

Partnership Design Guide

Move from a promising connection to a partnership worth pursuing.

Partner Fit

The Partnership Design Guide helps prospective partners determine whether they have sufficient shared purpose, reciprocal value, complementary assets, and capacity to work together effectively. Complete this guide with the prospective partner, rather than independently on the partner's behalf.

Begin with the Partner Fit discussion. For each question, first document the school or district perspective and the partner perspective separately. Then use the Shared Decision column to record what the parties agree will guide the partnership. Differences in perspective are useful information; they should be discussed rather than prematurely resolved for the sake of agreement.

The conversation should clarify why the partners are coming together, what each hopes to gain, what each can contribute, what limitations or non-negotiable conditions must be respected, how students and families will influence decisions, and what would make the relationship valuable enough to continue.

Proceed to partnership design when both parties can clearly describe a shared outcome, reciprocal contributions and benefits, the people and capacity required to do the work, and how they will learn and make decisions together.

Partnership Design

Once partner fit has been established, translate the conversation into a concise shared design. Name the partners, the access challenge the partnership will address, the learners or communities prioritized, the intended outcome, and the anticipated length of the project. Then articulate a Theory of Action connecting what partners will do with the change they expect to see.

A strong design should also identify how students and families will exercise voice and choice and how local identity, knowledge, and decision-making will be protected—particularly when a partnership extends across multiple schools, districts, or communities.

Partner Fit

What challenge or aspiration brings us together?

School/District Perspective	Partner Perspective	Shared Decision

What value does each party receive?

School/District Perspective	Partner Perspective	Shared Decision

What knowledge and assets does each contribute?

School/District Perspective	Partner Perspective	Shared Decision

What capacity limit or non-negotiables exist?

**School/District
Perspective**

Partner Perspective

Shared Decision

How will students/ families shape decisions?

**School/District
Perspective**

Partner Perspective

Shared Decision

What would make this relationship worth renewing?

**School/District
Perspective**

Partner Perspective

Shared Decision

Readiness Signal

Proceed when both parties can name the shared outcome, their own contribution and benefit, the people who will do the work, and how they will learn together.

Partnership Design

Partners

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Partners

Partners

Partnership Project Title

Purpose (Access Challenge And Outcome, Priority Learners)

Theory Of Action If We...Then Students/Educators/Community Will...Because...

Length Of Project & Project Outcome:

Student/Family Voice & Choice Will Be Included By:

How Will Local Identity & Voice Be Protected: