School Community Partnerships: Let’s Rock the Boat!

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Ever Active Schools

Introduction

- Ever Active Schools has been looking at after school programming through the support of a grant from the Public Health Agency of Canada since 2012.
- A key component of quality after school programming is partnerships and services between schools and community.
- This survey was developed and analyzed with the assistance of Brenda Herchmer from Grassroots Enterprises.
- Distributed across a number of provincial offices.
- From October - December 2014, 395 individuals responded to the survey.

Background

- Healthy students are better learners, and better-educated individuals are healthier.
- Making school health a reality requires working together in a planned, integrated and holistic way.
- Partnerships and services — one of the four pillars of comprehensive school health — is essential, and at times under-developed.

Objectives

1. Gather examples of successful school-community partnerships.
2. Identify the common denominators of successful school-community partnerships.
3. Better understand the challenges and barriers involved in developing successful school-community partnerships.
4. Determine levels of internal and external support for schools to work collaboratively with organizations and external entities.

What would help support more school-community partnerships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector's represented by respondents</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>14.46%</td>
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<tr>
<td>research</td>
<td>16.85%</td>
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<tr>
<td>coaching</td>
<td>9.60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>tools/resources</td>
<td>15.57%</td>
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<tr>
<td>networking</td>
<td>11.47%</td>
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<tr>
<td>learning opportunities</td>
<td>4.25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>pilot projects</td>
<td>16.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>examples from practice</td>
<td>7.28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Findings

- While most respondents would agree school-community partnerships are important, a lack of time and funding were identified as barriers.
- It appears that even when time and funding are available, there is a lack of understanding on how to initiate and build partnerships.
- On the continuum of partnerships most of the examples shared were change that reforms; traditional examples were shared such as shared facility use, building equipment, programs, and networking.
- While we are making strides in partnerships that reform, there appears to be less understanding and support for transformative partnerships.
- A clear need was identified for more how-to’s, practical examples, learning and coaching.

Types of Partnerships

1. Cooperation
   - Groups come together to address a specific social issue.

2. Collaboration
   - Groups develop shared new goals that advance the efforts of all the partners.

3. Collective Impact
   - Groups connect and overlap in their goals to improve the outcomes and effectiveness.

4. Comprehensive Community Transformation
   - Entire community comes together to address community from a holistic or systemic perspective.

Participants were presented with the above diagram and asked 4 questions, one addressing each type of partnership. Two hundred and ninety one respondents answered the four questions. Sixty percent identified they are working in cooperative partnerships, 48% on collaboration, 65% are participating in collective impact, and 40% in community transformation.

Insights

Considerations on where to go from here...

- Incentives
  - Any incentive to keep kids safe and healthy needs to be in place and in effect today.

- Pilot Projects
  - The project is a good idea, but when put into practice there are many challenges.

- Family and Volunteers
  - The possibilities are endless when it comes to volunteers.

- Businesses
  - Here lies the key to success.

- School as Community Hub
  - Education is the key to understanding the potential for benefiting from community collaboration.

- Active Living Initiatives
  - Healthy communities are healthy school communities.

- Improve Communication
  - Communication is a key component to building successful partnerships.

- Staff Coordinators
  - Communication is the key to bringing together school and community.

- Work collaboratively
  - There needs to be a better way.

From the Field!!

- More work needs to be done to bring school and community leaders together to talk about their realities.
- Each of these leaders needs to have their own networks and be able to provide some sort of vision of where they would like to take the school.
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- It takes a leader to engage the various partners creating a common space and purpose and planning a path that will impact the community.
- Local leadership needs to be available and ready to engage the community in a productive manner.

- This is a great opportunity to engage families and the community in a meaningful and productive manner.
- With a list of interested businesses and or organizations that are interested in partnering with schools in a close proximity to the school, it is easier to bring them in on board.

- The reciprocal use of City Facilities and Schools is an important tool in providing a high standard of educational, cultural and social experiences for all residents of the city.

- Pilot projects to address specific community issues would help us build trust across sectors and get beyond our silo-thinking.

- Examples of social issues addressed using collective impact

- Examples of Community Transformation

- Examples of Collaboration

- Examples of Social Issues Addressed