



8 Tips for Establishing Successful Peer Mentoring Programs

Peer mentoring has a profound impact. A Peer Mentor is a positive role model for another, often younger, student who provides friendship, guidance, and support. Good Peer Mentors are responsible, trustworthy, caring individuals who, through personal leadership, call upon their own life experiences to provide support for their mentees as they face transitions and new experiences.

- 1. Engage Students.** When Peer Mentors are involved with planning their program, they are more motivated and invested in the program's success. They do a better job inspiring and moving their peers into action than adults do. Adults play a very important role, but these adults must listen and tap into student expertise.
- 2. Make It Meaningful.** Peer Mentors like to be able to help others and to "make a difference." Mentoring activities that are seen as "busy work" deter them. Peer Mentors like to know their work is improving the life of another and, in return, is helping them. Positive feedback to Peer Mentors makes a huge difference and contributes to future success.
- 3. Build a Strong Core Peer Mentoring Team.** Student and adult core peer mentoring team members with easy access to one another are better able to keep their program running smoothly. For example, a common advisory period or study hall allows for regular interaction. Schools benefit when core peer mentoring team members are on the CFES team. Consider engaging more than one or two students on the core team through the CFES Club or student leadership team.
- 4. Simplify.** Use peer mentoring as a vehicle to move CFES core practices forward. This doesn't mean more work, it means working smarter. Design peer mentoring that engages other CFES core practices.
- 5. Set Calendar Early.** Have the calendar set early in the year. This helps everyone stay focused. Begin building the calendar by establishing program kick-off and wrap-up dates. Once the start and end dates are established, look at times for celebrations, mentor check-in meetings, etc.
- 6. Provide Effective Training.** Peer Mentors need to know what is expected of them and what they can expect from mentoring. Initial mentor training is a must. The most effective training is ongoing: follow up the initial mentor training by in-house check-ins or "How is it going?" meetings. This is a great way to involve your program director!
- 7. Access the Peer Mentoring Forum.** Add your news to the peer mentoring forum in the MetLife Peer Mentoring section of the CFES website (www.fesnet.org). Looking for an idea? Post a question on the forum. The forum is a place to exchange exciting, new ideas.
- 8. Spread Good News.** Be sure to broadcast success and achievements. Instead of waiting until the end of the school year, start now. Publish articles in the local paper; have Peer Mentors write for the school paper. Spread the good news about peer mentoring early; create a buzz in the halls. Be sure to let CFES know about events, news, and achievements. We are always looking to spotlight Peer Mentors.