

Communications Plan for Advisory Boards

Internal Communications Strategies

Establishing open communications between community organizations and Advisory members is a key aspect of the work as you move forward with your WBL programming. These two-way communication paths allow for streamlined practices that make your potential partners feel listened to and appreciated. Developing a communications plan on how to address specific items or types of messages is worth a conversation at the school level to ensure the expectations at this level are able to be met in a timely manner. For example, if a community member needs to get a hold of a teacher, establishing an exchange of email information would be a logical first step. If a community member wants to offer a high level experience that includes multiple resources or intense school support, it might be better to communicate in a fashion that shares these types of communications in which they could be held in a more formal setting, with the Advisory group, or in a meeting with multiple stakeholders.

Establish communication procedures with your Advisory Board; contact information and naturally occurring communication can occur throughout the course of the WBL offering for students. This could include:

Informal

- Emails
- Text messages
- Workplace chat applications (Microsoft Teams, Google Chat, etc.)
- Phone calls

More formalized communications may need a larger conversation amongst stakeholders in the form of various meetings, roles and responsibilities, communications platforms, and general formats of communication. These formalized communications might be necessary because larger problems or issues may not be able to be properly and fully addressed with a simple discussion or email. They may need broader institutional support from the school, district, community members, or a combination of these groups. They could include some of the following examples:

Formal

- Shared Google documents

- Meeting agendas
- Formal email structures
- Role and responsibilities formal agreement documents
- Logical progressions of Communication (eg Chain of Command)

External Communications Strategies: Publicizing your WBL Program

Partners agree to serve on the Advisory Board and work with students for many reasons. These include wanting to assist young people to succeed, wanting to recruit young people to enter the industry, wanting to give back to the community, wanting approval from their company, or the company wanting approval from the community and/or its national headquarters.

Some examples of external communication strategies you can use include:

- Provide your partners with positive publicity about the support they are giving you and your students. While maintaining strong relationships with individuals, this also encourages other employees to volunteer. It enhances the company image in the community. If the company is national, it helps the local office to impress national headquarters with their volunteer spirit and industry promotional efforts.
- Ask students to write stories for the school newspaper and parent newsletter and have them make presentations to the school board. Public relations representatives from your industry partners are also useful and have ideas for publicizing the work of your Board; they can write stories for their industry newsletters.
- Try to involve your local newspaper or television stations in student events – a field trip to an industry site or student presentations to your partners. These stories provide human interest, showing students interacting with industry representatives and give your partners recognition within the community and with their peers.
- Host a career day or partner day to generate positive publicity. This is an opportunity to not only recognize your current partners, but also recruit potential partners

Examples:

- The district holds an annual Principal Partners Day, and each school hosts 15 to 20 business leaders. During the day, visitors talk with students and teachers and visit classrooms where students are
- The energy industry has mixed reactions from the general public. Working with students, providing mentors and internships, as well as serving on the

Advisory Committee, gives the energy industry an opportunity to demonstrate their value and service. They are presented in a positive way. Newspaper articles about field trips present the industry favorably, quoting positive student reactions while explaining what the students have seen and learned.