



A PROGRAM OF JCRC

Greater Boston Jewish Coalition for Literacy

Reading Buddies: Corporate Partners Program

Thank you for your interest in the Greater Boston Jewish Coalition for Literacy! Below are best practices of designing corporate partnerships with Boston area public schools through the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC). JCRC is always open to exploring new models and new ideas that best suit the partners involved. If you have an idea for your company and you do not see it listed below, contact us and together we can explore the possibilities!

Program Structure Options: GBJCL Corporate Partners have a number of engagement options. This includes weekly tutoring, biweekly or monthly tutoring; short term or long term program design. GBJCL staff works with your Human Resources/Social Responsibility/Corporate Philanthropy department to design a volunteer program that aligns with your company's goals of service and community involvement for its employees.

Weekly Meeting Time: The two models that GBJCL corporate partners have requested over the past decade is either during Friday lunch time or Mondays during breakfast before volunteers head to their office to start their work day. GBJCL is open to developing additional models with corporate partners and schools to imagine a program structure that does not disrupt the school or work day significantly.

Pairing Design: In order to best support students in their literacy efforts and build meaningful, constructive relationships, consistency is the key. JCRC has developed a model for successfully supporting students through corporate partnerships. This model is to pair two company employees with one student such that they alternate weeks tutoring to minimize impact on their work responsibilities. This also ensures that if one person is sick, on vacation or unable to attend for professional reasons, someone the student knows can easily fill in and tutors feel some flexibility.

Alternates: This model also supports having "alternate" tutors who are trained and ready to step in if both tutors are not able to attend on a given week. The alternate option allows for tutors who have unanticipated work commitments to ensure their student has a Reading Buddy for that day. The Reading Buddies saying is: "Students can cancel on us but we should not need to cancel on students."

Weekly Option: After tutors have completed one year in the program, some opt to commit to attending every week. Given the volume of holidays and vacations on the school calendar, programs tend to meet only 2-3 times per month.

Transportation: Each week, volunteers go as a group to tutor students at their partner school. They either drive together or take an Uber/Lyft as a group. All pairs meet in the same room such as a library which generates energy amongst the pairs and seeing other students engaged motivates other students to stay focused.

Team Leader: Each team has a Team Leader who organizes the group. Responsibilities include tutor recruitment, scheduling trainings with JCRC and employees, organizing beginning and end of year parties, sending weekly reminders, contacting alternates as needed and staying in touch with the school liaison to find out absences on any given tutoring day. This person could be a member of the team of volunteers or a representative from the office.

Tips for Corporate Volunteers

- Be clear with your supervisor before making the commitment
- Block out the time on the calendar for all sessions
- Include travel time on your calendar; share with others as needed

School Support: Schools arrange a system for providing weekly support to tutors. Some tutors write in journals together with students each week for the teacher to review what they accomplished. The teacher writes back with notes about what the pair should be reading and activities to do or inserts books/activity sheets into a bag for pairs to use. Tutors can solicit feedback from the School Liaison who is usually onsite at all sessions and can connect on the tutor's behalf with the teacher with outstanding questions. Notebooks provide a great reflective moment for the student and tutor on their progress.

Benefits: There are a variety of benefits to companies that take on this experience. The team of individuals begins to feel a sense of camaraderie amongst their cohort. Volunteers report how this develops their communication skills and opens up their daily life by helping them connect to others outside of their home or office circles.

Giving Opportunities: In addition to volunteer components to corporate partnerships, there are many other ways companies can get involved and support the program. These include sponsorships such as a book drive, sponsorship for an author visit, a sponsorship at JCRC's annual gala, large in-kind book donations or joining the program's Founder's Circle.

For more information about GBJCL corporate partnerships,
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