

# Community Involvement for Student Success



When it comes to building curriculum designed for student success, incorporating and welcoming professional members of the community provides opportunities for authentic application of skills students have learned, and real-world mentorship in a relevant industry.

During the last century, the involvement of community partnerships in education deteriorated creating a silo of educational practices with no real connection to industry needs. This has unfortunately led to a professional sector with unfilled job vacancies desperate for a trained workforce and schools simultaneously producing graduates unqualified for the jobs that await them.

By increasing community involvement in schools, two amazing things happen: schools become part of the community and the community becomes part of the school. The community and its leaders not only provide innovation, employment and a healthy tax-base, but they serve as an exceptional resource for professional expertise, mentorship and relevant and engaging instruction. Access to educational institutions provide a conduit for sharing informed and practical requirements for career readiness.

Community stakeholders want to have a prepared workforce emerge and can help create a relevant, engaging curriculum that offers students a socially and professionally appropriate space to practice knowledge, skills and abilities gained in the classroom. When students are able to apply what they learn through meaningful and authentic real-world application, they engage in deeper learning and understanding of the world around them. Building upon students' intrinsic motivation will improve their academic progress as well as prepare them for the rigor of the workforce.

As you move to competency-based education, the standards you use to inform your performance indicators are key—not only to the academic success of your students—but also with the needs of our communities. By increasing community involvement, our schools and programs are strengthened, and our students successfully meet the demands of a skilled workforce. Student success is community success.

“ We learn best when we care about what we are doing, when we have choices. We learn best when the work has meaning to us, when it matters. We learn best when we are using our hands and our minds. We learn best when the work we are doing is real and relevant. ”

**Dennis Littky**

Co-Founder of Big Picture Learning,  
Founder of The MET School and College Unbound