

Sandy Springs Perimeter Chamber of Commerce Workforce Development-Education Alliance (WDA)

*A qualified workforce is essential to economic growth.
Quality schools and educational programs are key to a prosperous business environment
and quality of life for the whole community.*

Mission of the WDA: To establish partnerships between businesses, educators and students, in order to ensure a qualified workforce for the Sandy Springs and greater Perimeter region. Research shows that positive adult/student interaction improves academic achievement and develops soft skills and workplace readiness among our students.

Approach: The Workforce Alliance, as a committee of the SSPC, coordinates with Sandy Springs Education Force (SSEF), Fulton County Schools and other organizations, to develop and support initiatives that directly address student preparedness for future success.

2018 Plan of Work

Business Bridge: In partnership with SSEF, we provide year-found opportunities for business leaders to impact student success and learning through one-on-one and small group interaction at the school, or the business' location. Our outcomes include:

- Enhancing student learning through lessons taught by experts in the field.
- Adding relevance to curriculum.
- Inspiring students to continue to post-secondary studies or, if it is their choice, pursue a career.
- Increasing the probability that students will graduate prepared to work, or to continue in post-secondary studies.
- Expanding students' awareness and understanding of potential career paths and the real world preparation necessary to pursue them.
- Providing real-life experiences through job shadows or case studies.

GOAL: Increase opportunities at all 11 public schools for students to interact with and learn from business professionals through support of career events, classroom presentations, and small-group discussions through programs such as AVID and Link with a Leader.

Principal for a Day: In partnership with Fulton County Schools during this annual fall event, we provide opportunities for business and community representatives shadow our public school principals. Our outcomes include:

- Promoting understanding and opportunities for shared resources.
- Engaging our principals in learning from business leaders' experiences.
- Engaging our business leaders in better understanding the challenges and strengths of our schools.

GOAL: Continue and enhance our partnership with Fulton County Schools, and make the program available to private school chamber members; expand feedback mechanisms with principals and businesses to promote ongoing relationships.

CEO for a Day: During this one-day Chamber program, locally headquartered businesses host our public school principals and key leadership personnel. Throughout the day, at multiple locations, C-suite executives share their workforce needs, including the skills they look for when interviewing and hiring employees. Our outcomes include:

- Providing guidance to educators, in helping tailor curriculum that addresses known and expected workforce needs.
- Enabling educators to experience various business environments.
- Encouraging business leaders to share expertise in leadership and other topics, thereby providing personal development for our educators.
- Developing relationships between schools and business leaders, leading to relevant curriculum assistance and support.

GOAL: Expand program to a variety of industries. Include school guidance and career counselors, and teachers of high-need subject areas.

Curriculum Partnerships: Through participation in this Chamber initiative, a business or group of businesses may adopt a curriculum area at one of Sandy Springs' public schools. Such engagement may involve support of a specialized club, afterschool program, or ongoing relationship, providing speakers, support and guidance in that area. Such engagement is at the school's discretion. Our outcomes include:

- Filling immediate employment needs through in-school certification programs.
- Enhancing and expanding learning opportunities for students.
- Ensuring continued relevance of topics and teaching models.
- Improving student engagement, and therefore grades and graduation rates.
- Producing "certificated" graduates in certain programs.

GOAL: Expand this program beyond the construction trades, culinary arts, and health sciences. Targets include entrepreneurship and computer sciences.

SSPC and SSEF Partnership: SSEF manages a variety of targeted, school-based programs to bridge the gap between student needs and academic achievement. SSPC continues to provide volunteers and support for these ongoing programs, including but not limited to:

- STEAM showcase, an annual event.
- Footprints for the Future 5k, an annual event.
- Reading buddies, a program of weekly engagement at elementary schools.
- Link with a Leader.
- SAIL and Chosen programs, which assist high school students with the college application process.
- Mini Libraries.
- Junior Achievement.
- After School All Stars.
- Teacher Supply Closet, a program on which the Community Assistance Center also collaborates.

GOAL: Maximize the use of SSPC communication vehicles to recruit volunteers and engage the business community in supporting SSEF initiatives. Facilitate opportunities for businesses that want to engage in school based programs. Increase the number of volunteers, to expand programs and reach more students.

In what ways do you feel your business or others would be able to work with our students and teachers?

For more information, please contact us:

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