

## Helping Students Succeed Outline

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### Gathering Prayer

Eternal God, Bless all schools, colleges, and universities, and especially our neighbor schools, that they may be lively centers for sound learning, new discovery, and the pursuit of wisdom; and grant that those who teach, and those who learn, may find You to be the source of all truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(*The Book of Common Prayer*, Online Edition, page 824, found at <http://www.bcponline.org/Misc/Prayers.htm>)

### Objectives

- To present effective strategies for engaging community partnerships for student success
- To provide an orientation to working with students in public school settings
- To offer strategic insights into ministry opportunities that can contribute to student success

### Helping Students Succeed

*The work is about the kids, not either [church or school] institution.* — Tim Warner, Chief Engagement and Partnership Officer, Montgomery County (MD) Public Schools

### Direct Engagement with Students

- Working directly with students is a delicate and sensitive task.
- Relationship building is important.
- The choice of programming for students is driven by two factors:
  - Needs of students
  - Resources of the congregation

### Examples of Program That Directly Engage Students

- Moral/Character Building
  - Mentoring
  - Clubs or Character Coaching
- Academic Achievement
  - Tutoring
  - Reading programs
  - Testing prep and SAT prep
- Vocational and College Selection Guidance

### Practical Considerations

- Before approaching schools, congregations need to give thought to several major areas. These include:
  - Child safety
  - Volunteer preparation
  - Church objectives

## Child Safety

- Put child safety first.
- Learn and comply with your school's volunteer guidelines and protocols.
- Consider your denomination's or congregation's policies regarding child safety.
- Resources include programs like Protect My Ministry<sup>®</sup>, Ministry Safe<sup>®</sup>, and Reducing the Risk.

## Volunteer Preparation and Training

- Provide volunteers with adequate training.
- Help them understand why they are doing what they are doing and process what they experience.
- Cultivate an attitude of servanthood.

## Church Objectives and School Culture

- Start small by focusing on just one classroom, grade, or subject area, rather than a whole school.
- Be sensitive regarding church/state boundaries.

## Mentoring

- Mentoring and tutoring are two different concepts.
- Boys and Girls mentoring programs are effective ways to teach character building.
- Mentoring programs often meet the "social/emotional" learning that many schools have difficulty teaching.
- Example: Mount Olive Baptist Church and Arlington Public Schools

## Tutoring

- Tutoring serves a distinct academic purpose.
  - Supports and augments classroom learning for student achievement.
- Schools can identify key places for tutor assistance.
- Tutors need to be trained in both the discipline they are teaching as well as in working as a tutor.
- Guidelines for considering a tutor include:
  - Providing adequate training for volunteers to work with children
  - Being transparent about expectations of the volunteer tutors, teachers, and parents
  - Finding people who care about learning and a student's academic achievement
  - Giving volunteer tutors adequate time for preparation and reflection

## Reading Programs

- Programs that involve reading to (and with) students are an easy way to get churches working with schools.
- Can be as simple as one person adopting a classroom to read to.
- Example: Germantown UMC and Caldwell-Guthrie Elementary School

## College Preparation

- Churches can sponsor college preparation workshops for SAT prep and to discuss college life.
- Churches can partner to plan college tours for youth interested in higher education.
- College Fairs
- Example: Alfred Street Baptist Church

### Develop Strategic Partnerships

- There are three strategic partnerships that can aide in student achievement:
  - Local school officials
  - Parent and community groups
  - Direct engagement with students

### Understand the System

- Any efforts need to advance the school's goals and objectives.
- Student achievement is the universal interest of every school leader.

### Working with School Officials

- Be prepared.
  - Understand school policies and regulations.
  - Start from a place of listening.
- Be flexible.
  - This is a partnership between two institutions; churches have to negotiate their interests with the best interests of the school.
- Be focused and unified.
  - Identify a singular contact to work with the school.

### Parent and Community Groups

- Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and community groups (sports leagues, boys and girls clubs, local fraternities, etc.) can be effective partners for achieving student success.
- Some considerations:
  - Consult with parents.
  - Leverage your assets.
  - Explore the community.

### Consult with Parents

- Parents are integral to any school culture. Listening to their needs can give insight to ministry opportunities.
- Even if there is no organized PTA, parents will always be concerned about who is working with their children.
- Finding ways to help parents and children grow together can be constructive to the entire household.
  - For example, tutors may need to work with parents and students to bring test scores up.

### Explore the community around the school

- Understand issues facing youth, such as gang activity, family, work life, etc.
- In some communities, you can learn about the school by learning about sport teams. Understanding the team culture helps you understand students.

### Assessing the Needs of Students

- Listening to school officials, PTAs, and other groups gives you information about student success.
- In many instances, teachers and principals can very easily identify the places of greatest need.
- Using periods after state tests or other strategic moments are good opportunities to engage school officials about student achievement.

## Success Factors

- Build relationships with school staff and school officials.
- Know and understand the climate for education in the community.
- Attend public meetings on educational issues in the community.
- Stay up to date on issues challenging youth.
- Be transparent about the church's resources for meeting students needs.
- Have programs with attainable goals, measurable outcomes, and flexible execution.

## Resources

- National School Programs
  - Kids Hope USA (Mentoring): [www.kidshopeusa.org](http://www.kidshopeusa.org)
  - Faith for Change (Graduation Ministry/College Interest): [www.faithforchange.org](http://www.faithforchange.org)
  - National Adopt a School: [www.churchadoptaschool.org](http://www.churchadoptaschool.org)
- Abuse Prevention Programs
  - Ministry Safe: <https://www.ministrysafe.com>
  - Protect My Ministry: <http://protectmyministry.com/child-safety-training>
  - Reducing the Risk: <http://www.reducingtherisk.com>
- Other Sites
  - Alfred Street Baptist Church: [www.alfredstreet.org/hbcu](http://www.alfredstreet.org/hbcu)

