



Alone

we can do
so *little*

TOGETHER

we can do
so *much*.

—Hellen Keller



Faith-Based & Community Organizations

in Public Schools

When more people get involved in our schools, remarkable things
happen for students, families and communities.

Guilford County Schools has more than 69,000 pre-K-13 students and 10,000 employees.

Their hard work and dedication to educational excellence have propelled GCS to the top, leading to state and national recognition in academics, character education, athletics and more.

INTRODUCTION

Guilford County Schools seeks to maintain and develop more partnerships with faith-based and community organizations. We know that partnerships with a public school can bring many benefits and feelings of accomplishment to both parties.

GUIDELINES

This relationship must be handled with great care in order to stay within the parameters of what the law says can or cannot be done.

The following points are adapted from "Public Schools and Religious Communities: A First Amendment Guide," published by the American Jewish Congress, Christian Legal Society and the First Amendment Center. More detailed information is available at www.freedomforum.org.

- Under the First Amendment, public schools must be neutral concerning religion in all activities. All partnerships and partnership activities must remain secular.
- School volunteers should be reminded that all conversation with students should remain secular.
- Do not pray with students or encourage prayer.
- Do not preach about faith while participating in a partnership activity.
- Do not prohibit a student from speaking about religion.
- Participation in programs is not limited to religious groups. Schools must be open to participation by all responsible community groups.
- A student's grades, class ranking or participation in school programs cannot be affected by the student's willingness or unwillingness to participate in faith-based partnership activities.
- A student's religious beliefs will not prohibit that student from being part of a faith-based partnership activity.



None of us
including me, ever
do great things. But
WE CAN ALL DO
small things, with
great love, and
TOGETHER
we can do something
wonderful.

—Mother Teresa



- Partnership activities conducted at a faith-based facility may be done in rooms with religious icons or symbols. However, rooms cannot display any proselytizing materials.
- Space leased by a school from a faith-based organization and used for instructional purposes must be free of religious symbols.
- Faith-based and community partnerships should be detailed in writing.

GETTING STARTED

We welcome partnerships from the business, faith and nonprofit communities that accomplish the following:

- Align with **district goals and priorities**;
- Support the district's **essential work of teaching and learning**;
- Create opportunities for **student academic and social-emotional growth**; and
- Have high-value goals for students and schools and **address a need at a particular school or within the district**.

Partnerships are created through mutual agreement with the school or district department and the faith-based or community organization. A mutually beneficial partnership consists of open communication and a comfortable, productive relationship. For this to occur, there must be known expectations for the partner, principal and school.

PARTNER EXPECTATIONS

- Communicate with school and ask questions.
- Support goals and attendance as outlined in partnership plan.
- Monitor student success/challenges and communicate suggestions/concerns to principal.
- Follow all school rules and code of conduct.

PRINCIPAL EXPECTATIONS

- Take ownership of the partnership and if needed, assign partnership coordinator.
- Keep staff and volunteers engaged and updated.
- Communicate regularly with partner & report progress.
- Follow policies and procedures for volunteers and volunteer activities.

SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

- Train volunteers on school rules, culture and tasks they will be performing.
- Inform and explain partnership to student participants
- Make sure students are available for partner activities/notify partner in timely manner if absences occur.
- Plan and organize activities with assistance/suggestions from partner.
- Coordinate the use of school, faith-based or community organization facilities.



Keys to a

SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP



Coming together
is a beginning,
STAYING TOGETHER
is a progress, and
working together
is success.

-Henry Ford



**Feed & Water the
Partnership**



**Start Small/Target
Specific Areas**



**Follow Through &
Keep Promises**



**Stay in Touch with Clear
Communication Lines**



**Set Goals
Together**



**Agree in
Writing**

For the safety of our students, and in compliance with our Board of Education policy, volunteers who are 16 years old and older are required to register with GCS and complete a background check for any volunteer work that has the potential for unsupervised time with students.

You can register and create a volunteer account at www.gcsvolunteers.com.

Guilford County Schools | 712 North Eugene Street
Greensboro, NC 27401 | 336-370-8100 | www.gcsnc.com



**Register & Create a
Volunteer Account**