

Getting Started

- Pray! Seek God's guidance in choosing a school and pray for an open door with administration.
- Contact the school principal by phone or email. Ask to make an appointment and let them know the purpose of the meeting.
- Be patient. Principals have a lot on their plates. Recognize that it will take time to build trust and let them know you are there for them with no other agenda. If you are having trouble connecting, drop off a personal note explaining that you would like to meet to discuss how you can help. Include a special treat with the note.
- When you meet, share your appreciation of their work and acknowledge the challenges of the last few years. Be ready to connect and listen. Do not assume you know their needs.
- Ask, "How can we help?"
- If the principal is taken by surprise and doesn't have an answer, ask, "Is there some way we can encourage your teachers?" or "What are some student needs we can help with?"
- Under promise and overdeliver. Know your limitations and always follow through.
- Consider serving on the School Improvement Council. Community members are needed. You will hear about school needs and creative ways to serve.
- Plan to connect on a consistent basis (every few weeks) to check in for support, encouragement, and to continue asking how you might help.

For more ideas, support, and resources, visit our website: www.Heart4Schools.org or email angelamcneal@scbaptist.org.



What are some student needs?

- Reading Buddies (reading once a week for 30 minutes with a student throughout the year)
- Mentoring or serving as a 'Lunch Buddy' weekly or monthly
- Food on the weekends for the food-insecure
- Snacks and healthy food for the school "pantry"
- School supplies
- Clothes to be kept in the office in case of accidents
- Personal hygiene items
- Shoes and warm clothing

How can we encourage teachers?

- Write personal notes of encouragement.
- Provide snacks and a note in the teacher workroom.
- Purchase classroom supplies for teachers and students.
- Provide breakfast or lunch; serve teachers and make intentional connections.
- Support first-year teachers with classroom help, supplies, and consistent encouragement.
- Church members can "adopt" a teacher and provide ongoing support throughout the year. (Put names on an "angel tree".)
- Provide a "duty-free" lunch for teachers by sitting with their class while they eat in another location.
- Volunteer in the front office, guidance counselor's office, or library.
- Help with bulletin boards, Fun Run, Field Day, reading incentives, or family engagement nights.
- Offer the use of your building for special events.