



# Roadmap to Successful Collaboration with Lincoln Public Schools



## K-12/Higher Education Partnerships are Important

Collaborations between K-12 schools and institutions of higher education serve as one model for fostering mutually beneficial education, research, and outreach partnerships in the local community. Universities and K-12 schools mutually benefit from these partnerships through access to groups and individuals otherwise unavailable (e.g., student populations, university researchers, and K-12 educators and administrators); enhancements or supplements to existing academic curricula, out-of-school time programming, and research programs; and the development of long-term professional relationships and projects that advance the missions of both organizations.

While the benefits of K-12/higher education partnerships are numerous, building and maintaining effective collaborative ties that are based on strong interpersonal relationships and reciprocity can be challenging. As such, there are several strategies and best practices that can be used for forming strong, long-term partnerships between higher education and K-12 schools and educators. This document serves as a roadmap for University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) faculty and administrators seeking to establish and maintain successful partnerships with Lincoln Public Schools (LPS).

## Tips for Getting Started

### Before Initiating Contact

- Consider your timeline
  - ◇ Building relationships and acquiring the approvals necessary to conduct collaborative work takes time
  - ◇ Keep in mind the K-12 school calendar (e.g., beginning/end of school year, breaks, and testing season are not good times to initiate conversations or implement outreach activities)
- Determine your focus area (e.g., science, mathematics, humanities, etc.), target audience (e.g., teachers or students, grade level [elementary, middle, or high school], formal or informal), and timeframe (e.g., during the school year or the summer, before or after school)
  - ◇ Do your homework and become familiar with LPS' curriculum areas, existing programs, and district priorities at <http://lps.org/>
- Consider how you might leverage existing curricula and/or school improvement programs
- Brainstorm your anticipated project outcomes and consider how they align with LPS' mission

## Initiating Contact

Contact the appropriate LPS curriculum specialist and arrange, if possible, for a face-to-face meeting to discuss your proposed outreach activities

- Take a brief description of your idea to the meeting to stimulate discussion
- LPS curriculum specialists will likely have feedback regarding the fit of the proposed idea with current LPS issues/needs



Once you reach an agreement with the LPS curriculum specialist, which may involve modifying the original idea, contact the LPS Assessment and Evaluation Team to obtain permission to perform outreach activities on school property and to determine the required approvals and protocols for such activities

- Minimum review time for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval at LPS is 15 days, so make contact well in advance of planned activities

## Tips for Maintaining a Successful Relationship

- Establish common goals and work together with your LPS partner(s) to achieve them
- Secure the full engagement of all partners during implementation of project activities
- Assess the progress of the partnership from time to time and make adjustments when necessary
- Expand the partnership to include more people when appropriate to enhance its sustainability
- Disseminate project outcomes to all partners – including relevant school district administrators – to ensure maximum impact
- Remember that during collaborative work, UNL personnel are guests within LPS

## Contact Information

- Contact information for LPS curriculum coordinators is available online at <http://home.lps.org/curriculum/>
- The LPS Assessment and Evaluation Team webpage is available at <http://www.lps.org/post/index.cfm?collection=44>
- Leslie Eastman, director of assessment and evaluation for LPS, can be reached at [leastman@lps.org](mailto:leastman@lps.org) or 402-458-1790

For proposal-related education and outreach questions at UNL, contact:

- Tisha Mullen, director of proposal development, at [tgilreathmullen@unl.edu](mailto:tgilreathmullen@unl.edu) or 402-472-2894
- Nathan Meier, director of research strategy, at [nlm@unl.edu](mailto:nlm@unl.edu) or 402-472-3902