



CLOSURE MANUAL

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Closure Do's:

- Be honest and clear with your mentee about your intentions for the summer and the following year.
 - Date should be identified (speak to campus facilitator to find out last day of mentoring that will be allowed on campus.)
 - A gradual goodbye is better than an abrupt one.
 - Let them know, what if any, contact they can expect from you in the summer.
 - Don't just say "We will keep in touch." That can mean many different things to people. Be specific.
- Ask them if they want to continue with mentoring next year and allow them to voice how they feel about the transition into the next year (note that they will complete a survey at school where they can share their feelings about next year.) I will share the results with you when I receive them.
- If you are not able to continue as their mentor, encourage them to stay open to another mentor.
- End on a positive fun note...not a sad one.
 - Make last meeting special. Have a celebration!
 - Affirm what they did that made the relationship work.
 - Focus on strengths of the relationship; particularly strengths you see in your mentee.
 - Celebrate good things and normalize the act of saying goodbye and feeling a sense of "loss." You can present them with "keepsakes" from your time together that remind them of the positive experiences. For example, if you played a lot of football maybe you give them a little football. If you laughed about something in particular, maybe you give them a memento symbolizing that.
- Complete the End of the Year survey that is sent to you before the year is over.



Closure Don'ts:

- Don't assume they know your intentions moving forward or that you know their intentions.
 - Just because they say they are moving next year, doesn't mean they are moving.
- Don't wait until your last meeting to bring up the changes that are coming (ie: summer and next year.)
- Don't promise something that you can't follow through with.
- Don't feel bad if life change doesn't allow you to continue with your mentee into the next school year. If you know that is the case now, then let them know that now.
 - Don't just disappear from their life. They will certainly find a way to think this was their fault.
- Don't abandon all boundaries because it is summer.
- Don't be disappointed when your desire to meet up or stay connected over the summer does not happen. And don't assume this is because the family is not accepting of you.



Preparing for Closure (from the beginning)

Ritual ideas (things to do now to establish a routine for saying good bye)

- Share a hello hug, fist bump or high five with your mentee when you say so long each week.
- Tell each other a joke and laugh together before you part ways.
- Create a secret handshake.
- Share your week's highs and lows, or sunshine and cloud, or your rose and thorn.
- Celebrate your friendship on the yearly anniversary of your match. I have your start date if you want to do this next year.
- Ask your mentee what he/she would like to do as your ritual!

Saying so-long for the summer

- Even if you have every expectation to return to mentor in the fall, it is still crucial to plan a mini-closure to say so-long for the summer months. Life happens and you may not be able to keep your promise.
- Share your feelings about the match and about the summer break; encourage your mentee to share as well.
- Reminisce about things you have done during the year together.
- Give them self-addressed stamped envelopes or postcards in case they want to write you. You can use the ESC address if you want and we can get the letter to you if they send one. We can also send letters to them since you don't have their address.
- Give your mentee a care package. Assemble items your mentee can use over the summer, such as sunscreen, puzzles or word games, a blow up beach ball, dime store flip flops, a water bottle.
- Make your last meeting together special. Celebrate your time together...regardless of your intentions for the following year.

Closure ideas

- Create a project that helps you remember each other.
- Make a memory book together.
- Make your last meeting special...different...make it a celebration.
- Write a letter to your mentee and express positive and confident hopes for his/her future.
- Make a friendship bracelet.
- Say **Thank You** to your mentee, for the time he/she has shared with you.
- Say Thank You to your mentee's parents for allowing their child to participate in RISE. See Sample parent letter in the Mentor Toolkit and in this packet.
- See the Mentor Toolkit on our website: pearlandisd.org/mentoring. At the bottom of that page are some closing activities that you could use with your mentee.

Gift ideas (a gift is not required)

- Something related to an activity that you two did together during the year. If you played a lot of Uno...buy them their own Uno game.
- A Summer Survival Kit or Care Package. See idea of items for it in previous section.
- A heartfelt letter/card from you.
- A Tagul (word cloud) of their name and words to describe them. (See Mentor ToolKit)



Reaching out to Parents

Figure out what your intentions are for the relationship with the mentee moving forward. What do you want it to look like?

Acknowledge your fears about reaching out and anticipate possible questions

Older student (5-12th grade) ask them how they feel about you contacting parents. You could also do this with younger kids, but with older kids I feel like it is a must to build trust. And it is a must if you are going to spend time together outside of school.

Write them a letter as an initial reach out, to thank them for allowing their child to be in RISE. There is a sample parent letter in the Mentor Toolkit. If in this letter you would like to give them your phone number or email so that you guys could possible meet up in the summer then you could do that in this letter.

How you send that letter home is dependent upon the child. If you would like to give it to the student and tell them to make sure their parents get it...and you think they will then you can do that. If you would like to give it to the counselor to make sure they get it to the parent you can do that as well.

If you want to send a letter, I would do it in the next few weeks before summer is here. That way if you don't hear back from them we still have another chance to try and reach them before they are gone for the summer. If you wait until the last meeting to do this, it might be harder and most stuff that comes home from school on last day of school...gets tossed or lost.

If you have been with the same student for more than 2 years and have never reached out to the parents at all, I would suggest you do that. That doesn't mean you have to give them your info. Could simply be a "thank you."

If you desire or if you feel like your relationship has progressed to more than 30 minutes one day a week at school, then you have to take the step and reach out to the parents. I'm happy to walk you through that process.

Remember, parents had to give them permission to be in the program. They are on board. But that doesn't mean they are going to be quick to opening up their outside life to you. It might take a while.

Don't take it personally, if you don't get a response. That does not mean that you aren't a good mentor or that they are a bad parent. Everyone and every situation is different. We offer and then if they take the offer...excellent. If they don't...excellent. It's just not the right time...yet.

Do not promise kids or even plant ideas in their head of things you will do with them if you have not yet discussed it with parents. We don't want to make the parents the bad guy if they say no to something you have planned with the student.

In most cases, their opinion of you is also their opinion of the entire program. Our relationship with the parents is important.



SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear _____,

I just wanted to say thank you so much for allowing me to serve as your child's mentor and friend this school year. It has been a pleasure getting to know _____. I hope that he/she feels the same way. My only goal has been to be another positive influence in their life, and I'm so thankful that you, as the most important adult in their life, allowed me the opportunity to help them be the very best version of themselves that they can be.

I also want you to know that your child has been a great teacher for me. I have learned so much about myself and about what most people really want and need in life – someone to show up for them and just listen. That has been a huge and very important lesson for me in my life and I have your child to thank for that.

It is my hope to continue to be able to meet with _____ next school year as well.

Have a wonderful summer and thank you from the bottom of my heart for your support of the RISE mentoring program.

Sincerely,



Ideas for final meetings leading into the summer

- Make something together that can serve as a symbol of your time together (a friendship bracelet, a scrapbook, a journal, a piece of art)
- Create a collage of pictures of things you did together and give it to them.
- On notecards, write down a few goals you have for the summer, place them in an envelope and then re-open them at the beginning of the next year to see how you did.
- Read a book together that talks about transitions or saying goodbye (i.e.: *An Invisible String*)
- Create something like a “Flat Stanley” (but with each other’s picture that you or your mentee can take with you different places and take pictures of to share with each other at the start of next year. Can even be an object of some sort and not a “Flat Stanley.” You could even give them a disposable camera to take pictures of the object in different places that they visit or doing different activities that they may do this summer. You may have to teach them to use a disposable camera. You can offer to have pictures printed for them when school starts back next year.
- If transitioning to another school next year, you can help them create something that will stay behind at the school. For example, you can decorate rocks with positive words or quotes on them to leave around the trees at the school or to give to teachers or staff that were special to them during their time at the school. You can make the connection that their time at that school was a “stepping stone” to help get them to the next level in their life. If transitioning into middle school (5th grade) bring in a combination lock and let them practice. This is a huge stressor for middle school kids who will have lockers for the first time.
- You can Google “end of the year activities for students” and pull tons of ideas that are used in classrooms to close out the school year. Many of them could be modified to work for your mentoring relationship as well. Pinterest would also have a wealth of these types of end of the year activities.
- Make a Word Cloud for your mentee with words that you think describe them.
 - Go to tagul.com
 - Click on “Create Now”
 - In the column labeled “Filter” put in their name and change the size to “5”. Hit +Add button and then continue to put in words to describe them. Each of the other words can be size “1”
 - When you are done hit the big “Visualize” button on the right.
 - Then you can print and give to them as a gift.
- Write questions on each section of a beach ball and toss it back and forth. When you catch the ball, wherever your right thumb is – that is the question that you have to answer. Questions can be reflective in nature or can be light hearted and fun. For example: What is your favorite summer time activity? OR What is your favorite thing we did this year?



Mentor/Mentee Summer Communication Ideas

If you are able and plan to continue to mentor this student during the next school year, it is beneficial for both students and mentors to try and stay in touch, in some small way, over the summer break. **This of course is 100% optional.** You just want to let your student know what to expect as they head into the summer months away from you.

Some suggested activities to stay connected for the summer months include:

Letter Writing

Once you have written your mentee a letter, simply drop off at the Education Support Center (1928 N. Main St. Pearland, TX 77581) anytime this summer (except on Fridays when we are closed.) There will be a RISE mailbox in the front lobby that you can put your letter in. We will address them and mail them to the student. You can also include, in your letter, instructions on how they can write you back. You can use the ESC address or give them your own. It's up to you! The ESC address is: 1928 N. Main St. Pearland, Tx 77581

- Please note, if you give the mentee your own address, Pearland ISD cannot be held liable for the student's misuse of that information.

Provide them with a couple of self addressed stamped envelopes if writing you over the summer seems to be something they would want to do. Again, you can have them addressed to your home if you are okay with them having your address or you can use the ESC address.

Virtual Meet ups

These will have to be scheduled and executed with you and the child's parent since they will be at home. The parent needs to be aware if you are choosing to meet with them virtually.

Journaling

Give the student a small notebook/journal and ask him/her to write down thoughts, summer events, etc. Sharing their writing will provide a beginning activity when you reunite in the fall.

Calendar

Give the student a small pocket calendar (or make one) and mark off the weeks until school re-opens. This will allow them to understand scheduling and calendar use

Plan a meet up with your family and your mentee's family

You can do something as simple as meeting at a park near your mentee's neighborhood. Again, any meet up or communication needs to be scheduled between you and the child's parent.

Whatever methods you choose to use to keep matches alive over the summer months, recent research indicates that communicating biweekly or monthly can be very effective in sustaining the relationship the following year. (Herrera, 2007) **However, communication over the summer is not required by the RISE program.*