Creating a Sustainable Partnership Between a School District and a Partner Organization

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Chicago Public Schools STARTALK Arabic and Chinese Institutes at the University of Chicago 2008-2012
Whether you have an existing partnership or are seeking one, today you will:

- Have a better sense of the ultimate benefits a strong partnership brings to a STARTALK program
- Learn some of the common joys and hurdles any type of partnership experiences
- Get an intimate behind-the-scenes glimpse of a specific STARTALK partnership that has been sustained since summer 2008.
CPS Startalk Arabic and Chinese Institutes at a glance

- Overall objective: Encourage students to go beyond the 2-year World Language graduation requirement in CPS.
- 30 exiting Level I and II Arabic students and 30 exiting Level II Chinese students
- Study for one month, non-residential at the University of Chicago
- Weekly Culture Clubs and Field Trips
- External Evaluation
What types of partnerships are there?

- School district and university
- School district and cultural/linguistic institution
- School district and another school district(s)
- Other possibilities?
What are the benefits of creating a sustainable partnership?

- Benefits to students
- Benefits to the school district
- Benefits to the partner organization
Benefits to students

- Community-Students are more engaged because they are in a new context for language learning, exposed to new dialects, ways of thinking.
- Students see themselves as likely applicants to great universities.
- Students connect their language studies with a world of wider academic and career opportunities.
- Library, cafeteria, ID cards, being around U of C professors, treated as young adults.
- Being in a university setting brings out their mature side, want to fit in.
- Exposure to graduate students who are American and who know Arabic or Chinese and who have lived in a country that speaks the target language or students who have used Arabic/Chinese in their careers.
Benefits to the university/partner organization

- K-16 articulation: gives U of C an awareness of the diversity that exists within the language learning needs of CPS students.
- Gives the university a heads-up of broader national language trends that impact the university’s own language offerings.
- STARTALK principles have impacted the pedagogical methods used at the university level. For example, an increased use of realia.
- Using the curriculum planning guide has foregrounded the 5 C’s, backwards design, and student-centered learning.
- Exposure to ST has brought the less commonly taught languages more in synch with proficiency-based teaching found among the romance languages.
- Community engagement and service
Benefits to the partner school district

- K-16 articulation
- Motivates students to go beyond the two-year World Language graduation requirement
- Establishes a pipeline of extracurricular activities
- Access to world-class resources, instructors, and technology in a centralized location
- Shared responsibility for program planning and administration
- Allows us to reinforce what students learned during the school year and hone in on specific activities that otherwise would not take place such as Culture Clubs and field trips
What are the keys to a successful, sustainable partnership?

- Clearly defined roles in partnership
- Specific divisions of and shared responsibilities
- Communication and continuous improvement are key.
- Transparency
What are some hurdles you might have to overcome?

- Knowing who does what best
- Discrepancy in the level of agency afforded to language teachers at the university vs. the K-12 level
- Different procurement and contractual procedures
- Perspectives on second language acquisition methodology
A year in the cycle of our partnership

Summer -> Fall

Late Winter/ Spring
Any questions?

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