



How Chambers Can Make A Difference For Public Schools

**Kit Cramer
Charlotte Chamber**



Classroom Central



Example One:

**A FREE STORE FOR
TEACHERS**

The Need



- ⌘ **Teachers** spend dollars out of their pockets for supplies for their classrooms
- ⌘ **Businesses** have excess materials that can end up in landfills
- ⌘ **Many children** don't have the supplies they need to succeed in school

Classroom Central



The Concept

- ⌘ Establish an attractive retail **store** environment **where teachers can “shop” for free** for materials that can be used in their classrooms
- ⌘ Materials are donated by businesses

Classroom Central



The Benefit



- ⌘ **Teachers spend less and feel more valued**
- ⌘ Businesses get rid of excess materials and get a tax credit
- ⌘ Usable materials don't end up in landfills
- ⌘ **Kids get the materials they need!**

Classroom Central



Feasibility study to:



- ⌘ Determine **level of interest** and support
- ⌘ Identify **barriers to success**
- ⌘ Determine **key components**
- ⌘ Develop high-level **action plan**
- ⌘ Make final **recommendations**

Classroom Central



Aligned with Charlotte Chamber Business Strategy

- ⌘ Supported objective of “dramatically increasing the business involvement in schools with greatest needs”
- ⌘ Supported objective of “leading the community to constructive and educationally sound strategies which would assure every student an **equitable** and appropriate education”

Classroom Central



Funding Requirements

- ☒ \$200,000-\$250,000 initial **funding**
- ☒ Operating funds proportionate to number of schools/teachers served
 - ☒ *Initially Equity Plus II school teachers*
- ☒ **Staff support** required for operations, fundraising and marketing
- ☒ Donations of **in-kind services** for upfit

Classroom Central



Resources Needed



- ⌘ Strong, energetic and resourceful executive **director**
- ⌘ Intensive volunteer involvement for start up, ongoing **volunteer support**
- ⌘ One year of **funding** and a strong support structure (board)
- ⌘ Two **staff** members

Classroom Central



Resources - continued



- ⌘ At least 10,000 sq. ft. of operating **space** split between retail and warehousing
- ⌘ Office equipment/**furnishings**
- ⌘ **Design/build out** of space
- ⌘ **Dollars** for space rental

Classroom Central



Final Recommendation

- ⌘ Feasibility Study Team recommended we **start a free store for teachers** in Charlotte
- ⌘ Interim Executive Director
- ⌘ Executive Director hired
- ⌘ Location obtained
- ⌘ Fundraising started
- ⌘ Volunteer/produce recruitment began

Classroom Central



More ways Chamber helped



⌘ **Spring Clean for Kids**

⌘ **In-house ads**

Classroom Central



Doors opened 10/8/02



⌘ First "Mid-term Report"

☑ **\$318,672.66** in supplies to **1,294** teachers
in **36** schools

☑ Year one total of **\$754,000**

Classroom Central



Questions about Classroom Central?

Classroom Central



Contact Karen Calder, Executive Director
704-377-1740



Example Two:

WHAT'S WORKING CONFERENCE

“Not all help is helpful”



- ⌘ **Worked with Superintendent** to choose topic that would be helpful
- ⌘ Worked with Education Foundation and staff to **research** the issue
- ⌘ **Gathered best minds** in country around issue
- ⌘ Held **half-day conference** with both educators and business people

Next steps



⌘ Developed **action** items

- ☑ Support for **Bright Beginnings** pre-kindergarten program

- ☑ Support for **research-based reading** curriculum

⌘ Report out on **results**



Example Three:

EDUCATION VISIT TO RALEIGH

Influencing legislators on behalf of public education



- ⌘ Develop **agenda** in conjunction with public policy, **k-12 and higher ed**
- ⌘ Full-day trip via bus
- ⌘ **Lobbying 101** on the bus
- ⌘ Training on **key talking points**
- ⌘ **Assignment packets** for volunteers

Influencing legislators – cont.



- ⌘ **Lunch** with local delegation
- ⌘ **Panel discussion** of a key issue
- ⌘ Celebration on the way home
- ⌘ Thank you notes