

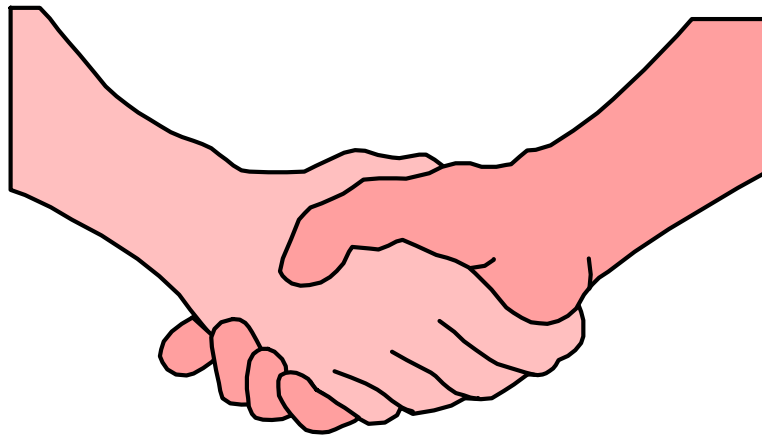
Traut Core Knowledge School

Hand-In-Hand

Guidebook

of

School Partnerships



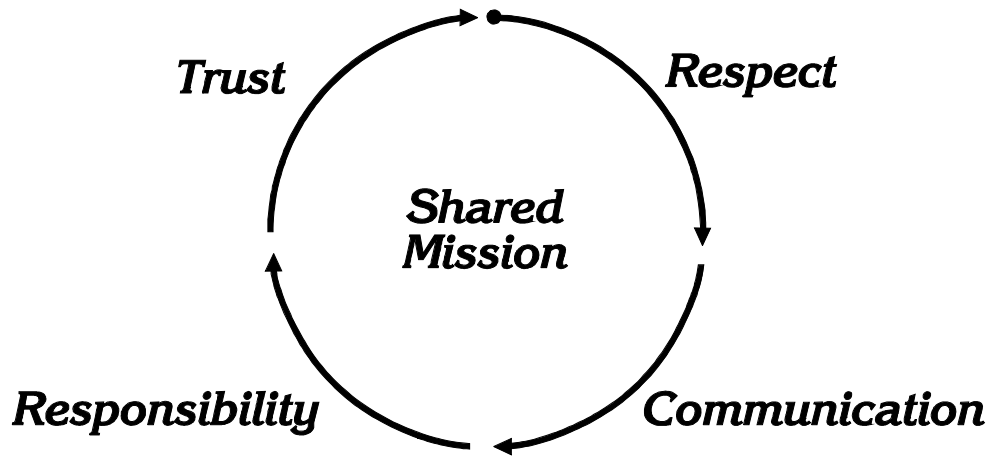
**Written by
The Character Education Committee
Approved 3/21/00 by SBMC**

**THE HAND-IN-HAND GUIDEBOOK OF SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP AT
TRAUT CORE KNOWLEDGE SCHOOL
Parent-Teacher-Student Partnership**

“A partnership is defined as a collaborative effort between parents and staff as equals.”
(TCKS Charter)

Our unique partnership model of school governance gives us the ability to deliver a rich educational experience for children, adding both breadth and depth to a child’s education. The success and effectiveness of our partnership model is dependent upon the commitment, strength of character, and broad participation of all its partners. The purpose of this document is to describe effective working relationships and to build strong parent/teacher/student partnerships at Traut Core Knowledge School. By applying the twelve character qualities to our interpersonal relationships, our goal is to sustain the shared mission and vision of the school community.

“Building a School Partnership”



STEP ONE

UNITY IN A SHARED VISION AND MISSION

Our vision is educational excellence in knowledge, skills and character with strong parent-teacher-student partnerships.

Our mission is to provide excellence and fairness in education for elementary school students.

At the heart of any effective partnership is the sharing of a common vision. If two groups or individuals do not share the same goals, their efforts are not only divided, but may well be working against each other. Making an informed choice to join Traut Core Knowledge School is the first step in insuring that this school partnership is the right match for each student, teacher and parent.

STEP TWO

THE FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE OF MUTUAL RESPECT:

Before a working relationship even begins, the fundamental attitude from each student, teacher, and parent is one of mutual respect for the valuable role the other person brings to the partnership.

Respect:

Teachers will remember that “...every child’s first and most important teachers are his or her parents. Our school exists to supplement and support the learning that is started in the home.” (TCKS Covenant) Parents will remember that, “This partnership includes the responsibility to support the school staff and provide good examples of behavior and work habits for their children.” (TCKS Covenant) Parents will remember that the teacher is the final authority on all matters within the classroom. The teachers will remember that parents retain the final responsibility when it comes to their individual children. In the case of a conflict, the way the partners interact with each other should not undermine the authority of the other individual. Parents will be respectful of the teachers’ privacy as it relates to their desks and personal property. Teachers will be respectful of the privacy and confidentiality of the parents and students with regard to personal family matters. Parents and teachers will respect confidentiality with regard to personnel records and student records and files.

Appreciation of Other’s Strengths and Cultural Differences:

The partners will remember that each person brings a unique perspective and strength to the partnership. Parents will realize that their relationship with the teacher as a parent is separate from their relationship with the teacher as an educational partner. Teachers will realize that the parents are the people best acquainted with their child’s unique characteristics. Parents and teachers can appreciate the possibility that a student may function and behave differently at school than at home. Parents can appreciate the education, expertise, and experience that each teacher brings to the school environment. Teachers can appreciate the unique skills, professions, and experiences that each parent brings to the school environment. “Parents will be invited to teach or assist with lesson plans or learning projects in all subjects depending on their interests and expertise.” TCKS Covenant

Patience:

The partners will realize that forbearance is necessary as the partners begin to adjust to working together each year in a new learning environment. Building a team takes time and partners need to be patient with each other and the children in their care. It is important to allow new teachers, new students, and new parents ample time to acclimate to TCKS’s unique school atmosphere and curriculum.

STEP THREE

THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF COMMUNICATION:

Partnerships at TCKS require an array of different methods to maintain effective communication. It is even more important with these close-working situations that the communication remain positive and encouraging to everyone involved.

Kindness:

The partners will be kind and thoughtful with their words, actions and attitudes. This includes the appropriate time and place for communication. Because Traut is unique in regard to the emphasis on teamwork, it is essential that kindness be the foundation for our communication. Parents will strive to see and understand the complexity of the teachers' position. Teachers will strive to see and understand the tenderheartedness that parents have for their children. Expressions of gratitude and appreciation show the other partners that their contribution is valued.

Honesty:

The partners will be honest with their communications by relying on first-hand facts rather than second-hand information. Every effort must be made by everyone to ensure that emotions and perceptions do not supersede objectivity. Parents and teachers will support the effort to help students develop the verbal communication skills necessary for dealing with adults about concerns honestly, directly, respectfully, and without fear. Parents and teachers will strive to be open-minded, listen to all perspectives, and set a good example for the children. At the same time, all must be willing to deal directly and truthfully with each other when resolving issues in the best interest of the child, and in the overall pursuit of the shared vision and mission. If one cannot repeat one's words in front of any of the partners among us, one should reconsider the statement.

Humility:

The partners will remember to secure a clear understanding of their abilities and limitations. Each partner will seek to comprehend the point of view and unique circumstances of the other two partners. In dealing with decisions, it is important to never lose sight of the fact that the parents and staff are a team; they serve for the benefit of the children. All will recognize that situations will arise when the partners do not agree, and each partner may have a valid perspective. Each partner must be willing to compromise, if it is for the common good, and be open to the idea of taking more time for better understanding. All will realize that each may benefit from the personal growth that occurs during healthy conflict resolution.

Cooperation:

The partners will support the common goal by listening and by being willing to do what is needed to be done to accomplish the task. It is necessary, at times, to set aside personal wants and needs to achieve what is best for the common good of all the students. Parents will be considerate of the teachers' schedules, and teachers will be prepared for parent help.

STEP FOUR

THE POWER OF SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES:

More can be accomplished in the school and classrooms through delegation of tasks among the teacher and parent partners. This is a powerful strategy that elevates the quality of the students' educational experience. *"Parents will also be encouraged to spend time reading aloud to children at school, coaching them in skill development, and otherwise contributing time and talents in a variety of ways at the school and on committees."* TCKS Covenant

Responsibility:

The partners will work together to clearly define and demonstrate their individual commitments, obligations and duties. Each partner will realize that some agreement is necessary for the partnership to be functional. Partnership is hard work. Decisions may take longer, but the shared decision-making model helps all work together toward specific educational goals, thus creating a positive drive toward excellence in education.

Perseverance:

The partners are expected to fulfill their respective commitments and complete tasks despite personal feelings or differences. The success of the school, and therefore, the students, is dependent on continued reliability throughout the year. The partners will be persistent in their collective pursuit of worthwhile objectives. Partners should exercise the TCKS motto, “Never Give Up,” even if a situation becomes difficult.

Citizenship:

The partners will be knowledgeable with regard to the content of the TCKS Charter and Covenant. The partners will strive to stay informed on issues that affect the school and the decisions that are being made. The partners will actively participate in the shared decision-making process that is utilized to make decisions for the school community. Once these decisions have been made, the partners are strongly encouraged to be supportive of them. The partners should notice the needs that the school is experiencing and be willing to help. The success of the vision and mission of the school is dependent on all of the partners’ commitment to performing their obligations.

STEP FIVE

THE ULTIMATE PARTNERSHIP BUILT ON TRUST:

If the first four steps in building a partnership are well developed, the result is trust. This ability to put faith and trust in our partners is the cement that makes the partnership strong, giving us confidence to continue to respect, communicate, and share the load. A lack of trust is a signal to go back and examine the previous steps to find out where the problem arose. Is it a lack of respect, breakdown of communication, or a problem with an unfulfilled responsibility?

Self Control:

The partners will remember to maintain self-control when differences of opinions occur. Partners are encouraged to state their point of view and even argue, but to also remember to focus on the issues. Partners can recognize differences of opinion as opportunities to strengthen the quality of the outcome. Emotionally charged words or actions directed at individuals can undermine the partners’ credibility on an issue, and the animosity it creates is destructive to the partnership.

Integrity:

The partners will attempt to presume that all persons involved have honorable motives. The partners will establish a commitment to the other partners’ success, worth, and value. The partners will seek and strive to maintain an alignment with one another as the team works together for the common good of the students. This can be accomplished by always referring to the Charter, Covenant, the Vision and Mission of Traut Core Knowledge School. The partners’ support of the school needs to reflect a harmony with the philosophies, policies and procedures of the school. The partners need to make a conscientious effort to match what is actually practiced in the classroom with the decisions made by the school.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS

Even when all five steps have been diligently followed, situations may arise that simply require a process for outside mediation. Parents, teachers, staff, and students are encouraged to communicate with each other on a regular basis about any issues of concern. When dissension is faced openly, differing viewpoints are better understood and conflicts can be resolved. When such informal communication does not quickly or easily solve a problem, the conflict resolution process should be initiated. To insure that this happens, a more formal process is available and may be pursued.

Forms:

Conflict Resolution Concern Form: To be completed by each concerned party prior to each scheduled meeting. This form will be used as a basis for communication and planning at each meeting.

Conflict Resolution Meeting Documentation Form: To be completed and signed at the conclusion of each meeting. Agreed upon concerns, action plan, goals, and expected completion dates will be included.

These forms will be kept in the school office in the student record of the student involved. In the case of a situation that does not directly involve an individual student, the school secretary will maintain a separate file.

Step 1. A meeting will be scheduled between the concerned parties. The concern forms will be used as a basis for discussion. The documentation form will be completed. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled to evaluate progress.

Step 2. If resolution is not achieved via step 1, a meeting will be scheduled between the concerned parties and the principal. PAB and/or TAB representatives of each party's choice may be invited to attend. The concerned parties will meet with that PAB/TAB representative beforehand to review the issue to be discussed. Complete confidentiality is to be maintained. A continued professional respect from the teacher for the student and the parents, and the respect from the parents and the student for the teacher will be maintained as they continue their school relationship during these steps of resolution. The forms from previous meetings will be reviewed. The meeting documentation form will be completed. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled to evaluate progress.

Step 3. If resolution is not achieved via step 2., a meeting will be scheduled between those parties involved in step 2., plus the PAB and TAB presidents or vice-presidents. Written information will be presented regarding the concerns, actions attempted to date, why these have been unsuccessful and constructive recommendations for resolution of the problem. Previous meeting forms will be reviewed. A further action plan will be developed and a documentation form completed. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled to evaluate progress.

Step 4. There may be additional follow-up meetings. The principal will determine when the appeals process is exhausted.

Conflict Resolution Concern Form

Date:

Step:

Student:

Teacher:

Parents:

Other parties involved:

Describe your primary concern, giving specific examples:

Describe other contributing concerns:

Constructively list what you think could be done to resolve this concern:

What is your goal at this time?

How soon should this be accomplished?

Other comments:

Signature:

Conflict Resolution Meeting Documentation Form

Date:

Step:

Student:

Teacher:

Parents:

Other parties involved:

Main concern presented at this meeting:

Other contributing factors:

Action plan involving all concerned parties:

Goals:

Additional comments:

Follow-up meeting date and time:

Signatures: