



MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT VOLUNTEER AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Handbook for Volunteers, Mentors, Business and Community Partners

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Thank you for serving as a Martin County Schools'

Partner In Education

You are taking an active role to support and enhance the development of our community's greatest resource –our students.

There is a direct and compelling correlation between the involvement of parents and community partners and the improved academic performance of students. In Martin County Schools, a number of creative strategies have been initiated at the state, district, school and classroom levels to encourage and support this involvement.

The district's Strategic Plan, as well as the School Improvement Plan for each school in the district, has identified objectives and an action plan to engage parents and businesses as interactive partners in the educational process. Schools are inviting business partners and families to participate in specific, goal-related enrichment activities.

It is a tribute to our "Partners" to see how the program continues to grow and expand to provide more offerings than ever before. Assisting students to achieve new academic heights offers its own lasting rewards, yet the people of the Martin County School District would be remiss if we did not add our tremendous appreciation for the work of our school volunteers.

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Partners in Education Program Goals



- Provide individual educational assistance to students.
- Improve students' self-worth by increasing the opportunity for educational achievement.
- Relieve the teacher of many non-instructional tasks and duties.
- Stimulate business and community interest, concern, and support for the educational system.
- Enhance all aspects of the educational process.

Partners in Education Code of Ethics

As members of a movement to improve and enrich the lives of our children, volunteers have a challenging role to play. Here are some guidelines to help:

Volunteers may work directly or indirectly with students. The main thing to remember is, ***"Volunteers never replace the teacher."*** Volunteers offer a supplementary service and are there to provide motivation to develop a student's receptivity to learning and help the student acquire a better self-image.

School staff and teachers will decide the specific tasks to perform and the information and materials volunteers will need.

Love and respect for each student as a person are the most important ingredients in working effectively as a volunteer. Self-esteem and self-confidence are basic to learning.

Teachers are in charge of the instruction and the discipline of each student. The volunteers' job is to guide and encourage the student along the path the teacher has chosen. The personal interest volunteers show students may be the catalyst that makes them recognize their own worth and their ability to achieve.

Volunteers will consider any information about the students privileged, and to be held in the strictest confidence.

Volunteers will support the basic aims of education by:

- Maintaining consistent and regular attendance.
- Following all regulations and procedures of the school and the district.
- Discussing school problems with staff members at appropriate times.
- Observing discretion in commenting on school matters.

The commitment volunteers make to our students is a significant one. As they participate in school activities, volunteers are looked to as role models. Therefore, it is imperative that volunteers conduct themselves in a correct and responsible manner, thereby making the "Partners in Education" program a success.

School Board Rules

6Gx43-3.10

6Gx43-3.10 SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM.

The Board encourages volunteer participation by individuals and groups in local schools, central and area offices, and supervised off-school activities before, during, and after school hours.

1. Definition: A volunteer is a non-paid person functioning under the sponsorship of the Board and at the direction of the responsible administrator.
2. The Supervisor of Volunteer Services shall be responsible for the direction of the program and its compliance with all laws pertaining to volunteers, which shall include the recruitment of volunteers and the evaluation of the program.
3. Volunteers registered with the school volunteer office are protected by the Board's Workers' Compensation and General Liability Self-insured program the same as regular employees.
 - a. All schools shall maintain a Log, which will record names, dates, and hours of service(s) and tasks assigned. All volunteers shall sign in and out when volunteering in a school or in a school-related activity.
 - b. Volunteers shall register each year.
 - c. Volunteers must wear an identification badge while on school property.
 - d. Volunteers may be screened through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.
4. Categories.
 - a. Instructional Volunteers: Provide services to students and staff on a regular basis:
 - b. Resource Volunteers: Provide curriculum enrichment for students on an occasional basis. Discuss jobs, demonstrate crafts, share collections or hobbies with classes, etc.
 - c. Organization Volunteers: Comprise the school community organizations (PTA, Boosters, School Advisory Committee, Civic Groups, etc.).
 - d. Business/Education Partnerships: Volunteer Services Office will serve as a clearinghouse for business/education partnerships. (mentor programs, etc.)
 - e. Mentors for Students: Work with individual students encouraging academic remediation, communication skills, and goal development.

5. Responsibilities.

- a. Work within guidelines established by the responsible administrator.
- b. Perform any task assigned by their supervisors and approved by the responsible administrators, excluding access to student cumulative records.
- c. Work under the direction and supervision of teachers or other members of the staff.
- d. Maintain strict confidentiality with information to which they have access while performing their duties.
- e. Be aware of all state and local policies, procedures, and laws relevant to volunteer responsibilities.

6Gx43-3.10

Authority: 230.22(2) F.S.
Implements: 236.0873 F.S.
Adoption Date: 03/17/87
Effective Amendment Date: 08/16/88; 10/06/92; 02/17/98

Background Checks

A Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) background check (or other authorized background check) is required every two years for the following volunteers:

1. Coaches, club sponsors, cheerleading sponsors, mentors, tutors.
2. All school site volunteers working with students who are not under the direct visual supervision of a School Board employee.
3. All school-sponsored trip chaperones that are not under the direct visual supervision of a School Board employee.

As of July 2004, all volunteers will be checked annually against the FDLE Sexual Predator/Offender Registry prior to being placed in any volunteer position.

Each school site is responsible for requesting and maintaining background checks for its volunteers, as well as screening volunteers against the FDLE Sexual Predator/Offender Registry. Mentor screenings, including reference checks, will be handled and paid for by the respective sponsoring agency (i.e. Big Brothers Big Sisters, Take Stock in Children, Foster Grandparents).

Sign-In and Sign-Out Policy

Each time a volunteer enters a school to volunteer, she or he must sign in, wear a nametag and sign out when she or he is ready to leave the school. This requirement is necessary for the following reasons:

1. Safeguarding our students and maintaining campus security is of the utmost importance.
2. School board policy calls for sign in procedure (3-a).
3. In case of an emergency telephone call, the volunteer can be located.
4. **While volunteering at school for a specific purpose, individuals are covered by school board insurance provided they have completed a volunteer registration form and have signed in.***
5. Verified volunteer service can be used as work experience for future employment.
6. Individual volunteers will be recognized for their dedication and service to our schools. The record of volunteer attendance is the basis for consideration for these awards.
7. Each school is recognized for its number of registered volunteer hours. The Florida Department of Education presents the Golden School Award to schools with twice as many hours of volunteer instruction or instructional-related service as students enrolled.

*Please refer to the Risk Management Guidelines for Volunteers and The Workers Compensation Managed Care Handbook for information regarding specific coverage of registered volunteers.

General Volunteer Procedures

1. Each school year, all volunteers and business partners are required to complete a *Partners in Education Registration Form #270*. Community Resource Volunteers will turn in their registration forms to the school office on the day that they speak.
2. Volunteers must always work under the supervision of a district employee and are never to meet a child alone.
3. Volunteers agree to practice the "No Touch" policy at Martin County school sites and on school field trips. Praise and encouragement are the approved methods to demonstrate care and respect. A volunteer might pat a child's hand in a non-threatening manner to reassure a child, if the child seems receptive and in need of a touch.
4. Volunteers must wear an identification badge every time they are at the school.
5. If a volunteer is going to be absent for a scheduled activity, or if a community resource volunteer is unable to speak at the agreed upon time, the volunteer should call the school and ask that the teacher and/or student be informed of his or her absence.
6. Volunteers should be prompt; due to scheduling requirements, it is important to make every minute count.
7. Volunteers are asked to commit to only the time that they can realistically expect to fulfill because teachers will plan for them, and students will be dependent upon them.
8. Once the volunteer receives his/her assignment from the school volunteer coordinator, the volunteer should meet with the teacher sometime when the teacher does not have students in the classroom. This will provide an opportunity to discuss the assignment, learn about procedures, etc. Volunteers should be encouraged to set up additional meetings, if necessary, to get further instructions, discuss a problem, and learn about materials.
9. The teacher is in charge of the classroom at all times and the teacher will provide any discipline that is required.
10. Volunteers are expected to maintain strict confidentiality with information to which they have access while performing their duties.
11. When they have questions about policies and procedures, volunteers should follow the proper channels within the school, and ask the appropriate person: the teacher, the principal or the school volunteer coordinator.
12. Parents are not placed in their child's classroom on a regular basis.

Mentor/Tutor Program Guidelines

Definition of a Mentor/Tutor:

Mentors and tutors work with a student or students on an individual or small group basis for at least one hour per week for the purpose of increasing academic success. In addition to providing academic reinforcement, a mentor may assist in goal development, serve as a role model to students who may have been identified as at-risk, and/or work on a special project from its origination to completion with a student who has a special interest or unique talent. School-based mentoring is limited to the school or designated mentor site, under the supervision of a district employee or designee.

Mentor Programs:

A number of agencies have a variety of effective mentoring programs already in place throughout the district. Among these are *Big Brothers Big Sisters of Martin County*, *Boys & Girls Clubs of Martin County*, *Foster Grandparents*, and *Take Stock in Children*.

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Martin County

School-based Mentor Program and *"Think Big"* (after school program with high school mentors)
283-8373

Boys & Girls Clubs of Martin County

545-1255

Foster Grandparents

Area Agency on Aging
1-800-773-1895 or (561) 694-7601

Take Stock in Children

IRCC Foundation/Chastain Campus
283-6550

Teen Trendsetters Reading Mentors

Martin County School District
219-1200, ext. 30351

General Mentor/Tutor Program Procedures

1. Teachers, other school personnel, or a parent may identify a student.
2. A referral form is completed and submitted to the school or school-based agency case manager for Big Brothers Big Sisters, Take Stock in Children, or other agency.
3. Mentor agencies or the school may recruit mentors and tutors.
4. Mentors and tutors **MUST** complete the **Partners in Education Registration Form #270** every school year.
5. Mentors and tutors **MUST** have a current background check completed before working with students.
6. To prevent the mentor or tutor from making a wasted trip to the school, the mentor or tutor should contact the school the morning of their scheduled appointment to confirm that their student is in attendance.
7. The teacher is responsible for providing appropriate materials for the student and mentor to cover during the scheduled mentor appointment.
8. Schools will include mentors in any appropriate volunteer recognition activities.

For Mentors Referred by a Mentoring Agency:

1. Mentors must complete any registration/paperwork required for the specific mentoring agency.
2. Parents **MUST** complete **Mentor Activity Parental Permission Form #494**.
3. Mentoring agency will screen and review mentor applications.
4. Mentoring agency will provide at least one hour of mentor training.
5. Mentoring agency will appropriately match students and mentors.
6. Mentoring agency will provide case management, and speak with the mentor at least once a month.
7. School personnel are encouraged to contact the case managers on an "as needed" basis.

Business Partnerships

Business partners work together with schools to improve educational programs that are responsive to the needs of the students, the community and our society. The goal of education/business partnerships is to utilize available resources of both the business and the school to creatively satisfy the predetermined needs of each partner.

Who qualifies as a "Business Partner?"

- A business of any size
- Professional organizations
- Civic groups or homeowners associations
- Governmental agencies

A cooperative agreement (**Form 84A**) between a school or school district and a business or organization must be completed *each school year*. This will ensure that a plan and timeline will be followed by the school as well as the partner to achieve a specific outcome.

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program / R.S.V.P.

Volunteers age 55 or older are invited to join the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Martin County. RSVP is sponsored by the *Volunteer & Community Resource Center, United Way of Martin County*, and provides a number of benefits to registered volunteers which include:

- Supplemental accident and liability insurance coverage while on assignment
- A formal recognition event each year to honor all RSVP volunteers
- Tracking and reporting of senior volunteer hours to support local and national initiatives for the elderly

For more information, contact the school volunteer coordinator or the RSVP Office at **772-220-4472**.

Volunteer Activities

The volunteer coordinator at each site will assist you in determining the volunteer activity which is best suited to your skills, interests, schedule, and needs of the school. The following list is only a sampling of the areas in our schools where volunteers may be needed:

After School Activities ...

Supervises, under the direction of the teacher, any after-school activities.

Attendance Volunteer ...

Maintains attendance/absenteeism records, and/or makes home contact to determine reason for absence.

Business Partner ...

Provides expertise and resources to enhance the career-based educational perspective. Activities include participation in advisory committee functions, opportunities for career-related internships, and special events and programs that assist students in skill development.

Career / Technical Skills Volunteer ...

Assists individual students in areas of applied technology and career development activities.

Chaperone ...

Chaperones school-sponsored trips (i.e. field trips, competitions, sporting events, band and chorus performances, etc.), school dances, and other school-sponsored events.

Classroom Assistant Volunteer ...

Performs clerical, monitorial, and reinforcement tasks under direct teacher supervision in any classroom setting, including Exceptional Student Education (E.S.E.) and Related Arts (i.e. Art, Band, Chorus, and Physical Education) classes.

Clerical Assistant Volunteer ...

Works with a particular school department or the office staff, performing designated departmental tasks such as: record keeping, inventories, attendance, supplies, marking objective tests; also types, duplicates and collates materials. Can compile catalog materials, prepare teaching aids and learning materials, and record written work for the teacher.

Clinic Volunteer ...

Works in the clinic or health room to provide services for those students who are ill or unable to be in class because of health reasons. Also helps with health screening activities such as visual and hearing screenings.

Community Resource Volunteer ...

Provides special demonstrations, tasks or instruction on a variety of topics including careers, hobbies, travel or interests that enrich and extend student awareness and knowledge.

Library / Media Center Volunteer ...

Works under the supervision of the media specialist. Shelving, filing, clipping, circulating, and book processing are some of the tasks that may be performed.

Mentor / Tutor ...

Works with a student or students on an individual or small group basis for approximately one hour per week. A mentor may provide academic reinforcement, assistance in goal development, and serve as a role model to students who may have been identified as at-risk. A mentor may also work on a special project from its origination to completion with a student who has a special interest or talent.

Speakers of Other Languages Volunteer ...

Assists in establishing effective written and oral communication among limited and non-English speaking students, parents, and school personnel. May act as an interpreter.

Special Activities Volunteer ...

Performs occasional but important support as needed for the duration of a particular project. Includes serving on school advisory committees (SAC), participating in band and music booster clubs, and parent-teacher group activities (PTA, PTO), assisting with book fairs, grading papers for the Math Super Stars program, working in the school store, assisting with the opening / closing of school tasks, assisting with school fund-raising projects, and other special school activities.

Supervision Volunteer ...

Assists in the cafeteria, as a hall monitor, and in the parking lot or playground areas to provide additional supervision.

Find the activity that's right for you!

Thank you for your interest in being a volunteer for the Martin County School District. We hope that it will be an enjoyable and enriching experience.