

Building Community-Rich Webs of Supports

PURPOSE

Partner with community-based organizations to support intervention and enrichment structures by providing holistic, positive and engaging experiences that support each student's learning, well-being and interests.

DIRECTIONS:

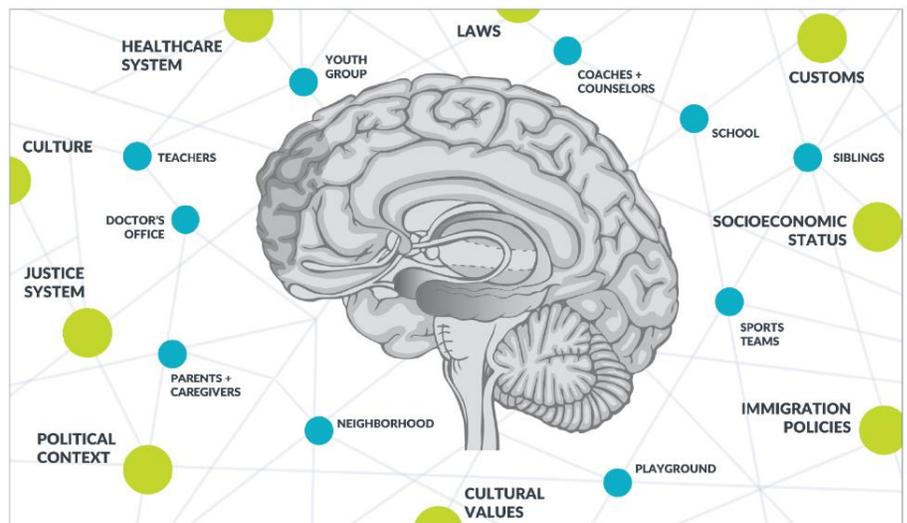
These tools do not need to be used in order. Instead, read through the tool overview and determine what next step(s) makes sense given the current state of community partnerships.

Inquiry Question: If you have worked in a school, you have probably been part of a conversation about a student who is struggling. Picture that conversation—how did it go? What did you and your team decide to do? Who was part of the solution?

Now, read the quote and look at the map of students' contexts below. What partners might you have leveraged to holistically support students? What might you have done to assure students' experiences aligned with Dr. Cantor's message?

Should we continue to offer menus of labels and interventions or conceive of a response that reflects a new, equitable purpose for education and learning settings that is encompassing, relationship-rich, holistic, rigorous and profoundly positive and engaging of students' interests and capabilities?

– Dr. Pamela Cantor



You are not alone if your system's response to students focuses narrowly on remediating an academic deficit. In intervention and enrichment systems, and as schools work to meet individual students' needs generally, responses commonly operate within silos and/or focus only on content areas to remediate. However, the science of learning and development tells us that the most effective responses are integrated, positive, holistic and built on a network of trusted adults in students' contexts. Use the following tools to envision what might be required to build webs of positive experiences and supports for students.

Tools Overview:

- **Student Web of Supports Planning Tool:** Identify three community partners to provide personalized supports for individual students based on their interests, strengths and needs.
- **Community Partner Interview: Intervention and Enrichment:** Initiate a conversation with a community partner about shared goals for students' intervention and enrichment experiences.
- **Menu of Options for Community Partner Collaboration:** Develop an approach to ongoing collaboration aligned with school and community partner needs for supporting students.
- **Managing Tensions in Community Partnerships:** Identify, manage and learn from tensions that emerge when engaging with community partners for intervention and enrichment purposes.

Student Web of Supports Planning Tool

PURPOSE

Identify three community partners to provide personalized support for individual students based on their interests, strengths and needs.

DIRECTIONS:

Read the sample to envision what webs of supports look like for students. Then, use the blank template to plan community-based supports as part of your intervention and enrichment team processes.

Implementation Considerations:

- ✓ In your context, for the specific students you serve, how would you partner with families and caregivers to identify and implement supports for each student?
- ✓ What existing structures (e.g., *tiered support meetings, student support meetings, grade-level meetings, community partnerships*) might you leverage to collaboratively approach holistic, community-rich supports for individual students?
- ✓ How does the current state of community partnerships in your school support this work? What might need to be enhanced to make personalized webs of supports even more effective?

SAMPLE COMPLETED WEB OF SUPPORTS

Relevant Context: It is Ryan's first year at Oakfield School. He has had a hard transition and is struggling academically. He enjoys his peers, is outgoing and has a strong desire to build community. When Ryan feels left out, he can be attention seeking. He is happiest when playing sports and most engaged when talking about fairness and making the world better.

Sample Caregiver Communication: *We're so glad to discuss ways to connect Ryan to the broader community here in Oakfield. One part of our intervention and enrichment system is making sure that students have access to enriching experiences with our community partners. We hope to learn more about how things are going for Ryan both in and out of school so that we can think together about what supports might be most impactful for him. Some examples of the types of partners we connect students to include tutoring, mentorship programs, sports and clubs, mental health and counseling resources, and faith and identity groups.*

Sample Caregiver Questions:

- What are some of the things that the student is interested in and enjoys?
- Is there anything the student needs access to (food, supervision, mental health supports, etc.)?
- Do you have any concerns that we might address through community partnership?

WEB OF COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORTS

Partner name	Kennedy After-School Program	Youth Mentors of Oakfield	Basketball League
Goals and hopes for student engagement	Structure and community after the school day during a previously unsupervised time, including a healthy afternoon snack. A portion of the time is homework help, and Ryan's teacher will partner with his tutor around reading goals. Also has interest-based clubs.	Something for Ryan to look forward to each week, and an opportunity to explore his new neighborhood and community while building trust with an adult. Ryan's mentor studied history and plans to expose him to local social justice work.	Opportunity for Ryan to be part of a team and engage in a favorite activity. The coach is awesome with social and collaboration skills. Games are an opportunity for his family to get to know other members of the Oakfield community.
Resources and logistics	Ryan can go directly to after-school five days a week. Publicly funded.	Free for student. Ryan's mentor will pick him up on Saturdays at 9 a.m. and drop him off at home or at basketball practice.	Fee covered by PTA's student support fund. Ryan's family is covering the cost of uniform.
Check-in notes	Date: 09/27 Ryan likes the computers club and has a good relationship with staff member John.	Date: 11/07 Ryan's first meeting with his mentor went well! He was late and there was a miscommunication about time—follow up with family to help clarify and remind.	Date: 09/10 Attended first game—Ryan was happy and seems close with one of his teammates who is in another class. Will see how to help get them more connected at school.

Student Name: _____

Guiding Questions for Collaboratively Identifying Student Supports:

1. What are the student and their caregiver(s) hoping for in terms of enriching and supportive experiences? What logistical considerations apply (e.g., *transportation, schedule, family or caregiver needs, resources and supplies, etc.*)?
2. What types of supports are best matched to the student's interests, strengths, needs and concerns (e.g., *basic needs such as food access or supervised out-of-school-time care, mental health counseling or groups, identity-based or culturally focused groups, athletics, clubs, mentorship, academic supports, or expansion*)? If you think about the enrichment and support that the student is experiencing at school, how might these additional supports complement, reinforce or fill a gap?
3. We know that experiences that are relationship rich, holistic, rigorous, profoundly positive, and engaging of students' interests can help optimize their potential. As you think through the list of supports, do they provide this? Is there anything you might change to better align with these criteria?

WEB OF COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORTS			
Name of partner			
Goals and hopes for student engagement			
Key contact(s)			
Resources and logistics			
History with student <i>If applicable</i>			
Check-in notes <i>Brief, ongoing check-ins about the student can facilitate deeper understanding and alignment of approach for both the community partner and school. Use this space to note anything that comes up in those ongoing check-ins.</i>	Date: Date: Date:	Date: Date: Date:	Date: Date: Date:

Community Partner Interview: Intervention and Enrichment

PURPOSE

Initiate a conversation with a community partner about shared goals for students' intervention and enrichment experiences.

DIRECTIONS:

Use this template to plan for a conversation with a community partner about how they might support your intervention and enrichment structures.

QUESTION OR TOPIC	NOTES
CONTEXT SETTING, AS NEEDED	
SHARE: Introduce yourself, your school, and your goals for the conversation.	
QUESTION: What are your organization's/program's long-term and current goals and priorities?	
QUESTION: What services or programs are you offering that support our students and families?	
SHARE: Describe how those programs are aligned with school goals, including specific goals for intervention and enrichment.	
STUDENTS SERVED	
QUESTION: What students from our school community do you currently work with?	
SHARE: If possible, share a story of impact and/or appreciation for the work that the partner has done with these students.	
QUESTION: How is your work with the students from our school going? Is there anything we should know to make this opportunity better for them? Are there any specific students whom it would be helpful to discuss in more depth?	
QUESTION: Do you have the capacity to work with additional students? If so, what is the process to refer them to you?	
RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS	
SHARE: Describe some school resources that might be supportive to the community partners' goals and needs. <i>(Note: This might include physical resources like space/equipment, or other assets such as trainings, etc.)</i>	
QUESTION: Would any of these resources be helpful? What else might you need? Do you have any resources that we might share?	
QUESTION: Do you have any resources you might bring into the school community?	

Next Steps:

Menu of Options for Community Partner Collaboration

PURPOSE

Develop an approach to ongoing collaboration aligned with school and community partner needs for supporting students.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Identify and discuss collaboration needs and goals for both parties.
2. Together, use this menu of potential collaboration structures to determine priority approaches aligned with needs and goals.

Drawing from the shared purpose of creating powerful, positive enrichment and support opportunities for your students, identify the top collaboration needs for both members of the partnership.

Top collaboration needs and goals for school: _____

Top collaboration needs and goals for community partner: _____

STRUCTURE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES / SAMPLE TOPICS
Asynchronous communication	Emails, newsletters, text messages, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling, including shifts and changes • Sharing community events • Brief student updates and considerations • Progress monitoring
1:1 check-ins	Dedicated time and space with the primary purpose of collaboration directly between members of the school and community partner staff or leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing student observations, needs and progress • Reviewing goals and data • Complex scheduling, including troubleshooting student transportation • Resource sharing and coordination • Family and caregiver support and engagement • Referring new students, or ending student engagement
Push-in to existing meeting structures	Existing meetings or structures, such as staff meetings, professional development, intervention and enrichment meetings, student conferences, school board and committee meetings	Each of these meetings has a unique purpose. When this purpose is aligned with a shared goal, consider using the existing meeting structure. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community partner attends student portion of intervention and enrichment or tiered supports meetings • Mutually beneficial professional development hosted by either the school or community partner • School and community partner could work together to advocate for resources or policies during a school board meeting
Community outreach events	Performances, events such as potlucks, volunteering, cultural celebrations, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrating and sharing accomplishments • Learning alongside community members, and understanding the community better
Bi-directional site visits	Visits from the community partner to the school, or from the school to the community partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding students, and how different contexts unlock their strengths and interests or reveal a need to meet • Building a strong relationship with the partner • Identifying potential resources to share or offerings to make

Recognizing that you will likely engage in a variety of collaboration structures based on emergent needs throughout the school year, identify two priority approaches to collaboration that you and the partner can both commit to over the coming year.

Priority Structure A:

We will use this structure to ...

Priority Structure B:

We will use this structure to ...

Managing Tensions in Community Partnerships

PURPOSE

Identify, manage and learn from tensions that emerge when engaging with community partners for intervention and enrichment purposes.

DIRECTIONS:

Use this resource to identify and reflect on predictable tensions that can arise when partnering to support and enrich students. This process can support each party in checking assumptions and collaborating to determine what is most effective for students.

GUIDING QUESTIONS	DISCUSSING TENSIONS WHILE MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take some time to have each party think about where you see yourself falling within this tension. Describe what this looks like in practice, and your rationale for your approach. What are students getting from this approach? What are the benefits? What blind spots might there be? Are there differences in your partner's approach that you might learn from? What have you learned from discussing this tension? How might you learn from one another to enhance students' experiences? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assure that a strong, relational foundation is in place. Start with curiosity and openness and remember that the goal is to learn, not judge. Work from shared norms for collaboration. Use empathetic and active listening techniques. Clarify and confirm understanding. Only initiate these conversations if both parties have the capacity to engage.
Examples of Tensions	
<p>Intervention and enrichment providers can vary in their need for structure. The absence of precise agreements for how time and space are managed may feel disruptive to one group and relational, engaging and creative to another. In contrast, structured environments may feel rigid to one group member but predictable, consistent and safe for another.</p>	<p>STRUCTURED FREE-FLOWING</p> 
<p>Among partners, there may be different priorities around providing support aligned with very specific goals and a targeted approach or more holistic experiences. When this tension is polarizing, it can make it harder to see how each approach may benefit students and have value.</p>	<p>TARGETED HOLISTIC</p> 
<p>Within the context of intervention and enrichment, there can be a tendency to see experiences as either remedial or expansive. When dichotomized, parties may lose the opportunity to learn about what effective, need-based supports can look like, or, in contrast, what it looks like to connect to students' passions/interests and to the world.</p>	<p>REMEDIAL EXPANSIVE</p> 
<p>Add Your Own:</p>	