



## **M - E - N - T - O - R**

### **Six Steps for Setting Up an Effective Mentoring Program**

#### **1. Mobilize Mentoring Team.**

Start by putting together a team with at least one teacher and a few students who will serve as peer mentors. When mentors are part of the planning, they are invested right from the start. Gather the team regularly to keep everyone connected. Consider meeting during a common advisory period or after school.

#### **2. Establish Nuts and Bolts.**

Now that you have a team, begin to set dates, such as when the program will start and end. Set aside times for celebrations and mentor check-ins. Plan the time and place for the mentoring sessions, focusing on space that might be available at certain times. If mentoring happens at lunch, look for an empty classroom, or if it's before school, try the library.

#### **3. Nominate Mentors and Mentees.**

Once the nuts and bolts are in place, identify the mentors and mentees. If the program is designed to help with transitions, select mentors who are good with new students. For example, eleventh graders might work with ninth graders or eighth graders with sixth graders. Participants could self-select or teachers could nominate mentors. Either way is effective; the choice is yours.

#### **4. Train Mentors.**

Mentor training is essential for newly selected mentors who need to learn how to effectively guide and support their younger peers. Training should focus on leadership, responsibility, and communication. Mentors do more than influence their mentees; they become role models whose actions shape school climate and culture. After the initial training, hold regular follow-up trainings throughout the year so mentors can strengthen their skills and support one another.

#### **5. Open with Kickoff Event.**

With trained mentors in place, it's time to launch the program. A celebration enables mentors and mentees to get to know one another and provides visibility for the program. Use this time for matched pairs to officially begin their mentoring or make it a time for everyone in the program to come together. Be sure to take pictures, offer interactive activities, and provide food.

#### **6. Reach Out to Cultivate Program.**

After the kickoff, your program will need ongoing cultivation to maintain visibility. Appoint a team member to oversee publicity and outreach. Publish articles in the school and local paper. Feature stories not only provide visibility and generate interest, but they also recognize mentor and mentee achievements. This positive feedback makes a big difference and ensures continued success. Mentoring programs need ongoing review and refinement. This is a vital part of creating an effective peer mentoring program.