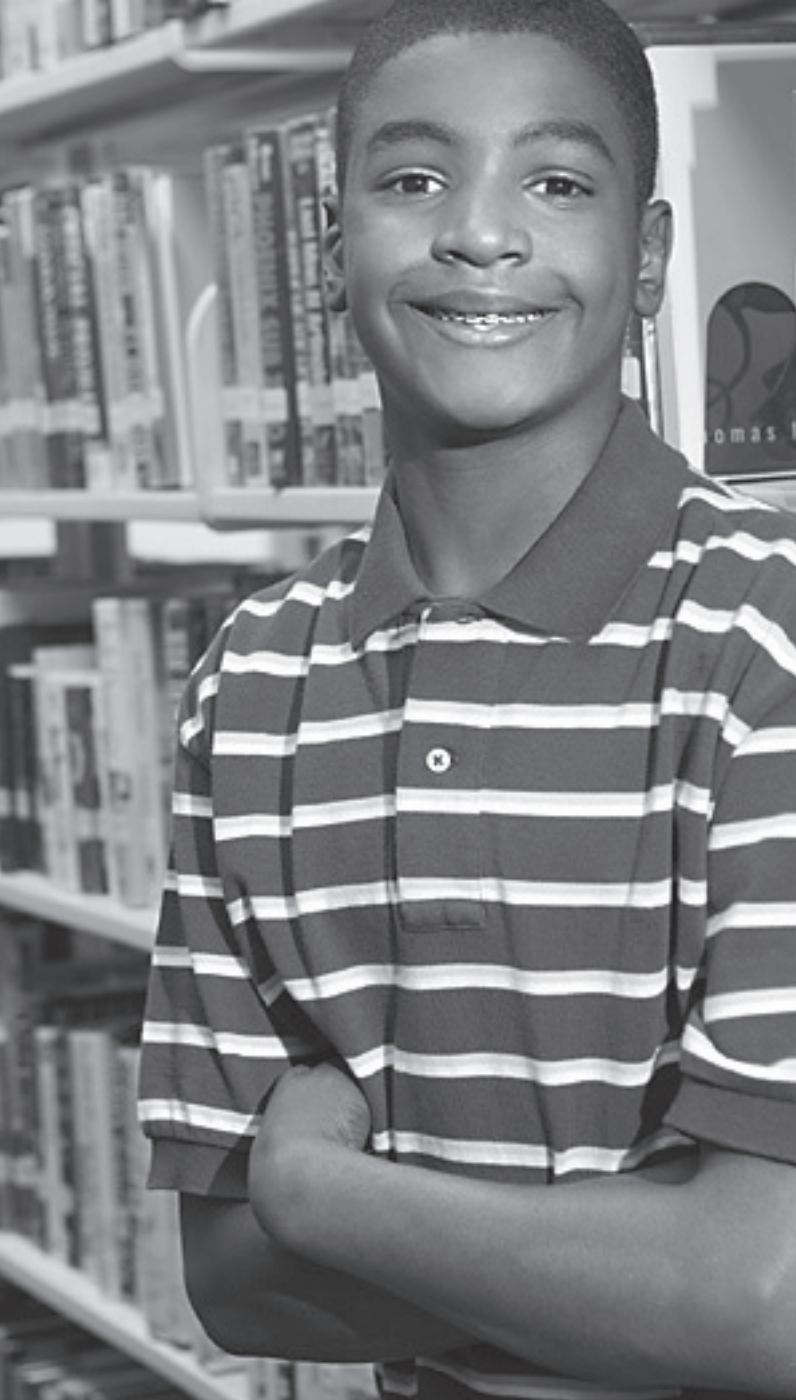


Helpful Tips for SBISD Mentors

Making connections *that matter*





Thank you.

Thank you for being a SpringBoard mentor in Spring Branch ISD. By offering guidance, encouragement and support to our students, you're *connecting them to a lifetime of success.*

Your support will help our young people gain the skills needed to address personal, school and home issues that may discourage them from reaching their full potential. *In just 30 minutes a week, you supply the gift of hope and give young people a vision of success.*

Take a look inside!

We are here to support you. Inside this publication are ideas and tips to help you maximize your Mentor-Mentee relationship.

If you need additional support, you can always consult with your Mentor Coordinator at your mentee's home campus. Or, visit the SBISD Mentor website for access to the latest news, information and downloads, including the Mentor Manual.

<http://springboard.springbranchisd.com>

“It’s helped me like school more and helped me feel better about myself.”

- SBISD Mentee

It’s about maximizing the opportunity for success.

Our mentors and mentees receive comprehensive training to maximize opportunities for success. The SBISD Community Relations Department provides on-going training, programming and support.

Campus coordinators serve as liaisons to the mentors and campus leaders. Our coordinators manage program implementation, communication and planning.

Making connections takes time and patience.

You're shaping their future...and yours!

Being a mentor takes time, patience and the willingness to take the time to build trust. Remember, the work you are doing today will change not only your mentee's future...but yours as well.

Let it grow.

If your mentee is quiet, he/she is probably still adjusting to the presence of a mentor in his/her life.

Just like any other relationship, your Mentor/ Mentee relationship needs to grow. This takes time. Many mentees have been hurt in past relationships and will test your reliability and compassion before opening up.

They may exhibit protective behaviors such as boredom, ambivalence, or dislike, until they are sure they can trust you. Be consistent and don't give up.

It's about working together.

Allow your mentee to set the pace. Don't expect him/her to open up too soon. Offer choices about activities and let your mentee know you value his/ her opinions.

"It has been most rewarding to have my mentee tell me what a difference she feels I have made in her life. To see her applying some of the strategies we discussed in our time together."

- SBISD Mentor

"I notice..."

A good way to build a relationship with your mentee is to notice little things, and mention them, but not make a big deal so as to embarrass the student.

Your quiet observation could be the only positive attention your mentee gets that day or week.

Try it out and watch the trust grow.

Below are some conversation starters that will let your mentee know you are paying attention to him/her:

"I notice you got a hair cut."

"I notice you like to wear red."

"I notice you have good handwriting."

"I notice you waved to that girl over there."

"I notice you have new tennis shoes."

Getting Acquainted

- Greet the student with a smile and a handshake.
- Sit side by side—not across.
- Learn how to pronounce each other's names, and establish what you would like your mentee to call you.
- Tell each other your birthdays and how you like to celebrate.
- Discuss each of your families, where you each were born.
- Find some interests you have in common, i.e. art, sports, pets, music, TV shows, games, etc. These can be springboards for future conversation and activities.
- Ask open-ended questions— not questions with yes or no answers. Encourage the conversations with phrases such as:

“How do you feel about ...”

“Tell me about...”

“What/Who is your favorite...”

“And then what happened?”

- Establish trust and dependability.
- Explain to your new friend you will come to visit every week so he or she will look forward to seeing you and make every effort to be in attendance.
- Let your mentee know you will keep what they tell you confidential, unless it is a safety issue for someone.
- Help set goals for your relationship, and ask how your mentee would like to spend your time together. Give him or her as much choice as possible.

Ice Breakers


It is best to arrive with a game plan and some small activity to facilitate conversation. Some ideas for the first few meetings are:

- Play a simple card game while chatting.
- Ask the student for a school tour, or take a stroll around the outside of the building.
- Read a book from the library and discuss the mentee's thoughts about the story.
- Each of you make a family tree to share.
- View a map or globe and talk about where you each were born, have lived and hope to visit.
- Bring photos cut from a magazine. Choose one and tell your mentee how it best represents your personality. Then the mentee does the same.

Goal Setting

Your mentee may not have had experience setting goals and achieving them. Here are some suggestions for instilling this notion:

- Talk about long term and short term goals
- Role Play - Help mentee solve problems
- Suggest timelines and let mentee make choices
- Research occupations and talk about the education needed to get there
- Talk about goals you had and steps you took to achieve them



“I have benefited from having a mentor because I’ve had somebody who was concerned about my education and guides/ motivates me to do my best.”

- SBISD Mentee

More Activity Ideas

- Play soccer or Frisbee, shoot baskets
- Reading newspaper to discuss current events
- Keep a journal and share
- Make a photo album
- Build a kite and learn how to fly it
- Origami, knitting/sewing
- Decorate cookies
- Make a holiday card for a teacher, family member, or friend
- Make flash cards
- Use the library computers to play games
- Look at college websites and talk about scholarships, setting goals and how to reach them
- Play Hangman, Chess, Checkers, Uno, Jenga, Battleship, Dominoes, Scrabble, Pictionary, Mastermind, card games
- Do a puzzle
- Draw pictures jointly
- Eat lunch together
- Make a quilt
- Learn calligraphy together
- Decorate tennis shoes or a t-shirt
- Build with Legos
- Make sock or finger puppets
- Discuss problems and explore options
- Play educational games
- Talk about grades and how to improve them
- Make New Year’s resolutions
- If the student speaks a different language than you, ask him/her to help you learn it
- Talk about bullying and how to deal with it
- Make a gingerbread house
- Go over sports statistics
- Discuss etiquette
- Plant seeds or take cuttings from around the school to root new plants
- Make jewelry
- Make suggestions for homework projects

Mentor Do's:

- Be consistent and on time
- Be yourself
- Be an active listener
- Be honest, patient and forgiving – not judgmental
- Be encouraging
- Be realistic
- Respect cultural, social and religious differences
- Maintain confidentiality (understand exceptions)
- Identify the positives in the mentee's life
- Be a friend – not a parent, teacher, or authority figure
- Be a neutral party for your mentee to use as a sounding board
- Set a professional example – dress to let your mentee know this time is important to you
- Help your mentee see the practical advantages of doing well in school

Mentor Don'ts:

Do not:

- Leave the student alone at any time or leave school with the student
- Give gifts – it is ok to provide supplies for mentoring projects
- Meet with the mentee alone behind closed doors
- Expect to change the mentee's life overnight
- Overstay your visit, which takes away from precious instructional time
- Hesitate to ask for help from campus personnel
- Join in with a mentee's criticism of family, school or friends
- Give out personal information until you are ready

Important Information:

My Mentee's Name:

Campus Name:

Campus Phone Number:

Campus Address:

My Mentee's Teacher:

Teacher's Email:

Mentor Coordinator:

Mentor Coordinator's Email:



SBISD Community Relations Department

955 Campbell Road, Houston, Texas 77024
Phone: 713-251-2468, Fax: 713-365-4678

Email: mentor@springbranchisd.com
<http://springboard.springbranchisd.com>

