

## **Partnership Building**

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1. **Set up:** Look at groups around campus and in the community. Ask yourself:
  - a. Who has power? What type of power? What can they contribute to your work?
  - b. Who has the ability to work with you? Are they already busy with programs, events, or other partners? Is it realistic that they'll talk to you?
2. **Make contact:**
  - a. Check out their website/facebook/twitter for contact info, and staff list to see who would be most receptive to talking with you. Look for staff dedicated to outreach, community relations, partnership building etc.
  - b. Once you find that person, send an email, then make a call. Describe SFER and yourself, and suggest meeting to talk more about mutual goals and vision.
  - c. Schedule a meeting, preferably in person. You may have to call first to explain to give some background but the goal should always be face time. Try for this as soon as possible; the longer you wait, the less likely they are to care.
3. **Meet up:**
  - a. **Come prepared.** Do some homework first, know who you're talking to and be able to articulate what their organization/office does.
  - b. Look at yourself: Keep in mind that you are on their time, make the meeting worthwhile. Have an idea in your head already of what the relationship could look like:
    - i. Make it more about what you can do for them than what they can do for you. Why should they work with you? How does your mission/vision/past work align with theirs? Can you attend their events?
  - c. Impress! Talk about why you love SFER, share your passion for the work. Market yourself and our organization in a way that would make someone want to be involved. Have an open conversation, get to know them and build a personal and professional relationship (but mostly professional).
  - d. Have an ask. Even if it's just sharing contact information or setting up another meeting. Let that you want to continue the relationship and how they can find you if they do as well.
  - e. **Say thank you.** Ask questions if you have them, but be humble and grateful.
4. **Follow up (MOST IMPORTANT):**
  - a. Send an email or call within a couple days of meeting: thank them, remind them of what happened in the meeting, and see if they are interested in learning more or working together more closely.
  - b. Let them know about upcoming events, and be specific. Make sure they know you will continue to keep in contact.
5. **Engage:** As time passes be sure to engage yourself in their work, become involved/volunteer or offer a helping hand whenever you can. Do not just let the initial meeting be the only meeting.
6. **Invite:** If they agreed to working together more closely, USE THEM!

- a. People want to feel important. Invitations should always be sent out when there is events surrounding your relationship/ partnership. Get them to support you as much as possible.

For Discussion:

Why is partnership building important?

How can you continue to grow the relationship and connect with other partners while doing so?

What do you do when you can no longer benefit from the relationship?

Building a collaborative partnership:

- recognizing opportunities for change
- mobilizing people and resources
- developing a long term vision
- seeking support and involvement from diverse and non-traditional partners
- building trust
- developing learning opportunities for partners

Additional Considerations:

\_\_\_\_\_ **Ensure a broad-based, inclusive partnership** by seeking partners who represent a cross-section of the community: parents, principals, teachers, counselors and other school staff, cultural and religious leaders, health care and human service providers, business and political leaders, staff and administrators from community organizations, and representatives from local universities and student groups. Make sure your partners reflect diverse perspectives, experiences, cultures, and levels of authority.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Don't wait for all partners to get on board before moving forward** with your plans. Most partnerships expand gradually over time. But always have size and impact of partnership in mind. Who will move the most people? Who will bring the most attention? Everything will follow after that connection is formed. Keep forming new connections, and show them that you have something for them to work on with you.