

Getting Started

1. Pray! Seek God's guidance in choosing a school and pray for an open door with administration.
2. Contact the school principal by phone or email. Ask to make an appointment and let them know the purpose of the meeting.
3. 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.
4. When you meet, share your appreciation of their work, and acknowledge the challenges of the last few years. Be ready to connect, listen, and ask "How can we help?"
5. 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?"
6. Under promise and overdeliver. Know your limitations and always follow through.
7. Consider serving on the School Improvement Council. Community members are needed. You will hear about school needs and creative ways to serve.

What are some student needs?

- Food on the weekends for the food-insecure
- Snacks and healthy food for the school "pantry"
- Clothes to be kept in the office in case of an accident or need for a change
- Personal hygiene items
- Lice kits for school nurses to disperse
- Coats, jackets, and shoes
- Field trip expenses
- Books to read over summer break
- School supplies
- Christmas support for the student and their family

When schools are open to volunteers:

- 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



How can we encourage teachers?

- Write personal notes of encouragement.
- Provide a basket of snacks, or bagels and coffee, in the teacher lounge once a month.
- Purchase supplies for the classroom for students and teachers.
- Help with "wish lists" for larger classroom items.
- Cater breakfast or lunch; serve teachers and make intentional connections.
- Supply healthy snacks and drinks for monthly after-school faculty meetings.
- Support first-year teachers with classroom help, supplies, and consistent encouragement.
- Place an angel tree in your church with every staff member's name. Church members can "adopt" a teacher and provide ongoing support throughout the year.

When schools open to volunteers:

- Provide a "duty-free" lunch to teachers by sitting with their class while they eat.
- Volunteer in the front office, guidance counselor's office, or library.
- Help with bulletin boards, Field Day, reading incentives, family engagement nights, and other special events.

For more support and resources, visit our website:
www.Heart4Schools.org.

You will also find a link to our Facebook group where you can get ideas and connect with other churches who are serving South Carolina schools.

For a personal consultation, email angelamcneal@scbaptist.org.