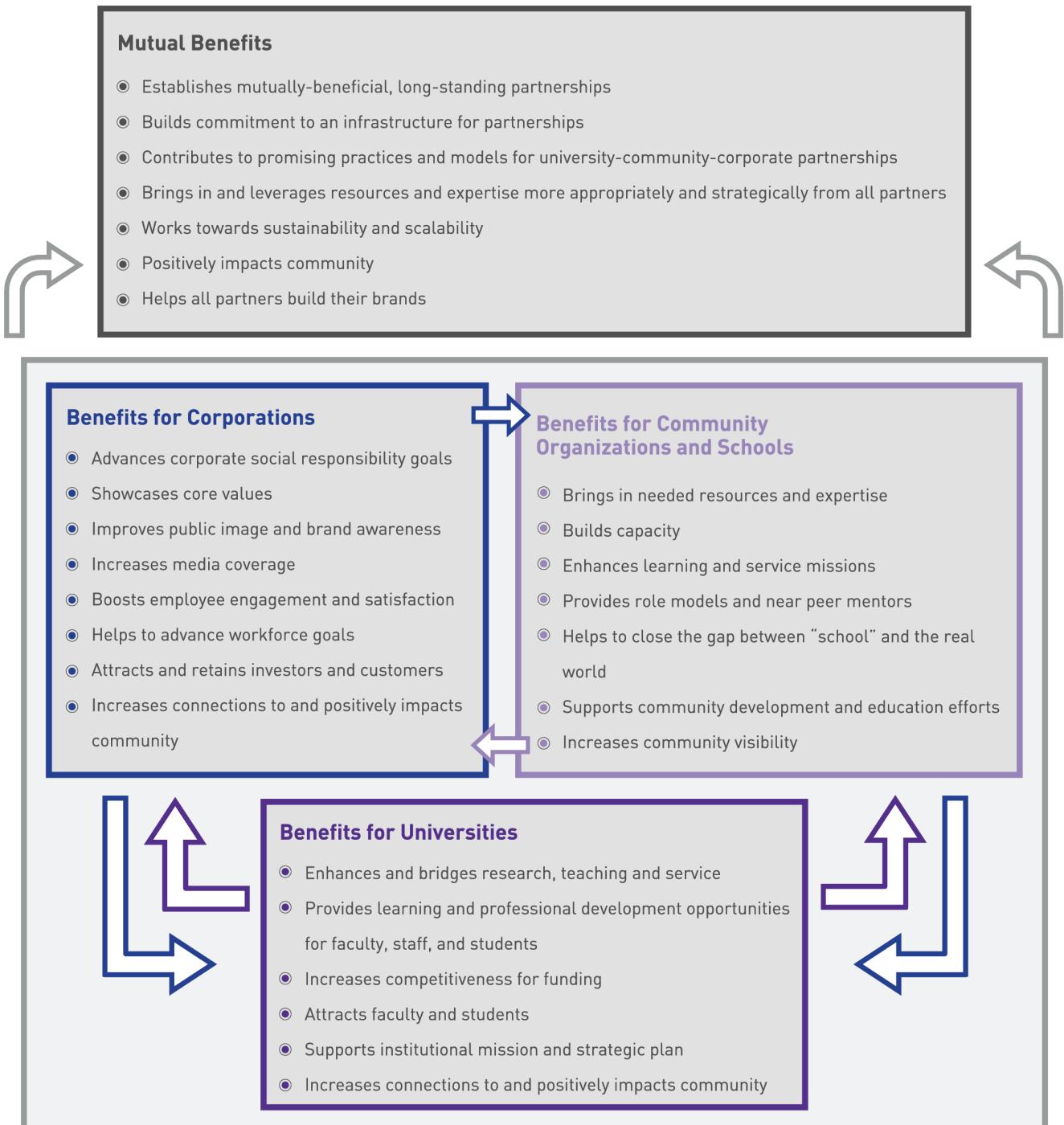


WHY PARTNER?

Partnerships can make progress on ambitious goals that cannot (and should not) be solved alone. Diverse partner organizations can bring together unique sets of expertise and resources, which spark innovative solutions. Partnerships can productively impact learning and well-being for youth and may have rich potential for sustainability.

Additionally, partnership work that values mutuality and shared learning can benefit partners directly. Such benefits, shown in the graphic below, may overlap or serve specific partners in particular ways.





While partnership work often takes place at community, city, and/or regional levels, insights can be shared and scaled nationally and beyond¹ — another benefit of partnering. Partnerships, especially those that partner universities, schools and community organizations, and corporations, have increased in prevalence and taken many forms in the field, including research-practice partnerships², community-university engaged scholarship³, participatory design research⁴, and others.

Further, major funders such as the National Science Foundation (NSF) — the funding source for approximately 27 percent of the total federal budget for basic research conducted at U.S. colleges and universities — highlight and intentionally support partnership activities. At NSF, “broader impacts” (BI) is a key component of all proposals and refers to the “potential for a research project to benefit society or advance societal outcomes,” such as achieving full participation of women, persons with disabilities, and underrepresented minorities; or increasing public engagement⁵. BI activities partner researchers with educators, entrepreneurs, media, and the public in innovative ways to advance knowledge and achieve positive societal impact.



¹The central case study we provide of the Baxter Center for Science Education operates at a regional level.

²Visit the William T. Grant Foundation website for resources <https://rpp.wtgrantfoundation.org/> and see the 2013 white paper by Cynthia E. Coburn, William R. Penuel, and Kimberly E. Geil titled “Research-Practice Partnerships: A Strategy for Leveraging Research for Educational Improvement in School Districts”.

³For more information visit the Engagement Scholarship Consortium at <https://engagementscholarship.org/>

⁴Bang & Vossoughi (2016). Participatory design research and educational justice: Studying learning and relations within social change making. *Cognition and Instruction*, 34(3), 173-193.

⁵See the National Science Foundation’s website on Broader Impacts at <https://www.nsf.gov/od/oiia/special/broaderimpacts/> and the most recent NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide at https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg20_1/nsf20_1.pdf



A Framework for Building and Sustaining Partnerships

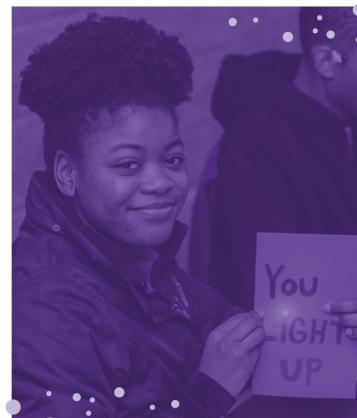
The Baxter Center for Science Education is a partnership that brings together four diverse institutions — Lindblom Math & Science Academy in the Chicago Public Schools, Round Lake High School, the Baxter International Foundation, and the Office of Community Education Partnerships (OCEP) at Northwestern University to promote student success in STEM education and career pathways. Through lessons learned throughout our ten-year partnership and the broader work of OCEP, we have identified five pillars and associated promising practices for developing, growing, and sustaining effective partnerships.

1. **Foreground equity:** Understand and act to decrease inequities through partnership efforts.



"The senior year team was so special because it was the first year that the team was majority female. So that was amazing because there's a stigma in STEM fields where women aren't engineers or women can't participate in it, and just to have a team that's the majority female was like, we proved you wrong. **Women CAN be in STEM**, we are engineers, and this is what we like to do." - Erinn Thomas, *Lindblom Alumn*

- **Consider the Context**⁶ Consider a community's social, cultural, economic, and political characteristics in contemporary and historical contexts. Remember that each community member plays a role in the success of the partnership.
- **Resist "top down" approaches**⁷ "Top down" approaches can lead to leadership unilaterally controlling and enforcing programs for community residents, which may not fully account for each community members' perspective.
- **Use counter storytelling**⁸ Counter storytelling is the practice of introducing a new narrative to a historical, stereotype-driven story. This practice prioritizes understanding different perspectives on learning and culture.



⁶Velasco, Anne, et al. "Race and Class Challenges in Community Collaboration for Educational Change." School Community Network, 2008, www.adl.org/journal/fw08/CousinsMickelsonWilliamsVelascoFall2008.pdf.

⁷Ibid.

⁸McIntosh, Reubin, and Katharine Curry. "The Role of a Black Church–School Partnership in Supporting the Educational Achievement of African American Students." School Community Network, 2020, www.adl.org/journal/2020ss/McIntoshCurrySS2020.pdf.