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access
ONE number equals access

CHARLOTTE MECKLENBURG
LIBRARY

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Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

Lessons Learned: Building and Sustaining a Successful Library/School Partnership *December 2015*

A successful collaboration can be so much more than the sum of its parts, with clear benefits for the library, the school system, and the community. Partnership requires hard work, planning, patience, and flexibility. We believe the result is worth the effort.

- **Begin with conversations** about the goals of the library and the school system. Opportunities will emerge from these conversations.
- **Listen** to the needs expressed by your school system contacts, and prioritize common goals. The most successful initiatives are beneficial for both the school system and the library.
- **Formalize the relationship** with a memorandum of understanding that outlines each organization's responsibilities and benefits.
- **Communicate!** Strong relationships and ongoing, regular communication with school administrators at all levels are critical to successful partnerships. Send regular updates to key contacts.
- **Leverage relationships** to learn who to contact for what. No two school systems are the same.
- **Use the school system's tools** to reach parents and teachers.
- **Use pilot projects** to test concepts and strategies. Regardless of the outcome, the experience will deepen your relationship and prepare both organizations for next steps together.
- **Enlist library staff** at all levels to raise public awareness of how the partnership works and how it benefits the community.
- **Work with curriculum coordinators** to offer teachers relevant training about using library resources with students. Continue classroom curriculum support through program development, materials management and online content curation.
- **Nurture the partnership** at the branch and school level. Library staff have relationships with neighborhood schools and can encourage use of the library as an extension of the classroom. These relationships ensure that initiatives work at the ground level, closest to students.
- **Tell your story** to stakeholders and funders throughout the community. Focus on student impacts and how the partnership increases student success.

ONE Access is a collaboration between Charlotte Mecklenburg Library and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools that enables students to use their Student ID number to access and check out Library resources.

Learn more at cmlibrary.org/studentsuccess

