

“There is no such thing as other people’s children” —Hillary Clinton

“Every kid is one caring adult away from being a success story” —Josh Shipp

EFFECTIVE MENTOR ATTRIBUTES & BEST PRACTICES

This packet outlines attributes and best practices for effective mentorship. Please use these documents as you see fit. You can keep hard copies of these in your student’s academic folder at the school where you mentor.

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EFFECTIVE MENTOR ATTRIBUTES

The following attributes are consistently exhibited by effective mentors:

- Understands the needs of their student and shares his or her experience constructively
- Builds a trusting relationship and serves as a role model
- Helps the student see the big picture and serves as a sounding board
- Commits to regular meetings with the student
- Listens actively, asks questions, challenges appropriately and withholds judgment
- Probes carefully to clarify the issues at hand
- Offers genuine interest and support
- Holds the information shared by the student in confidence
- Holds the student accountable for the goals they set together

EFFECTIVE MENTOR BEST PRACTICES

- 1. Be Yourself** in all activities with your student, do NOT try to be someone you are not. Teenagers are adept at sensing when you are not being authentic.
- 2. Get to know your student** and work to establish a positive, supportive relationship.
- 3. Reach out to other mentors** in your building or from your training session for advice about how to handle difficult/challenging situations. Also reach out to your site coordinator, school contacts, and OSMI staff persons for additional assistance.
- 4. Using timelines, set REALISTIC goals and action plans** with your student that are attainable during your time together and beyond. If it becomes necessary to adjust the goals, do so together.
- 5. Identify student strengths** to build upon and communicate to parents in order to establish a working relationship with them. Work to find a hook in school for your student—a club, activity, or class in which they would do well.
- 6. Let the student know you are their school success coach**, that you are certain that they can succeed in school and beyond, and that you want to help! Help the student and their parents/guardians understand the short and long term benefits of attending and finishing school.
- 7. Greet your student warmly.** Let them know you are excited to see them and look forward to seeing them at your next meeting.
- 8. Listen with intent.** Once trust is established, students will be more than willing to share. Your goal is to get the student talking. Asking relevant open-ended questions will allow students to share what is really important to them.
- 9. Check your assumptions.** Often times we assume our students have goals similar to our own. Take time to put yourself in your student’s position and look at life through their lens to help you gain perspective.
- 10. Accountability is the first step to success.** The first step in establishing a positive rapport with your student is for them to understand you have their best interest at heart. And



OFFICE OF STUDENT MENTORING INITIATIVES

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because you care about their success, you are going to demand follow through in making this relationship successful.

11. Avoid judgment. Caution should be made to avoid an attempt to mold your student into what you think they should be.

12. Celebrate SUCCESS. As each goal, or intermediate goal, is achieved make it a point to recognize these accomplishments no matter how small.

13. You don’t have to be an EXPERT. You will encounter areas of questions that you may not feel comfortable in answering. It is OK to say, “I don’t know, but I will find out for you.”