



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS

# PLANNING GUIDE



# SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

## Planning Guide

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# OVERVIEW

# Overview

Young people learn across multiple settings – at home, in school and with other community organizations. Help youth thrive by partnering with their schools so they can become successful learners and leaders in their communities, both now and throughout their lives.

This School Partnerships Planning Guide is designed to help your youth-serving organization develop, strengthen and sustain impactful partnerships with local schools. It explains what an effective school partnership includes, why it's important, and how to develop and strengthen such a partnership. You'll learn from real examples and best practices at Boys & Girls Clubs that could possibly be implemented by any youth-serving organization to effectively partner with schools.

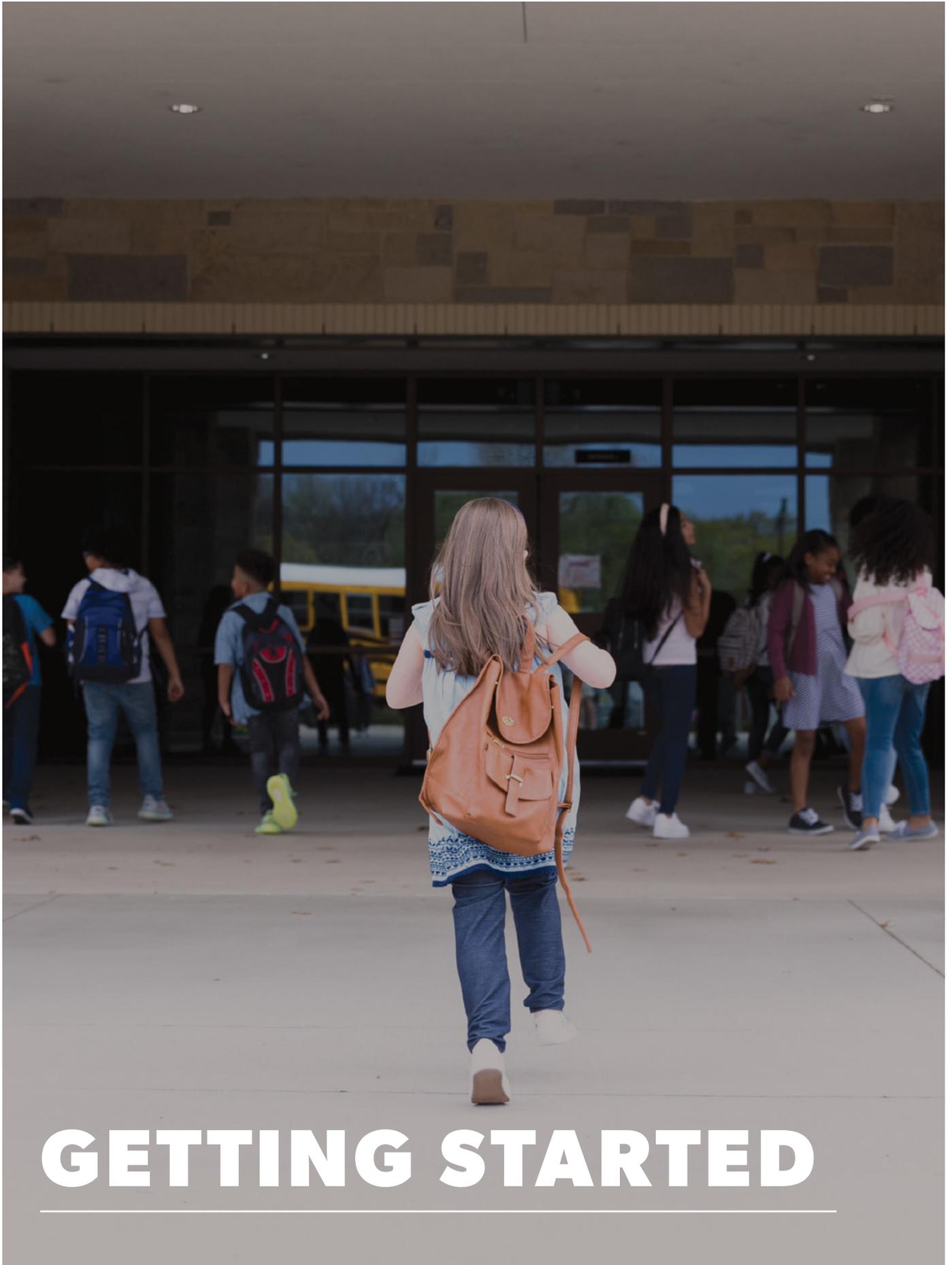
## The Importance of School Partnerships

When Boys & Girls Clubs partner with area schools, they can greatly impact young peoples' lives. Close school collaboration can address essential youth needs, promote academic success and social-emotional development, advance educational equity, and support high-quality programming by leveraging the strengths and resources of each partner.

A successful Club-School partnership puts youth and families at the center of initiatives. It ensures youth-facing services, resources, and opportunities are relevant and responsive to young peoples' unique life experiences. Partnerships might include:

- Coordinating meal distribution to address food insecurity
- Collaborating on professional development to ensure staff have the necessary skills to support youth
- Communicating about individuals' strengths and needs so the Club and/or school can provide more targeted support services

School partnerships can ensure youth reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens. This guide and its support resources are designed to be used in Boys & Girls Clubs, but they can also be relevant and beneficial for any youth-serving organization.



# GETTING STARTED

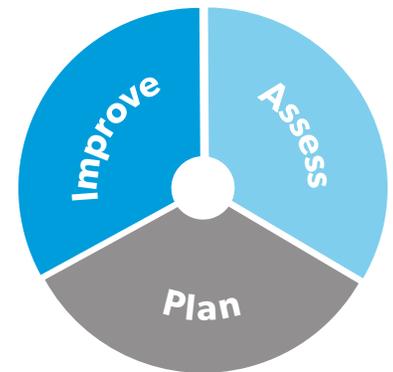
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# Getting Started

This guide is your roadmap to establishing and navigating mutually beneficial school-Club partnerships. If you already partner with your local schools, use this guide to enhance those partnerships with more collaborative solutions. This guide lays out the steps for doing either – establishing or enhancing partnerships – as part of a Continuous Quality Improvement process.

**Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)** is about fostering a culture of learning, with the belief that we can always do better. You will learn more about how to follow these three steps in this guide.

- 1. Assess:** Identify specific needs and opportunities in the community.
- 2. Plan:** Develop collaborative solutions based on the needs identified.
- 3. Improve:** Engage in regular reflection to identify what's working well and what needs to change.



To help drive the CQI process in your organization, each section of this guide includes:



**RESOURCES:**  
Links to additional resources



**PROMISING PRACTICES:**  
Helpful ways to apply the suggestions in your Club



**PRINCIPLES IN ACTION:**  
Real examples from Boys & Girls Clubs

## Meet to Plan Your School Partnership Initiatives

Developing a partnership with a local school should be a collaborative effort. It requires support from Club leadership – such as the CEO, board of directors and unit directors. To get started, form a team of six to 10 Club professionals who can lend a variety of ideas and assets to your initiative. Consider including these members of your organization:

- CEO
- Education director
- Unit director
- Youth development professionals

Once you've assembled a School Partnership Team, gather relevant data and then meet to determine your main objectives and how to accomplish them. See the **School Partnership Planning Agenda** to prepare for and facilitate this meeting. Access this resource and other modifiable workshop materials at: [ProgramBasicsPlanner.com/back](http://ProgramBasicsPlanner.com/back)

You'll notice the Planning Meeting involves significant preparation, such as gathering data to assess the needs in your community and Club. You'll learn more about that important effort in the Pre-Work: Data Collection Facilitator's Notes of the **School Partnership Planning Agenda**. We'll also discuss that step in greater detail in the following section of this guide: [Step 1: Assess](#)

Let's get started!



# STEP 1: ASSESS

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# Step 1: Assess

## Determine Needs and Opportunities

Before developing a school partnership, allow at least one month to identify specific needs and opportunities in the community. This means conducting surveys and focus groups with Club youth and their families to find out what's important to them. Also collect data sourced from other organizations to develop a comprehensive understanding of both the strengths and opportunities in your community. Find sample interview questions and surveys for youth, their caregivers, teachers and others in the community at: [ProgramBasicsPlanner.com/back](https://ProgramBasicsPlanner.com/back)

Use the **Community Needs and Opportunities Worksheet** and **Community Strengths and Needs Assessment** on the following pages to drive your data collection efforts. Fill these templates out electronically if you're using the PDF version, or download Microsoft Word versions online at: [ProgramBasicsPlanner.com/back](https://ProgramBasicsPlanner.com/back)

On the [Community Needs and Opportunities Worksheet](#) following, you'll notice there are three types of data needed to assess community needs and assets:

- Youth and Caregiver Data
- School Data
- Community Data

In this section, we will discuss how to collect each type of data.



## COMMUNITY NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES WORKSHEET

1. What are the demographics and characteristics of our Club members, particularly those who attend local schools?

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2. What are some of the identified strengths and resources in our community? (See Community Strengths and Needs Assessment following this worksheet.)

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3. What are some identifiable needs in our community? (See Community Strengths and Needs Assessment following this worksheet.)

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4. What programming, services and resources does the Club offer to address these needs?

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5. What programming, services and resources does the school offer to address these needs?

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6. What programming, services and resources does the community offer to address these needs?

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7. What gaps exist? What opportunities exist to respond to these gaps?

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8. How can community resources be leveraged to respond to these gaps?

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9. What are the priorities and areas of focus for our local school(s)?

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10. What are the short-term and long-term goals of our local school(s)?

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# Community Strengths and Needs Assessment

## COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

<b>Boys &amp; Girls Club</b>	<b>PROGRAMMING</b> (e.g., Targeted Programming, Mentoring)	<b>SERVICES</b> (e.g., case management, food program)	<b>RESOURCES</b> (e.g., equipment, space, technology)
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<b>Local Schools</b>	<b>PROGRAMMING</b> (e.g., classes, extracurriculars, afterschool clubs, parent workshops)	<b>SERVICES</b> (e.g., behavioral counseling, food program)	<b>RESOURCES</b> (e.g., equipment, space, technology)
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<b>Community</b>	<b>LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS</b> (e.g., civic clubs, churches, neighborhood associations)	<b>LOCAL INSTITUTIONS</b> (e.g., community colleges, schools, libraries, nonprofits, social service agencies)	<b>LOCAL ECONOMIC RESOURCES</b> (e.g., banks, businesses, foundations)
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# Community Strengths and Needs Assessment cont.

## COMMUNITY NEEDS

### Academics

(e.g., performing on grade level, on track to graduate from high school, academically post-secondary ready, workforce readiness, truancy/chronic absenteeism, access to technology)

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### Social-Emotional Wellness

(e.g., healthy relationships, bullying prevention, social-emotional development, emotional well-being, mental health, physical activity)

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### Essential Services

(e.g., food and housing)

## Types of Data and How to Get Them

### Youth and Caregiver Data

Gather youth and caregiver data to identify your Club youths' needs and interests. Then you will be ready to discuss the feasibility of proposed solutions.



**Resource:** Tap into a variety of methods for collecting youth and caregiver data.

Conduct a **Community Needs Assessment** to discover more about the youth and caregivers in your community. To learn how to conduct a Community Needs Assessment, along with a sample template, see the Getting Started section of [VirtualClubPlanner.org](https://VirtualClubPlanner.org).



**Promising Practice:** To encourage those surveyed to share more openly, consider making surveys anonymous so participants know answers can't be traced back to them. Explain what you are hoping to learn from the survey so participants are encouraged to answer honestly. Assure them they can skip any questions they don't want to answer.

**Focus Groups** are a great way to gather more in-depth information about Club families' attitudes, beliefs and experiences. As with any group discussion, it's important to set ground rules to support a welcoming space for sharing. For information on how to run a focus group, visit [cdc.gov/healthyyouth/evaluation/pdf/brief13.pdf](https://cdc.gov/healthyyouth/evaluation/pdf/brief13.pdf).

Visit [MyData](https://MyData.BGCA.net) on [BGCA.net](https://BGCA.net) to access the **National Youth Outcome Initiative (NYOI)** member survey data, which measures youth outcomes in the priority outcome areas of Academic Success, Good Character and Citizenship, and Healthy Lifestyles.



**Promising Practice:** Collecting data can be time-consuming. Use Pulse Checks to quickly, easily and inexpensively “keep a finger on the pulse” at your Club between your formal data collection efforts. See the [Pulse Checks guide](#) on [BGCA.net](https://BGCA.net) to get started with different types of Pulse Checks at your Club.

### School Data

Solicit school-level data to learn what needs local schools are trying to address. Consider partnering on shared goals to support the youth in their schools and your Club.



**Resource:** Choose from a variety of helpful resources for collecting school data.

**Basic school-level data** – such as the number of youth eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, test scores and graduation rates – are all readily available online. Access current information from sources including:

- National Center for Education Statistics ([nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch](https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch))
- Great! Schools.org ([greatschools.org](https://greatschools.org))
- Public School Review ([publicschoolreview.com](https://publicschoolreview.com))
- State Departments of Education or Public Instruction

Conduct **teacher surveys** to better understand educators' priorities, challenges and concerns. Then develop specific opportunities to support youth as learners.

Find links to a **Teacher Survey** template, **Curriculum and Learning Goals Conversation Guide**, and **School Needs Worksheet** here: [ProgramBasicsPlanner.com/back](https://ProgramBasicsPlanner.com/back)

**Outreach meetings and empathy interviews** with school administrators can help you understand and better respond to schools' broader perspective, areas of focus, specific pain points and opportunities for growth. Find more information about conducting empathy interviews at: [designmuseumfoundation.org/empathy-interviews](https://designmuseumfoundation.org/empathy-interviews)



**Promising Practice:** Clubs can access in-depth information about each young person if they have a data sharing agreement in place with their local school. Such an agreement would grant Clubs access to students' grades and assessment scores. This information is regulated by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), so schools are required to have written permission from a parent to be able to release such information. Beyond the Bell offers a helpful tool to use when developing a data-sharing agreement and outlines important things to consider: [beyondthebell.org/sites/default/files/4th-ed/Beyond%20the%20Bell%20Tool%2054.docx](https://beyondthebell.org/sites/default/files/4th-ed/Beyond%20the%20Bell%20Tool%2054.docx)



**Promising Practice:** Grades and assessment scores are available at specific times of the year. Check the school's website for a list of key dates related to report cards and academic testing. This can also alert your staff to potential behavior changes, as youth may feel anxious about such events.

## Community Data

Community-level data helps your Club understand community-wide needs. Youth thrive when they feel safe and supported in and by their community, so addressing community needs is an important part of advancing the Club's overarching mission.<sup>1</sup>



**Resource:** There are a number of methods for collecting community-level data, referenced below.

**Community-level data** – such as poverty, homelessness, food insecurity and unemployment rates – is available online. Access this data from sources including:

- American Community Survey ([census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/data-profiles](https://census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/data-profiles))
- Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center ([datacenter.kidscount.org](https://datacenter.kidscount.org))
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics ([bls.gov/eag/home.htm](https://bls.gov/eag/home.htm))
- County Health Rankings ([countyhealthrankings.org](https://countyhealthrankings.org))
- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention ([cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/nav\\_us.htm](https://cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/nav_us.htm))
- USDA Food Access Research Atlas ([ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas](https://ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas))
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration ([samhsa.gov/data](https://samhsa.gov/data))
- Local state and city government agencies



**Promising Practice:** When collecting community-level data, research ways your town or city is already addressing identified challenges. Rather than doubling efforts, connect with established initiatives or programs to ensure youth and families receive the supports they need.



# STEP 2: PLAN

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# Step 2: Plan

Now that you have taken the time to assess the needs, assets and opportunities in your community, plan to partner with schools to meet youths' needs. In this planning phase of the CQI process, you and your team will:

1. Develop shared goals
2. Establish partnership opportunities
3. Engage in outreach
4. Develop the relationship

Use your brainstorming notes and feedback from the **School Partnership Planning Meeting** to prioritize and direct your school partnership planning steps. We will also walk through each of the planning steps in this section of the guide, as the bulk of your School Partnership planning will take place in the weeks and months after your meeting concludes.

## Develop Shared Goals

Review the data collected in **Step 1: Assess** to determine objectives based on youths' needs. Then jot down your answers to the questions in the [Shared Goals Worksheet](#) on the following page. A successful partnership is one that is mutually beneficial, and your answers to these questions can help to ensure partnership goals align before moving forward.



## SHARED GOALS WORKSHEET

1. What unmet needs does the school want to address (e.g., enrichment opportunities for students, stronger academic outcomes, trauma-informed care, career exploration opportunities for teens)?

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2. What are my Club's priorities (e.g., expanding services to more youth, providing high-quality educational programming, supporting youths' emotional wellness, engaging teens)?

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3. Where is there overlap?

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4. In what ways can my Club collaborate with the school to support our shared goals?

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5. How might that collaboration look different at different times of the year? (For example, does collaboration look different during the summer versus the school year? Do the school's priorities shift during the year in light of academic testing, college application deadlines or new student enrollment?)

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# Establish Partnership Opportunities

Once you have identified shared goals, work with your team to develop collaborative solutions that you can propose to help achieve those goals.

The chart below includes various ways you might suggest partnering with schools. Partnership opportunities are grouped into the following levels: Foundational, Developing and Advanced. Consider starting with foundational opportunities and work your way to more advanced levels as your school partnerships develop and strengthen over time.

<b>FOUNDATIONAL</b>	<b>DEVELOPING</b>	<b>ADVANCED</b>
<i>Many Clubs and schools begin their partnerships with these foundational elements.</i>	<i>These opportunities require more intentional communication and buy-in from leadership.</i>	<i>These opportunities work best with a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and intentional, sustained collaboration.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Establish transportation between schools and Clubs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Coordinate a meal distribution program</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop an agreement to share spaces or facilities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Establish a mechanism through which teachers share information about homework and tests</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Communicate about youth strengths and needs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Communicate about curriculum and learning goals (e.g., homework policies, quarterly objectives, social-emotional skill development)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Coordinate volunteers and mentors</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Employ the partner school's staff (e.g., hire teachers over the summer, jointly staff a social worker)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Share technology or learning software</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Formally offer tutoring for students</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Collaborate on caregiver resources and supports</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Offer programming across locations (e.g., Club offers recess, teachers support Power Hour)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Share professional development opportunities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Collaborate on events</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Align policies (e.g., health and wellness, internet safety, homeless assistance)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Operate as a virtual learning hub during the school day for students, with members participating in virtual or hybrid school</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Serve on one another's boards or committees</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Share youth data (e.g., grades, test scores, IEPs)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Collaborate with another youth-serving organization (e.g., Communities in Schools, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Junior Achievement)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pursue joint funding (corporate, government, donor)</li> </ul>



**Resource:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, many Clubs began operating as Virtual Learning Hubs while school buildings were closed. Such Clubs provided supervision, support and technical assistance for youth accessing school remotely. **A Practical Guide to Learning Support Centers** offers helpful information about how to establish a safe and productive space where youth can connect and engage in virtual learning. Access it here: [ProgramBasicsPlanner.com/back](https://ProgramBasicsPlanner.com/back). Access webinars about virtual learning hubs here: [bit.ly/BGCABTS](https://bit.ly/BGCABTS)



**Promising Practice:** Start small by identifying one or two simple partnership opportunities, and build from there. For example, cohost an event or establish a way to share information about homework assignments. Grow the partnership over time. Do not overpromise and under-deliver, as unfulfilled promises erode trust. Focus first on building a solid foundation for the relationship and proving your value as a potential partner.



**Principle in Action:** Boys & Girls Club of Portage County reserves a standing seat on their board and impact committee for the superintendent, and the current school president also sits on their board. Key district personnel participate in steering committees to provide input on programming and priorities. This has opened the doors to even greater partnership opportunities such as shared transportation, complementary summer programming and a truancy abatement program. Subsequently, this Club included relationship building in the job description of their Center directors – requiring them to spend time developing relationships with school principals, social workers, psychologists and teachers.



**Principle in Action:** When Boys & Girls Club of Franklin-Simpson applied for a substantial grant opportunity, Club leaders gave their presentation alongside the school superintendent of the local school system, which helped to convey their strong standing and well-established presence in the community. They credit this collaboration as part of the reason they were awarded \$200,000 for a state-of-the-art Teen Center.

## Engage in Outreach

Once you have identified partnership opportunities, it's time to determine which potential partners to connect with and how. Begin outreach at the very beginning of the school year. Personnel often changes from one school year to the next, so this timing will help you connect with the appropriate individuals.

Determine how the local school system is structured. Each school district has its own unique structure and titles, so learn about the different roles and responsibilities at your local schools. Read about common key players, along with a brief description of their roles.

**School boards:** Like a Club's board of directors, a school board manages a school district. These individuals are typically elected, though they may also be appointed by the mayor or other government official. The school board oversees how the school district is managed and is responsible for setting the vision, developing organizational policies, determining educational standards, and ensuring accountability and transparency.<sup>2</sup>

**Superintendent:** This individual manages the school district and is generally appointed by the local school board, but may also be popularly elected. Specific responsibilities vary, but can include:

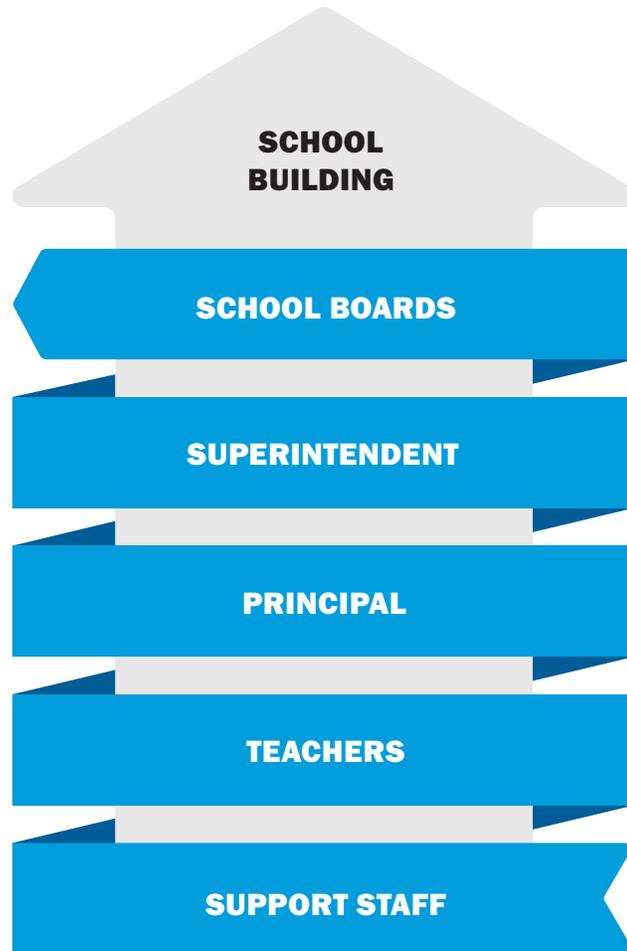
- Making policy recommendations for improving educational programs
- Hiring, supervising and managing select staff
- Preparing and managing the annual school budget
- Representing the school to the community

**Principal:** This leader manages the operations of a specific school in the district. They are typically hired by the superintendent and approved by the school board. They are responsible for supporting students' academic achievement, managing school staff, implementing specific policies, and advocating for the school in the community and with the school district.

**Teachers:** These professionals are responsible for day-to-day instruction in the classroom. Some teachers may be responsible for a specific subject, while others may oversee a specific grade.

**Support staff:** They provide additional support for youth during the school day. Support staff include guidance counselors, social workers, special education aides and nurses.

School staff turnover is high. The average tenure for a superintendent is five to six years<sup>3</sup> and four years for a principal.<sup>4</sup> In addition, 8% of teachers leave the profession every year.<sup>5</sup> Since leadership and personnel change frequently, priorities may shift. Therefore, outreach must be a continual process of engaging and reengaging key individuals.



When engaging in outreach, follow these four steps:

1. Build connections
2. Identify school contact person
3. Set an agenda
4. Prepare your case

We will discuss each of these steps at greater length on the following pages.

## 1. Build Connections

Some schools may initially be hesitant to partner, especially if they are less familiar with your Club and the programming and services you offer. Consider inviting school administrators and teachers to open houses or special events to help them get to know the Club and Club staff. Join the PTA, attend school functions, volunteer at special events, meet with teachers, and eat lunch with students so school staff get to know you and see your commitment to youth.



**Principle in Action:** Boys & Girls Club of Franklin-Simpson invites school board members, the superintendent and principals to see the important work being done with youth at the Club. This creates an opportunity for greater connection and familiarity between Club staff and school personnel.

## 2. Identify School Contact Person

If you do not already have a relationship with someone at the school, consider whether there is anyone – such as a board member, existing partner or donor – who can provide an introduction and arrange a meeting. Also consider the school’s organizational structure of personnel and leadership. It’s best to first meet with and establish a strong relationship with the principal, vice principal, teachers, and other personnel before attempting to contact the district superintendent or school board.

## 3. Set an Agenda

A partnership won’t likely develop after just one encounter. It can take multiple meetings to get to know each other, discuss common goals and priorities, and identify promising partnership opportunities. Consider the following high-level goal recommendations for the first few meetings.

1. Introduce yourself and the Club, share data related to needs and opportunities, discuss shared goals.
2. Identify action steps for collaboration and resources needed for each action step.
3. Check in on action steps, share successes, identify challenges and brainstorm solutions.

## 4. Prepare Your Case

Before meeting, prepare some talking points and key messages. Consider the questions on the following page, and draft your responses in the right-hand column.



**INITIAL PARTNERSHIP MEETING TALKING POINTS**

Why is your Club poised to be the solution?  
[Summarize your Club’s mission, vision and history.]

---

What is your unique place in the community?  
[Share information about the programming you offer, the services you provide and the population you serve (including overlap with the school’s population).]

---

What impact have you already had?  
[Highlight success metrics that demonstrate the impact you’ve had on youth, their families and the surrounding community.]

---



**Resource:** When preparing your case, ensure you can simplify it into an “elevator pitch,” which succinctly advocates for your vision of the partnership. Access general information about how to draft and deliver an elevator pitch here: [forbes.com/sites/alejandrocremades/2018/09/08/how-to-prepare-the-perfect-elevator-pitch/?sh=118ffd3470e5](https://forbes.com/sites/alejandrocremades/2018/09/08/how-to-prepare-the-perfect-elevator-pitch/?sh=118ffd3470e5)



**Promising Practice:** Put yourself in their shoes. Instead of focusing on how the Club will benefit from the partnership, clearly outline how the school will benefit. How will you help school administrators meet their goals? How will collaboration help the school to better support youth? Consider the situation from the school’s point of view, and speak about specific ways they can achieve their goals as a result of the partnership.

Once you prepare your objectives and main talking points, write your elevator pitch in the box below.

### INITIAL PARTNERSHIP MEETING ELEVATOR PITCH

# Develop the Relationship

To ensure a positive and successful working relationship, partners should take time to do the following:

- Define a vision
- Develop a set of working norms
- Delineate roles and responsibilities

## Define a Vision

Identify the overarching purpose of the partnership. Explain what specific goals your Club wants to accomplish. Be specific, and let this vision drive the partnership forward with a clear purpose.

## Develop a Set of Working Norms

Similar to a Group Agreement – which establishes a set of agreed-upon behaviors that participants commit to follow – partners should collaborate on a set of norms to guide the partnership. This could include standards related to communication, resolving conflict or decision-making.

## Delineate Roles and Responsibilities

Map out these details to prevent misunderstandings and ensure accountability among all individuals within the partnership. Include this information in a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between partners.



**Resource:** The CDC offers a sample template that can be used to outline the purpose, goals, and roles and responsibilities of each partner organization: [cdc.gov/cancer/ncccp/doc/samplemoatemplate.doc](https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/ncccp/doc/samplemoatemplate.doc)

For more tips and information on creating shared use agreements, see the **Shared Use Playbook** by ChangeLab Solutions: [changelabsolutions.org/product/shared-use-playbook](https://www.changelabsolutions.org/product/shared-use-playbook)



# STEP 3: IMPROVE

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# Step 3: Improve

By this point in the CQI process, you have assessed youth needs, developed shared goals, created partnership opportunities, reached out to your partner school, and are collaborating to achieve your joint objectives. Now that your partnership is established, work to keep the relationship going.

In this third phase of the CQI process, it's important to engage in regular reflection to identify what's working well and what needs to improve. Evaluate your partnership every year since needs, priorities, resources and personnel may change.

In this section, learn how to keep the partnership growing by making efforts to:

- Evaluate
- Sustain
- Expand

## Evaluate

**First, schedule an internal staff meeting to discuss the partnership in more detail.** Use the reflection questions on the following page to help guide your discussion, and feel free to jot down your responses. For more information about how to conduct this meeting, see Post Work: Evaluation Facilitator's Notes in the **School Partnership Agenda**.



## SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP EVALUATION MEETING (INTERNAL)

1. What shared goals and collaborative solutions did we propose?

---

2. With whom did we engage at the school? How did we engage with them (e.g., developing a process for communicating about learning goals, sharing learning software, serving on a committee)?

---

3. What worked well about the different engagement activities? What could be improved?

---

4. Who else could we engage?

---

5. How has the overall partnership addressed the identified needs and opportunities?

---

6. What about the partnership is working well? Where could we improve and grow?

---



**Promising Practice:** Refer to the data from the initial School Partnership Planning Meeting and any updates to discover changes or improvements.

**Second, schedule a meeting with your school partner to discuss the relationship.** Use the following questions to help guide the conversation, and feel free to jot down your responses.

### **PARTNERSHIP EVALUATION MEETING WITH SCHOOL PARTNER**

**1.** What shared goals is this partnership addressing?

---

**2.** How are we partnering to address these needs?

---

**3.** What about the partnership has worked well?

---

**4.** What about the partnership could be improved?

---

**5.** What are some opportunities for growing the partnership?

---



**Promising Practice:** Use this meeting as an opportunity to review the vision for the partnership, agreed-upon norms, and roles and responsibilities. Discuss whether anything needs to change.



**Resource:** The **Continuous Quality Improvement Toolkit** walks you through each phase of the CQI process. It includes additional resources and templates to support your efforts. Access the Continuous Quality Improvement Toolkit here: [cqitoolkit.org](http://cqitoolkit.org)

## Sustain

Any healthy relationship requires regular maintenance. In order to sustain your school partnership, both parties must strive to ensure it remains a positive and impactful working relationship. Learn three ways to effectively support your school partnership in this section:

- Build relationships at multiple levels
- Communicate regularly
- Celebrate and show gratitude

### Build Relationships at Multiple Levels

Rather than relying on just one or two people at the Club and the partner school to drive the partnership, identify multiple people on both sides who can regularly interact. Share relevant information directly with the people it most affects. This creates opportunities for greater alignment and collaboration. It also ensures the partnership remains intact, regardless of staffing changes.

Consider ways to connect with various school personnel. Administrators and teachers are important, but consider adding school psychologists, social workers, guidance counselors and reading specialists who may provide additional insight into a young person's unique needs. This promotes a strong partnership supported by multiple levels of engagement.



**Principle in Action:** Boys & Girls Club of Portage County recommends developing strong relationships with all school staff, not just the principal and teachers. Connecting with the school's administrative assistant can be particularly helpful as they keep a "pulse" on everything going on in the school. They know students at all grade levels and their parents, and they can provide access to the principal. Custodians are also helpful since they often are the only staff left in the building at the end of the day. They can assist with storage and equipment needs, advocate for more space, and help with safety concerns. Boys & Girls Club of Portage County staff show their gratitude with handwritten cards from youth, a box of donuts and other forms of recognition.

## Communicate Regularly

Regular communication allows partners to share information, coordinate efforts and address any challenges that arise.

Consider these ideas to support clear and open communication.

- Schedule monthly check-in meetings (virtual or in-person) to discuss information and share updates.
- Distribute relevant Club correspondence (e.g., weekly newsletters, emergency communications).
- Follow one another on social media.
- Create a shared folder with relevant documents (e.g., meeting minutes, pertinent youth data).
- Determine what form of communication works best (e.g., email, phone calls, text), and share multiple forms of contact information.



**Promising Practice:** Be proactive with your communication. Give your partners helpful information in advance to avoid unpleasant surprises or last-minute scrambling. This holds true whether it's a holiday showcase, parent orientation, leadership change or funding opportunity.

## Celebrate and Show Gratitude

Take time to recognize the time and effort people have put into developing and sustaining the partnership. This includes attending meetings, sharing information, coordinating services and collaborating on events. Show your gratitude and appreciation for such efforts, and everyone will stay motivated and committed to the partnership. Consider the following ideas.

- Write thank-you cards.
- Buy coffee and donuts.
- Treat partners to lunch.
- Send a basket of goodies.
- Distribute swag (e.g., BGC T-shirts, pens, water bottles).
- Highlight partner school in a social media post.
- Recognize partner at a Club event.
- Volunteer to help with a special project (e.g., organizing a closet, painting a hallway, decorating a bulletin board).
- Coordinate a fun outing (e.g., mini golf, trip to the zoo, local sporting event).
- Give a framed picture of partners with Club youth.
- Donate something from partner's wish list (e.g., new library books, whiteboard markers, paper for the copier).
- Share a holiday-themed treat (e.g., holiday carols, Valentine's cards).

# Expand

School partnerships should not be static relationships, but they should grow over time. Collaborate to identify more opportunities to work together. See the [Partnership Opportunities chart](#) in the [Step 2: Plan](#) section of this guide to determine where your partnership falls in the spectrum of Foundational, Developing or Advanced. Then consider the following questions.

- How can we move our partnership to the next level?
- How can we expand on the services offered to deepen the partnership?

For help answering these questions, access data that reveals needs and opportunities your partnership could expand to address. Revisit the [Step 1: Assess](#) section to continue this process of identifying shared goals and collaborative solutions.



**Principle in Action:** Boys & Girls Clubs of Tennessee Valley has expanded their partnership with the local school district by consistently providing high-quality services and programming. When the district noticed Clubs were providing youth with needed supports and helping them to achieve high outcomes, they asked to expand the partnership. Their close working relationship has enabled both parties to focus on strategic priorities while leveraging their combined strengths and resources to keep serving youth who need them most.





# TEMPLATES AND RESOURCES

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# Templates and Resources

## School Partnership Templates

Personalize the templates listed below to assist with your initiatives. Download them from: [ProgramBasicsPlanner.com/back](http://ProgramBasicsPlanner.com/back).

TITLE	DESCRIPTION
Youth Interview	Open-ended questions to facilitate a guided discussion with younger children about their needs and interests
Youth Survey	Survey questions for teens about their needs and interests
Parent/Caregiver Survey	Survey questions for parents/caregivers about their needs and interests
Teacher Survey	Survey questions for teachers about their students' needs and interests
Curriculum and Learning Goals Guide	Questions to guide a conversation with teachers about their curriculum and learning goals
School Needs Worksheet	Talking points to guide a discussion around school needs
Transportation Waiver Form	Grants permission to the Club to provide transportation for a member
LOA/MOU Template	Outlines the purpose, goals, and roles and responsibilities of each partner

## School Partnership Resources

Use the resources below when you plan to develop or improve your partnerships with schools. Find these resources on the **Program Basics Online Planner**: [ProgramBasicsPlanner.com/back](http://ProgramBasicsPlanner.com/back).

TITLE	DESCRIPTION
School Partnership Planning Agenda	Provides information and talking points for a comprehensive meeting to kickstart your School Partnership initiative
School Partnership FAQ	Provides answers to the most frequently asked questions about school partnerships, such as why and how
COVID School District Partnership Toolkit	Guides Clubs to collaborate with local education agencies (LEAs/school districts) to access emergency relief and redirected existing funding that addresses youth needs with coordinated services
Project Learn Manual	Outlines BGCA's strategy for academic improvement, which includes homework help and tutoring, high-yield learning activities, parent and adult involvement, collaboration with schools and incentives
YD Resource Catalog	Helps Clubs identify and access resources that align with their goals. It is a comprehensive list of high-yield activity guides, initiatives, implementation guides, Targeted Programs, curated programs, My Future badges and activities, and capacity-building resources organized by Core Program Area
Mapping BGCA Programs to National Standards	Shows how BGCA Targeted Programs and select resources align with the National Standards, such as Common Core and CASEL. It can be used to help communicate how programs complement and reinforce the standards taught in schools

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# ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Whole School, Whole Child, Whole Community (WSCC)," [cdc.gov/healthyschools/wsccl/index.htm](https://cdc.gov/healthyschools/wsccl/index.htm).

<sup>2</sup> Sam, Silvia Li. (October 16, 2020). "Demystifying School Boards: What Do School Boards Do?" XQ, [xqsuperschool.org/reflecttogether/demystifying-school-boards-what-do-school-boards-do/#:~:text=Boards%20usually%20consist%20of%20five,students%2C%20and%20the%20general%20public.](https://xqsuperschool.org/reflecttogether/demystifying-school-boards-what-do-school-boards-do/#:~:text=Boards%20usually%20consist%20of%20five,students%2C%20and%20the%20general%20public.)

<sup>3</sup> The School Superintendents Association. "Superintendent and District Data," [aasa.org/content.aspx?id=740#:~:text=The%20mean%20tenure%20for%20a,between%2014%20and%2016%20percent.](https://aasa.org/content.aspx?id=740#:~:text=The%20mean%20tenure%20for%20a,between%2014%20and%2016%20percent.)

<sup>4</sup> Bradley, Kathryn and Levin, Stephanie. (June 5, 2019) "Understanding and Addressing Principal Turnover," National Association of Secondary School Principals, [nassp.org/2019/06/05/understanding-and-addressing-principal-turnover](https://nassp.org/2019/06/05/understanding-and-addressing-principal-turnover).

<sup>5</sup> Wang, Karla. (July 29, 2019) "Teacher Turnover: Why It's Problematic and How Administrators Can Address It," Fast Forward Scientific Learning, [scilearn.com/teacher-turnover/#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20National%20Center,out%20of%20every%2020%20teachers.](https://scilearn.com/teacher-turnover/#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20National%20Center,out%20of%20every%2020%20teachers.)

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