



PARTNERSHIP HANDBOOK

Alumni for Public Schools

This handbook contains resources to help a college or university alumni group start and maintain a successful volunteer partnership with a school.

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For more information about how to form a partnership with a school, contact the APS Project Manager by phone at 773-553-1549 or by email at info@aps-chicago.org.

You can also visit the APS website at www.aps-chicago.org to see examples of other partnerships and learn more about the program.



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Mobilizing College Alumni to Support Public Education

Alumni for Public Schools (APS) grew out of a vision shared by John Fish and Oren Pollock, active members of the Princeton Club of Chicago who volunteered regularly at Theodore Roosevelt High School. Alumni from both Princeton and Harvard were involved in supporting schools through a variety of activities that benefited not only the students and the schools but the volunteers as well. Fish and Pollock saw alumni clubs as underutilized networks that, if encouraged, could form dozens of partnerships with Chicago schools that would **engage college and university alumni in meaningful service for students in Chicago.**

The Need for Awareness

In Chicago, the district-wide ratio of counselors to students is **1:360**. Volunteers from college alumni clubs can assist by providing individual attention and exposing students to postsecondary options.

Fish and Pollock saw a particular need for college and career awareness within the schools. Many students, especially first-generation college attendees, had few, if any, adults in their lives who could answer questions about what is involved in preparing for and succeeding at a college or university. These partnerships could give students valuable services and guidance from college-educated adult mentors. Fish and Pollock teamed up with Harvard club member Sandy Weissent to present their idea to other alumni in Chicago. **Alumni rallied around the idea** and formed partnerships of their own. In 2002 APS formed a board of alumni volunteers.



A GROWING NETWORK

By spring of 2005, seven partnerships had formed between alumni clubs and schools, and APS was able to hire a full-time staff person housed at CPS and devoted to supporting current partnerships and encouraging new ones. Arne Duncan, schools CEO, provided salary support for the first year and, since then, APS has received private support from the Gorter Family Foundation. The support of CPS has been instrumental to the development of APS, and has included the use of the Children’s First Fund, the Chicago Public Schools Foundation, as a fiscal agent, as APS does not have its own 501(c) (3) status.

With a Project Manager working full-time to strengthen current partnerships and promote the formation of new ones, the number of alumni clubs working with schools has grown to 30.

APS now provides a link and a means of communication between three key stakeholders:

1. the CPS central office
2. participating schools
3. volunteers from participating alumni groups

"I found it extremely useful to hear about the challenges that other partnerships have faced and the methods they've found to be successful. What struck me most was how much we all have in common, so workshops like this—where we can learn from one another—are a tremendous help."

Kate Tomford, Harvard alumna and volunteer at Walter Payton High School

HOW WE HELP

Volunteers and school representatives connect with each other at events like partnership workshops, which help them share best practices and equip them with the knowledge and resources they need to be more effective partners.

APS's board of directors is composed of alumni who are active in their clubs' partnerships, giving them the experience necessary to provide guidance and support for other alumni clubs. Through the board's participation in three committees, Outreach and Development, Special Events and Communication and Finance and Development, the directors guide the content of the workshops and the strategies for improving the quality of support for schools.

APS facilitates partnerships by matching a given alumni club with a school based on the school's needs and the club's resources. Once a partnership is established, APS supports the alumni club volunteers by helping them:

- organize activities
- communicate with their partner schools
- recruit more alumni volunteers

ALUMS IN ACTION

While many college and university alumni clubs are centered on social and athletic events, a significant number are finding that **community service is a common interest**, especially among younger alumni who volunteered during their time in college.

Drawing from their experiences at college and within their careers, APS volunteers

- tutor students in reading, math, test preparation and other subjects
- speak at career fairs and judge academic contests
- hold roundtable discussions about the college application process
- organize field trips
- complete beautification projects such as painting and gardening
- provide college counseling support

CONTINUING THE EFFORT

The number and quality of partnerships has increased drastically since APS's inception, but there is still room for expansion. We can improve the quality of support volunteers provide to CPS students by **equipping volunteers with the knowledge and resources they need** to be

effective partners. This work is accomplished by

- conducting training
- facilitating collaboration
- providing individual assistance to current partner alumni groups
- reaching out to untapped alumni groups to maximize the number of schools that can benefit from alumni club partnerships

"As a volunteer, I've really enjoyed working with the students as well as having the chance to meet other service-minded Williams alums. Volunteering gave me a chance to reconnect with the Williams community."

Sarah Dugan, Williams alumna and volunteer at De La Cruz Elementary

What is a Partnership?

The APS model for a partnership includes at least three activities planned within a school year, one or more of which is focused on college awareness.





PARTNERSHIP HANDBOOK

Current Partnerships as of September 2008

By Alumni Group

Alumni Club	Partner School
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity	Copernicus Elementary
Amherst College	Salazar Elementary
Beloit College	Andersen Elementary
Boston College	Stewart Elementary
Brown University	Columbia Explorers Academy
Cornell University	Penn Elementary
Dartmouth College	Pulaski Elementary
Duke University	Greeley Elementary
Harvard University	Walter Payton HS
Howard University	Corliss High School
Indiana University	Pritzker Elementary
Keller Graduate School	Overton Elementary
Kellogg Black Management	Dunbar Vocational HS
Knox College	Morgan Park HS
Miami University of Ohio	Trumbull Elementary
MIT	Jones College Prep HS
Morehouse College	Hope HS
Northwestern University	Lincoln Park High School
Penn State University	Goethe Elementary
Princeton University	Roosevelt HS
Purdue University	Kelly High School
Smith College	Kelvyn Park High School
Spelman College	Young Woman's Leadership
Stanford University	Reavis Elementary
Stillman College	Gillespie Elementary
Texas Southern University	Harlan Community Academy HS
Thunderbird	LaSalle Language Academy
University of Chicago	Sexton Elementary
University of Illinois	Gage Park High School
University of Iowa	Chalmers Elementary
University of Michigan	Taft High School
University of Notre Dame	Amundsen HS
Williams College	De La Cruz Middle
Yale University	Yale Elementary

By Partner School

Partner School	Alumni Club
Amundsen HS	University of Notre Dame
Andersen Elementary	Beloit College
Chalmers Elementary	University of Iowa
Columbia Explorers Academy	Brown University
Copernicus Elementary	Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity
Corliss High School	Howard University
De La Cruz Middle	Williams College
Dunbar Vocational HS	Kellogg Black Management
Gage Park High School	University of Illinois
Gillespie Elementary	Stillman College
Goethe Elementary	Penn State University
Greeley Elementary	Duke University
Harlan Community Academy HS	Texas Southern University
Hope HS	Morehouse College
Jones College Prep HS	MIT
Kelly High School	Purdue University
Kelvyn Park High School	Smith College
LaSalle Language Academy	Thunderbird
Lincoln Park High School	Northwestern University
Morgan Park HS	Knox College
Overton Elementary	Keller Graduate School
Penn Elementary	Cornell University
Pritzker Elementary	Indiana University
Pulaski Elementary	Dartmouth College
Reavis Elementary	Stanford University
Roosevelt HS	Princeton University
Salazar Elementary	Amherst College
Sexton Elementary	University of Chicago
Stewart Elementary	Boston College
Taft High School	University of Michigan
Trumbull Elementary	Miami University of Ohio
Walter Payton HS	Harvard University
Yale Elementary	Yale University
Young Woman's Leadership	Spelman College

Checklist for Starting a Partnership

How to Develop a Successful Partnership with a Chicago Public School

- Assess club interest** using an email blast or announcement at a club event, then gather interested volunteers and learn their interests and availability using the Alumni Survey (found on page 7 of this handbook or online at www.aps-chicago.org/alumnisurvey.shtml). Responses can be emailed directly to the APS contact or committee for your group.

- Identify a leader** or form a committee to manage the partnership.

- Meet with APS Project Manager** to discuss alumni's interests.

- The APS Project Manager will contact principals** of potential partner schools and arrange meetings with one or more of them.

- Meet at the principal and any other main contacts from the potential partner school** to develop a Partnership Plan (found on page 11) of specific volunteer activities. Check page 6 of this handbook and the APS website (www.aps-chicago.org) for activity ideas. During this meeting, the principal will also connect you with the school representatives who you will primarily work with throughout the partnership. The Project Manager will draft a Partnership Plan based on the discussion.

- Discuss the Partnership Plan** with the committee or whole club and commit to three or more specific activities, then confirm these with the school principal.

- Enjoy your first project** with your partner school!

- Report your activities** online using the APS Activity Reporting Tool, (found on page 12 or online at www.aps-chicago.org/reporting.shtml). This helps track your involvement and measure your partnership's impact

Top Ten Partnership Activities

By forming a partnership with a Chicago Public School, your alumni club can make a positive difference in the lives of students. There are numerous ways for an alumni group to get involved depending on the school's needs and the group's resources. Below are the ten partnership activities that have proven most effective for other Alumni for Public Schools partnerships.

1. **Tutor students in reading or math** – Meet regularly with students before, during or after school or on Saturdays to provide individual assistance for students who need it. Also, consider using an online tutoring program for added convenience.
2. **Judge a Science or History Fair** – A great way to participate with an event that may already be on your school's calendar. Judge the fair or meet with students beforehand to help them prepare their projects.
3. **Serve as Principal for a Day** - Encourage prominent alumni in your club to serve as Principals for a Day at your partner school on 30 October 2007. Alumni can get to know the partner school by touring classrooms and talking to students during the day.
4. **Hold a Beautification Day** – Improve your school's learning environment by working alongside students on landscaping, painting or decorating your school.
5. **Mentor or e-mentor students** – Form ongoing personal relationships with students, meeting regularly or communicating online. Mentoring can be one of the most meaningful ways to engage with students at your school.
6. **Talk to students about going to college** – Increase students' college awareness by speaking as part of a panel, a small group discussion or an assembly. Describe the college application process and the opportunities available to students during and after college.
7. **Speak at a Career Day** – Bring alumni to your partner school to speak about their professions and the job seeking process, advising students on how to pursue careers in the fields they are interested in.
8. **Host a student for job shadowing** – Give interested students a chance to experience your workplace and see how the skills they are learning in school will apply to their careers once they graduate.
9. **Help establish and support extracurricular activities** – Use your alumni's skills and interests to start or support an after-school activity such as a book club, robotics club or chess team.
10. **Collect and donate dorm supplies for college-bound seniors** – If you work with a high school, you can ease the transition to college life by providing supplies like sheets, phone cards, and reading lights for students from your school who are starting college.

Alumni Survey

Name _____ Class of _____

Email _____

Telephone (please circle one: *work home cell*) _____

1. Preferred age group (mark all that apply):

- Elementary (Pre-K – 8th grade)
- High School (9th – 12th grade)

2. Preferred geographic area or partnership school (mark all that apply):

- North Side West Side South Side Loop/Downtown
- Near North Side Near West Side Near South Side

3. Volunteer Preferences

a. Time Availability:

	8am - Noon	Noon – 4 pm	Evenings
Monday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b. Activities:

Interest, talent or hobby you could you share with students: _____

One-time projects—

- Speak to students about your career or college experience, hobby or background.
- Help students with college applications, essays or financial aid.
- Host a student for job shadow day.
- Accompany students on a field trip or other school events.
- Judge an academic contest (mark all that apply)
 - Science Fairs History Fairs Debate Other _____
- Participate in a beautification project (circle all that apply)
 - Painting Landscaping Organizing (e.g. library)

Ongoing projects—

- Tutoring, weekly or monthly
- Mentoring (≈1 time per month or e-mentoring)
- Coaching—could be a one-day workshop (circle all that apply)
 - Debate Sports Music Drama Other: _____
- Technology support or training

What talents or interests do you have that you could share with students?

How to Plan and Organize a Partnership

Initial Planning

Make sure both the alumni group's leadership and the school's administration are supportive of the partnership before moving forward. Identify one enthusiastic and consistent leader in the alumni club and at the school who will 'champion' the partnership and return phone calls and emails promptly. These leaders may assign another alum or school staff person to coordinate a particular project, but maintain one overall leader on both sides.

Time Management

Provide a range of activities with different levels of commitment. Generate a list of one-time activities to recruit volunteers without a lot of time availability. Utilize multiple time slots, such as early weekday mornings and Saturday mornings. Recognize that high school students often have difficulty attending Saturday events and elementary school students often have difficulty staying late at school (if they take a bus). Communicate with the school about time availability in order to schedule events on evenings and weekends.

Event Planning

Think big, start small. Avoid over-promising and under-delivering. When developing a new partnership, be careful not to think too broadly. Both the club and the school should be realistic about expectations and start with small, feasible projects that will not overcommit alumni. Understand your partner school's and principal's goals and plan accordingly. Set clear goals for your partnership with the school principal and school APS point person. For a larger program, such as tutoring, make sure to set realistic and specific goals.

Plan activities and dates far in advance. In particular, make sure to give the general alumni membership a lot of advance notice of ongoing or one-time activities, such as tutoring once a month or a career fair next May. Specificity increases the likelihood that more people will attend. Focus the scope of a particular partnership event, so you can give specific directions to volunteers and provide an achievable goal. Avoid giving volunteers unclear roles or too many responsibilities by being as specific as possible when developing projects and assigning tasks.

Piggyback on pre-existent, already-structured programs such as an after-school tutoring program or a Career Fair.

Transitions in Leadership

If the leader within the alumni club or school must change, plan carefully for this transition and make sure the alumni club membership, volunteers and the school staff are aware of the change. Sometimes, changing alumni club leaders might relieve over-taxed volunteers and re-invigorate a partnership.

How to Recruit and Maintain Volunteers

Contacting Volunteers

Club meetings or events such as a lecture series, cocktail event, game night, sports event, or bar night are often effective venues for describing a partnership to potential volunteers and gauging their interest. Some alumni groups have had success with utilizing their group's established methods of communication—such as e-mail or print newsletters and regular mailings—to get the word out about a partnership. When describing a partnership, it is often helpful to include pictures, testimonials, and details on specific opportunities for involvement to make the partnership tangible and appealing to potential volunteers. A story describing a connection between an alum and a student can be a meaningful way to convey the partnership's impact. Continue to provide updates via email or print about recent and upcoming activities.

Appealing to a Broad Range of Alumni

The partnership can provide a way to reach Chicago-area alumni in the alumni group who are not yet involved. Community service is increasingly prevalent in colleges today, and young alumni especially may be looking for ways to continue their service beyond college. It can sometimes be helpful to form an alumni sub-committee including alumni who have graduated in different decades who may be connected with different circles of people. Current students at your alma mater who are from Chicago may also be interested in getting involved while they are home over summer or winter break.

Scheduling Events

Retired alumni often have the most flexibility in their schedules and can commit to ongoing activities such as tutoring or mentoring, whereas younger alumni may not have as much leeway in setting their own schedules. In trying to address scheduling problems, some alumni clubs have found that Saturday mornings and weekday evenings allow for the greatest number of volunteers to attend. Activities held during the day, such as judging a Science or History Fair, should be planned and advertised as far in advance as possible to allow people to arrange their schedules.

Building Alumni Interest

Be sure to convey to alumni how a partnership is beneficial to the volunteers as well as the school. Partnerships reflect positively on the partner university's reputation, and they can be a way to form meaningful relationships with other alumni. When planning events, group alumni with similar interests and try to connect them with corresponding activities at your partner school, such as a group of alumni interested in the arts working with a Drama Club or those interested in engineering working with a Robotics Club.

How to Communicate Effectively with a School

Finding a Contact at the School

During your initial meeting with the potential partner school, you will work with the principal and any other main school contacts but they are not always the contacts designated for your APS partnership. During the meeting, you will be connected with the primary school representatives who you will work with throughout the partnership. Some of the most common contacts include:

- *AVID Teacher or GEAR UP Coach* – Some elementary and high schools participate in the AVID and GEAR UP programs, which focus on providing rigorous coursework for students in the academic middle. AVID classes often have time allotted for outside speakers.
- *Assistant Principal* – Some principals prefer to have their assistant principals manage the partnership. Often the AP has specific projects for which he or she could use volunteers.
- *Counseling Department* – Whether focused specifically on college or on general student support, counselors often have a first-hand understanding of students' needs, and should be able to direct volunteers to where they can be most appreciated and useful.
- *Local School Council (LSC)* – The LSC is made up of teachers, parents and community members, and can be a useful venue to discuss how a partnership can best meet the needs of a school.
- *Postsecondary Education (PSE) Coach* – Many middle and high schools have PSE Coaches who help students learn about work and school options after graduation. Many Coaches will be able to provide opportunities for volunteers to speak with students about college and career options.
- *Teacher or Department Head* – One option is to ask if there is a teacher who would be interested in managing the partnership. Teachers may have specific extracurricular or class projects for which they could use volunteers, and those that head a department will be able to provide volunteer opportunities relating to a particular subject of interest.

Meeting with the School

Before meeting with your partner school, it is often helpful to meet with alumni who are interested in the partnership to talk about the group's interests and resources. Using APS's Alumni Survey (page 7 or online at www.aps-chicago.org/alumnisurvey.shtml) and suggestions from the Top Ten Partnership Activities (page 6) to find out what kinds of activities alumni would be interested in (one-time or ongoing, physical labor or personal interaction, etc.).

When meeting with your partner school, be sure to establish common goals so each side knows what to expect from the other. Using the Partnership Plan (page 11) format, focus on setting specific, quantifiable goals and deadlines for action to ensure that meetings are productive. Finally, provide feedback by sending photos or written reports to your partner school after an event. Also, complete the Activity Reporting Form (page 9 or online at www.aps-chicago.org/reporting.shtml) and send it to APS to help measure the impact of your partnership on students, volunteers and school staff.

Accountability

The best way to ensure accountability in a partnership is by designating at least one person in the alumni club and one person in the school as primary contacts that will represent their organization in the relationship. Some principals will serve as the partnership contact themselves, while others will prefer to delegate the responsibility to another administrator or a teacher. It can be helpful to include multiple school personnel in the initial planning meeting and designate one person as the primary contact so if a problem arises with an activity or if volunteers need details on a particular event, there is someone at the school who can be contacted.



PARTNERSHIP HANDBOOK

Partnership Plan : _____ Alumni Group and _____ School
2007-2008 School Year

GOAL	ACTIVITIES	# STUDENTS IMPACTED / # ALUMNI NEEDED	TIME AND DATE	POINT PERSON(S)	EVAL/ MEASURE- MENT
1.	A.				
	B.				
2.	A.				
	B.				
3.	A.				
	B.				



Activity Reporting Form

Use this form to record details about an activity with your partner school. The information can be used to help measure your partnership's impact on both students and volunteers. You can also report activities online at www.aps-chicago.org/reporting.shtml.

1. Name: _____

2. Alumni Group: _____

3. Email: _____ 4. Phone: _____

5. Activity date and time: _____

6. Frequency (check one):

One-time

Recurring (How often? _____)

7. Description of activity: _____

8. Participants – How many of each group were involved in the activity?

Volunteers: _____ Students: _____ School staff: _____

9. Preparation – Approximately how much time was spent planning and preparing for the activity?

By volunteers: _____ By school staff: _____

10. What was successful about this activity? How could the activity be improved?

11. Would you recommend this activity to another alumni club? Would you or another volunteer be willing to speak with another alumni club about how to plan and execute this activity?

Please submit completed forms to the APS Project Manager by fax at 773-552-1541 or by email at info@aps-chicago.org