

It takes a community to raise a school

Key Players

For this blog post I've identified the four stakeholders I consider most important. Students, Parents, Seniors/Grandparents and Local Businesses

Students

Who's school is it anyway? Students are people who matter in schools. [Giving students a legitimate voice](#), has educational, social and emotional advantages, so [how might we encourage and promote student voice?](#)

Top ideas

- ⤴ Create a closed group social network like a Ning or Facebook groups and invite your community leaders, local businesses to join and share your thoughts, ideas, and concerns with them in an open discussion
- ⤴ Ask if you can create a class for the following term, semester. Design the learning experience you want and find ways to connect it to core curriculum.
- ⤴ Student- Skill share - Skills audit and match with Curriculum for the coming year. Let your teachers know your passions, interests, goals, skills learned outside the classroom. Your teacher can use this info to match you to projects and customise learning for your benefit.
- ⤴ Hold a Student Voice conference for your school district. Invite all schools and make it a youth lead event. [Here is an example](#) put on by students from [Preshil in Australia](#).

Parents

If you believe connecting and contributing to your community, then show it. Your kids will learn by watching you. Parent volunteers offer a huge resource and support base for the school community and parents are teacher too, show what you know, teach and learn in your child's school.

Top ideas

- ⤴ Bring Your Fathers and Mothers to School
- ⤴ Create a dedicated space in the school just for families to use when they visit the school. Make it warm and welcoming and offer ways to get involved.
- ⤴ Ask parents to share their life-long learning experiences. Promote their passions and share how they have learned on the job, career or special expertise or service work.
- ⤴ Ask parents to be spokespersons in community groups, churches, and civic clubs to communicate about what's happening in school. Parents can be powerful advocates for the school and are credible to others in the community.
- ⤴ Host a festival of ideas day on the weekend and make it a fun community event. Create an online brainstorming and voting mechanism using [ideascale.com](#) so the community can share and vote on ideas to improve the school community.
- ⤴ Set scheduled "Coffee with the Principal," times for parents to have coffee and informal conversation with the principal.

Seniors/Grandparents

We need events and learning/teaching opportunities which encourage closer relationships between generations. [Research shows children need 4 to 6 involved, caring adults in their lives to fully develop emotionally and socially.](#)

Research shows children may have already internalised ideas that lead to ageism. Children need to learn about aging and have positive role models in their life.

Top ideas

- ⤴ Reach out to senior/retired citizens and invite them to volunteer at the school
- ⤴ Speak to classes about career or special expertise
- ⤴ Read to students over Skype and connect with multiple classrooms in different countries
- ⤴ Students visit aged care facilities each week to ask advice and help out.
- ⤴ Create a 'wisdom of the elders' question bank to let students ask questions that seniors can answer and send back.
- ⤴ Connect with local Rotary or similar organisations to find ways to collaborate
- ⤴ Get Seniors who love cooking and gardening involved in setting up a [School Kitchen Garden](#). Or create and maintain a community garden network and match them with young people to share workload and distribution of fruit and vegetables throughout the community.

Local Business & Subject Matter Experts

When I talk of business-school partnerships, I don't mean corporates partnering with school districts or multinationals promoting their end to end education products and services, I'm talking about local small and medium sized businesses.

There is strong evidence to show that students, teachers, parents, business employees, schools as a whole and the wider community can all benefit from these kinds of partnerships.

An example of a federal program in Australia called [School Business Community Partnership Brokers Program](#) is a good example however I would like to see something available to all ages and not just for those in the later years of their schooling. Another good one is [Kew High School Community Business Partnerships](#). ACER here in Australia have published a 2011 report, [The benefits of school-business relationships](#).

Top ideas

- ⤴ Portable pop up learning centres - in malls or in unrented shops.
- ⤴ Design learning games to be participated out in the community and make rewards prizes from local retailers. Turn the learning experience into a game and the entire community are players.
- ⤴ Establish a school-to-work program and invite businesses to participate through mentoring programs, service learning
- ⤴ Work with business leaders to provide resources that will move the business expertise and skills into the classroom
- ⤴ Create a school Youth Media Bureau. Have businesses train students to report via video, print, online, teach media literacy through real world experience. Create and share media with local TV stations and newspapers.
- ⤴ Invite community members to come to school once or twice a year and spend 20 minutes one-on-one with students, asking about career goals, offering advice, listening to their concerns about the future.

- △ Get local businesses involved in setting up a [School Kitchen Garden](#). Or create and maintain a community garden network and match them with young people to share workload and distribution of fruit and vegetables throughout the community.

Feel free to get in touch.

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