**INTRODUCTORY CONVERSATION GUIDE**

 Learn about what the partner does

 Build your confidence in the partner’s ability to implement the program

 Determine if what the partner does is aligned with your school’s priorities and capacity

 Get a sense of what your school and staff will need to do to support the partnership

 Determine if you want to proceed with planning for the partnership

**Goals for this Conversation**

**Who:**

* Generally, this can just be a conversation between the partnerships coordinator and the prospective partner, but you may want to loop other colleagues in depending on what you know about the potential partnership going into this conversation.

**Where/How:**

* We recommend having the introductory conversation over the phone or in-person at the school. Some Coordinators might prefer to send these questions in a survey/form to the potential partner. It is up to you and your principal to determine an approach that works for you!

**What to do after the conversation:**

**What to do before the conversation:**

* Make sure that you are ready to summarize your school's goals and priorities. If you have not yet developed these with your principal, check out the [Framing Your School’s Goals and Priorities module](https://www.philasd.org/strategicpartnerships/toolbox/principal-goals-priorities/).
* Review the partner's website or any other materials you can find about the program to get an initial sense of the program

* Decide whether or not you think the school should pursue developing this partnership. If you do not think pursuing the partnership makes sense right now, send a follow-up e-mail to the program contact with a brief explanation of why.
* Schedule a meeting with your principal to go over what you learned about the program, answer any questions that came up in the introductory conversation and determine if the principal would like to pursue developing the partnership.
* Share the [Requirements for Partnering](https://www.philasd.org/strategicpartnerships/wp-content/uploads/sites/83/2019/08/Checklist-Requirements-for-Partners.pdf) document with the partner

**SCHOOL:**

**PARTNER ORGANIZATION:**

**DATE:**

**QUESTION #1:**

What is the name of the proposed program?

**WHY DO WE ASK THIS?**

You will need to know the name of the program for a number of reasons, but a name can often tell you about an organization's philosophy/approach to students!

**QUESTION #2:**

Will the program be free to the school?

**WHY DO WE ASK THIS?**

We recommend clarifying this early in your conversation, because this will tell you if the program actually qualifies as a partner (no cost to your school) or a vendor (cost to your school). Sometimes organizations are interested in securing contracts for their services, so this is important to clarify as early as possible, as they would not be considered "school partners" (i.e. they offer services at no cost to the District or schools).

**QUESTION #3:**

**WHY DO WE ASK THIS?**

Some programs may not actually have funding identified for what they are proposing to do. We recommend waiting until the partner has secured the funding to begin planning the prospective program at your school.

How is the program funded?

**QUESTION #4:**

When was the organization/program founded?

**WHY DO WE ASK THIS?**

This can be helpful in building your confidence about the organization's experience in implementing their programming. If the organization is new, you will want to ensure that they are going to be able to implement their program effectively.

**QUESTION #5:**

Is your organization local, regional, or national; if national, does it have a local/regional presence/staff?

**WHY DO WE ASK THIS?**

If the organization is not based locally, it is important for you to be confident in their ability to support/implement the program in Philadelphia. If they are a national organization, you may want to ask how they would support the program in Philadelphia. Do they have a regional office and/or staff located in Philadelphia?

**QUESTION #6:**

Are you a full-service program? Do we need to provide additional staff support?

**WHY DO WE ASK THIS?**

Sometimes a partner requires that school staff support/implement the program. In some cases, this may be possible at your school, but in other cases it may not be. This may be something that you want to bring up with your principal following this conversation to see if what the partner is offering merits trying to identify staff to support/run the program.

**QUESTION #7:**

What are the goals of the program?

**WHY DO WE ASK THIS?**

This question will help you determine if the goals of the program match your school's goals/priorities. If these are drastically different from your school’s goals/priorities, this partnership is likely not a good fit for your school and you should communicate that to the organization at this point.

**QUESTION #8:**

**[If you have not already shared information about your school’s goals/priorities, we recommend that you summarize them before asking this question]**

How does, or how can, your program align with our school goals/priorities?

**WHY DO WE ASK THIS?**

Not all programs need to directly address certain school goals/priorities, but many can still support them indirectly. It is always a good idea to make sure that partners are aware of what the school is focusing on and encouraged to think about how their work aligns with those goals/priorities.

**QUESTION #9:**

Approximately how many students would your program have the capacity to serve?

**WHY DO WE ASK THIS?**

It helps to get a baseline understanding of how small/large the proposed program will be. This will help you gauge the amount of support/resources/space the school may need to provide.

**QUESTION #10:**

What grade levels/age range does the program serve?

**QUESTION #11:**

Do you have written materials describing the program in detail, including a logic model, program outline, sample schedule and/or curriculum? If so, could you share them with me?

**WHY DO WE ASK THIS?**

Organizations should be able to provide materials that outline their program. If the materials contain typos or unclear information, this could be a sign that the program does not meet the standards of quality that you would want to see in a partnership for your school.   
  
Some organizations may not have a curriculum, or their program might not entail needing a curriculum, but generally strong partners can provide detailed explanations of how their program is structured and why it is structured that way. If a partner has a curriculum or another document that provides detail about the program, this can you build confidence in their ability to implement/manage the program effectively.

**WHY DO WE ASK THIS?**

The partner may be planning on serving grades that you don't have at the school or grades that already have partnerships serving them.

**QUESTION #12:**

Do you have an evaluation/program data you can share that speaks to the impact of your program? If so, can you share it with me?

**QUESTION #13:**

**WHY DO WE ASK THIS?**

Partner programs are not required to have a formal evaluation to operate in District schools, but you can feel more confident about organizations that can provide evidence that their program is effective.

Does your program currently partner with any other School District of Philadelphia schools? If so, which ones?

**QUESTION #14:**

Have you communicated with the Office of Strategic Partnerships or any District office before?

**WHY DO WE ASK THIS?**

This might be helpful in understanding what existing connections the program has with the District, and it may be helpful to connect with these other contacts to hear about their prior experiences with the partner program.

**WHY DO WE ASK THIS?**

This will give you a sense of whether the organization has experience working with schools in Philadelphia and also give you a list of potential schools to reach out to as references, if you decide to proceed with planning out this partnership.