

PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS

Mentor Handbook

Resources for Pinellas County Schools Mentors

THANK YOU for being a Mentor!

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

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Section I:

Get to Know Pinellas County Schools

pcs STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Welcome!

Hello and thank you for choosing to serve as a mentor with Pinellas County Schools. Your decision to invest your time and care in our students makes a meaningful difference, and we are truly grateful for the role you play in strengthening our school community.

Pinellas County Schools is proud to offer a variety of mentoring programs, each designed to support students in unique and impactful ways. No matter which program you are part of, your presence matters, not only to the student you mentor, but to our entire community. Research consistently shows that students with mentors develop a more positive outlook on school, demonstrate improved attendance and academic performance, and are less likely to engage in negative behaviors. Whether you are sharing time as a Lunch Pal, encouraging a Take Stock in Children student toward their post-secondary goals, or serving as a positive role model through Girlfriends or Brotherhood of Strength & Purpose, your influence is both powerful and lasting.

You do not need special qualifications or prior experience to be an effective mentor. What matters most is your willingness to show up, be present, and build a genuine connection. Simply being your authentic self and offering consistency, encouragement, and care can have a profound impact on a student's confidence and sense of belonging.

The Office of Strategic Partnerships is here to support you every step of the way. This handbook is designed to provide guidance, offer helpful resources for building strong and meaningful connections with your mentee, and highlight additional opportunities to get involved.

We are excited about the difference you will make and the many ways you will help enrich the Pinellas County Schools community.

Sincerely,

Mistine Dawe

Mistine Dawe
Director, Strategic Partnerships



Pinellas County Schools







WHO WE ARE

VISION
100% student success

MISSION
Educate and prepare each student for college, career and life.

CORE VALUES

Commitment to children, families and community
- Making decisions and committing resources to attain each student's success
- Seeking out and connecting with families and community

Respectful and caring relationships
- Establishing positive relationships among all stakeholders
- Using the district vision to guide intentions, motives and actions

Cultural competence
- Understanding and honoring culturally-defined beliefs, needs, styles and behaviors of the students, families and communities we serve
- Valuing the benefit that individual differences bring to our school district
- Recognizing the importance of individual similarities and differences while working effectively with all stakeholders from various cultures, races, ethnicities and religious backgrounds

Integrity
- Maintaining the highest standards of behavior, ethics, fairness and honesty with ourselves and others
- Committing to doing the right things for the right reasons
- Demonstrating fairness in our judgments and actions

Responsibility
- Fulfilling commitments and promises through fact-based decision-making and problem-solving
- Taking ownership of our own behaviors
- Seeking opportunities for continuous improvement

Connectedness
- Teaming through internal and external partnerships by aligning efforts for the common purpose of each student's success
- Willing to share and transfer knowledge with others

Office of Strategic Partnerships

The Office of Strategic Partnerships is all about building connections between families, communities, schools and the district, all working together for 100% student success. From awesome volunteering and mentoring programs to exciting partnerships with local businesses, community groups, faith-based organizations, government, and universities, we've got it covered. We help everyone "Get Engaged, Stay Engaged" with Pinellas County Schools - there's something amazing here for everyone!

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School-Based Points of Contact

The main points of contact for mentors will be either your Family & Community Liaison for elementary and middle schools or your College & Career Readiness Coordinator for your high schools. Our Liaisons and Coordinators run their schools mentoring programs and will be able to work with you to match you with a potential mentee and develop a schedule for your mentoring sessions.

You can find the **direct contact information for your school** by visiting our website.

Your Family & Community Liaison/College & Career Readiness Coordinator will be the person you reach out to for:

- Schedule changes
- Absences or tardies
- Questions & concerns
- And much more!

If you need assistance beyond what your Family & Community Liaison/College & Career Readiness advisor can provide, please email **volunteer@pcsb.org**.





Section II:

Mentor Eligibility, Rules, & Roles

pcs STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Mentor Program Overview

Pinellas County Schools is proud to host a variety of mentoring programs. Students in these programs are either recommended by a teacher or staff member or apply and meet qualifications for their participation. All students must also receive consent from their parent/guardian in order to participate.

The volunteers that assist with these programs must all undergo some form of mentor training. The specific training requirements for each program are listed below their descriptions.

The four main mentoring programs of Pinellas County Schools are...

- **Lunch Pals:** Open to any interested/recommended student, K-12 grade; mentors are paired with a student or small group of students and have lunch with the student once a week or biweekly. There is no set curriculum - students and their mentors bond over shared interests, academic and personal check-ins, games, and conversation.
  - **Mentor Training Requirement:**
    - **Pinellas County Schools Mentor Workshop**
- **Take Stock in Children:** Application-based statewide program for students, 7-12 grade; mentors are paired with a student and meet with them **at least 15 times** per school year. There are provided resources that assist the mentor in conversations about academics, goal setting, scholarships, and more. Students can earn a 2-year Florida prepaid scholarship upon graduation for maintaining eligibility requirements and meeting with their mentors regularly.
  - **Mentor Training Requirements:**
    - **Take Stock in Children Mentor Workshop hosted by Pinellas Education Foundation**
    - **Take Stock in Children Training Video**
- **Future Leaders Collaborative**
  - **Girlfriends**: A group mentoring program for girls, 4-12 grade, with school-based eligibility requirements and application; these groups typically meet once a month or biweekly, led by a staff member or experienced mentor. In addition to group meetings, the students are paired with mentors who support the work of the group and the individuals student or group of students they meet with.
    - **Mentor Training Requirement:**
      - **Pinellas County Schools Mentor Workshop**
  - **Brotherhood of Strength & Purpose:** A group mentoring program for boys, 4-12 grade, with school-based eligibility requirements and application; these groups typically meet once a month or biweekly, led by a staff member or experienced mentor. In addition to group meetings, the students are paired with mentors who support the work of the group and the individuals student or group of students they meet with.
    - **Mentor Training Requirement:**
      - **Pinellas County Schools Mentor Workshop**

Mentor Eligibility & Training

All mentors must first be active and approved Pinellas County Schools Level 2 volunteers who meet the eligibility requirements outlined in **PCS School Board Policy 9180**. Additionally, mentors must complete a mentor training. For Lunch Pals, Girlfriends, and Brotherhood of Strength & Purpose, the Pinellas County Schools Mentor Workshop meets this training requirement. Mentors who wish to work with Take Stock in Children must complete separate training requirements, either in addition to or in place of, the Pinellas County Schools Mentor Workshop.

To learn more about the **Pinellas County Schools Mentor Workshops**, please visit **www.pcsb.org/mentor** or read the descriptions below.

- **Live, In-Person Workshop**s: At least once per month and at varying locations across the county, a member of the Office of Strategic Partnerships team will offer a live, in-person workshop. Workshops last approximately 60-minutes. Workshops often take place at libraries, recreation centers, or community centers, and locations vary by month to ensure an equal number of north, mid, and south county options.
- **Live, Online Workshops**: At least once per month using Microsoft Teams, a member of the Office of Strategic Partnerships team will offer a live, online workshop. Workshops last approximately 60-minutes. Registered attendees receive a link the business day prior to the workshop via email.
- **Asynchronous, On-Demand Workshops**: Available whenever and wherever is convenient for a volunteer, our new on-demand mentor workshop can be accessed by filling out an online form. The link to the workshop is then provided to the volunteer. For this workshop, volunteers will watch a video and answer a series of questions to confirm their understanding. Within 5 business days of watching the video, their profiles will be updated to show that they are mentor-trained.

To learn more about the **Take Stock in Children Mentor Workshop**, please visit **https://pinellaseducation.org/get-involved/mentor-volunteer**.



Board Policy 9180

Pinellas County School **Board Policy 9180** outlines specific rules regarding the relationship of mentors and mentees. The following rules are outlined in this policy for the protection and safety of both students and volunteers.

- All mentors must be a registered and background checked volunteer.
- All mentoring activities are limited to school grounds, during school time or school-sponsored activities.
- There is to be NO exchanges of phone numbers, e-mail addresses, contact information, social media, etc..
- No contact with the student's family members.
- All mentors are to log in and out of the school's front office each visit and to log their volunteer hours in the computer.

In alignment with this policy, parents/guardians are informed when their student receives a mentor, however they are not given any identifying or contact information about the mentor, including but not limited to their name, address, phone number, or email.



Student Confidentiality

Information shared between a student and their mentor is considered confidential.

With that said, if a mentor has concerns about the wellbeing or safety of their student mentee, these concerns should be brought same-day to the administrator or liaison/coordinator.

If the student provides information that...

- The student is planning to or has harmed themselves
- The student is planning to or has harmed someone else
- Someone is harming the student

...that information must be reported immediately to school administration and/or reported via one of the methods below.

- Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-962-2873
- **Say Something Anonymous Reporting System**

Thank you for your assistance in caring for the safety and wellbeing of our students.

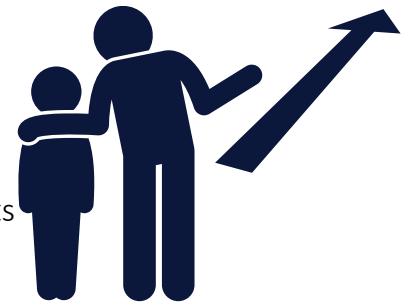


Resiliency Coaches

Mentor-trained volunteers are eligible for an additional, optional opportunity provided by Resiliency Florida. Resiliency coaching is a new addition to the Pinellas County Schools volunteer program, and we are excited for the additional tools these coaches receive and apply to their existing volunteer duties. Below is the process to become a Resiliency Coach.

What is a Resiliency Coach?

Resiliency Coaches are trusted volunteers who are trained to support children as they build resiliency to face day-to-day challenges. This is an optional, additional step that complements any mentoring volunteer role in Pinellas County Schools.



Steps to Become a Resiliency Coach in Pinellas County Schools

- [ ] Become a Pinellas County Schools volunteer by registering at **www.pcsb.org/level2**
- [ ] Attend a mentor training, either in-person, online, or on-demand. Find these training options and more information at **www.pcsb.org/mentor**
- [ ] Fill out the Resiliency Florida interest form at **www.buildresiliency.org/coachtraining**
- [ ] Complete the Resiliency Florida online training. The link for the training will be sent to your email after completing the first three steps mentioned above.
- [ ] Upload your online training completion certificate at **tinyurl.com/PCSRCUpload**
- [ ] Complete your 4-hour volunteer practicum at any Pinellas County School. Be sure to log your volunteer hours at **volunteer.pcsb.org**
- [ ] Use the online form at **tinyurl.com/PCSRCPracticum** to share your practicum completion date.
- [ ] Complete the final survey sent to your email via SmartSheets to receive your $150 stipend from the Florida Department of Education.

Logging Mentor Hours

We encourage all mentors to log their own volunteer hours after each visit to a PCS campus or event. Liaisons & coordinators may elect to keep a paper log as well for tracking purposes. Not only does this help to track a mentor's personal impact, but it also assists us in accurate reporting of volunteer contributions and volunteer recognition programs. Additionally, for Take Stock in Children mentors, volunteer hours help to track necessary mentoring sessions for scholarship eligibility.

Directions for Volunteers

Volunteer hours can be logged on your volunteer account. To access this account, please complete the following steps:

- Using an internet browser, access the URL **https://volunteer.pcsb.org**
- Enter your username and password, provided in your onboarding email.
    - The general formula for volunteer credentials is:
        - Username: v.lastnamefirstinitial
            - For example, for Jane Smith, it would be v.smithj
        - Password: Lastname (first letter capitalized) + 4-digit birth year
            - For example, for Jane Smith born in 1980, it would be Smith1980

*If you are unable to log in or have lost your credentials, please call 727-588-6405 or email **volunteer@pcsb.org**. Please do not create a new account.

Logging your Hours

- Click "Log Hours Here" on the top left box on your volunteer home screen.
- There are two options given once you are on the Volunteer Hours page
    - Mentor/Tutor Hours - record hours here if you were actively mentoring or tutoring a student
    - Support Services Hours - record hours here for any activities other than mentoring or tutoring, including Resiliency Coach hours
    - Please fill in the entire line as completely as possible



Section III:

Mentoring Resources

pcs STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Mentor Matching

One of your first points of contact at a school will be the volunteer coordinator. At the elementary and middle school levels, this role is known as the Family & Community Liaison, and at the high school level, it is the College & Career Readiness Coordinator. You can find the name and contact information for the appropriate liaison or coordinator at your selected school by visiting our website.

Once they learn that you are a new mentor, the liaison or coordinator will connect with you to confirm your availability and learn more about your preferences for mentoring. They may also ask you to complete a brief questionnaire or worksheet about your interests and hobbies. A sample questionnaire is included on the next page. This information helps them thoughtfully match you with a student who shares similar interests, setting the stage for a meaningful connection.

As you go through this process, we encourage you to be open and honest about your availability, interests, and what you hope to gain from the experience. Your input plays an important role in creating a strong, successful mentoring relationship from the very beginning.



SAMPLE

Pinellas County Schools Mentor Programs – Mentor Get to Know You

Thank you for your support of Pinellas County Schools and for being a mentor. Please fill out the information below to help the Family & Community Liaison/College & Career Readiness Coordinator get to know you better and match you with the appropriate student or program.

Mentor Name: _____ Date: _____

Which mentoring programs are you interested in participating in? (Circle all that apply)

- Brotherhood of Strength and Purpose
- Girlfriends of Pinellas County
- Lunch Pals
- Take Stock in Children

Student Preferences (Circle all that apply)
Grade Level:

- K-2
- 3-5
- 6-7
- 8-10
- 11-12

Personality:

- Assertive/Leader
- Analytical/Thoughtful
- Calm/Stable
- Outgoing/Enthusiastic

Tell us more about yourself:

Emergency Contact Name: _____ Phone#: _____

Do you have any accessibility, or accommodation needs we should be aware of?
_____

Are there any considerations you'd like us to know about in case of an emergency?
_____

Spoken Languages: _____

Occupation/Career Field: _____

Hobbies/Interests: _____

Favorite Book or Movie: _____

Favorite Sports Team: _____

Favorite Music Artist/Genre: _____

What is your motivation for becoming a mentor?

What positive impact do you wish to have on your mentees?

What strengths do you bring to the mentoring program?

What three words best describe you?

Is there anything else we need to know?

Availability (Check all that apply):

_____ Monday AM _____ Monday PM

_____ Tuesday AM _____ Tuesday PM

_____Wednesday AM _____Wednesday PM

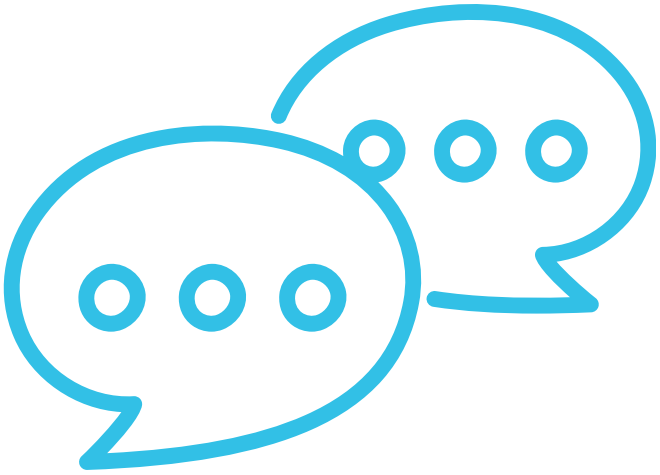
_____Thursday AM _____ Thursday PM

_____Friday AM _____ Friday PM

Conversation Starters

The first meeting with your mentee is an exciting opportunity to begin building a meaningful connection. It's natural for both you and your student to feel a few first-time jitters, but those moments often lead to great conversations and lasting rapport. To help you get started with ease, here are some conversation starters and icebreaker activities designed to spark engagement and create a comfortable, welcoming environment for you both.

- What's your favorite thing to do after school?
- Do you have a favorite subject or class right now?
- What do you like to do for fun on the weekends?
- Do you have a favorite movie, TV show, or YouTube channel?
- What kind of music do you like to listen to?
- Do you play any sports or games?
- Do you have any pets?
- What's your favorite place to eat or favorite food?
- If you could travel anywhere, where would you go?
- What's something you're really good at or proud of?
- What's your favorite holiday and why?
- If you could have any superpower, what would it be?
- What's something that always makes you laugh?
- What are you looking forward to this week?
- If you could only eat one food forever, what would you pick?
- If you could switch places with any cartoon or movie character, who would it be?
- If you could make a new holiday, what would people celebrate?
- What's your dream ice cream flavor (you can invent one!)?
- If you could have any animal as a teacher, which one would you pick?
- If your mood today was an animal, what animal would it be?
- If you had a robot, what would you want it to do for you?



Ice Breaker Activities

This or That?

Get to know your mentee by asking a series of this or that questions. You can also try each writing your answer on a small whiteboard or notebook paper and seeing how many you have in common.

- Pizza or burgers?
- Beach or pool?
- Cats or dogs?
- Sweet or salty snacks?
- Movies or video games?
- Morning or night?
- Ice cream or cake?
- Sneakers or flip-flops?
- Rainy days or sunny days?
- Texting or talking on the phone?
- Indoor games or outdoor games?
- Super strength or super speed?
- Books or movies?
- Pancakes or waffles?
- Music or podcasts?
- Summer or winter?
- School lunch or packed lunch?
- TikTok or YouTube?
- Roller coasters or water rides?

Two Truths and a "Silly" Lie

Take turns sharing three statements, two true and one made-up (the sillier, the better). Guess which one is the "lie."

Favorites Lightning Round

Go back and forth with your mentee naming favorites (food, color, movie, place, subject, etc.). Keep it quick and playful, no overthinking allowed.

Highs and Lows

Each of you shares one "high" (best part of the day/week) and one "low" (something that wasn't great). Keep it brief and optional.

Ice Breaker Activities

If I Could…

Take turns finishing prompts like:

- If I could have any job…
- If I could live anywhere…
- If I could learn anything instantly…
- If I could have any superpower, I would…
- If I could travel anywhere in the world, I would go to…
- If I could meet any famous person, I would meet…
- If I could be any age for a day, I would be…
- If I could have any animal as a pet, I would choose…
- If I could instantly learn a new skill, it would be…
- If I could eat only one food for a week, it would be…
- If I could live in any movie or TV show, I would live in…
- If I could design my dream school day, it would include…
- If I could invent something, it would be…
- If I could be really good at any sport, I would pick…
- If I could spend a whole day doing anything, I would…
- If I could change one thing about the world, I would…
- If I could create a new holiday, it would celebrate…
- If I could have any job for a day, I would be a…
- If I could have any kind of room (dream bedroom, game room, etc.), it would have…
- If I could be famous for something, it would be…
- If I could time travel, I would go to…
- If I could make one rule that everyone had to follow, it would be…

One-Word Check-In

Ask, “What’s one word that describes your day so far?” You can both share and expand if you’d like or keep it quick.

A–Z Game

Pick a category (foods, animals, hobbies) and take turns naming something for each letter of the alphabet.

Ice Breaker Activities

This Week's Top 3

Share your "top 3" from the week (favorite moments, foods, songs, etc.)

Story Builder

Start a story with one sentence, then take turns adding on. You can do this verbally or on a sheet of notebook paper. Keep it silly and unexpected.

Name That Category

Say a list of 3 things (e.g., "apple, banana, orange") and have your mentee guess the category, then switch.

Clap Pattern Copy

Clap a short pattern and have your mentee copy it. Take turns making them more creative or tricky.

Backwards Day

Ask fun "backwards" questions like: "What's your least favorite food?" or "What's the most boring superpower?"

Mini Talent Show

Invite your mentee to share something small they can do (a fun fact, a joke, a skill), and you share one too.

Category Countdown

Pick a category and count down from 5, naming one item each number with 1 being the best or top-ranked. For example, come up with the 5 best pizza toppings or the 5 best movies of all time.

Fast Favorites

Ask 3 quick favorites in a row (color, food, game) without pausing.

PCS Monthly Themes

We have found that having a theme or topic to discuss with your student mentee on a monthly basis can be a launching point for deeper conversations. Monthly themes that align with the core values and mission are listed below and can be used to facilitate conversations with Lunch Pals or Take Stock in Children mentees. Additionally, these themes are integrated into the curriculum for the Girlfriends and Brotherhood of Strength & Purpose monthly meetings.

- September - Respectful and Caring Relationships
- October - Decision Making
- November - Integrity
- December - Service
- January - Responsibility
- February - Unity
- March - Community
- April - Connectedness
- May - Reflection





PCS Monthly Themes

The following activities can be done quickly and easily to support each of the monthly themes.

September - Respectful and Caring Relationships

- **Friendship Qualities**
  - Work together to name qualities of a good friend (kind, honest, trustworthy, etc.). Talk about which ones matter most and why.
- **Perspective Swap**
  - Talk about a common situation (e.g., a misunderstanding with a friend) and ask: "How might the other person feel?" Builds empathy and awareness.
- **Kindness Reflection**
  - Ask: "What's one kind thing someone did for you recently?" and "What's one kind thing you've done for someone else?"
- **Kindness Brainstorm**
  - Challenge yourselves to list as many small acts of kindness as possible in 2–3 minutes. Then talk about which ones feel easiest to try.

October - Decision Making

- **Quick Choice, Quick Why**
  - Offer simple choices (e.g., "Study first or relax first?") and ask your mentee to pick one and briefly explain why.
- **My Top 3 Priorities**
  - Ask your mentee to name their top 3 priorities right now (friends, grades, sports, etc.) and talk about how decisions connect to those.
- **One Better Choice**
  - Ask: "What's one small choice you could make today that would make your day better?"
- **Decision Replay**
  - Reflect on a recent choice (big or small) and ask: "Would you make the same decision again? Why or why not?"

November - Integrity

- **Trust Builder**
  - Ask: "What makes you trust someone?" Then connect those ideas to integrity.
- **Do the Right Thing Signals**
  - Ask: "How can you tell when something might not be the right choice?" (gut feeling, rules, impact on others).

PCS Monthly Themes

November - Integrity (continued)

- **Right vs. Easy**
  - Give examples of choices and ask: "Is this the right thing or the easy thing?" Talk about the difference.
    - Sample choices to discuss:
      - You drop a piece of trash on the ground.
      - You forget to do your homework.
      - You see someone sitting alone at lunch.
      - You borrow something and forget to return it.
      - You make a small mistake in a game.
      - The teacher steps out and the class gets loud.
      - You promise to help someone but get distracted.
      - You see a mess that no one is cleaning up.
      - You lose a library book.
      - You're working in a group and finish your part early.
      - You accidentally bump into someone.
      - You're supposed to be listening, but your friends are talking.
      - You find something that isn't yours.
      - You're asked a question and don't know the answer.
      - You're playing a game and start to lose.
- **Role Model Reflection**
  - Ask: "Who is someone you think has strong integrity? What do they do that shows it?"

December - Service

- **Acts of Service Brainstorm**
  - Set a 2-minute timer and list as many ways to help others at school, home, or in the community as possible.
- **Who Helps You?**
  - Talk about people who serve or help in their daily life (teachers, bus drivers, family, friends). Ask: "How do they help you?"
- **Gratitude + Service Connection**
  - Ask: "What's something someone did for you that you appreciated?" Then connect it to how they can do the same for others.

PCS Monthly Themes

December - Service (continued)

- **This or That: Helping Edition**
  - Ask fun choices about helping. Then ask why they chose that.
    - Example questions:
      - Hold the door for someone or help carry their things?
      - Invite someone to join your group or sit with someone new?
      - Help a teacher with a task or help a classmate understand something?
      - Pick up trash you see or organize a messy space?
      - Share your supplies or share your time helping someone?
      - Help someone new feel welcome or help a friend who's having a tough day?
      - Help behind the scenes quietly or lead and organize helping others?
      - Offer advice or offer hands-on help?
      - Help someone stay organized or help them stay motivated?
      - Help someone learn something new or help them complete something quickly?
      - Help one person a lot or help many people a little?

January - Responsibility

- **My Job**
  - Talk about different "jobs" students have (student, friend, sibling, teammate) and what responsibility looks like in each role.
- **Be Ready Check**
  - Ask: "What are some ways you can stay prepared for school or activities?"
- **One Thing I Can Own Today**
  - Ask your mentee to name one small thing they can take responsibility for today.
- **Time Check-In**
  - Ask: "How do responsible people manage their time?" Talk about simple strategies.
    - Some example time management strategies to share are:
      - Set a timer: Work for a short burst (10–15 minutes), then take a break.
      - Break it down: Split big assignments into smaller steps.
      - Use a planner or notes app: Write down assignments and due dates.
      - Checklists: Cross off tasks as they're completed for motivation.
      - Time blocks: Set aside specific time for homework, games, or chores.
      - Backwards planning: Start with the due date and plan steps backward.
      - Avoid distractions: Put phone or games away during focused time.

PCS Monthly Themes

February - Unity

- **Common Ground**
  - Take turns naming things you both like or have in common (food, hobbies, shows, etc.). See how many you can find.
- **Build a Team**
  - Imagine building a team (sports, school project, club - customize to student's interests or current acitivities). What roles or strengths would you need?
- **Help Each Other Out**
  - Discuss simple ways students can support classmates or friends during the school day.
- **One Thing We All Need**
  - Ask: "What do you need to feel included or supported?" and "What is one thing you think all people need to feel included or supported?" (kindness, respect, friends, etc.)

March - Community

- My Communities
  - Take turns naming communities you're part of (school, neighborhood, sports team, family, clubs).
- **Community Helpers Talk**
  - Discuss different community helpers and what they do. Ask: "Who helps you in your community?" and "What are some ways you already help your school or home community?"
- **Belonging Check-In**
  - Ask: "Where do you feel like you belong?" Talk about what makes that place feel welcoming.
- **Help the Community Scenario**
  - Talk through a simple situation like cleaning up a space or welcoming someone new.
    - Sample situations to discuss:
      - Someone in your group doesn't understand what to do during a project. How could you help them succeed?
      - The school is holding a cleanup or spirit event. What role could you play to contribute?
      - You notice a friend is having a tough day and not participating much. What could you do?

PCS Monthly Themes

April - Connectedness

- **What Helps People Connect?**
  - Brainstorm simple behaviors that build connection (listening, kindness, shared interests, teamwork).
- **Real-Life Connections**
  - Ask: "Who are the people you interact with during a normal school day?" Talk about how those interactions create connection.
- **Strong vs. Weak Connections**
  - Talk about what makes some connections feel stronger than others (trust, time, shared experiences).
- **Simple Acts That Build Connection**
  - List small actions like saying hi, smiling, including others, or listening.

May - Reflection

- **Then and Now**
  - Ask: "What is something you can do now that was harder at the beginning of the school year?" (skills, classes, friendships, routines)
- **If I Could Tell My Past Self…**
  - Ask: "What would you tell yourself at the start of the school year?"
- **Mistake to Lesson**
  - Talk about a simple mistake and what it taught them (focus on learning, not judgment).
- **School Year Snapshot**
  - Have them describe their school year in three words, then explain why.

SMART Goal-Setting

Goal setting is a simple but powerful way mentors can help students build motivation, confidence, and a sense of direction. When students have something clear to work toward, even in small steps, it can help them feel more focused and encouraged in their day-to-day school experience. Goals can absolutely be discussed out loud in conversation, but it is also helpful when either the mentor or student writes them down and checks in on progress together over time. These small follow-ups can make a big difference in helping students stay connected to their goals.

One helpful approach to goal setting is the use of SMART goals. SMART is an acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely. This framework simply helps turn broad ideas like “do better in school” into clearer, more manageable steps like “complete all math homework this week” or “ask one question in class each day.”

For mentors, SMART goals are not about creating pressure or adding expectations. Instead, they offer a supportive structure for helping students name something they care about and break it into realistic, doable steps. Whether a student is working on improving a grade, building a habit, strengthening a skill, or staying more engaged in school, SMART goals can help make progress feel more possible and more visible.

In this section, you will find age-appropriate ways to introduce SMART goals in mentoring conversations, along with examples and prompts designed to make the process approachable and meaningful for students at every grade level.



Goal Setting for Grades K-2

Focus: What I can do today or this week

1. “I Can Try” Goals

Ask:

- “What is something you can try to do better this week?”
- Examples: share toys, raise hand, be kind, clean up

2. Smile Goal

Prompt:

- “What is one thing you can do to make someone smile today?”

3. One-Step Goals

Help them choose one simple action:

- “My goal is to ____ today.”
- (Examples: say hello, finish lunch, help someone)

4. Yes or No Goal Check

Give examples and ask if they are good goals:

- “Be kind to a friend” (yes/no?)
- “Ignore directions” (yes/no?)

5. Goal Finish Line

Ask:

- “When will you know you did a good job?” (end of day / recess / lunch)

Goal Setting for Grades 3-5

Focus: Clear, specific, short-term goals

1. “Make It Specific” Game
Start vague, then refine:

- “Be better in class” → “Raise my hand 2 times a day”

2. Goal Builder (SMART)
Ask step-by-step:

- What do you want to do?
- When will you do it?
- How will you know you did it?

3. Weekly Win Goal
Prompt:

- “What is one thing you want to improve this week at school?”

4. Effort Meter
Ask:

- “What would a ‘great effort’ look like in that goal?”

5. Break It Down
Take a goal and split it:

- “Finish homework better” → “Do it right after school for 20 minutes”

Goal Setting for Grades 6-8

Focus: specific, measurable, realistic, time-based thinking

1. SMART Check-In Game
Ask if the goal is:

- Specific?
- Measurable?
- Achievable?
- Relevant?
- Time-based?

2. Upgrade the Goal
Start with a basic goal:

- “Get better at math” → “Complete all math homework on time this week”

3. Timeline Talk
Ask:

- “How long will it take to reach this goal?”

4. Success Definition
Ask:

- “How will you know you reached your goal?”

5. Obstacles Chat
Ask:

- “What might make your goal hard and how can you handle it?”

Goal Setting for Grades 9-12

Focus: realistic planning, accountability, and reflection

1. SMART Breakdown
Have them walk through each step:

- Specific: What exactly?
- Measurable: How tracked?
- Achievable: Is it realistic?
- Relevant: Why it matters?
- Time-bound: When done?

2. Real-Life Goal Rewrite
Take a vague goal and refine it:

- "Do better in school" → "Raise my math grade by one letter by the end of the quarter"

3. Barrier Planning
Ask:

- "What might get in your way?"
- "What is your backup plan?"

4. Progress Check Strategy
Ask:

- "How will you check your progress each week?"

5. Short vs. Long-Term Goals
Discuss difference between:

- Daily habits vs. semester/year goals

6. Motivation Connection
Ask:

- "Why does this goal matter to you personally?"

7. Adjust the Goal
Discuss:

- "If this becomes too easy or too hard, how would you adjust it?"