

ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS—Part 5

Volunteer Placement

Once you know a volunteer is a good fit and is able to get started, you will need to find an appropriate placement for them. Schools have different methods for making this happen, so please consider what the most effective methods are for your school. Here are some suggestions:

- ❖ **Needs of the school**—It will be more effective to place people in established priority volunteer roles than to individually identify opportunities for interested volunteers.
 - Inform the prospective volunteer what roles they can fill.
 - Offer a variety of options and explain them so the volunteer understands the duties and qualifications of the job.
 - Help the volunteer to fill the greatest need, but do not coerce.

- ❖ **Scheduling needs**—At times it may be helpful to narrow down the possible roles given the scheduling needs of volunteers.
 - Having identified roles at various times is easier than hunting for someone who needs volunteer help when the volunteer is available.
 - If your school cannot accommodate their schedule, refer them to another school or program that might.

- ❖ **Survey teachers and other staff**—Find out which teachers or staff members would like to have volunteer assistance, or which students need assistance.
 - Create a form (see examples on following pages) and let people know how to respond and when to respond by.
 - Sometimes teachers want volunteers, but don't take time to respond to communications. You might help them out by checking in with them personally.
 - Frame volunteer assistance positively. Do not place a volunteer with a reluctant teacher or staff member.

- ❖ **Provide supportive placements**—Place volunteers in position where they will receive the support they need.
 - You or another staff member need to provide the support.
 - Different volunteers need different levels of support.

- ❖ ***Continued on next page...***

Volunteer interests—At times you may have a volunteer with a particular interest or expertise that your students or staff can benefit from. Finding a special role for them is appropriate.

- Identify their skills and interest for teachers or other staff to engage.
- Create a special job description or proposal to fit the opportunity.
- Identify different support or structure this volunteer needs.

❖ **Volunteer motivation**—It is important that a volunteer's placement match their motivation for volunteering. For instance, a volunteer who wants to connect with one or two students on a more personal and consistent level will be best placed in a one-to-one tutoring role, rather than being a classroom assistant working with a large group of students. In the same vein, someone who wants to work together with other parents to improve the school will be well placed on a PTA council or helping with field trips and events as opposed to assisting the librarian or in the technology lab. For these reasons, it is important that you:

- Understand the motivation and interest of your volunteers.
- Help the volunteer understand the nature of the positions you have available.
- Check in with them periodically, especially in the beginning, to sense if the position is actually a good fit or to troubleshoot challenges if need be.

❖ **Matching volunteers to individual students**—At times we have specific students that need a good one-to-one match to make the time with the tutor, mentor or assistant effective.

- If appropriate, ask the student to provide input as to the characteristics he/she may want in a volunteer.
- Take into consideration the entirety of potential volunteer characteristics when placing the volunteer.
 - Personality
 - Availability
 - Gender
 - Ethnicity
 - Race
 - Age
 - Profession
 - Language
 - Faith
 - Abilities, talents and skills
- These issues can also be important for a good teacher/volunteer match.

Request for Volunteer

Today's Date: _____

Teacher/ Name of person requesting volunteer: _____

How can I get back to you? (Phone, e-mail?): _____

Date/days volunteers are needed: _____

Time volunteers are needed: _____

Activity:

_____ Teacher Prep-work

_____ Copying

_____ Classroom Assistance

_____ Tutoring

_____ Event

_____ Other (please describe):

Number of Volunteers needed: _____

Please describe what volunteers will be expected to do:

Do you have any volunteers you suggest I might call? (People who may have expressed interest in this in this event, for example).

Is there anything else I need to know?

Is a driver's license needed? Yes No

Tutor Request

Teacher making the request: _____

Student Name: _____

Subject and grade level: _____

Can the student be removed from class for tutoring?

Yes

No

Comments: _____

Tutor Request

Teacher making the request: _____

Student Name: _____

Subject and grade level: _____

Can the student be removed from class for tutoring?

Yes

No

Comments: _____
