

2011 NAB Schools First Student Award – A guide to developing school-community partnerships

The questions below will help you think through the steps required to create a school community partnership. This will help you flesh out your idea and make sure you're ready to apply.

The four sections below match the criteria in the Application Form, so you'll find lots of hints on the kind of information you should include in your responses.

Note: These are not random things we've plucked out of thin air...The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) has produced a body of research indicating the key characteristics of effective, sustainable school-community partnerships.

Student Details

You'll note the Application Form allows up to two students to jointly submit an application. Of course you can submit an application on your own, but if you and a friend (or a group of friends) have come up with the idea together, a maximum of two students can jointly submit the application on behalf of the group. If the application is successful, the two students who submitted the application will be eligible for the Award.

1. Identifying the need and objectives of the project

- Is there some aspect of your school that you'd like to see changed?
- Is there an opportunity to help students in your school somehow?
- Is there a problem in the community that the school could help resolve?

Possible topics:

- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Bullying
- Community safety
- Environment
- Graffiti, vandalism, littering
- Homelessness
- Healthy food
- Intergenerational conflict
- Sanitation
- Student engagement with learning and school
- Student voice
- Police relations
- Poverty
- Traffic safety

Possible community partners:

- Aged care centres
- Arts organisations
- Building associations



- Community health centres
- Environmental Groups
- Gardening/Agricultural
- Health Departments
- Indigenous education
- Indigenous support groups
- Industry placement groups
- Law firms
- Local Councils
- Media organisations
- Men's Sheds
- Mining and trade corporations
- Non for profit groups
- Police Citizen's Youth Club
- Refugee/Migrant support groups
- Rotary/Lions International
- Science organisations
- Sporting organisations
- Trade associations
- Universities and TAFES
- Youth services groups

2. Benefits/outcomes

School benefits:

The purpose of NAB Schools First is to reward schools that are involved in partnerships whose aim is to improve educational outcomes for students. This can range from making class more interesting for students, improving the school's physical environment or culture, improving students' academic marks, broadening the curriculum, introducing certain skills to the school, helping students with their school work, giving students a wider range of activities to become involved in, making students more aware of life beyond the classroom, etc.

Benefits for the school or students could include:

- Employable skills
- Cleaner environment
- Less bullying
- Better health and nutrition for students
- Improved well being
- Higher attendance rates
- A new or more interesting way of teaching science (or other subjects)
- Encouraging students to remain at school
- Encouraging students to go on to higher education
- Encouraging students to remain engaged in formal and informal education beyond high school.
- Improved student wellbeing and mental health.
- Building a stronger sense of community in the school and within each student.
- Students gain the ability to see a project through from start to finish
- Students gain greater appreciation for their community and in particular, their community members
- Students gain greater access to resources not currently available at school
- More opportunities for career planning and job placements
- More varied or a wider curriculum
- Increased student self-esteem
- Increased student respect, for themselves and fellow students
- Increased positive opinion of school/school members amongst community

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Organisation benefits:

Any partnership must have benefits for all. Think about what a business or community organisation would gain from entering a partnership with your school.

Benefits could include:

- Wider recognition in the community
- A more positive relationship with the school
- More advertising
- Students become interested in different career paths (potential for the organisation to gain skilled workers)
- Meeting their own organisational targets by connecting directly with young people
- Recognition as a pioneer in the school-community partnership arena
- A greater understanding, insight and appreciation of the youths of the community
- Potential future members/employees of their organisation/business
- Seen as a “leader” amongst their fellow community/business peers
- Setting a positive example of the success of school/community partnerships and in turn, encouraging others to follow suit
- Interest from media to profile their partnership, in turn publicity for the organisation/business etc

3. Activities

What activities will be undertaken in the program that your school and partner will develop? You will need to demonstrate to the judges the purpose of these activities (i.e. how they link in with the main objective of the project).

EXAMPLE 1:

If the Project Objective is to create a partnership with a community organisation that can teach students about eating disorders and body image issues:

Student focused activities (include a description of why they will help achieve your goal):

1. Workshops on Eating Disorders will be developed by the community organisation (e.g. the Butterfly Foundation) with the help of my teacher and a group of students from our school.

These workshops will be aimed at students with eating disorders and will encourage them and their friends to work towards a healthier lifestyle by showing them the dangers of not looking after your body.

2. Workshops will be delivered at our school as part of our Health and Physical Education Class. The PE teacher will work with the organisation and together work out healthy lifestyle programs for all students.

This will encourage everyone to be healthy and have a good body image and maybe the curriculum will change to suit what the students really want to learn.

3. My school and community organisation will develop an online forum to allow students from my school (and maybe others) to discuss issues that we're facing. Someone from the Butterfly Foundation will be available at certain times to do real time Questions and Answers on the website.

This way, students can be anonymous and answer questions they might be too embarrassed to ask.



4. At the end of the year, students from Year 10 will deliver a presentation to the school on what we've learnt at the workshops.

This could be presented to the whole school or parents as well and show them what has been learned and deliver our message.

EXAMPLE 2: If the project objective is to teach students how to become safer, more responsible motorists:

Student focused activities (include a description of why they will help achieve your goal):

1. A guest speaker from the RTA will come to our school and host a morning presentation on the risks involved in driving

This will create awareness amongst students of how important it is to be aware of all the safety procedures in driving a car and emphasise how important it is to log as many learner driving hours with your parent/instructor

2. The RTA will leave behind kits for the students on safe driving that includes all the dos/don'ts and has homework to complete.

By taking the safety kits home and reading them and answering the homework questions, the students will be aware of the dangers involved when driving and have a reference book to use in future.

3. Members from the local Police station will come to our school and demonstrate to us the dangers of speeding whilst driving

By showing the students firsthand how far a car travels before stopping at 40km vs. 50km vs. 80km, in both dry and wet conditions, paints a clear a vivid picture to the students the dangers of speeding. By them participating in this by watching, they gain a greater appreciation of the control capabilities of a car and the importance to obey road rules

4. Vic Roads will provide the school with computer software that enables the schools computers to host interactive road rule tutorials

Students will have weekly access to the software during class time that will allow them to partake in an interactive tutorial in which they will learn the road rules and be tested on numerous safety scenarios. This allows the students plenty of practice and prepares them for what the actual process is for getting a Learners Permit

5. 22 year old James Smith from our local community, will come and speak with the students and give his first hand story of the dangers of speeding whilst driving

Students will be privy to how life changing a split decision to speed whilst driving can be. James's family has some images of James's life prior to his accident and very graphic images of James's rehabilitation process. The students may be able to relate to his situation given the small age gap and this may come as a complete shock and hopefully hit home to them just how important it is to obey road rules.

6. At the end of the term, students will be able to sit for their Learners Drivers Licence at VIC Roads.

We could then host an afternoon tea celebrating the students achievement at getting their L's and invite the police, Vic Roads, RTA and James's to the presentation to say thank you.



4. Planning

Think about how you will plan the project. What are the steps that you, your school and partner organisation need to take to turn your idea into action? Consider what your school's role will be in the planning, and what the partner organisation's role will be.

The judges need you to be as specific as you can with your answers. For example:

EXAMPLE 1:

If the Project Objective is to create a partnership with a community organisation that can teach students about eating disorders and body image issues:

Actions (include the reason you would take each action and the intended result, where applicable)

1. Make phone calls to various businesses to find out who is interested/ask if and how they can help
(Result: The Butterfly Foundation responded positively)
2. Contact my PE teacher to see if he supported the project or could offer advice
(Result: He suggested that the PE class was a good place to start and he would talk to the students. He would present our survey to the class).
3. Produce a survey to see if students were interested and because I need evidence that there is a need for the project

EXAMPLE 2:

If the Project Objective is to teach students how to become safer, more responsible motorists:

Actions (include the reason you would take each action and the intended result, where applicable)

1. Speak with my peers and see if there is interest in my idea and if they think this is something they would like to be involved in. I'd get them to sign a form confirming their interest.
(Result: 20 x Year 9 students signed the form to say they would be interested in learning more about how to be a safe, more responsible motorist)
2. Speak with my teacher/principal and gain their feedback so I have support from my school
(Result: Showed my teacher/principal that I have a form from x20 of my peers who would be super keen to learn more about this)
3. Identify ways in which we could learn more about safe driving. Research online and through local community members how this could happen so I can devise a "program" in order to meet the needs of the 20 students.
(Result: I found my local Police station would be happy to come and provide a safe driving demonstration, VIC Roads were willing to donate software for our commuters that teaches us the do's & don't of safe driving, my Mum's friend works with a woman who's 22 year old son was involved in a car crash and is more than happy to come and speak with my class, the RTA provide kits for students on how to get their Learner Drivers successfully and drive safely).



4. Sit down with my Principal/teacher and work out proposed dates and times that each of these individual presentations could happen so there are no clashes with current school timetables and that I can book the various presenters sooner rather than later as I appreciate they all have busy schedules.

(Result: I managed to contact each individual and have confirmed all their dates for their presentations)

5. Prepare a flyer "Safe Driving for Year 9's" that has the dates and times as to when all the presenters are coming and what to expect from each one. Kind of a who, what, where, when flyer so they all make sure they are available to attend. I would do this so no one misses the presentations and they can block out those times so they are available sooner rather than later.

(Results: All 20 students are available for all dates except Linda Jones who can't make the RTA presentation as she has state tennis finals but I'll make sure I get a kit for her and she can work through it when she is home).

6. Confirm what each presenter needs in order to successfully deliver their presentation because they are generously donating their time so the least I could do was offer to help where I can.

(Result: Confirmed that Jason needs a projector and microphone, the Police need the basketball court cleared and free)

7. Presentations delivered, 20 students sit for their L's, arrange celebration afternoon tea. I would do these to complete what I had originally set out to do.

(Result: All presentations are completed, x20 students have successfully got their L's and the afternoon celebration tea was terrific)

Need more information?

If you're after more information on school-community partnerships, visit the NAB Schools First website – schoolsfirst.edu.au. It's full of information and resources and features nearly 200 case studies.

If you have any questions about the NAB Schools First Student Award, contact us on 1800 649 141 or students@schoolsfirst.edu.au.

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