Report
Planning Project
Exchange Programs for Small Businesses and Schools

A Joint Project of
The Institute for Educational Leadership, Inc.
and
The Small Business Foundation of America, Inc.

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INTRODUCTION

In October, 1984, the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) and the Small Business Foundation of America (SBFA) were awarded a planning grant by the U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of the Chief Advocate, to identify and assist four school districts, two in Massachusetts and two in the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area, to plan and develop pilot exchange programs for small businesses, educators and students. IEL and SBFA planned to identify four likely communities through their respective networks education and small business leaders.

The roles of the two organizations with the four sites, beyond assisting in the initial convening, were to assist in meetings to bring small businesses and local educators to improved mutual understanding of each other and to assist in the process of identifying some pilot efforts which would bring the small business community into more active involvement with the school system in each community.

The overall purpose of the project was, through four modest pilot efforts, to observe and document the process by which small businesses and educators begin to develop some productive areas for exchange programs and possible frameworks for continuing relationships. IEL and SBFA undertook the project knowing that, despite the current national agenda for business/schools collaboration, bringing small businesses into ongoing activities with schools poses unique challenges. Our hope for this limited planning project was to learn something from the process which will help inform both the small business community and school systems of other communities about what can work and what
strategies seem to promise the most success in bringing together small businesses and schools.

The project was successful in initiating planning and identifying areas for collaboration in two communities -- Montgomery County, Maryland and East Boston, Massachusetts. The success of an ongoing project in Springfield, Massachusetts has also been documented by SBFA for one of the case studies because the project is illustrative of strategies essential for small business and school system exchanges. The SBFA attempted to initiate development of planning in other communities in Massachusetts, but met with various barriers which are discussed in the case studies.

IEL, while gaining the commitment of the City of Alexandria, Virginia Public Schools to participate in the project in November, 1984, has to report that planning for concrete exchange activities initiated through this project has not progressed in that community. The experience with Alexandria is also documented in the case studies. It is illustrative of the result of not having in place an essential ingredient for developing these relationships -- an individual (who may be from either the education or business sector) who assumes ownership and strong leadership in the planning process and stays with the project during development and first activities.

BACKGROUND FOR THE PROJECT

This planning project developed from a working conference sponsored by the U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of the Chief Advocate and the Institute for Educational Leadership in November, 1983. The conference brought together national representatives of the small business community and major national educational organizations to discuss issues and strategies for linking small businesses with local school systems.

The genesis for the conference and, in turn, the planning project was a recognition by the U.S. SBA and IEL of two factors. First, many job are created and new industries developed from small businesses, and small businesses depend upon the products of the local schools for their labor force to a greater extent than large corporations which typically have more substantial internal training programs and can recruit more broadly. At the same time, however, current initiatives for developing business/education partnerships and strategies for collaboration focus mainly and most visibly on links with large corporations. Involvement of small businesses with school systems is largely on an ad hoc basis, is frequently limited to vocational and career education, and is not well documented. Further, few structures have been developed in communities that bring the small business community together in an ongoing dialogue with school systems.
Several different foci for small business/education collaboration emerged from the conference:

- career and vocational education: exposing students to various career opportunities and collaborating in training of students;

- entrepreneurial education: helping students to understand the opportunities and requirements of owning and operating their own business;

- economic education: educating students in the workings of the American economic system;

- general assistance to education: supporting the basic mission of schools to educate by engaging in a number of activities, e.g., tutoring students, teacher training, teacher and student awards, adopt-a-school; and

- forums for exchange of information: identifying needs and creating opportunities for ongoing discussion between a school system and the small business community to further the interests of each.

The conference highlighted several considerations that educators should bear in mind as they seek the involvement of small businesses. These considerations were shared in the beginning with the school systems participating in this project. Considerations for working with the small business community include:

- Small business people run their own businesses and carry out community service activities themselves. If you want to involve the small business person, this must be done on a time schedule that reflects and respects his/her immediate involvement in running their businesses.

- Large group discussions are more likely to turn off small business people. They are accustomed to moving independently as entrepreneurs. Organizational meetings are necessary but should be of limited duration. An action agenda is needed.

- When seeking small business involvement, goals and objectives should be clear, timing clearly defined and commitments explicit. Educators should know what they want to do and why before approaching small businesses.

- Grandiose plans are not likely to be fulfilled with small businesses. Small business people will be put off by projects that take forever and become entangled in the bureaucratic machinery of the school system. Build on small successes.
- Do not make the mistake of failing to follow-up after seeking small business involvement. Small business people rely on their reputations for fulfilling commitments. They will expect educators to do the same.

- Given the size, diversity and number of small businesses in a community, the process of building relationships will require use of an institutional structure, whether that is an existing structure, i.e., Chamber of Commerce, the local chapter of a trade or service organization, or a new structure such as public school foundations which are being established in a number of communities across the country.

Two often important political factors that are also significant reasons for bringing educators and small business people together were also raised through the conference and were part of preliminary project discussions with educators. First, small business owners are an important political constituency for school systems, but are likely to have some of the cynicism about public education that exists in large corporations and the general population. Small business people frequently have few opportunities to learn first-hand about what is the reality in school systems. It is important for educators not only to develop concrete activities with small business people, but also to focus information strategies to help small business persons to understand their local school system. Second, small businesses may well be among the opponents of measures to increase school revenues because of the impact of tax increases on their businesses.

A number of different ideas were proposed at the end of the conference to further the relationship between small business and education. This planning project of the Institute for Educational Leadership and the Small Business Foundation of America was undertaken in response to one of the suggestions: research should be conducted to develop a better understanding of the processes and structures through which educators work with small businesses at the local level.

**PROJECT STRUCTURE AND START-UP**

IEL and SBFA developed some guidelines for structuring the project. Among these were:

- focusing on involvement of small businesses of no more than 150 employees;
- involving those small businesses that are most dependent on products of local schools for their labor pools, are relatively stable in size, have a history in their community and are least apt to leave the community; and

- attempting to involve some small businesses that are newer and exhibit high growth potential and which may perceive themselves as less dependent on the local schools and not necessarily having indigenous ties to their communities.

As stated before, issues growing out of the November conference provided the organizing framework for identifying major areas for documentation in the case studies and for developing initial agendas as communities began discussing and planning. The SBFA and IEL, given the short duration of the project and very limited resources to support staff time for the project within each organization, did not expect that there would be full functioning partnership programs at the end of the project. We did expect, and subsequently as the communities were defined, communicated our expectation that some first concrete activities would have been defined and next steps for these determined within the timeframe of the project.

As stated in the proposal to the U.S. Small Business Administration, we started in the role of catalyst to help small business persons and educators to come together. The project began with the task of identifying four communities for project planning activities. The SBFA started this task working through its network of contacts within the small business community in prospective Massachusetts communities. IEL reached out through its contacts among school superintendents in the Washington, D.C. area.

**PROJECT START-UP**

**Massachusetts Start-up**

Outreach through the small business community became a case of one step forward and three steps back. The following documents the experience of the SBFA in its attempts to identify communities for the project.

**Worcester, Massachusetts**

Lack of business contacts was not the problem. Well-connected in the small business community, SBFA began with that route, looking for places and people where partnerships were ongoing or interest had been expressed.

Exploratory activities began with the Worcester Chamber of Commerce. The community, one hour from Boston, Springfield and Hartford, Connecticut, is traditionally heavy in manufacturing.
It is primarily blue collar and also supports a large but declining farm population. The city is ethnically diverse.

Worcester has had for several years an extremely active school/business partnership program. It had been a model in the state. The partnership forged through the Chamber is piloted by the Norton Company and a major construction firm. Since both are large businesses, each can devote a full-time staff person to serve solely on partnership programs.

The SBFA project staff person met with representatives of the Chamber and educational institutions. The suggestion to them to begin a partnership with only smaller companies, expanding their successful program, was confronted with the following deterrents:

1. The current partnership was now firmly rooted and the need was to concentrate on improving current programs.
2. Smaller companies were involved in the partnership in a limited fashion which was their own choice. No smaller businesses had come forward to ask to do more.
3. There was no staff person at the Chamber who could devote time to a specific school/small business partnership. Smaller businesses did not have the resources to send their own representatives.

The conclusions of SBFA staff following this meeting were that the Chamber did not need smaller businesses to continue or enhance their existing successful partnership and the small business community seemingly did not see the need for developing partnerships with schools. Unless the Foundation provided staff and money there was no interest in continuing the conversation.

Northshore, Boston, Massachusetts

The Northshore of Boston has communities ranging from affluent suburbs to blue collar towns. The range of industry is equally diverse. The glue for this potpourri of cultures is the Northshore Chamber of Chamber. It has 100 members and is extremely active and well-led.

Following an expression of interest by the volunteer president of the Chamber, SBFA attempted to open up planning discussions, but was unsuccessful. The volunteer president (there is also full-time staff) is also active in the Smaller Business Association of New England, a large small-business trade association. The president had expressed interest in establishing a partnership similar to one in Burlington, Massachusetts. That program is essentially a fund from which all
forms of programs receive funding. While donations come from the business community, programs funded are not strictly business related.

With a model in place it seemed the path would be smooth for gaining Chamber commitment and beginning planning. Attempts at even establishing a meeting were completely unsuccessful. After several months of trying to move the project by phone calls and letters, SBFA met with the formerly enthusiastic volunteer chamber president. When queried about the seeming lack of interest when interest had earlier been expressed, she stated she simply could not gather together a committee. Each person she contacted was fearful of the time, money or both, that commitment to a partnership would entail. And, since there was no staff time available through the Chamber, the idea did not move forward.

The Educational Community - False Hopes and Promises

While continuing the search for a friendly alliance, SBFA began to canvass the educational community as a source of leads for identifying commitments for the project. By this point in the project, SBFA was considering the possibility of identifying small programs already in progress for expansion within the project.

Massachusetts Department of Education Small Group Meetings

In the course of conversations with education groups, SBFA learned of a planned series of six meetings across the state to be sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Education. The purpose of these meetings was to explore strategies for and barriers to establishing business/education partnerships. SBFA staff were told that involving small businesses in these meetings was a major objective and Foundation staff attended the meetings hoping to identify possible communities for the project and to enrich observations about involvement of small businesses.

The proceedings of these meetings, held in Boston, Springfield, Lakeville, Worcester, Pittsfield and Reading are now being processed, but the overall theme which emerged around small business involvement was the same at each meeting -- too little time, not enough money and little or no capacity for staff involvement.

These small group meetings revealed the difficulties in involving small business people in these kinds of activities. The meetings, by design, took place outside of the major metropolitan areas in the hope that they would attract smaller businesses. Mailing lists of large and small businesses were used. The vast majority of attendees, with the exception of the Lakeville
meeting, were representatives of larger businesses. Attendees at the meetings were primarily human resource personnel.

At each discussion session it was agreed that smaller businesses should be and needed to be more involved. The overall solution was only shaking of heads. No one ventured any concrete approaches, always returning to the barriers of time or money. Yet, each of the small group meetings voiced another theme by educators and business people alike - business, as a whole, was not doing enough in terms of involvement with the schools. The involvement and expertise could and should be time, it could be money, it would be nice if it were both.

No possible project communities were identified at these meetings.

**East Boston and Springfield**

A lead from the Governor's Office of Educational Affairs brought information on several well designed school volunteer programs, each wishing to increase small business involvement.¹

Several communities across the state have highly organized school volunteer programs. They are separate non-profit organizations that work with the school systems yet are independent of them. Boston and Springfield are two active areas.

Springfield, because of its demographics, became an ideal location. To include Boston in this project, several meetings were held with the group of volunteer association staffers. A decision was made that East Boston, again for its demographic make-up, would be a good choice for a beginning dialogue.

The lead from the Governor's Office facilitated identification of possible communities for the projects, but the rest was not easy.

**Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Start-Up**

In contrast to the problems experienced by SBFA in identifying communities for participation in the project, IEL gained early commitment of two area school systems for participation in the project. However, IEL, like SBFA, ultimately experienced a great deal of frustration in moving the project along even though it easily and early on identified the communities. The superintendents of Montgomery County, Maryland and the City of Alexandria, Virginia Public Schools expressed enthusiasm for the project as a catalyst for helping their school system to meet

¹. For further information contact Susan Freedman at the Massachusetts State Department of Education.
objectives for broadening the involvement of business with their schools.

Montgomery County

This school system has strong involvement of small business in some of its vocational programs but no organized outreach to the small business community existed. The Montgomery County system is a very large system of over 100,000 pupils serving a county made up of communities with many local business organizations. The County's economy is dominated by smaller businesses of both indigenous and newly established growth companies. Developing long-term strategies for involving the business community with the school system is a major priority for the school system. Organizing this involvement to include small businesses poses the usual problems and, in addition, the problems arising from the single school system having to develop outreach to multiple communities and business organizations.

The City of Alexandria

This is a small school system in the Washington, D.C. area of approximately 12,000 pupils with a growing minority student and community population. The city's economic base consists almost entirely of small businesses and new growth in the location of offices of national associations and agencies. The school system has a high per pupil cost due to its small size and its attempts to maintain quality for an increasingly diverse student population. Developing improved understanding of the school system and developing the business community as a political constituency of the system are increasingly important to Alexandria.

In November, 1984, the first planning meetings were held with the persons identified by each of the superintendents to take the lead in the systems' involvement in the project. Specific progress and lack of progress of the project in each of the communities is described in the case studies section.

Comments on Project Staff

There were some general constraints endemic to the project that did have an impact on project start-up for both SBFA and IEL. We were attempting to get a new activity underway well into the school year. The original timeline in the proposal letter was for project start-up in July, 1984, which would have allowed identification of communities and initial planning prior to the start of the school year. The grant was made, however, in October, 1984. While the objectives of the project were in line with superintendents' priorities in the two school districts in the Washington, D.C. area, responsibility for involvement in
the project was given to busy staff people with other major projects for which they were already responsible.

The project did not include resources to "buy" a small percentage of a school system or business organization staff person's time to provide necessary emphasis and leverage within the timeframe of the project. Finally, consistent with our premise that activities in each community should be perceived as locally initiated, the school systems wanted to be the initiators in the first organized outreach to the small business community and IEL's initiating the meetings as a possible avenue for getting started was not considered desirable.

Following the first frustrating months of outreach for both SBFA and IEL, there are two apparently solid new initiatives, one in East Boston, Massachusetts, and one in Montgomery County, Maryland, resulting from this project. In addition, we have documented a successful project in Springfield, Massachusetts and our attempts to initiate action in the City of Alexandria, Virginia. Both of these add to our understanding of the dynamics of bringing the worlds of local school systems and small businesses together. We believe these experiences can help both school systems and small businesses in other communities in coming together to meet goals for improving public education and helping the schools to be responsive to the needs of small businesses.

CASE STUDIES

Massachusetts

Springfield

Springfield is an old, small city which has experienced the problems common to these older manufacturing communities in Boston.

The past few years of the boom in high technology have breathed new life into Springfield. Because of low rents and a better overall quality of life, Springfield is reviving. An overt strategy of the community is improving the schools. As part of the effort for improvement of the schools, the School Volunteer Program decided to bring the space age to Springfield.

By the time Springfield was identified for a case study, general patterns were emerging regarding establishing a small business/school partnership.

1. The process was not at all easy.
2. Lack of time, money and both in combination were a serious deterrent to a small business even vaguely interested in public school education.

3. Chambers of Commerce, unless this became the project of the year, were equally disinterested because of their own staffing and money constraints.

4. A single, respected, committed leader had to emerge to make the process work. It did not matter if the individual was from small business, education or the non-profit sector such as a chamber or school volunteer program.

5. An individual, working on his/her own, could also begin the process of developing a partnership project. Such a project would probably be much smaller than a group effort, but it could also be of superior quality, resulting from the relationship and commitment of the individual.

Characteristics of the project in Springfield reinforce findings for patterns 4 and 5. Larry deRose, an individual small business entrepreneur, personally initiated a project with the Springfield schools and has continued his commitment and personal direction of the activities.

Larry deRose, a young man with a successful small company, was connected with the NASA space program. His laser welding technique was used to weld together sections of the space shuttle. DeRose's wife is a school volunteer in the Springfield school system. Therefore, it seemed natural to ask her if her husband could produce an astronaut to speak in the schools.

DeRose went beyond this request. He felt that what the students needed - all students - was not to see an astronaut but to actually put their arms around high technology. He inspired a high-tech expo. It was not to be a science fair nor a career day for high technology, but rather a hands-on, demonstration oriented, touching and feeling expo where students could see in action several new technologies that otherwise simply would be words on a page.

Again, the idea did not stop on the drawing table -- deRose took it through to its completion. His motivation was as entrepreneurial as is his philosophy and company. He sees in today's students a major gap between what was taught as technology in the classroom and what was truly going on in the students' lives. He saw this magnified one-hundred fold in the teachers' awareness level.
He saw teachers fearing to introduce new concepts because they thought that the students were not yet ready to learn those concepts. In effect, he will state that teachers were themselves unaware of how to introduce the new technologies. DeRose contends and has proven that the laser concept can easily be presented to nine or ten year olds who are not scientifically oriented.

Thus, the High Tech Expo was developed. DeRose worked closely with the school volunteers. He gave his own time. He does not have a staff person to commit to the project. But he made a commitment to the teachers, to the students and to himself that he would carry it out.

The program is currently in its third year. This year he worked with several students who actually performed laser welding demonstrations at the Expo.

The program has multiple rewards:

- it aids in career choices and opinions;
- it exposes all teachers and students in a hands-on fashion to the new technologies, thus reducing fear and enhancing learning;
- it exposes the average student to the many applications of the technology. It shows them they don't have to be designers to be involved in new technologies; and
- it shows clearly to industry what its own route is in the information transfer process.

Larry deRose is not out to perform educational miracles. He is a one-man partnership and his involvement costs nothing but his own time. That time has already been paid back. One student after seeing the Expo called deRose. The student wanted to build his own laser. deRose gave him a corner of the workroom floor, catalogues and the willing ear of one of the engineers. And, while the student was ultimately unsuccessful in building his own laser, there is no question in deRose's mind, or from anyone who hears the story, that the entrepreneurial spirit has been promoted in the most positive of learning environments with a business person who both cared and shared.

DeRose developed the idea for the Expo himself. He helped to formulate the program with some assistance of the Springfield school volunteers. Essentially, he does most of the work.

"If you limit yourself to a single project, you'll find the few days necessary to get it done," he suggests. "Any role is
helping the community to provide stable employment. I am investing in the next generation” he adds.

The other important aspect of the expo program, deRose said, is that it is aimed directly at the students. This is important to him as, with his limited time, he can see the results of his assistance immediately. "This type of project is an easy and painless way to get involved," he said.

DeRose advises on new nuances and becomes more heavily involved as the time for the event approaches. He estimated he gives no more than a day a month on average. That day has gone a long way.

EAST BOSTON

It was March when SBFA began its outreach in East Boston. That geographical community segment of Boston was picked for several strategic reasons:

1. Interest in such a program had been expressed by the local Chamber and other business people;

2. The community is separated by two tunnels from the rest of Boston. Students in that community are exempt from Boston's busing plan and thus a sense of a small community's relationship with the schools exists;

3. The community, which is largely Italian, is close-knit and cohesive. Persons who live in East Boston from childhood tend not to migrate from the community;

4. The largest employer is the Massachusetts Port Authority. (The airport is in East Boston.) In the private sector, the majority of businesses are small, often family-run establishments; and

5. The high school is considered one of the best in the Boston system.

In March, discussion began with the principal at the high school. He knew there were several community members who wanted to bring the community and schools closer together. He was also interested in whatever could be put together as long as he did not need to commit his staff or any resources.

SBFA then met with the local Chamber of Commerce. Linda McGregor, through the school volunteers program, was already known by some of the members, thus establishing her credibility. She spoke of the need for small business involvement, the fact
that the Foundation and School Volunteers would assist in the program they wished to begin and that the schools were ready.

The meeting was too nebulous in focus. No leader emerged from the group and SBFA could pursue this route no further. A new approach was tried. Knowing of the small town, close-knit community flavor of East Boston, a search began to find, inspire and befriend a community leader. That person turned out to be Ted deAlphano. A retired electrician, deAlphano was the former president of Kiwanis. The Kiwanis is much more active than the Chamber. DeAlphano was much more well-known and well respected in the community than any one else suggested or talked with to that point. It then took two more months to arrange a meeting with deAlphano.

During that meeting, he talked of two areas that were important to him - the need for all students to graduate and have a goal, and the need to help the students get jobs.

Linda McGregor then talked of the Occupational Resource Center (ORC) in Boston, a vocational career center serving all Boston high school students. The school is located in Roxbury, a predominately Black section of Boston.

DeAlphano not only was familiar with the school but had sent a son through it. Linda told him that the school because of busing, staffing and scheduling issues, was not producing the educational results anticipated with its establishment. In effect, it needed input from the community. East Boston was a good place to start. (The school is a special quasi-vocational school. It goes beyond traditional voc-ed training and encompasses English language arts as well.)

DeAlphano invited SBFA project staff to a Kiwanis lunch to present the proposal. He gave the names and addresses of the membership and gave permission to use his name when writing to them. Two weeks later the Kiwanis lunch took place, but not before some serious homework.

First, there was now a concrete project for the group to embrace. Second, through a Small Business Foundation Board member who is chairman of Massport, bus transportation for the Kiwanis Club trip to the ORC was arranged. In short, logistical problems were anticipated and SBFA and the East Boston schools had the support of deAlphano, a respected member of the business community.

As an extra attraction, the President of the Club had a child currently in the ORC. He had strong words for its good points. He also had strong words for its bad points.

The end result was that the club would travel to the Center on a Massport bus sometime in September. School volunteers
will carry the lead until the coalition is more firmly established. The straightforward discussion of what was needed by the Center and how the Kiwanis could help was easily digested and understood. As defined, we have asked the Kiwanis to give the ORC input from a technical standpoint on what should be taught. The ORC needs to be updated in its curriculum. It also needs community involvement.

SBFA learned from the earlier mistake of having the first meeting without focus, without a leader and without a precise payback to the organizing group. By the time deAlphano was approached, the community was better known and understood.

As the project was left, the time commitment may be a group meeting at the school and then, at the direction of school officials, small business persons' involvement will be on a more one-to-one basis. Further steps will be determined at a later date.

Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area

The two case studies describe a successful effort to initiate activities in one school system and a less than successful effort to date in another. As stated earlier in this report, IEL had no problem in gaining positive decision from the top leadership in each of the school systems. However, the length of time required for getting well under way in one system and the minimal concrete activity in the other illustrate the need within systems for ordering of priorities and recognizing that, however positive individual intentions, staff time is finite and there is a limit to the number of special projects for which any one person can take responsibility.

Montgomery County, Maryland

Concrete steps have been taken with this project serving as a catalyst for generating new activities between the school system and three County Chambers of Commerce -- Kensington, Wheaton/Gaithersburg and Rockville (the community in which the school system administrative offices are located). Two meetings have been held with representatives of small business members of these Chambers and staff of the Chambers working as the Small Business Task Force with the school system. A third meeting is planned in the last two weeks of September which will include teachers identified by the school system staff person working on this small business exchange project.

The Montgomery County project is focusing on relatively small businesses within the parameters for business size for the IEL/SBFA project. The business persons involved (list is attached in resource persons list) are committed to developing new avenues for involvement with the schools. This commitment
appears to stem largely from their personal experiences and observations of a lack of understanding of the business world and our economic system on the part of students or teachers with whom they or their business colleagues have interacted. There are strong feelings about the need to improve the employability skills of students even for part time jobs in summers and during the school year. Montgomery County along with other suburban D.C. area communities has a very low unemployment rate and increasingly these businesses find they cannot be particularly selective in drawing on the available labor pool.

The first meeting of the Small Business Task Force took place July 16. Sally Keeler, Coordinator for School/Business Relations, and the person taking the lead for this project, attempted scheduling the start-up meeting in late May or early June, but scheduling conflicts for her and business people delayed the meeting until July. At this first meeting, IEL explained the purpose of the SBA project and discussed issues outlined in the November, 1983 conference as background for the work of the Task Force. The importance of developing a more substantial and ongoing collaborative relationship between the school system and the small business community was discussed by Sally Keeler. Other initiatives of the school system with business (mainly corporations in the establishment of a foundation for the school system), and the vocational foundations which involve smaller businesses were described. Educational priorities of the Montgomery County schools were identified for the business people. These include:

1. Improving student achievement overall.

2. Improving minority student achievement and improving these students' involvement in the full life of the schools.

3. Maintaining high quality staff, attracting new quality staff to replace retiring and leaving staff, and developing new ways to recognize good staff.

4. Focusing on development of student values with particular emphasis on citizenship.

5. Setting up more formalized planning processes over time and involving the business community in helping determine long term goals and in reaching these goals. The school system, if it is to meet its goal for effective long term planning, must know what the jobs will be, the skills required and have the input of business for curriculum development and staff development to meet these goals.
Several things came out of the first meeting. Following the IEL orientation to the project and the school system orientation to its reasons for increasing involvement with the small business community, Task Force members discussed what they believe students and teachers need to learn, the extent of these businesses' need for young people as employees, and what the small businesses can do to improve knowledge and skills of young people and improve educators knowledge of business.

In summary, small businesses depend on young people to meet the businesses' employee needs. Young people they bring in as employees often seem to have little understanding of what it is to be an employee and too many who will work for the wages offered do not have adequate communication skills and interpersonal skills to meet workplace expectations. All expressed a concern about the lack of understanding of our economic system and the ethic of work evidenced by students and school staff with whom these business persons have contact either through formal school system work experience programs or through less organized contacts with teachers and counselors and interaction with students seeking employment on their own.

There was consensus that small businesses offer unique opportunities for students to learn about business and the culture of the work place, and that this is an important contribution small business can make to the education of young people. The limited time available for small business persons to become substantively involved is a problem.

Some ideas for new activities to be discussed at the Task Force's August meeting included:

- The Chambers' organizing a job bank for students seeking summer or part time employment. Information would be disseminated through school system channels.

- Business people organizing for outreach into the schools to find qualified students for temporary jobs.

- Adopt-a-school for career education program strictly at the junior high level.

- Programs to introduce teachers and counselors to the business world.

- Developing an orientation program for students seeking part time jobs and offering this program through the business community.

The August 14 meeting picked up some of the ideas discussed at the July meeting with the focus of discussion narrowing to working with students through establishing a job bank and an
orientation to work program, and developing some strategy for working with teachers and counselors. Developing a staff training program offers great appeal to the business people because their involvement with this could leverage a far greater impact in the long run for greater numbers of students.

The Small Business Task Force determined that any decisions for developing a new activity or activities with the schools must have ownership of teachers as well as the small businesses and the involved Chambers. The Task Force members committed to a next planning meeting in September with representative teachers from schools in the three participating communities. The objective for this next meeting is to decide the first concrete activity for implementation and determine who on the Task Force and among others in the small business community will take responsibility for development and implementation of the program.

The school system asked for an original commitment of two planning meetings from the Task Force members and at their initiative, gained the commitment to a third meeting during this planning stage and to other meetings during the year after concrete activities have begun. Task Force members made clear at the first meeting that they believed small businesses have a role in helping to educate a community's young people, but that role has to be well-defined, limited to a few activities that are action-oriented, and must respect the limited amount of time any one small business or business person can devote to working with the schools.

The importance of an individual taking ownership of this type initiative is again underscored in the Montgomery County project site. While other responsibilities prevented early start-up of the project, Sally Keeler successfully organized the outreach to the three Chambers, contacted individual persons to set up the Small Business Task Force and organized and distributed proceedings of the meetings. She will continue to provide central organizing and monitoring support for the initiative with small businesses. IEL will continue to attend meetings of the Task Force and will provide, as time permits, technical assistance to help in developing the first action steps in Montgomery County.

City of Alexandria, Virginia

Three meetings were held beginning in December to assist the school system to initiate a planning meeting with small business persons and to discuss the project with the Assistant to the Superintendent for Special Projects. Ultimately, two meetings occurred in late spring to bring leadership persons from key small businesses together to plan for organized activities between the school system and the small business community. Attendance of the business persons, although 8 to 10 committed
for the meetings, was very disappointing, with two attending the first meeting and only one attending the second meeting. The Director of Adult Education for the school system also attended these meetings. She has developed several programs with small businesses to provide training for employees through the adult education programs of the system.

The persons from small businesses who did attend the meetings were enthusiastic about increasing the involvement of small business with the school system and organizing this involvement to have some specific focus consistent with priorities for the schools. At the last meeting, an owner of a travel agency agreed to make contact with some other business people to test interest in helping develop new activities. No meeting has been scheduled since this last meeting in June.

There are activities with small businesses in Alexandria but these, as with most school systems, are largely limited to individual ad hoc activities in the vocational and career education programs and classrooms. Some relationships between schools and businesses are developing and an adopt-a-school program is underway. It was hoped that through Alexandria's participation in this project, we might demonstrate some strategies for pulling together small initiatives and creating an ongoing forum for the small business community and the school system.

The Chamber of Commerce was not formally involved in the attempted initiative although this was suggested as a strategy since the Chamber has a newly formed education subcommittee. The business people invited to attend the planning meetings are, in the main, members of the Chamber but this did not bring the Chamber to the table as a focal organization.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The experience of the Small Business Foundation of America and the Institute for Educational Leadership in this project illustrates the problems inherent in increasing and organizing small business involvement with school systems. But, we have also demonstrated that these relationships can be built and success is not idiosyncratic to a specific individual or agency -- whether leadership comes from the small business community or the school systems.

Small businesses can make a unique contribution in partnerships with schools and school systems. Job creation is a major economic concern in the U.S. Understanding the entrepreneurial role and helping educate young people in entrepreneurship are the special provinces of small business people working with the schools. In addition, small businesses offer the most
effective learning opportunities for educating young people to all facets of business.

The problems are real. The nature of small businesses drives many of the problems. These businesses do not have the human or financial resources to commit individually to major involvement. Managing a small business leaves little time to focus on public policy issues except as they may affect a business. In large communities, the major corporations frequently dominate business organizations and assume greater roles in involvement with the public sector. In those cases where small business people may want to become involved with education, there are frequently few known avenues for identifying how small business may be helpful.

To some extent, the visibility of the major corporations' new agenda for involvement with education can lead to the conclusion that "we can leave it to the big boys." The large businesses are also easier for school systems to reach out to, and may be perceived to offer a bigger payoff in partnerships.

Given the staff time limitations in school systems, organizing the small business community poses logistical problems unless these relationships can be structured through a business organization which assumes responsibility for organizing its members to work with the schools.

We are probably at a watershed point for sustaining business interest in working with schools. If the highly visible role major corporations have assumed in supporting education reforms, and increasingly in the political arena around education issues does not produce measurable results in the near term, there is the likelihood that business will not stay in for the long haul necessary for real improvement in education. The involvement of small businesses with their local investments and larger dependency on the products of their local school systems is critical for sustaining and "institutionalizing" public/private sector collaboration for education.

Interestingly, there is general agreement among educators and small business people that this relationship must grow, and that the involvement of small businesses can bring unique perspectives and committed persons into the school system. There is at the same time, a tendency to have more agreement on why this relationship can't happen or at best on the arduous work to make involvement real.

It may be that only when the changing demographics of this country both in the characteristics of the coming generation and the size of that generation has a significant impact on small businesses will we see major involvement of these businesses with the education systems producing the worker pool.
Recommendations

Successful initiatives between schools, school systems, educators and small businesses must have strong leadership. Where we achieved success in this project, and this is reinforced by what we know in other communities, there is one person who spearheaded the program and is committed to hand-hold if necessary until success in some measure is achieved. Such an individual may come from the school system, a small business or a service organization.

Small business people cannot devote a great amount of time to meetings. It is important for the initiating sector, which will probably be education, to have thought through and be able to articulate the objectives for initiating involvement of small businesses. It is important to have ideas for action developed at least as starting points for the discussion. Educators and indeed the public sector rely heavily on process meetings because they must constantly accomplish goals through changing soft behaviors within a political process of people to achieve long term objectives for clients. Business people in general, and small business people in particular with limited time, have a low level of tolerance for process type activities. All meetings should be oriented to action with clear next steps agreed upon at the conclusion of any meeting. Ask ahead of requesting small business people's involvement what are the limitations on their time, what can they commit to in such an undertaking, and continue to check with participating business people how each feels he/she can best make a contribution.

Do not ask for commitment to a major agenda. Start small with an activity that is truly important to the school system, and that can provide small business with the opportunity to make a unique contribution. Build on small successes to expand involvement. Do not continue in an activity beyond need or if it is not meeting expectations of both groups. From the beginning build into activities and the structure of an ongoing working group ways to assess if the objectives for the activity are really being reached, the activity is still a priority, and the people involved are finding personal satisfaction from their efforts. Be willing to change course, and, if necessary, to say something is not working without feeling the relationship will be destroyed. If first activities are carefully chosen, solid relationships will be built which can weather problems.

The goal of bringing small business and education together to help each other meet their ends, must be kept alive through disseminating information about successes, identifying leadership persons among educators and persons from small business, and seeking opportunities for new initiatives with receptive school systems, small businesses and business organizations. Large companies have a role to play in this strategy through the
leadership they can provide at the local and state levels to initiate discussion of appropriate roles with education for large companies and small businesses. Major breakthroughs with small businesses will most likely occur if initiated within the business community. The roles for business involvement with education need to be determined within the entire business community. At the same time, educators need to clarify their long term goals for this public/private collaboration. When these are sorted out within the two communities at all levels, then effective partnerships and collaboration will occur. The following are some suggested activities and programs for school/business partnerships:

1. Small business representatives teaching economic education and or entrepreneurship in schools;

2. A school-based computer expert working on computer applications for a small business;

3. A scientist or person from some other field of expertise teaching physics, chemistry or some other high-demand, low supply field on a part-time basis in the schools;

4. School guidance counselors spending time visiting small businesses to increase understanding of the entrepreneurial culture;

5. School administrators and small business managers discussing organizational similarities and differences;

6. Exchange activities facilitating the creation of part-time jobs for students in small businesses and full-time summer positions for teachers and counselors as well as students;

7. Forums for small business persons which promote discussion of educational issues and governance/political issues of education;

8. Forums for educators which describe the small business world;

9. Programs which encourage the pooling of resources and facilities and technology-sharing initiatives;

10. Development of adult education programs to serve the training needs of small businesses;

11. Development of employment readiness programs for students which may be implemented either through the schools or business organizations;

12. "Shadowing" programs for students, teachers and counselors;
13. Structured experiential education programs for students;

14. Volunteer tutorial or mentoring programs for students who need academic help and/or expanded adult support;

15. Assisting school systems in development of entrepreneurial education curricula; and

16. Sponsoring of athletic and extracurricular activities through Chambers or other local business service organizations.
CONTACT PERSONS
Jacqueline Danzberger, Director, Local Improvement Programs, Institute for Educational Leadership, Inc., Washington, D.C. (202) 822-8722

Leslie Hitch, Babson Institute, Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts, formerly with the Small Business Foundation of America, Boston

Massachusetts
Larry deRose, President, Ebtec, Agawam (413) 786-0393
Helene Sweet, Springfield School Volunteers, Springfield (413) 787-7018
Mary Ann Hardenbergh, Special Assistant, Governor's Office of Educational Affairs, Boston (617) 727-0770
Gerard T. Indelicato, Special Assistant, Governor's Office of Educational Affairs (617) 727-0770
Linda McGregor, School Volunteers of Boston, Boston (617) 451-6145
Susan Freedman, State Department of Education, Quincy (617) 770-7572
Barbara Aschheim, State Department of Education, Quincy (617) 770-7572
John C. Rennie, President, The Small Business Foundation of America, Inc.

Washington, D.C.
Sally Keeler, Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville, Maryland (301) 279-3391

List of Montgomery County Small Business Task Force members is attached

Robert Harper, Alexandria Public Schools, Alexandria, Virginia (703) 998-2104
Exhibits for Massachusetts Project Activities

Program

School Volunteers Training Conference, Lakeville, Massachusetts

Best Bet Program, Burlington, Massachusetts
(This was the program the volunteer president of the Northshore Chamber of Commerce wanted to recreate.)

Program and Proceedings


School/Small Business Partnerships

Suggestions for Activities and Programs. (This was handed out in East Boston and at the Lakeville Conference.)
Objectives

1. To strengthen school programs by bringing business people into the schools to work with students, teachers, and administrators on projects which: a) schools feel will fill a real need, and b) business people feel qualified to accomplish.

2. To supplement classroom studies with relevant learning experiences in business and industry.

3. To give business people a better understanding of the educational system and involve them in helping to ensure the economic future of the community.

Benefits for Business

1. The opportunity to directly affect the quality of the public schools, and through them, the community.

2. The opportunity to enhance the company's image through efforts on behalf of students.

3. The chance to help the community in which many of their employees live.

4. Employees will gain greater understanding of the school system, which is a mainstay of the economic well being of the county.

5. The opportunity to share with students and teachers the requirements, satisfactions, and expectations of the business world.

Benefits for Schools

1. The opportunity to gain expertise and technical assistance that could lead to a more complete education for students and greater management skills for teachers and administrators.

2. The ability to provide adult role models with expertise not traditionally available in the classroom.

3. The opportunity to get resources that the school system cannot provide.

4. The chance to develop students' interest and understanding of the "world of work."

5. The opportunity to show the business community the strengths of their public schools.
THE SCHOOL/BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP PROCESS

1. School administrator contacts the school/business relations coordinator to indicate interest in developing a School/Business Partnership, and outlines specific areas of need and interest.

2. School system coordinator makes contact with an interested business or other organization.

3. In an initial meeting with the coordinator, the resources, interests, and needs of the potential business or organization partner are determined.

4. Coordinator meets with school or program administrator to determine if school needs and potential partner's resources match. Is there good potential for a partnership?

5. Business, school, and coordinator meet and work on a written partnership agreement for the first school year.

6. The partnership is officially announced to the school and community at a meeting of the Board of Education held periodically to honor new partnerships.

7. Activities continue with ongoing communication and planning between a school and its partner.

8. The coordinator contacts both school and partner periodically to make sure things are going smoothly and to help with any problems.

9. Yearly evaluations are completed by both partners and sent to coordinator by end of the school year.

SMK
8/8/84
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Office of the Superintendent

SCHOOL/BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

between


This is a project for the _______ school year, renewable upon agreement of both partners.


agree to work together to meet the following major objectives of their partnership by June, 198_.

1.

2.

3.

In order to meet these objectives, activities will be conducted that include:

Both partners agree to submit written evaluations of this project to the coordinator of school/business relations ___________, 198_.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business/</td>
<td>School/</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>Phone</td>
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Superintendent of Schools

Date: 30
1. Please supply a brief chronological outline of the activities in your partnership during this school year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>NUMBER OF STUDENTS OR STAFF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2. Approximately how many hours of employee time has the business or community partner invested during this school year? Include time spent in planning meetings and organizational activities at the business site as well as activities conducted directly with school staff and students.
3. Have there been any donations of equipment, supplies, or funds in your partnership this year?  If so, please list and give an approximate value.

4. Please rate the following aspects of your partnership from your point of view:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication between the school and business or organization</th>
<th>Not acceptable</th>
<th>Needs more work</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Above expectations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>breadth and depth of partnership activities conducted</td>
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<tr>
<td>knowledge gained about the partner</td>
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<tr>
<td>contribution of partnership to school programs as a whole</td>
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<tr>
<td>overall response to partnership</td>
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</table>

5. What steps have you taken to publicize your partnership:

a. within your school or business/organization?

b. outside your school or business/organization?
6. What difference has participation in a School/Business partnership made to your SCHOOL / BUSINESS / ORGANIZATION

(Please underline one)

What difference do you think participation in the partnership has made to your partner?

7. What could be done to improve the School/Business Partnership program for the next year?

Please return by __________ to:

SALLY M. KEELER, COORDINATOR
SCHOOL/BUSINESS RELATIONS
Montgomery County Public Schools
850 Hungerford Drive
Rockville, MD 20850
ANIMAL EXCHANGE PET SHOP MANAGEMENT COURSE

Who? - Anyone 14 or older who is interested in animals and/or may be considering work in a pet store or animal facility. Class size is limited to 8.

What? - The basic biology of each species plus management options.

When? - See schedule below.

Where? - The class meets at Animal Exchange. The field trip is to the Montgomery County Humane Society and a local vet.

How? - The cost for the program is $50.00. Your place in the class is confirmed upon payment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday June 23</td>
<td>3:15 - 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Introduction Sales, Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday June 25</td>
<td>7:00 - 9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Companion Animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday June 30</td>
<td>3:15 - 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday July 2</td>
<td>7:00 - 9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Bird catching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday July 7</td>
<td>3:15 - 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Dogs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday July 9</td>
<td>7:00 - 9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Cats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday July 12</td>
<td>8:00 - 12:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Field Trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday July 14</td>
<td>3:15 - 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Small Animals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday July 16</td>
<td>7:00 - 9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Unusual Pets and First Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday July 21</td>
<td>3:15 - 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Reptiles and Amphibians</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday July 23</td>
<td>7:00 - 9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Catching Fish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday July 28</td>
<td>3:15 - 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Tropical Fish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday July 30</td>
<td>7:00 - 9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Marine Fish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday Aug 4</td>
<td>3:15 - 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Test</td>
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BEST BET
Project Evaluation Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Short Title</th>
<th>Project Number</th>
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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Definitely should</th>
<th>Probably will</th>
<th>Not Likely</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Improves content of course</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increases student interest in course</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increases student interest in school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improves student-student relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improves student-teacher relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improves understanding of material's applications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increases student's career option perception</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increases students' career potential</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improves students' understanding of business</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fulfills needs of industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provides means for supplementary income</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improves teacher (generic) status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improves individual teacher status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expands scope of course material</td>
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<td>Improves teacher currency in discipline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improves teacher-industry understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provides means for supplementary income</td>
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<tr>
<td>Makes classroom work more interesting</td>
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<td>Improves teachers' knowledge/credentials</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improves overall quality of course content</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improves student morale/interest level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improves teacher morale/enthusiasm</td>
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<td>Supports school activities/programs</td>
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<td>Improves physical plant/facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improves teacher retention</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Improves school system (town)-industry relationships</td>
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When it comes to cooperation between business and education, here's the **BEST BET**

**By JOHN WHITE**

**BURLINGTON** — Cooperation between private industry and public education is one of those programs that needs too much strong backing in comments by business leaders, but there is considerable question as to whether cooperation can be well in practice.

In Burlington, the words have been transformed into actions as Building Excellent Schools Through Teamwork (BEST BET), a cooperative program between business and schools, has resulted in over $2 million in financing for the past school year, with hopes to double that figure in the next year.

The driving force behind BEST BET is the Industrial Power Teamwork (IPT), a Burlington-based business that has been working in the as a busy site where we have a test bed. After starting IPT, however, Remie said he was pleased with the small business.

As for his role in BEST BET, Remie explained that he became involved through his role as president of the Small Business Association of New Hampshire. He was in Washington meeting with Sen. Paul Tsongas and the senator spoke of the importance of high-technology industries developing long-term relationships with the schools in their communities.

The idea appealed to Remie and he said he was happy to begin "a pilot program" in Burlington. Tsongas staff assured him that the company could be a "good fit" and Remie said he was pleased with the small business.

A group of meetings between Remie and school officials were held over the summer, and Remie was impressed with the progress they had made. Remie also noted that the Maine line work is essential in the field in which

Remie also noted that help from businesses to schools often comes only on the field in which

- reviewing proposals for the BEST BET program at a recent meeting of the screening committee (clockwise from top left) Dr. Richard Marshall, chairman of the BEST BET program at a recent meeting of the screening committee (clockwise from top left) Dr. Richard Marshall, chairman of the BEST BET program at a recent meeting of the screening committee (clockwise from top left) Dr. Richard Marshall, chairman of the BEST BET program at a recent meeting of the screening committee (clockwise from top left) Dr. Richard Marshall, chairman of the BEST BET program at a recent meeting of the screening committee (clockwise from top left) Dr. Richard Marshall, chairman of the BEST BET program at a recent meeting of the screening committee (clockwise from top left) Dr. Richard Marshall, chairman of the BEST BET program at a recent meeting of the screening committee (clockwise from top left) Dr. Richard Marshall, chairman of the BEST BET program at a recent meeting of the screening committee (clockwise 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(Continued from Page One)

"BEST BET"

The Burlington schools and said the teaching staff is very happy and supportive of the program. School Committee Chairman George DeGregorio said the schools have put in a lot of hard work in getting the program going. 'We have four times the attendance we had last year,' he said. "The School Committee has worked very hard and been very supportive of the program. The data from BEST BET is very positive. The students have shown a marked increase in attendance and participation in the program." DeGregorio also said the program will be expanded in the future.

The program has been running for three years and has seen a steady increase in attendance. The Burlington schools have been very successful in keeping students in school and improving their educational performance. "We are very proud of the program," said DeGregorio. "We are seeing a real difference in the students who are participating. They are showing improved grades and behavior."
School Committee Applauds Rennie's Efforts

by Kathy Kozell

Appraising the efforts of a small businessman to help Burlington students meet success through his leadership and acquired funds for the school system from industries, the School Committee enthusiastically presented a recognition plaque to Mr. Jack Rennie. He was named 'champion' of the Milton's Best Bet - Building Excellent Schools through Business - Education Teamwork. This program has faculty enthusiastic and students committed. Interest and awareness of Jack Rennie and his programs.

Rennie, through the business world, made possible the application of $23,000 this past year, and projects this figure to $32,000 this year. Projects must be approved by the committee, but Rennie has found one way or another to fund all of them. The program is attractive to industries, according to Rennie because the projects are all tangible, they or the results can be seen.

Rennie was credited with consistency, dynamic leadership, genuineness, integrity, and purpose. The Chairman of the School Committee, Mr. John Rigio said that Best Bet voted cooperation between the faculty and the administration, providing a stimulus to the community.

John Rennie

needed. "It is the best, if not in the country, in the state of Massachusetts." The success, says Rennie, can be attributed to both the attitudes of the people involved (all are approached as equals), and the ideas that come from the school system.

not the committee itself. Rennie is supportive to people in the school system and expresses a feeling of "having fun."

The School Committee voted to hold a special meeting on Tuesday, September 18, for the evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools due to the absence of one committee member at this week's meeting. Superintendent of Schools Thomas Michael said he preferred that all members be present for the evaluation.

Burlington High School Principal Albert Perry, announced at the meeting that the school's Reaccreditation Process will take place October 14, 15, 16, and 17, 1984.

A Visiting Committee composed of 12 state-wide educators from various communities will be remaining in the school for the entire days of Monday through Wednesday of that week. They will submit a written report sometime before Thanksgiving to Michael.

Peter Finn, Superintendent of Schools in Winthrop was warmly accepted as President of the Visiting Committee. The committee will review during various meetings school philosophies and policies. Additionally, they will be asking financial questions and reviewing the self-evaluation material worked on during the latter part of last year. All recommendations of the committee will be addressed according to Michael and the report will be submitted to the New England Association of Secondary Schools.
BEST BET PROGRAM

Situation Report No. 1
August 22, 1983

Background
In late May, 1983 preliminary discussions with Senator Tsongas took place concerning the problems in the Nation's schools. These conversations were prompted by the recent issuance of the National Commission Report and a combined concern on both the Senator's and Jack Rennie's part about the quality of education in general. Rennie, who is President of his own Company, PACER Systems, Inc. in Burlington, MA and also President of the Smaller Business Association of New England (SBANE), had previously indicated to the Senator's staff that SBANE and he personally would like to "do something" to help the situation.

In the course of these discussions several ideas were advanced by both parties. Finally, Rennie suggested a program which he had been thinking about...a program whereby a company or cluster of companies would "adopt" a local high school and/or middle school, develop a long-term relationship and design a program to improve the quality of the school(s). The Senator liked this idea and asked if Rennie would be willing to develop a "pilot program". Rennie agreed to do that and indicated that Burlington, MA would be the logical school system, since it is the location of his Company's headquarters. Senator Tsongas then indicated that his staff would contact the Burlington Schools Superintendent to see if they would be receptive to the plan.

Within a few days, contact had been made and the Superintendent, Tom Michael, indicated great interest in the idea; this response was relayed to Rennie. Soon after that, in early June, Rennie and Michael had a preliminary meeting which solidified their understanding of the need and the concept.
Since that time, five meetings have been held on the formation of the program. These meetings have been attended by various key personnel in the Burlington School System and School Committee. Rennie has been joined by Ms. Bonnie Walsh, President of the North Suburban Chamber of Commerce as the second key person on the industry side. A Steering Committee comprised of personnel from both sides has been formed and has spent the summer drawing up the plans for the program.

The program has acquired the name BEST BET, an acronym based on the words: Building Excellent Schools Through Business-Education Teamwork.

Purpose
This is the first in a series of periodic Situation Reports. The aims of this Report are to document progress on the Program to date and convey to participants (and those interested in monitoring the Program) expectations for the future.

Discussion
The Burlington BEST BET Program is a long-term, broadly-scoped project of voluntary cooperation between the Burlington School System and local industry. The focus in the School System is the High School/Middle School level; the primary industry organizations are SBANE and the North Suburban Chamber. PACER Systems, Inc., Rennie's Company, is the "lead company" on the industry side.

Under this Program, companies (for the most part, smaller firms) will develop a special, long term relationship with the Burlington High School and Middle School, with the overall aim of providing support to improve the quality of the education offered.

Specific Objectives of BEST BET are:

- For the Students
  - Improve education content
  - Increase interest in school/subjects
  - Improve relationships with teachers
- Educate on career options
- Educate on the needs of industry (general)
- Promote teaching as career choice
- Educate on business as vocation
- Increase opportunities for compensation

- For the Teachers
  - Improve status/self image
  - Increase opportunities for compensation
  - Improve currency in profession
  - Provide support for class topics

- In General
  - Improve facilities/equipment
  - Make better use of excess space
  - Improve morale
  - Develop better ties between schools and industry

As can be seen by these aims, BEST BET can best be characterized as broad in scope, both in subject matter and participants. It will not concentrate on one industry; but will give equal attention to liberal arts, technical and vocational courses. The Program will be comprised of a number of distinct "projects" which will have qualitative as well as quantitative payoff. The first phase (or trial period) will last, at a minimum, through the summer of 1984.

Figure 1 depicts the BEST BET Organization.

During the Meetings this summer, the Steering Committee has developed the forms by which the Program will be administered.
BEST BET
ORGANIZATION

MEMBERS FROM
SCHOOL SYSTEM AND
INDUSTRY

BEST BET
STEERING
COMMITTEE

0 EVALUATE PROPOSALS
0 DEVELOP PROJECTS
0 MONITOR PROGRESS

HIGH SCHOOL
MIDDLE SCHOOL
SCHOOL ADMIN.
SCHOOL COMM.

IDEAS
NEEDS
IDEAS
CONCEPTS
IDEAS
SUPPORT/COORD.

PARTICIPATE
EXECUTE
PROJECTS
PARTICIPATE

LEAD
COMPANY
LOCAL
CHAMBER
OF
COMMERCE
OTHER
BUSINESS
ORG.
OTHER
PARTICIPATING
CO'S/ORG.

IDENTIFY
COORDINATE
SUPPORT
SUPPORT

Figure 1
Project Work Sheet (Attachment A) - This is the form by which individuals (usually teachers) will submit a proposed project to the Steering Committee for evaluation. The reverse side of this Form is used to record the Steering Committee's disposition of the proposal. Every individual submitting a proposed project will be informed of the Committee's decision and rationale.

A Project Work Sheet Guide (Attachment A-1) (normally yellow in color) is provided to help submitters in filling out the form.

Program Master Schedule (Attachment B) - This is a compilation of approved Projects, indicating the time of their planning, execution and critique. This Schedule will be updated monthly and provides a quick reference to the Program. For every item listed on the Master Schedule, a backup Project Work Sheet will exist.

Project Evaluation Matrix (Attachment C) (normally green in color) - This form will be used by the Committee during its deliberations concerning proposed Projects. Obviously, the profile of check marks clue the Committee as to the desirability of the Project and its priority. It will also help during Project critique.

The Steering Committee is now collecting proposed Projects and plans to have some in place by the start of the school year.

After the bulk of the teachers return, they will be briefed on the BEST BET Program. It is after that that the Committee expects to receive the larger amount of proposals.

The general procedure will be:

- Submitter transmits proposal(s) to the Committee;
- Committee evaluates, prioritizes the proposals and notifies submitters of disposition;
For approved projects, industry side organizes resources to carry out the project, including designation of Project lead company;

- Project is executed with cooperation between submitting teacher and project lead company (Committee monitors);

- Committee critiques Project with help of participants and makes recommendations for any later repeats.

Examples of the types of Projects anticipated range from the more usual role model/key speaker ideas, to mock hearings and other simulated situations and, possibly, mini-companies set up for teachers to work commercially and under grants.

Summary
The Burlington BEST BET Program is "off-the-ground" and will be formally initiated within the next month after schools open. All concerned are enthusiastic, although they realize the Program is still in the pioneering stage.

Situation Report No. 2 will be issued in late September. It should have the results of the first Project submittals.
# Best BET Project Work Sheet

## Short title:
-...of the Project

## Date submitted:
- filled in by Submitter

## Submitted by:
- name of Submitter

### Project Description

This section should contain the following types of information:

- **Content** - What is requested? What is going to happen? What would be demonstrated? What would subjects (ie. students/teachers) see? What would subjects have to do? etc.


- **Time frame** - length of session(s); when the project activity would occur during the school day; any constraints on the Project due to time/schedule considerations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One time</th>
<th>Repeated (repeat frequency:</th>
<th>Reviewed by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Start Date:</td>
<td>Target population:</td>
<td>Submitter's Department Head or equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...of the Project</td>
<td>age grade level of subjects;</td>
<td>Submitter's Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ability level required to participate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Objective(s)/Benefit(s) of Project:

What potential good (benefit) can accrue to the subjects and/or the school system? Are these benefits or purposes measurable? How will this further BEST BET and its goals?

### Needed Resources:

A brief summary of the Submitter's thoughts regarding the specific resources needed. These would include (but not be limited to): money; people; equipment; space; paperwork; transportation; and preparation activities.
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MAY 10, 1985

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REGIONAL EDUCATION CENTER
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