Business Coalition Leaders Speak Out on Education

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About DeHavilland Associates

DeHavilland Associates is a consulting and communications firm that helps its corporate, nonprofit, and association clients understand and connect with the K-12 community. The company designs, manages, and evaluates outreach campaigns and partnership programs for its clients and creates original initiatives to help educators and education stakeholders establish and strengthen dialogue for the benefit of public education.

For more information, visit www.dehavillandassociates.com.

About the Business/Education Partnership Forum

Created and managed by DeHavilland Associates, the Business/Education Partnership Forum is an online clearinghouse for anyone interested in learning how to build effective business/education partnerships. This clearinghouse offers news and announcements, links to resources, a directory of organizations involved in business/education partnerships, and a monthly newsletter.

For more information, visit www.biz4ed.org.

About the Effective Education Partnerships Conference

The Effective Education Partnerships Conference (EEPC) is an annual two-day meeting for the practitioners of business/education partnerships, including chambers, business coalitions, individual businesses, school and district leaders, and others interested in hearing case studies and effective practices from others in the field. EEPC will be held July 10-11, 2008 in Fairfax, VA.

For more information, visit www.eepc2008.com.

2007

Business Coalition Leaders Speak Out on Education

In a previous survey, DeHavilland Associates found that school and district leaders consider business coalitions - i.e., any organized group of businesspeople focusing on issues of interest to that group - to be their most desirable prospective partners for future initiatives. (See the box on this page for information on types of coalitions interested in education.)

To help educators determine when and how to pursue such partnerships, the company polled leaders of business coalitions on their work with schools and districts. Key findings from this survey of coalition leaders include:

- Workforce preparedness ranked as their top educational priority, followed by graduation rates and mastery of basic skills.
- While coalitions work more in urban areas than in suburban or rural ones, accessibility to location is the least important factor when selecting partners. More important are their willingness to collaborate, their commitment to the project, and their interest in obtaining measurable outcomes.
- Coalitions spend more than twice as much time working at the high school level than at the elementary, middle, or postsecondary.
- When asked how actively they work in certain areas, coalition leaders gave equal weight to a range of interests related to workforce development, including career awareness, college preparedness/entry, essential skills, STEM education, and vocational education.
- When asked about the support they offer to education partners, coalitions cited expertise most frequently. Other popular areas include providing volunteers and mentors, goods and services, and political support. Direct financial giving ranked last.

- While coalitions manage some structured programs, most of their projects are designed collaboratively with their partners, and they follow through on those projects by tracking activity and outcomes.
- Coalition leaders are predominantly satisfied with both the partnership process and outcomes; however, they offered several suggestions on how schools and districts can increase their attractiveness as partners and build more effective partnerships.

I. Data Collection Process

To solicit responses from a broad range of groups involved in education, DeHavilland Associates compiled a list of business coalitions with a history of working on education issues or partnering with schools and districts. This list contained 529 such organizations working at the local, state, regional, or national level.

Types of Business Organizations Involved in Education

NASSMC Members - The National Alliance of State Science and Mathematics Coalitions (NASSMC) is an umbrella organization of 42 independent state coalitions of business, education and public policy leaders united for systemic change in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education.

Business Roundtables - Nonprofit, nonpartisan state-level groups focusing on public policy issues (including education) of interest to the business community.

Public Education Network (PEN) Members - PEN members are independent local education funds, usually operating with strong business support, that work to improve public schools and build citizen support for quality public education in low-income communities across the nation.

Chambers of Commerce - Many Chambers of Commerce operating at the local, state, or regional level support school and district improvement and reform within their service areas.

Others - There are several other types of business-oriented groups working to support and improve education, including economic development groups, manufacturers' councils, trade associations, workforce development groups, Jump$tart coalitions, and others.

DeHavilland Associates conducted this online survey between May 2 and May 18, 2007. It was promoted to coalition leaders through email notices sent on May 2 and May 10; the only incentive offered to respondents was a copy of the survey results. One hundred and thirty-six coalition leaders participated in the survey, representing a 25.7% response rate.

This survey initiative benefited from the support of the National Alliance of State Science and Mathematics Coalitions (NASSMC), the largest network of state-level business/education coalitions in the country. NASSMC helped to design and review the survey instrument, and played a strong role in encouraging its members to participate.

II. Respondents

Survey respondents are leaders within their organizations, with 83.8% serving in a President/CEO/Executive Director or a management-level role. Organizations represented included most major coalition models, including those listed in the box on page 1 of this report. Detailed breakouts can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondent Characteristics	
Survey Item	**%**
What is your title or role?	
President/CEO/Executive director	55.9%
Management-level staff	27.9%
Staff member	7.4%
Volunteer	2.9%
Board chair	2.2%
Board member	1.5%
Other	2.2%
How would you describe your organization?	
Chamber of Commerce	29.4%
NASSMC	17.6%
Public Education Network	14.7%
Business Roundtable	8.1%
Economic Development Corporation	6.6%
None - we're independent	7.4%
Other	38.2%

- As might be expected, organizations exclusively dedicated to education, such as NASSMC and PEN members, provided responses directly from their top officials, while general business groups (such as chambers) were more likely to provide responses from senior managers.
- The fact that 38.2% of respondents described their organizations in ways other than those provided (or in addition to the categories provided) shows that there is significant diversity in the range of business organizations interested in supporting education.

III. Characteristics of Coalitions

Survey respondents were asked about the size and makeup of their organizations. While coalitions vary somewhat by type, they are by and large smaller organizations, with limited staff (generally less than ten people) and budgets (most under $2 million). However, one should note that this data refers only to the organization itself; each coalition garners a great deal of additional value from the direct contribution of its members to schools and districts in the form of employee time (as volunteers and mentors), goods and services, expertise, and other resources.

Responses to questions on the characteristics of coalitions can be seen in Tables 2a and 2b; additional notes follow.

- Service area varied by type of organization, with almost all NASSMC affiliates (91.7%) operating at the statewide level, chamber and PEN members split between local, statewide, and regional service, and the majority of roundtables operating at the statewide level or above (72.7%).
- Membership breakdown was also dependent on the organization's model, with NASSMC affiliates having the most diverse representation, chambers and roundtables seeing strong representation from small and large businesses (75.2% and 64.0% respectively), and PEN members identifying schools and districts as their largest single group of members (45.6%).
- NASSMC affiliates are most often all-volunteer organizations (58.3%), while PEN members report having larger staffs on average than other coalition groups: 35% have ten or more employees, compared with a survey average of 22.7%.
- Coalitions vary in the size of their budgets, but this variation does not align with organization type: a PEN member, for example, is just as likely (20%) to

have a budget in the $200-500K range as they are to be in the $2-5MM range.

- Different types of business coalitions have different funding models: chambers and roundtables receive most of their income from membership dues and corporate contributions (60.2% and 62.7% respectively), while others have a broader base of support, including grants, contributions, payments for services, and other sources.

IV. Priorities, Interests & Activities

As one might expect, business coalitions are interested in creating a capable workforce, and the majority of their efforts in education outreach are directed toward this end. Their desired outcomes emphasize workforce preparedness and graduation rates; they are most likely to work on high school level initiatives, which is a key target for workforce and college preparedness; and the bulk of their outreach activities focuses on workforce-related issues such as career awareness and STEM education.

These coalitions are flexible in how they achieve their workforce development objectives, being twice as likely to develop customized programs than to push forth structured initiatives. They are most interested in finding partners who take a collaborative approach to partnerships, and who share their interest in achieving measurable outcomes. In fact, this focus on shared priorities, collaboration, and a focus on outcomes and project sustainability is far more important than the location of the prospective partner, although coalitions are somewhat more likely to establish partnerships in urban locations.

Table 2a: Characteristics of Coalitions	
Survey Item	**%**
What is your organization's service area?	
National	4.4%
Regional	16.2%
Statewide	40.4%
Local - urban area	16.9%
Local - suburban ara	4.4%
Local - rural area	2.9%
Local - multiple areas	12.5%
Other	2.2%
Breakdown of membership:	
Small business	30.7%
Large business	21.5%
Schools/districts	14.9%
Nonprofits	8.1%
Higher education	8.0%
Business organizations	6.9%
Government	4.5%
Other	5.5%

Table 2b: Characteristics of Coalitions	
Survey Item	**%**
How many full-time employees do you have?	
None - all volunteer	12.9%
1	16.7%
2-5	29.5%
5-10	18.2%
10-20	12.1%
20-50	6.1%
50+	4.5%
What is your organization's annual budget?	
$0-25K	8.3%
$25-50K	2.3%
$50-100K	3.0%
$100-200K	9.0%
$200-500K	19.5%
$500K-$1MM	15.8%
$1MM-2MM	15.0%
$2MM-5MM	20.3%
$5MM+	6.8%
Where does your funding come from?	
Member dues	24.5%
Government grants	19.0%
Corporate contributions	17.1%
Foundation grants	14.8%
Fundraising events and programs	12.1%
Payment for services provided to schools	3.8%
Other	8.7%

Coalitions place a priority on developing and sharing expertise, with most respondents highlighting their efforts to educate their members and legislators on education and workforce issues, and with several also conducting original research and publishing position papers. This focus on knowledge and skills extends to their partnership efforts: expertise was the top-ranked contribution that coalitions make to their education partners. Direct financial giving, in contrast, was ranked last.

Desired Outcomes

As can be seen in Chart 1, business coalitions consider workforce preparedness their top priority, with graduation rates, dropout rates, and mastery of basic skills (such as reading and math) also showing as priorities.

However, while every coalition type ranks workforce preparedness as their most desired outcome, they differ on other priorities. PEN members and business roundtables, for example, identified test scores as one of their most desired outcomes much more frequently than did other coalitions. PEN members also placed dropout rates higher on their list of outcomes than did others.

Profile of Education Partners

While coalitions are somewhat more likely to work at the high school level given their focus on workforce issues, they are open to working with partners across the spectrum of grade levels, locations, and organization types. They have made it clear that partnership selection is based primarily on the potential for a collaborative focus on results.

Chart 2 and Table 3 provide the results of questions on partnership outcomes and interests. Breakouts of responses by different types of coalitions include:
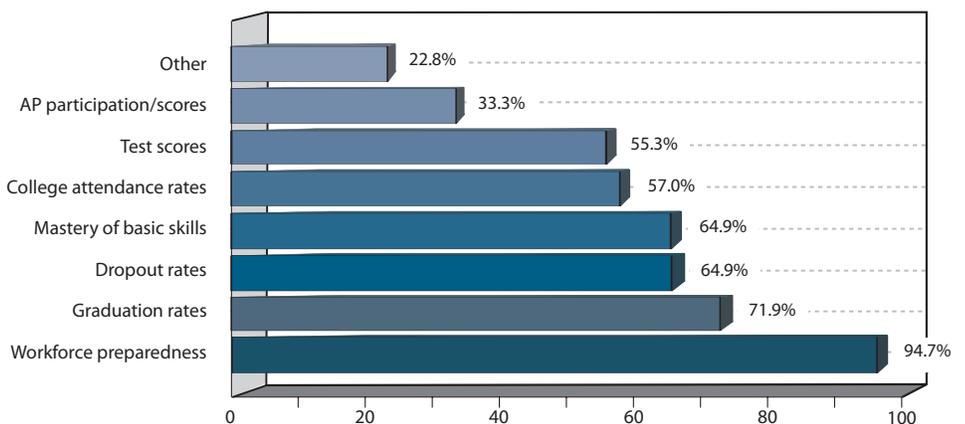
- Most coalitions mirrored the aggregate results shown in Table 3; however, PEN members are far more likely to consider the needs of the student body (78.9%), and less likely to give weight to an existing relationship (15.8%) when selecting a partner.

Table 3: Profile of Education Partners

Survey Item	%
What criteria do you use when selecting partners?	
Willingness to collaborate	84.7%
Interest in measurable outcomes	67.6%
Commitment to the project	64.0%
Needs of the student body	48.6%
Existing relationship with coalition	33.3%
Accessibility to location	21.6%
Other	18.0%
Which of the following do you partner with:	
Postsecondary institutions	85.6%
Districts	78.4%
Schools	73.0%
Informal learning organizations	41.4%
After school programs	26.1%
Other	33.3%
How do you divide your time among:	
Urban areas	44.2%
Suburban areas	29.4%
Rural areas	26.4%

Chart 1: Desired Outcomes

Survey item: What types of partnership outcomes are of particular interest?

Outcome	%
Other	22.8%
AP participation/scores	33.3%
Test scores	55.3%
College attendance rates	57.0%
Mastery of basic skills	64.9%
Dropout rates	64.9%
Graduation rates	71.9%
Workforce preparedness	94.7%

- Coalitions vary somewhat in their choices of partners: PEN members, for example, are much more likely to work with districts and with after-school programs than are others. The 41.4% average for partnering with informal learning organizations (such as museums) hides a wide range of response levels, with NASSMC and PEN members working much more frequently with such groups (78.3% and 57.9% respectively) and chambers working with them less frequently (22.9%).
- PEN members also have a different geographic focus than other types of coalitions, concentrating much more on urban areas (58.8%) than on suburban and rural areas (22.3% and 19.7%).
- Given coalitions' uniform focus on workforce preparedness, it is not surprising to see a stronger emphasis on partnerships at the high school level, as shown in Chart 2. The only variation among coalitions comes from NASSMC members, which place their greatest emphasis on initiatives at the middle school level (38.0%).

Coalition Activities

While coalitions are twice as likely to develop customized programs based on their partners' needs as they are to implement pre-planned initiatives (64.8% to 35.2%), the question remains: in what areas do coalitions work, and what types of support do they provide to their education partners?
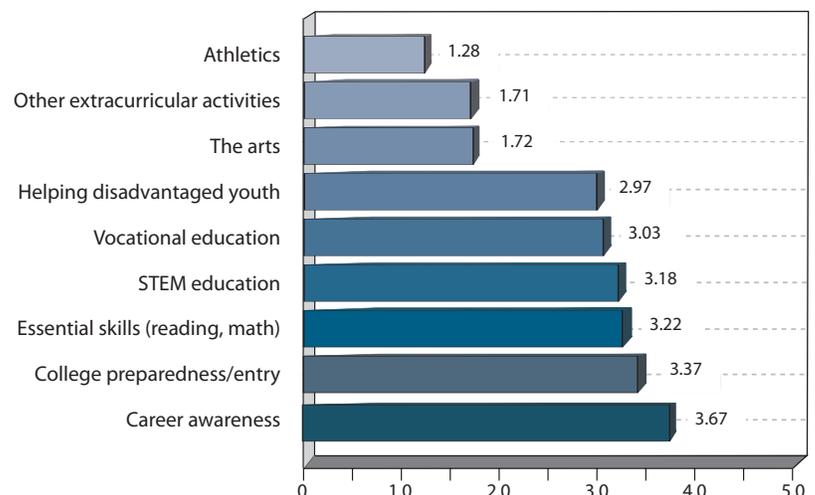
Consistent with their interest in outcomes related to career preparedness, coalitions report that they focus on career awareness, college preparedness, mastery of essential skills, and STEM education (see Chart 3). As might be expected, the priorities of some types of coalitions differed from the group:

- With STEM education as their core mission, NASSMC members list this as their top focus (4.87), followed by college preparedness and entry, career awareness, and essential skills (3.57, 3.18, and 3.14 respectively).
- Chambers focus more broadly on career issues, with career awareness, vocational education, college preparedness and entry, and essential skills as their top priorities (4.00, 3.30, 3.15, and 2.85 respectively).

Chart 2: Time Spent by Grade Level
Survey item: What percentage of your time is spent working in the following areas:

- Postsecondary and beyond 19.6 %
- Elementary school 18.0 %
- Middle school 19.9 %
- High school 42.4 %

- PEN members' top priorities focus less on workforce issues and more on equity, with essential skills and helping disadvantaged youth as their top areas of activity (3.78 and 3.75), followed by their work on college preparedness and entry and career awareness (3.33 and 3.29).
- Business roundtables are more closely aligned with NASSMC members and chambers, focusing on STEM education, college preparedness and entry, career awareness, and vocational education (3.67, 3.64, 3.55, and 3.10 respectively).

Chart 3: Project Priorities
Survey item: On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being "no activity" and 5 being "a major level of activity," rank the following by how actively you work in these areas:

Area	Value
Athletics	1.28
Other extracurricular activities	1.71
The arts	1.72
Helping disadvantaged youth	2.97
Vocational education	3.03
STEM education	3.18
Essential skills (reading, math)	3.22
College preparedness/entry	3.37
Career awareness	3.67

As can be seen in Chart 4, coalitions are most interested in providing expertise and time as their primary contribution to the projects they support. This comes in several forms, including their general knowledge and experience, their relationships with politicians, and their time and talents in the form of volunteering and mentorships.

While coalitions and their members are interested in providing goods and services as part of their contribution, it is interesting to note that direct financial giving, which is so often desired by education partners, is the least likely type of support to be provided by these coalitions.

In addition to their work with education partners, coalitions are actively engaged in increasing awareness and knowledge among their members and other stakeholders. As seen in Table 4, almost all coalitions hold educational events for their members and others, the majority work with legislators on education issues, and a sizeable minority conduct their own research and publish on education issues.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a critical question in program design and maintenance, and the majority of coalition leaders surveyed (67.3%) commit to continuing their support for programs in which they are involved. Aside from this direct pledge of ongoing support, more than half - 52.9% - require their education partners to have a sustainability plan in place. This reinforces the concept of program ownership by their partners and increases the likelihood that coalitions will not be required to serve as the sole source of support going into the future.

V. Experiences

A clear majority of respondents (89.9%) report working directly with schools and districts: 40.4% as their primary outreach method, and 49.6% as one of a number of things they do to support education.

The good news is that coalitions are interested in working collaboratively with their education partners, realize the importance of tracking activity and outcomes, and are either somewhat or extremely satisfied in both the partnership process and in the outcomes these partnerships produce.

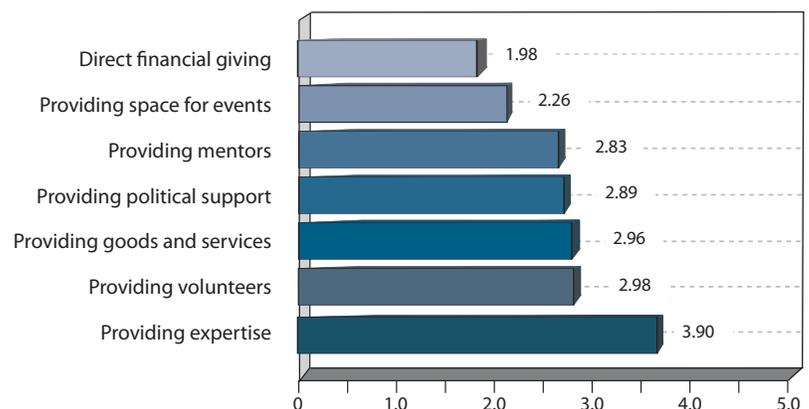**Table 4: Other Activities, Sustainability**

Survey Item	%
In what other activities do you engage?	
Hold educational events for members	87.2%
Lobby local/state politicians	59.6%
Conduct original research	42.2%
Publish position papers	42.2%
Other	22.0%
How do you ensure sustainability of your projects?	
We ensure ongoing support	67.3%
Partner must develop plan	52.9%
Other	23.1%

However, these coalitions have come across obstacles in developing partnerships in the past; these have most notably included difficulties in getting partners to commit adequate time and resources to projects and generating visibility for their contribution to education.

Finally, when asked about lessons they've learned from past partnership experiences, coalition leaders continued along a collaborative theme, emphasizing the importance of equal input and involvement of partners and the importance of clear and regular communication, among other things.

Chart 4: Types of Support
Survey item: On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being "no support" and 5 being "a major category of support," rank the following by the level of support you provide directly to your school/district partners:

Type of Support	Value
Direct financial giving	1.98
Providing space for events	2.26
Providing mentors	2.83
Providing political support	2.89
Providing goods and services	2.96
Providing volunteers	2.98
Providing expertise	3.90

Partnership Practices

As can be seen in Chart 5, coalitions strongly prefer a collaborative approach to partnership development, with 74.8% of respondents indicating an interest in sharing the opportunities and responsibilities involved.

Coalition leaders also demonstrate an interest in tracking activity and outcomes, as shown in Table 5: 82.6% state that either they or their partners always or sometimes track partnership activity (such as volunteer hours logged or the value of donated goods and services), while 87.6% note that they or their partner make tracking partnership outcomes a priority.

Satisfaction

Partnerships require a great deal of effort, and partners may not always be happy with the results of these collaborations. However, as Table 5 indicates, coalition leaders clearly indicate their satisfaction with both the partnership process and with the outcomes they generated, with 81.9% stating that they are either extremely or somewhat satisfied with the process, and 90.2% being extremely or somewhat satisfied with the outcomes generated.

Obstacles

While the vast majority of coalition leaders are satisfied with the partnerships they have built, there is always room for improvement, and Chart 6 (on the next page) identifies some of the key areas coalitions believe could be improved.

The issue faced most frequently by coalition leaders lies in getting partners to commit the resources and time required of a successful partnership, followed by the failure to ensure that coalitions and their members receive the visibility they expect for their work in education. (The awareness and public goodwill generated by education partnerships can be a key factor in securing partnerships with coalitions and with individual businesses.)

Lessons Learned

Coalition leaders were asked what lessons they learned that could be applied to future partnerships. Forty-seven replied, with the vast majority of responses to this open-ended question focusing on classic and critical elements of partnership design and development, including respect for all parties' interests, communication, planning, commitment, and allocation of sufficient resources.

Chart 5: Partnership Planning

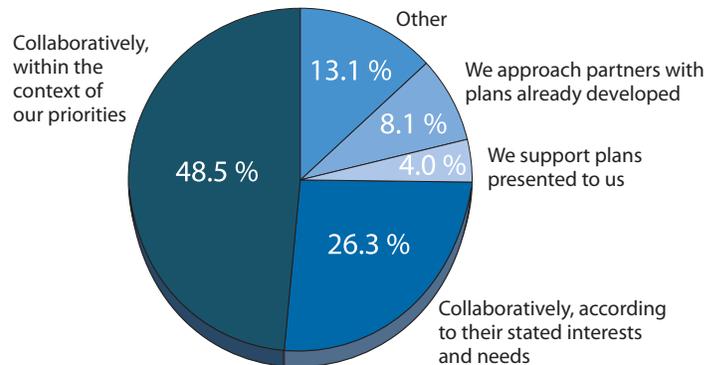*Survey item: How are you typically involved in the planning process?*

- Collaboratively, within the context of our priorities — 48.5 %
- Other — 13.1 %
- We approach partners with plans already developed — 8.1 %
- We support plans presented to us — 4.0 %
- Collaboratively, according to their stated interests and needs — 26.3 %

Table 5: Partnership Experiences

Survey Item	%
Do you or your partner track partnership activity?	
Yes - always	40.8%
Yes - sometimes	41.8%
No	17.3%
Do you or your partner track outcomes?	
Yes - we require it	40.2%
Yes - they insist on it	0.0%
Yes - both parties make this a priority	47.4%
No	12.4%
Are you satisfied with the partnership process?	
Extremely satisfied	40.4%
Somewhat satisfied	41.5%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	14.9%
Somewhat dissatisfied	3.2%
Extremely dissatisfied	0.0%
Are you satisfied with partnership outcomes?	
Extremely satisfied	40.2%
Somewhat satisfied	50.0%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	7.6%
Somewhat dissatisfied	2.2%
Extremely dissatisfied	0%

Lessons shared by respondents include:

Acknowledge style and agenda differences up front and find a collaborative model that works for all.

Constant communication with all stakeholders is key to success. Relationships make or break a change effort.

Design a contract that spells out each party's responsibilities and have it approved by the local school board & CEO. Then have the parties sign it.

Equality of partners is essential to avoid business-dominated or education-dominated practices and processes.

Have to have the superintendent's full support. Have to have the school principal's support. Have to have someone in the school (and community) committed to the program.

Have agreement on outcomes, process, and be clear who your customer is, e.g. Department of Education, superintendent, principal, sponsors, and what their various, and sometimes differing, expectations are. Encourage participation, involvement, and sponsorship opportunities for business leaders and organizations to cover costs and to get people hooked into the process. More does not always equal better.

Have commitment from the top as well as the schools, and communicate, communicate, communicate!

Importance of clear expectations and roles in the partnership. Ongoing communications system and alignment of efforts to avoid silos and duplication of efforts.

Need to identify the "right" people–those that want to partner. Have to have a vision and be able to communicate effectively.

Never assume that administrators understand what is being asked of them. Be more careful to establish a strong foundation of communication with the school system in each situation.

When you don't care who gets credit, you get a lot more done. Focus on victories and celebrate them. Be passionate about what you believe.

Strong leadership is essential. Real reform must come from the top down. Schools can not make reform work if districts are not ready for change.

The partnership cannot be connected to a district employee who may be "here today and gone tomorrow." The tide of education changes, and flexibility must be built in to accommodate changes in policies and mandates.
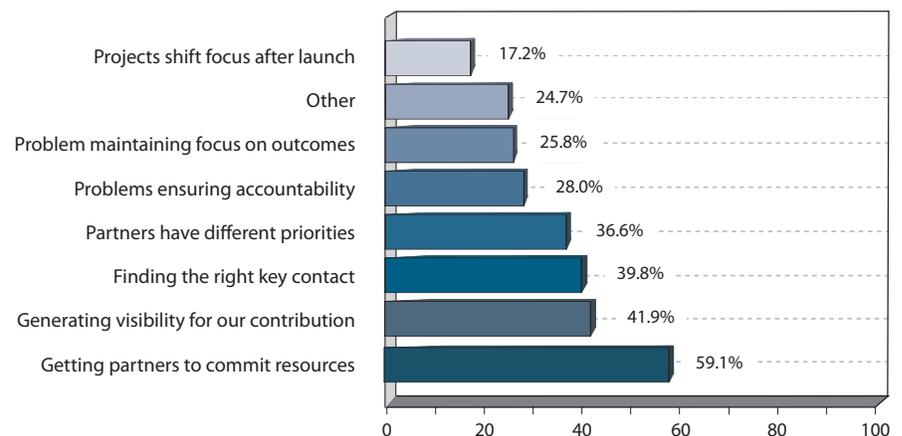
VI. Advice to Schools and Districts

After sharing information on their coalitions along with their priorities, interests, and experiences, coalition leaders were asked to offer suggestions to schools and districts interested in building effective partnerships with coalitions and others. Respondents shared information on how to stay informed of partnership opportunities and how to become an attractive partner for coalitions; they provided general advice to schools and districts as well.

Staying Informed

Coalition leaders were asked about the channels they use to communicate with prospective education partners and identified several ways in which schools and districts could stay informed of their coalition's activities, including opportunities for developing partnerships. As Table 6 shows, the majority of coalitions offer current information via their websites, and they encourage direct contact through meeting attendance and personal outreach. Several also noted that they publish print or email newsletters to keep prospective partners informed of coalition news and information.

Chart 6: Obstacles to Effective Partnerships
Survey item: What have been your biggest obstacles in working with schools and districts?

Obstacle	Percentage
Projects shift focus after launch	17.2%
Other	24.7%
Problem maintaining focus on outcomes	25.8%
Problems ensuring accountability	28.0%
Partners have different priorities	36.6%
Finding the right key contact	39.8%
Generating visibility for our contribution	41.9%
Getting partners to commit resources	59.1%

Becoming an Attractive Partner

Consistent with coalitions' lessons learned, the advice leaders offer to schools and districts on becoming more attractive as prospective partners centers on core elements of effective partnerships, such as being collaborative, being open to new ideas, considering the interests of all partners at the table, and making a real commitment of time, talent, and resources to ensure the success of the relationship.

Advice from coalition leaders includes:

Open, honest communication. Willingness to work as a partner. Enthusiasm to do good things for students.

Ask for our help or assistance to help their students. Don't ask for money.

Attend and participate on our boards. Make plain their commitment to public engagement in public education from the very top of their organizations. Ask us to make presentations to the Board of Education. Explore ways to attract resources that can only occur through collaboration.

Be clear regarding needs and outcomes and why this is in alignment with organization's goals.

Be open to new ideas; help partners know how they can contribute. When you say you want a business partner, make it mean more than just a yearly coffee to award certificates. Get out into the business community for awareness and relevancy.

Be open to participation and responsive to business concerns and points of view. Administrators need to invite us to the table for discussion and planning if they want support.

Be organized, and be willing to commit time; don't expect checks with no accountability.

Be proactive. Market your desireability as a partner...not just your need.

Be willing to be accountable and responsive to the time, services and resources that the coalition offers to them. In those instances where schools truly want to improve instructional effectiveness, assessment practices, and building/district leadership, the partnerships have worked out well. Committing fully to an improvement process seems to be a most difficult thing for schools or districts to do.

Be willing to listen to business's needs and concerns without defensiveness. Schools and districts should identify one point person who can aggregate the partnership opportunities and be the primary contact. Identify the benefits to the business of collaboration (e.g. a more prepared workforce, better responsiveness to business workforce skill needs, future workforce pipeline development, etc).

Be willing to modify their projects to meet the requirements of the partnership (generally not a problem but must be done). Build a track record of success with new, systemic change initiatives.

Be willing to put in the time required to develop and manage partnerships...including measuring outcomes.

Business needs to have equal representation for a true partnership to occur. Usually we are outnumbered and don't feel we are heard.

Express a need and an interest in the work and support of the partnership. Be willing to cooperate, collaborate, and financially participate.

Have a positive approach to partnering without fear of allowing community members to see inside their operations. Be clear and specific in expressing their needs for assistance. Be open to accept the help of the commumity.

Have one point of contact for partnership activities. Provide in-depth professional development to teachers and administrators to learn how to work with partners, such as what to ask of them and delivery expectations.

Show a willingness to change. Business partners find it very difficult to get schools to change with the changing times in terms of careers, etc. and what the employer needs.

Table 6: Finding Coalition Partners	
Survey Item	**%**
How can schools learn about partnering with you?	
Visit our website	70.6%
Attend our events	65.7%
Contact us directly	64.7%
Subscribe to our email newsletter	40.2%
Subscribe to our print newsletter	24.5%

Identify a key contact who will respond in a timely and complete fashion – most business partners get frustrated because of the time spent chasing answers.

Make sure they involve them in the beginning of the project so the community buys into the project; don't just come for funds after the fact. If they only want funding, make sure there is an accountability component and that PR opportunities are there for the partners.

Most schools and districts do not have a good communication plan. In short, they never tell their success stories. The partnership should include a budget to hire a broker who will make both sides accountable.

Not only should they keep us informed of needs, but they should also spend more time asking businesses' opinions, and truly considering what they could do to make recommended changes instead of considering recommendations as criticism.

Request, respond to, and welcome input from business and community leaders as education stakeholders. Make school a welcoming place for community volunteers.

Show their willingness to commit and prove it by fulfilling their obligations.

General Advice

Finally, coalition leaders were asked for any general advice they would share with school and district leaders. Many of the same themes resurfaced from their previous advice, but it had a broader feel - not focusing just on being an attractive partner, but more on being an effective, partner-supported organization.

Suggestions shared by respondents include:

Be consistent. Be open to suggestions, welcoming to the "outside."

Be honest about needs and ability to carry out long-term improvement plans that require results-based accountability.

Be welcoming...we're here to assist the schools, not spy on them. Drop the excuse "We've always done it this way."

Be willing to participate in community and business events outside of school events.

Don't ask for money; there are MANY ways business and the community can provide resources to education, such as used equipment, time, talents of employees and training (professional development opportunities).

Education and businesses must work together to clearly define requirements, expectations, and constraints. Neither side understands the other and we must break down those barriers.

Listen. Be receptive to input from non-educators. Break the mold.

Look beyond your school, neighborhood and district. School officials needs support at the state level, and can not rely on their associations to represent them alone. If they want funding, reform, etc. they must make sure key constituents know who they are and what their needs are. Make "the case" to those that matter most.

Make the partnerships real in terms of curriculum development, resource sharing, etc. Don't offer a lunch with a "dog and pony show" about your program and then escort business folks out the door...they will keep walking.

Most schools already have processes for developing stakeholder relationships with parents, taxpayers, etc. However, they need to improve their relationships by getting input on what the business community really needs from the educational systems. Business needs to tell educators what they need instead of educators telling business what educational programs are needed. Schools teach a lot of theory with very little application that translates to business operations.

Understand it is a partnership – not a vendor relationship. Respect the partnership.

VII. Summary

Coalition leaders represent the interests and efforts of businesses across the country, and these stakeholders are keenly interested in working with educators to prepare kids for success in life. These coalitions are collaborative, focused on results, and able to bring the time and talents of accomplished people to bear. They are also satisfied with the results of their previous partnerships and looking for new opportunities to make an impact. School and district leaders can benefit greatly by taking the initiative to develop relationships with these supporters of education.

A1: Questions from Survey of Business Coalition Leaders on Education

Thank you for participating in this survey, a joint effort of DeHavilland Associates and the National Alliance of State Science and Mathematics Coalitions (NASSMC). In a previous survey, school and district administrators identified business coalitions as the group with which they'd most like to work; your answers on this survey will allow us to tell them what's important to coalitions, how they operate, and what they look for in partnerships.

You may remain anonymous if you wish; however, if you choose to provide contact information at the end of this survey, we will send you a copy of the results when they are available.

I. Demographic Questions

1. What is your title or role?
- ❏ President/CEO/Executive Director
- ❏ Board member
- ❏ Board chair
- ❏ Management-level staff
- ❏ Staff member
- ❏ Volunteer
- ❏ Other _____

2. What is your organization's service area?
- ❏ National
- ❏ Regional
- ❏ Statewide
- ❏ Local – urban area
- ❏ Local – suburban area
- ❏ Local – rural area
- ❏ Local – multiple areas
- ❏ Other _____

3. How would you describe your organization (check all that apply)
- ❏ NASSMC (National Alliance of State Science and Mathematics Coalitions) affiliate
- ❏ Business Roundtable
- ❏ Public Education Network
- ❏ Chamber of Commerce
- ❏ Jump$tart Coalition
- ❏ Economic development corporation
- ❏ None – we're an independent business coalition
- ❏ Other _____

4. Breakdown of membership
__% Small business
__% Large business
__% Schools/districts
__% Higher education
__% Government
__% Business organizations (chambers, EDCs, workforce groups)
__% Nonprofits
__% Other _____

5. How many full-time employees do you have? (if part of a larger organization, such as a chamber, state only the people in the department actively engaged in business/education partnerships)
❑ None – all volunteer
❑ 1
❑ 2-5
❑ 5-10
❑ 10-20
❑ 20-50
❑ 50+

6. What is your organization's annual budget?
❑ 0-$25K
❑ $25-50K
❑ $50-100K
❑ $100-200K
❑ $200-500K
❑ $500K-1MM
❑ $1MM-2MM
❑ $2MM-5MM
❑ $5MM+

7. Where does your funding come from?
__% Member dues
__% Corporate contributions
__% Payments for services provided to schools
__% Foundation grants
__% Government grants
__% Fundraising events and programs
__% Other _____

II. Priorities, Interests, and Activities

1. What types of partnership outcomes are of particular interest to your organization? (check all that apply)
❑ Graduation rates
❑ Test scores
❑ AP participation/scores
❑ Mastery of basic skills
❑ Dropout rates
❑ College attendance rates
❑ Workforce preparedness
❑ Other _____

2. What criteria do you use when selecting school/district partners? (check all that apply)
❑ Accessibility to location
❑ Their willingness to collaborate
❑ Their interest in generating measurable outcomes
❑ Their commitment to the project
❑ Needs of the student body
❑ Existing relationship with the coalition
❑ Other _____

3. Which of these organizations do you partner with:
❑ Schools
❑ Districts
❑ Postsecondary institutions
❑ Informal learning organizations (museums, etc.)
❑ After school programs
❑ Other organizations (PTA/PTOs, education funds, etc.)

4. To the extent that you work directly with schools and districts, how do you divide your time among the following areas:
__% Urban
__% Suburban
__% Rural

5. What percentage of your time is spent working in the following grade areas?
__% Elementary (grades PreK-5)
__% Middle (grades 6-8)
__% High (grades 9-12)
__% Postsecondary and beyond (grades 13+)

6. Rank the following by how actively you work in these areas (1 = no activity, 5 = major level of activity)

	1	2	3	4	5
STEM education	___	___	___	___	___
Vocational education	___	___	___	___	___
Career awareness	___	___	___	___	___
College preparedness/entry	___	___	___	___	___
Essential skills (reading, math)	___	___	___	___	___
Athletics	___	___	___	___	___
Other extracurricular activities	___	___	___	___	___
Helping disadvantaged youth	___	___	___	___	___
The arts	___	___	___	___	___

7. Rank the following by the level of support that you provide directly to school/district partners (1 = no support, 5 = major category of support)

	1	2	3	4	5
Direct financial giving	___	___	___	___	___
Providing volunteers	___	___	___	___	___
Providing mentors	___	___	___	___	___
Providing goods and services	___	___	___	___	___
Providing expertise	___	___	___	___	___
Providing political support	___	___	___	___	___
Providing space for events	___	___	___	___	___

8. What percentage of your work with schools/districts is through formal programs (such as the State Scholars Initiative) and what percentage is discretionary?

__% Structured initiatives

__% Programs customized to the needs of the partner

9. In addition to your work directly with schools and districts, in what other activities do you engage?
- ❑ Lobbying local/state politicians
- ❑ Conducting original research
- ❑ Publishing position papers
- ❑ Holding educational events for members and others
- ❑ Other _____

10. How do you ensure the sustainability of the initiatives you launch?
- ❑ We ensure ongoing support
- ❑ We require our partner to have a sustainability plan in place
- ❑ Other _____

III. Experiences

1. Have you developed direct partnerships with schools and districts in the past, or do you do so currently?
- ❑ Yes – direct partnerships are a major part of our work
- ❑ Yes – it's one of many things we do
- ❑ Yes, but only occasionally
- ❑ No – we work through other means (note: skip to next section)

2. How are you typically involved in the partnership planning process?
- ❑ We approach education partners with plans already developed
- ❑ We support plans presented to us by schools and districts
- ❑ We work collaboratively with education partners to design projects and intended outcomes within the context of our priorities
- ❑ We work collaboratively with education partners to design projects and intended outcomes according to their stated interests
  and needs
- ❑ Other _____

3. Do you or your school/district partner typically track partnership activity (logging volunteer hours, financial contributions, etc.)?
- ❑ Yes – always
- ❑ Yes – sometimes
- ❑ No

4. Did you or your school/district partner typically measure project outcomes?
- ❑ Yes – we require it
- ❑ Yes – they insist on it
- ❑ Yes – both parties make this a priority
- ❑ No

5. Have you and your campaign sponsors (where applicable) been satisfied with the partnership process?
❑   Extremely satisfied
❑   Somewhat satisfied
❑   Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
❑   Somewhat dissatisfied
❑   Extremely dissatisfied

6. Have you and your campaign sponsors (where applicable) been satisfied with partnership outcomes?
❑   Extremely satisfied
❑   Somewhat satisfied
❑   Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
❑   Somewhat dissatisfied
❑   Extremely dissatisfied

7. What have been your biggest obstacles in working with schools and districts? (check all that apply)
❑   Finding the right key contact
❑   Getting education partners to commit adequate resources/time
❑   Partners have different priorities
❑   Projects shift focus after launch
❑   Problems ensuring accountability
❑   Problem maintaining focus on outcomes
❑   Generating visibility for our contribution to education
❑   Other _____

8. What lessons have you learned that you would apply to future partnerships?
     (open ended)

IV. Advice for Schools (3 questions)

1. How can schools stay informed about opportunities with your organization? (check all that apply)
❑   Our website offers current information on opportunities and events
❑   We have a print newsletter to which they can subscribe
❑   We have an email newsletter to which they can subscribe
❑   We hold events they can attend
❑   We encourage schools to contact us proactively to develop relationships and discuss needs and opportunities

2. What should schools and districts do to make themselves attractive to coalition partnerships?
     (open ended)

3. What other advice would you give to schools in general on developing stakeholder relationships?
     (open ended)

V. Survey Complete! (3 questions)

Thank you for your participation. You can now register to receive a copy of the results of this survey, as well as email newsletters offering news and information building effective partnerships with schools and districts.

Thank you for your participation!

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