Media** | **Timeline** | **Lead** | **Measurable Result** |
| Media will be part of implementation phase once plan is completed |  |  |  |
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| **Relationship Building** | **Timeline** | **Lead** | **Measurable Result** |
| Meet with University President |  |  | University will agree to continue to play critical role in providing support to school district and Club to meet the needs of identified youth with resources/work study program and technology support. |
| School Board/Club Board Relationship |  |  | Partnership agreement signed by both organizations to work together around COVID planning and recovery. |
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**Evaluation and Tracking**

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| **Develop a plan for tracking your progress as the plan is being implemented and adjusting tactics as needed – how, when will this occur and who will be responsible? Also, how will you evaluate your overall result when the plan is completed?** |
| Plan will be developed and reported out to executive committees of participating organizations and to established partnership coalition. |