



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IS ONE PIECE IN THE BIG PICTURE OF DEVELOPING CAREER READY STUDENTS

Assign job shadowing | Use community members to coach competitive teams | Develop a mentoring program | Invite guest speakers to meetings or class | Require students to interview someone in the field they are interested in | Set up volunteer opportunities or service learning projects | Create a scholarship program sponsored by community members or organizations | Ask students to deliver a presentation about your CSO to civic organizations | Use real examples from the community to create Problem Based Learning projects | Invite community members to local and state events | Organize an open house | Conduct mock interviews | Ask partners to conduct webinars or use Skype to teach students | Record the webinar for future use | Find a piece of legislation affecting your CSO industry and make writing letters to the legislature an assignment | Use partners to offer teacher trainings | Solicit donated technology or equipment for permanent or temporary use | Provide an educational opportunity such as a panel discussion or workshop that is open to the community and students.



Engaging Community in Student Career Readiness



Engaging the community takes time – time most teachers do not have. How do you add one more thing to your plate? Let's first shift the paradigm: put in a small amount of time now to save additional time later. Sure, it takes effort to build relationships and engage the community, but imagine how it will free up your time when others are sharing the responsibility of creating career ready students. You will see exponential gains as community members step forward to coach competitive teams, when your lesson plan for the day is simply opening Skype and dialing a practitioner, and when there is no need to spend time creating and developing student assignments because they are real-life scenarios taken from local organizations. So how do you get there?



There is strength in numbers. You are not the only teacher with the aim of developing career ready students, so build a coalition of your colleagues. Use other teachers in your school, area or county. Potential partners in your area are not only committed to developing students at your school, but students from across the region. When you begin to develop partnerships, your invite will be more appealing if the partnership reaches hundreds of students rather than solely the students coming through your classroom. Effectively engaging the community becomes a more realistic goal when the responsibilities are divided. For example, each teacher could set up a webinar once a semester that can be attended by all or schedule an industry tour for multiple schools to attend.



Now that you are sharing responsibilities, who can you bring to the table? Think: civic leaders, community based organizations, parents, business and industry, higher education, government agencies, or research agencies. First establish what's in it for them. How can they benefit from developing career ready students and future leaders? Provide the partner with specific options for how to be involved and how often. (See other side for ideas.) One option is to create tiers for involvement. Tier one: involvement inside the classroom – guest lectures, webinars, and invitations to events. Tier two: involvement inside and outside the classroom – coaching teams, offering internships, interviews, and providing volunteer opportunities. Tier three: sponsoring scholarships, one-on-one mentoring, and professional development for teachers.



We are aware that technology is connecting the globe in ways it never has before, so let's use it! Use it to:

- a.** Connect your coalition of teachers. Use Smartsheet, Google Docs and teleconferencing as options for planning and sharing ideas.
- b.** Connect to partners from their workspace. Allow them to teach or show demonstrations right from their office. Record these lessons for future use; be it two class periods from then or next year's course. Upload and share the lessons across your coalition. This is a great option to save the partner's time and to allow your students access to the globe.
- c.** Teach more efficiently. Don't recreate the wheel. If the students' assignment is to fill out a mock job application or file for a small business loan, screen shot the real thing straight from the web. There is no need to spend time creating tables and word documents of your own, when technology provides your students the opportunity to experience the real thing.



Capture actual community and business issues to simulate real world experiences for your students. Is there an entrepreneur in the community in need of a business plan? Your students can develop it. Does the local food pantry need nutrition education material or recipe cards? Your students can create it. Do you know of a farmer needing their soil tested? Your students can conduct it. Place students in groups for these projects or partner with other classes or teachers when possible. This will simulate real work environments such as cross departmental project teams. Use the same partners to evaluate the student's learning and assist in grading the project. This method helps students develop critical thinking and problem solving skills, enhances communication and promotes team-building.

