School-business partnerships create win-win situations for schools, businesses, communities and, most importantly, students. As [insert job title and company name], I used to think I did not play a role in supporting the efforts of [insert name of local school district]. I thought parents and schools were responsible for a child’s education.

The reality is, we all play roles in children’s education. Schools cannot, and do not, educate students in a vacuum. As a business leader, I am invested in the education of the children in my community. I need a strong pool of local workers and consumers who can afford the [products or services] [insert company name] produces. I want all our children to be well educated, motivated, hard-working and able to provide for their families. I want them to be punctual, friendly and comfortable making eye contact. These skills and behaviors are not acquired overnight. They are taught. They are learned through experience.

As a business leader, you can provide the experiences students need to gain these skills. [Insert company name] employs three interns each year. Our interns are 17 years old and selected through a competitive process from a pool of candidates taking [insert program] at [insert local high school]. They make a [two-year] commitment, and we make a commitment to training them in [insert skills and jobs your company would offer.] [Students are paid an hourly wage, and they work two days a week for five-hour shifts with the potential for summer employment.]

A number of outcomes — some expected, some not — have resulted. Our increased presence in the community has created a positive impression, which Harvard Business School research finds results in a company’s increased profits and competitive edge. Many of my employees have reported they look forward to the days the interns are on the floor. They enjoy teaching and mentoring the interns. Parents of the interns express a desire to go back to school to get credentials. But most importantly, the students gain experience while earning money – experience that will benefit them for a lifetime.