

# K-12 Partnership Report

## How Florida's K-12 Local Education Foundations Are Advancing STEM Education

The world of K-12 education is known for its array of acronyms, and few have received as much intense attention in recent years as STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.

National comparisons of how Florida students stack up in math and science scores don't paint a favorable picture. Eighth grade students in Florida are performing below the national average in both science and math. Students in the 4th grade perform at the national average but that average drops off by the time they are in 8th grade.

Internationally, the United States underperforms Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Japan, Korea, England, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Hong Kong, and the Russian Federation in 8th grade science performance, and of this list only the Czech Republic and Slovenia slide behind the US in math performance.

While the economy calls for a larger and more proficient STEM-talented workforce, enrollment and success in those courses is declining. As a nation, we're losing ground.

Florida's business community brings a sense of urgency to the need, particularly the need to increase specific STEM skills essential to our future workforce as we strive to build a new economy that is innovation-driven and no longer largely dependent on the three-legged stool of our past tax base: Tourism, Real Estate and Agriculture.

In 2009-10 the Consortium of Florida Education Foundations (CFEF) led the initial efforts for STEMflorida, a Workforce Florida-funded initiative to develop a business-led strategic plan for STEM

education in Florida. A series of business roundtables were held around the state in early 2010 to gather business input on the STEM-proficient workforce needed to drive Florida forward. One industry leader encapsulated the issue with a clarion call:

*We are in an educational arms race. If we in the United States, and if we in Florida, are successful in that education arms race then we will be the leaders of the global economy. If we are not successful, we will be working for the countries that are successful.*

– Susan Story, President & CEO, Gulf Power Company; March 1, 2010 STEMflorida Northwest Florida Business Roundtable

While national policy discussions on a number of the underlying issues continue, the Florida Department of Education has responded with the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS) that will be phased in over the next few years. The FCAT will be revised to reflect the NGSSS in 2011 for math and 2012 for science. New “end of course” exams will be phased in for students taking required courses in both math and science. Freshman entering high school in 2010 will have to pass the first EOC field-tested exam in Algebra 1 and take two additional rigorous math courses. By the fall of 2013, entering freshman will have to take and pass either chemistry or physics and another equally rigorous science course to earn a high school diploma.

Concerns have already been raised about how these changes will impact non-college bound students and Florida's overall graduation rate, which is currently at 80% overall. In particular, concerns have been raised on the impact on both college and non-college bound students enrolled in career academies which have been widely lauded by the business community. Enrollment in these academies has grown in recent years with the passage of the CAPE Act in 2007, which calls for developing industry-relevant career and professional programs where students graduate with industry certification in a chosen field along with their diploma.

The Florida School Boards Association (FSBA)

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is proposing that these Next Generation standards be modified to provide flexibility for CAPE Academies to implement applied math and science courses that are directly applied to their field of interest rather than standardized academic curricula. Widespread data and qualitative research supports their rationale, including the 2006 comprehensive study of high school dropouts by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation called “The Silent Epidemic.” That study revealed that 88% of the students dropping out had passing grades and cited that their top reason for dropping out was a lack of relevance in their class.

One could conclude that “more of the same” in terms of traditional classroom instruction with additional coursework requirements would not produce a better result.

### **The Perspective of Florida Local Education Foundations**

Amid this backdrop and ongoing policy changes, CFEF leaders have observed that K-12 local education foundations provide an opportune intersection for business and education leaders to have conversations about how they might work together to improve STEM education delivery. They can facilitate creative, homegrown approaches that are win/win/win scenarios for students, teachers and local businesses:

- Students benefit from relevant, real-world learning and introduction to STEM careers.
- Teachers obtain deeper content-area knowledge and new teaching strategies.
- Businesses increase their pipeline of STEM-proficient employees to meet their needs.

More than 200 business and education leaders from 45 counties who participated in 8 CFEF regional meetings in the fall of 2010 had the opportunity to engage in lunch conversations on this topic and share their concerns and ideas with those in neighboring counties.

Groups were asked to focus on the overall challenge of effective STEM education and specific strategies and opportunities for local education foundations with two questions to guide their conversation. The first question encouraged a high-level conversation around the question, “How can we prepare both college and non-college bound students for career – ideally in high demand, high wage, high skill fields and meet new graduation requirements?”

CAPE academies were pointed to as an effective strategy for engaging students in STEM disciplines that are focused on high demand areas, and several great observations on what makes them effective were made throughout the state. Comments included the following:

- *Career academies are important because they help to make connections, such as high school and job and/or college, job and career, getting from point A to point B.*
- *One way to facilitate this is to recognize that one size does not fit all and there should be different graduation paths to choose from that have different curriculum requirements based on the path the student takes.*
- *Develop equivalency programs in career academies that meet graduation requirements but with applications to careers that students are interested in rather than general textbook material.*
- *Strive for full immersion in a career track across all curriculum areas to capitalize on students’ interests (i.e., students in maritime academy reading about marine life, science labs focused on marine life, themed writing exercises, etc.).*
- *High school is not early enough to begin career academies and we need to do more in middle school -- helping students start making connections to career possibilities, taking appropriate courses and making an informed decision for high school programs.*

A disconnect between how today’s students learn and how teachers deliver instruction was also observed:

- *Teachers need to be content-area masters and technologically savvy to be effective STEM educators.*
- *Students are wired differently... we need to use a whole new toolbox with Ipods, Ipads, text messaging, etc. rather than traditional textbooks and chalkboards.*

Beyond these observations and strategies, many participants observed that there is a need to balance the need for STEM education with those students who do not have the desire to pursue STEM majors and/or careers. Comments included:

- *We need to prepare students to meet the increased requirements at lower grade levels.*
- *All students will need some level of STEM competency to function in our technology driven society, think critically, interpret data and be “STEM literate” citizens.*

### **Stepping into STEM: What Roles Can Florida’s Local Educations Play?**

A number of Florida’s local education foundation are already substantively involved in advancing STEM education through the career academy model, connecting educators and students with related businesses who step up with financial and in-kind support as well as industry expertise. In many instances, businesses that make long-term resource commitments are “branded” to career academies through the foundation (such as in St. Johns County). Others have developed a process for having

related industries play a role in curriculum development and inspecting the programs to provide their “seal of approval.” (Pinellas County)

In response to the second question posed at the fall 2010 regional meetings—“What role can local education foundations play in helping more students successfully choose STEM career paths and take appropriate classes?”—a number of specific programs and pilot projects already in place were discussed that could be adapted and adopted by local education foundations throughout the state:

- **STEM Teach-Ins**—Industries come into the schools and show the relevance between curriculum and real world application.
- **STEM Summer “Boot Camp”**—Students have three weeks of intensive exploration of different fields to give them an understanding of careers and the required skills for those industries.
- **“Field Trip to Your Future”**—Fund trips to various work locations to give students an understanding of career options and the education path needed to enter various fields.
- **STEM Career Fairs**—Illustrate the impact and need for these career fields, stressing they are exciting and well-paying, not just “a guy in a white lab coat.”

In terms of programs local education foundations can develop to help with the STEM instruction side of the equation, some are providing specialized training for teachers to help them develop new strategies for reaching students beyond textbook instruction. The “Engineers Teaching Algebra” program funded by the Education Foundation of Martin County shows teachers how to help middle school students understand algebraic concepts by solving real-world traffic pattern problems.

Additional ideas that surfaced during regional meeting conversations included:

- Provide teacher grants for innovative teaching methods including grants for teachers with high content-area knowledge to mentor other teachers.
- Foundations can support second-career teachers from a business, math, or engineering background who are willing to teach in their area of expertise.
- Ask businesses to provide in-kind support by providing a teacher or training and resources for teachers—help them understand how they will ultimately benefit from a well-trained and available workforce.
- Provide relevant and focused professional development for teachers to increase their comfort level with material and understanding of the classroom/workforce connection.

## **STEM at Work: A New Opportunity for Relevant, Real-world Learning**

Also in fall 2010, CFEF received a \$100,000 grant from the AT&T Foundation to enable member foundations to develop pilot projects for small groups of students to have workplace-related, hands-on STEM experiential learning opportunities. While the specific goals and curriculum areas vary, each is designed to increase student interest in STEM fields and answer the age-old question of students struggling to understand abstract math and science concepts: “When am I ever going to use this?” A total of 35 locally developed projects involving more than 2,477 students and 88 teachers are underway for the 2010-11 school year, including:

### The Physics behind Prosthetic Devices and Implants— Education Foundation of Collier County

Physics students will work with local business Structure Medical, Inc. to design and carry out a project to design and carry out a prosthetic device mathematics, technology and engineering.

### Virtuality to Reality—St. Johns County Education Foundation

Under the guidance of engineers from the Rulon Company, Sebastian Middle School students will design and acoustically sound hallway in for their school using all aspects of STEM education.

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### “Sublime”—Hernando County Education Foundation

Students will work with a variety of business partners including Savon Boats, Inc. and SCUBA West to build a human-powered submarine, conduct in-water testing of the hull mechanics and re-engineer as needed applying math and physics concepts.

### STEM Students Identifying Real Problems and Real Solutions—FUTURES Foundation (Volusia)

Students will work with Covidien at their local medical equipment manufacturing plant to identify problems and develop solutions to real-life manufacturing issues using Kaizen Initiatives engineering principles

### Cyber Security—Pinellas Education Foundation

Information Technology Academy students and teachers will work in partnership with the Science Center of Pinellas County to develop a course of study in protecting government, corporate and civilian computer networks from hacking and security breaches.

A report will be developed and shared with AT&T and CFEF members in July 2011 to encourage best practices sharing; we hope to learn more about how Florida’s local education foundations might serve as the bridge between the needs of educators to improve overall outcomes and STEM education advancement and the needs of business for a STEM-proficient workforce.

## **Exploring An Advocacy Role for CFEF & Florida’s Local Education Foundations**

In the meantime, additional observations from the fall 2010 regional meetings of local education foundation leaders, suggest there is a role for CFEF and local education foundations to play as advocates for both students and businesses when it comes to STEM education:

- *Recognize that “one size does not fit all” in terms of graduation requirements. There should be different graduation paths to choose from that have different curriculum requirements based on the path chosen.*
- *Develop a strategy to get the business community to persuade Tallahassee on what needs to be done, but recognize that it will be a challenge to get across the message about the impact of these career/technology programs.*
- *Support development of equivalency programs in career academies that meet graduation requirements but with applications to careers students are interested in.*
- *Encourage relationships within the local community; make sure everyone is informed about the industries on the Workforce Florida Target Occupations List for each region. Make sure this drives decision-making about programs and priorities.*
- *We can exercise our voice as a Consortium of business leaders directly involved in K-12 education to tell the decision-makers what we need to meet the expected outcomes.*

*Written by Mary Chance, Executive Director of the Consortium of Florida Education Foundations (CFEF).*



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## **K-12 Partnership** *Report*

Brett Pawlowski  
Editor and Publisher

The **K-12 Partnership Report** is the newsletter of record for anyone involved in connecting schools and their communities, including K-12 partnership practitioners, school foundation directors, and the business and community leaders who work to improve students’ lives and help to prepare them for the college and career opportunities that lie ahead. It is published 10 times per year (monthly except June and December) by DeHavilland Associates, 10101 Lampkin Way, Charlotte NC 28269. Phone 704.717.2864; email [brett@DeHavillandAssociates.com](mailto:brett@DeHavillandAssociates.com).

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# Thoughts from the Effective Education Partnerships Conference

On January 30, 2011, nearly 250 partnership professionals, foundation leaders, and business and community partners began arriving in Austin, TX to participate in the 2011 Effective Education Partnerships Conference. The conference was a combined program of DeHavilland Associates and the Texas Association of Partners in Education (TAPE), which hosted this national event as part of their annual statewide conference.

For those who were able to attend this three-day event, it was a time to network with colleagues from large and small districts across the country, and to learn from education, business, and community leaders about successful practices and proven partnership models. For those unable to attend, this article provides some of the key takeaways from the conference.

## The Partnership Field is Evolving

After starting the event with extensive boot camps and a networking reception on Sunday, the conference officially kicked off Monday morning with a keynote speech from Ranjit Sidhu, Senior Vice President of Strategic Initiatives for ACT's Education Division. Ranjit's career has tracked the progression of the partnership field, beginning with a leadership position at the now-defunct National Association of Partners in Education and now at ACT.

Ranjit made the point that, in order to thrive, partnerships must become indispensable by identifying and meeting critical needs in education. Part of that requires that partnership practitioners focus in areas of greatest interest to their community partners; today, that means turning attention to the ideas of career and college awareness and workforce preparedness. But even beyond that macro focus, partnerships must identify areas that are critical but are not being served through other means. Examples include isolating critical skills or knowledge sets that students need in order to advance academically (such as constructing complex sentences or working with large number sets) and meeting those needs when the school is not able. By providing a specific, measurable boost in critical areas, partnerships will become vital elements in a school or district education strategy.

Other EEPC speakers provided additional examples: Drew Scheberle of the Austin Chamber of Commerce, for example, spoke of the Chamber's work on issues

that were not the primary focus of area schools, such as increasing postsecondary attendance rates among graduating high school students. The Chamber is now helping students navigate and complete their financial aid forms, and working with students who need a final "boost" to graduate and find their way into a postsecondary program. Scheberle noted that the Chamber is also working with area colleges on developing a more standardized application, making it easier for students to apply to local institutions.



## An Interest in Improving Processes

One hot topic, heard often in the halls and discussed in various breakout sessions, was the need to become more efficient: in particular, many attendees were looking for ways to automate processes such as registering volunteers and tracking volunteer activities.

Fortunately new vendors have come online to provide services in these areas.

There was a similar interest in building more formalized partnership structures, with an emphasis on building and leveraging data collection and evaluation models to track and report on outcomes. There is a great deal to be done in this area.

## A Real Need to Connect, Formally and Informally

One thing became clear throughout the breakout sessions: There is some great work happening in districts across the country, but the partnership landscape is fractured: there are few, if any, networks offering proven models that can be adapted to local sites. (Programs like State Scholars are the exception, but even here there is no longer a single coordinating national presence.) Beyond the need for networks supporting formal programs, there is also a need for an informal network. Just as Texas has a professional network through TAPE, others across the country also need an opportunity to connect with, and learn from, their peers. This national conference was a solid step in the right direction—but it is clearly just the first step of many that needs to be taken here.

## Resource Links

Effective Education Partnerships Conference  
[www.eeepc2011.org](http://www.eeepc2011.org)

Texas Association of Partners in Education  
[www.tape.org](http://www.tape.org)

# Expert Roundup: Using Direct Mail

*KPR asks school foundation leaders for their best tactics*

As part of our occasional “ask the expert” series at KPR, we asked school and district foundation leaders across the country: [How does your foundation use direct mail?](#)

Here are their answers:

## One Element Among Many

Up until three years ago, direct mail was our only way of communicating with current and prospective donors. Today direct mail is an important element of our development plan, but not the only element.

We send direct mail invitations to events to our donors, fundraising campaign letters to current donors and prospective donors from purchased lists, and end of year appeals to current and prospective donors. Thank you letters are sent via direct mail. Our newsletter is now only sent electronically. Our annual report is available on-line and mailed upon request. Most of the items sent via direct mail are also sent via e-mail if addresses are available. We have found that offering the information via multiple channels is a successful approach; direct e-mails, e-newsletters, and facebook fanpage posts.

—Wendy Correll  
Executive Director  
Ann Arbor Public Schools Education Foundation  
Ann Arbor, MI

## Specific Program Support and PR

Our organization uses direct mail to connect with families our district serves while giving them the opportunity to honor teachers by making a contribution to the ACS Foundation in their honor. We also highlight our accomplishments, challenges and business partnerships using this medium.

—Leah Ferguson  
Co-Director  
Asheville City Schools Foundation  
Asheville, NC

## Email Instead of Direct Mail

We basically do not use direct mail at all. Returns for this have never been cost effective.

We do gather the information to mail special event invitations or holiday cards to donors. Most of our communication is done via email. When a donor has given a specified gift or grant we will use mail to forward photo's and personal thank you's.

—Keith Reimer  
Program Specialist  
BEST Education Foundation  
Garland, TX

## A Focus on the House List

How does Craven County Partners In Education use direct mail? This is the million dollar question that every foundation wants to know...what is the most effective use of your time, what gets you your biggest return, and who do you mail to?

In the 6 years that I have served as a part of our foundation, we have tried everything and found that a direct donor list is the most effective use of time and return on investment. We have purchased a direct mailing list from our Chamber of Commerce and spent more on printing, postage and time stuffing then we had when we used our donor list. We have also incorporated online giving and found that this is not an effective tool in our area.

—Jennifer Wagner  
Executive Director  
Craven County Partners in Education  
New Bern, NC

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# Social Media: Do We Want to Go There?

*Plotting your organization's social media strategy with outcomes in mind*

Social media channels are relatively new to the marketing playing field, but most don't realize that people have been socializing online for decades in online communities of one type or another. There were the bulletin board systems (BBS) of the 70s and 80s, then the web-based communities that grew along with the world wide web in the 90s. With the explosion of social media in the mid to late 00s, the concept of online community today has become central to a business' online and offline presence. People want to connect, engage, share, and learn, especially with people who have similar interests, or people they know and trust. Any type of organization, from colleges and universities, to non-profits, to large and small businesses, have the opportunity to create and foster online relationships that will support their overarching business and marketing goals, whether it's providing excellent customer service, championing a cause, gaining new customers, increasing enrollment, or increasing community or student engagement.

## A Brief Explanation of Social Media Tools in the Educational Context

Most are familiar with the Facebook-Twitter-YouTube triumvirate. On Facebook, there are personal pages, groups, and company pages. Teachers may use Facebook Groups to discuss assignments and disseminate information to a class. Schools may create a Facebook Page to market their education programs or build class unity and team spirit and try to grow their following to expand the reach of their message. Twitter is a microblogging platform that allows posting of messages limited to 140 characters to a wider audience. Twitter users can follow other users who have the same interests, and gain followers by posting interesting content and engaging with other users. Twitter has been used to encourage student engagement in class discussions, or hold discussions among teachers. YouTube videos are used to deliver lectures, recordings of school events, or student projects. Social media can also be used to spread the word about offline events, such

as conferences, seminars, or student events. All the great pictures taken at these events can be posted to Flickr, a popular photo sharing service, and then linked to on Facebook and Twitter. It's their nature to be interrelated, and there are scores of other social tools that can be used, depending your social media goals.

## Define Your Goals for Social Media

So what is it that you want to accomplish? You can strive for increasing the number of your Facebook "likers" or Twitter followers, but what does that number actually do for you? Rather, think about social media goals in terms of your business and marketing goals - or your classroom goals. Do you want to hire new talent? Do you want to position yourself as an authority on a particular subject? Do you want to increase student engagement? Knowing your goals leads you directly to knowing exactly who your audience is, which will help you deliver the right message and encourage better quality of your interactions. Remember, depending on your goals, it's usually the quality of your engagement, not the quantity, that helps you reach them.

## Evaluate the Social Ecosystem

Now that you know your goals and your audience, go find them! Conduct a discovery exercise of the relevant

A chart showing how various online communication vehicles can flow to your website



parts of the social “ecosystem” to find out where your audience (or potential audience) is already working and playing, listen to what they are saying and watch what they’re doing. If your audience is high school

students, you may find through your research that most high school students are on Facebook and rarely read their email. Based on that knowledge, you may want to drive high school students to a Facebook group, but not use email to reach them. Higher education students and educators may use Twitter more than younger students.

Also, do some competitive “espionage.” Visit web sites of schools similar to yours and see how they are using social media for their respective audiences. Find out how other teachers are using these tools. How are they using YouTube to disseminate information about their school or to conduct lectures online?

### Plot your Course with an Online Presence Map

Create a visual “presence map” of the social media channels in which you want to focus engagement, factoring in your business, marketing, or classroom goals, and the opportunities in the social media ecosystem that you discovered in the previous step. This presence map will give you a nice visual of the interrelationships among all of your chosen channels. Include other communication vehicles, including print pieces, email, and web site. In this example, all social media communication flows to the hub, which is your web site.

### Planning Your Social Engagement

Develop a content & activity matrix to help you plan out what channels you will use for particular activities. First, list out the various communication channels you use. Then list out the various activities over a period of time. Choose which will be the primary source of information, and then choose the supporting channels that will link to it.

Now that you understand the dynamics, strengths, and limitations of your chosen social media channels, this matrix will help you instantly determine:

- Where will we post messages? Facebook? Twitter? Email campaign? Blog post? All?
- When will we engage? What is the frequency of activity? Before, during, and after?
- What are our expected outcomes? More comments? More followers?

September				
Events	Date	Blog	Facebook	Twitter
Florida School Board Association Retreat	9/8 - 9/10	x		
Boys and Girls Club Nat'l Conference Atlanta	9/14 - 9/17	x	x	x
Adult and Community Educators of Florida (ACE)	9/27 - 9/30		x	x

*Example of a Content and Activity Matrix for planning your social media outreach*

### Getting Started

Above I introduced the Where, When, and What of social engagement. This step answers the “How.” At this point you know your goals. You know your audience. You know which social channels to use. Now for the logistics. Now you have to set up accounts on these social channels. That means usernames and passwords and emails...oh my! Be sure to document and keep in a secure place all of the accounts that you have set up, including the username or “handle,” the email associated with the account, and the password. Also, if you are supporting marketing efforts for an organization, make sure your usernames that are visible to the public are in line with your overall branding initiatives and consistent across all social channels in which you are participating.

There are several tools that allow you to manage multiple social media channels in one place, whether you want to post the same message to multiple networks, or just use one tool for all of your needs. TweetDeck offers desktop and web-based versions of their software that allows posting to not only multiple Twitter accounts, if you have them, but also to Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, FourSquare, Google Buzz, and more. Seismic.com also offers similar desktop and web-based tools for multiple social media channels. HootSuite.com, which is strictly web-based, is another powerful tool that has similar features to TweetDeck and Seismic. All three offer mobile versions of their software for various smartphones, including Android, BlackBerry, and iPhone.

### Managing and Moderating

After the Where, When, What, and How, it’s time to answer the question of Who – specifically, who is going to be in charge of posting messages and monitoring and responding to comments? Whether it’s one person or many, outline some best practices for engagement. For example, specify how often to monitor and respond to comments, or how to respond to positive and negative comments.

### Reporting and Measuring

Anyone using social media can measure their performance in some way, whether it’s simply looking

at how many followers you have on Twitter, or using a robust (and expensive) social media monitoring tool like Radian6 to measure “sentiment” and even ROI. However, if you took the time to set goals, you’re going to want to know if you’re meeting your goals. You can start by simply tracking hard numbers, such as weekly increase in Twitter followers, Facebook page fans, or YouTube video views, and then summarize the “sentiment” of comments and reactions (or lack thereof) in relation to specific events or activities simply by reading them. Tie your results back to your original overarching business, marketing, or classroom goals. Work with relevant teams, such as marketing or IT, to determine how social media is driving traffic to your web site, or the enrollment office, to see if there’s been an increase in enrollment. Or evaluate the difference in student engagement before and after using social media. Larger initiatives require larger measures, so think ahead about all of the potential stakeholders you may want to engage to help propel your strategy as well as to help determine whether it’s effective.

### Enjoy It!

Regardless of the scale of your social media efforts, take the time to enjoy the opportunity that social media gives you to directly engage and interact with people! It is a truly unique opportunity to converse, lead, educate, learn, and play with others, online, and in real-time. Hopefully these online interactions will also encourage more meaningful face-to-face interactions with customers, students, co-workers, and friends.

*Pia Simeoni is Director of Marketing for TreeTop Software Co., LLC, the Creators of SweatMonkey.org, a unique social network dedicated to building partnerships between students, schools and non-profit organizations. SweatMonkey.org provides hour tracking, crediting, and impact measurement of meaningful service learning, volunteer, and internship opportunities for students, schools, and organizations.*

**KPR Readers...**

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# Baltimore's Volunteer Management System

“Inside every challenge,” goes an old saying, “can be found the seed of an opportunity.” This was certainly the case for partnership leaders within the Baltimore City Public Schools who, when trying to manage multiple contact lists and meet the volunteer tracking needs of one of their major partners, ended up building an interactive system that is revolutionizing the way they work with the community.

## Origins of the System

Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS) is a large urban school district, serving 83,800 students through nearly 200 school sites. The district benefits greatly from the support of its community partners as it strives to meet the needs of its students; this support is especially important given the fact that more than 80% of district students qualify for the free/reduced lunch program.

One of the district's major initiatives has involved leveraging volunteers through the Great Kids Come Back program, in which community members help find children who have dropped out of school and encourage them to re-enroll. While one of the primary challenges of this program involves finding students who have left the system, a second challenge has involved tracking and communicating with all of the different volunteers and volunteer groups who support the program.

According to Deb Silcox, Business and Careers Partnerships Specialist with BCPS, “We put the ‘all-call’ out for volunteers to support the program, and as we built our own lists and added in the people who signed up, we ended up with around 4,000 people we wanted to communicate with - a huge number to manage.”

A second issue came up as a result of this call for help: Johns Hopkins University, one of the largest employers in the city, had decided to support employee volunteering, offering its workers with two paid days off to volunteer in the school system. Employees, of course, were required to prove that they had actually worked in the schools, which meant that some kind of tracking and verification effort had to be made.

Recognizing the need to manage large numbers of contacts, promote a range of volunteer opportunities, and verify participation on the part of volunteers, employees of the partnership office began to look at technology solutions to address these challenges - and the district's volunteer management system was born.

## Organic Development

Working with adcieo, a company experienced in building data solutions for education and nonprofit

organizations, BCPS began to look at developing a contact management system that would allow their contacts at Johns Hopkins to directly access reports on employee activity. Another thought early on: the system would need to be able to grow in the future to accommodate additional district needs.

Several interested parties came together to begin planning out the system requirements: this included representatives from adcieo, Deb Silcox and Michael Sarbanes from BCPS, and key contacts at Johns Hopkins; the project also received support from interns and others. Once the team began discussing what needs could be met, and what such a system could truly do to help with community engagement efforts on multiple fronts, system requirements began growing, and BCPS continues to fine-tune the system and look at additional features that might be added as new needs arise.

## Functions

The original vision for the system was that of a basic interactive tool; it now offers a full set of management, tracking and reporting features for not only volunteering, but also for other key areas of community engagement.

## Volunteer Management System

### Where:

Baltimore, MD

### Organization:

Baltimore City Public Schools

### Challenge:

Manage a combined set of volunteer contact lists of more than 4,000; provide a key partner, Johns Hopkins University, with activity reports on employees' volunteer work in BCPS schools

### Solution:

An interactive contact management and reporting system that allows school and district officials to post detailed information on volunteer opportunities, which volunteers can search either remotely or on-site.

### Expansion:

Originally focused on volunteering, the system now includes modules for donating and for finding partnership opportunities. Remote terminals continue to be installed in schools across the district.

### Outcomes:

This new system is now fully functional, and has already resulted in hundreds of effective volunteer matches.

In terms of tracking volunteer activity, BCPS has placed terminals at the front desk of schools: volunteers sign in and then sign out when they're done, which allows the system to track not only their time, but also categorize that time based on which activity had been selected. This allows the user, their employer (where appropriate), and BCPS to each pull up records showing how much time had been spent on each volunteer activity.

The system has strong matching capabilities: an interested volunteer can specify times and dates, types of projects, locations, student ages, and other criteria in searching for opportunities that would be of greatest interest to them. School officials enter data project specifics as they upload new opportunities into the system in order to make this type of search function possible.

BCPS' system has full communications functions, allowing them to send notices and opportunities to their partners. They are also able to ask volunteers to complete occasional satisfaction surveys, which helps them to gauge what kinds of experiences their volunteers are having.

Beyond the volunteer function, BCPS has also instituted partnership and donation components, allowing interested or current partners to go online to immediately find opportunities to help. The system offers reporting capabilities in these areas as well, helping BCPS leaders to easily report on community support.

### Results To Date

For a system that launched just months ago, BCPS has seen significant support: in addition to managing more than 4,000 contacts, they have already seen 249 volunteer opportunities uploaded from 42 schools; have terminals in place at 39 sites; and have 521 school volunteers registered. These volunteers include 193 from Johns Hopkins, a group representing 17 different departments from the university.

One lesson learned is to respect the need for training of personnel. In some locations, they found that school personnel were not enforcing use of the system, or were not prepared to help volunteers on its use; system training has made a significant impact on proper use since then. They have also

School and district volunteer coordinators enter opportunities through the portal shown above

found that if school and district leadership are supportive of the system, increased compliance generally follows.

Given their plans for district-wide implementation, it is clear that BCPS' volunteer management system has proven its value, and will provide tremendous value to the district's community engagement efforts going forward.

## Resource Links

Baltimore City Public Schools  
www.baltimorecityschools.org

adcieo  
www.adcieo.com

Volunteers can search for engagement opportunities using multiple search criteria

Position	School	Desired Skills	Date	Featured
Math Tutor	Central Office	Math	9/28/2010 - 11/4/2010 Tue Thu 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM	<a href="#">Sign up</a>
Back to School Event Volunteer	Central Office	Event Organization	8/19/2011 Friday 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM	<a href="#">Sign up</a>

# STEM Education Coalition Expands

*National STEM-focused partnership organization becomes standalone entity*

Over the past several years, the subject of STEM education (science, technology, engineering and math) has become a front-burner issue in the K-12 arena. To increase the impact of its efforts in this area, the STEM Education Coalition, a national organization focused on policy and advocacy, has recently announced a move to become a standalone organization.

During the past few years, the Coalition has grown significantly, both in terms of its membership and in its influence as an advocate for the STEM education community. Members of Congress and Executive Branch officials now regularly seek out the Coalition for its insight and expertise in STEM educational policy issues.

To build on its track record and on the relationships it has developed, key players in the STEM Education Coalition's leadership have offered their resources to establish the Coalition as a sustainable, freestanding organization capable of advancing the cause of STEM education at every level of government for many years to come.

The Coalition has therefore announced several new initiatives designed to increase the effectiveness and reach of the STEM Ed Coalition. These include:

## New Co-Chairs

The Coalition has been jointly co-chaired by the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) and the American Chemical Society (ACS). Under the new structure, NSTA will serve as Chair of the Coalition. ACS will continue to serve as a co-chair, and will be joined by the following organizations:

- National Council of Teachers of Mathematics;
- ASME Inc.;
- Microsoft Corporation;
- Education Development Center, Inc.; and
- The Hands on Science Partnership.

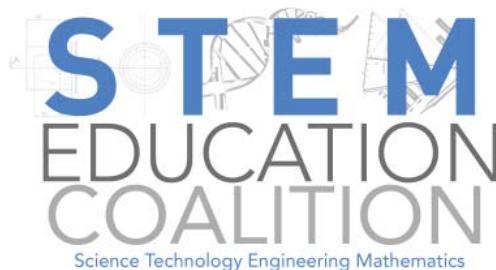
## The Coalition Council

The Coalition has formed a Coalition Council that will help guide the affairs of the group and will be responsible for helping to expand the Coalition, setting the advocacy agenda, and acting as a formal governing body. Membership in the Governing Council is open to any and all members of the Coalition who commit to support the Coalition through annual membership dues. These dues will be used to augment the Coalition's

communications and advocacy initiatives and generally raise the profile of STEM education.

The Coalition Council currently comprises the following organizations:

- National Science Teachers Association
- American Chemical Society
- National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
  - ASME, Inc.
  - Microsoft Corporation
  - Education Development Center, Inc.
  - Hands on Science Partnership
  - Association of Public and Land Grant Universities
  - American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
  - Business Higher Education Forum
- American Society for Engineering Education
- ASTRA – The Alliance for Science and Technology Research in America
- Battelle
- National Association of Manufacturers
- Afterschool Alliance
- Education Testing Service, Inc.
- Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy/Committee for the Advancement of STEM Specialty Schools



## A New Executive Director

James Brown, longstanding Co-Director of the Coalition and formerly employed with ACS, will serve as the Coalition's newly created position of Executive Director.

## Moving Forward

Organizations that currently belong to the STEM Education Coalition will remain members under the new leadership structure, considered as Affiliate Members of the Coalition. Affiliate Members will continue to receive regular email updates and will have the opportunity to sign letters to policymakers as before.

Organizations interested in joining the Coalition Council and enjoying the full benefits of Coalition membership should contact the leadership to learn about dues and benefits.

## Resource Links

STEM Education Coalition  
[www.STEMEdCoalition.org](http://www.STEMEdCoalition.org)