

Mentor Handbook

2023–2024



LAKE TRAVIS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CAMPUSES & CONTACTS

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS (Grades K-5)

Bee Cave Elementary

14300 Hamilton Pool Road, Austin, TX 78738
512-533-6250

Principal: *Kim Kellner*

Mentor Coordinator:

Courtney Trimmer, trimmerc@ltisdschools.org

Lake Pointe Elementary

11801 Sonoma Drive, Austin, TX 78738
512-533-6500

Principal: *Karen Reich*

Mentor Coordinator:

Tara Postma, postmat@ltisdschools.org

Lake Travis Elementary

15303 Kollmeyer Drive, Austin, TX 78734
512-533-6300

Principal: *Lizeth Thompson*

Mentor Coordinator:

Laura Twohey, twohey@ltisdschools.org

Lakeway Elementary

1701 Lohmans Crossing, Austin, TX 78734
512-533-6350

Principal: *Sam Hicks*

Mentor Coordinator:

Michelle Monahan, monahanm@ltisdschools.org

Rough Hollow Elementary

4219 Bee Creek Road, Spicewood, TX 78669
737-931-3000

Principal: *Vanessa Randels*

Mentor Coordinator:

Karen Wager, wagerk@ltisdschools.org

Serene Hills Elementary

3301 Serene Hills Drive, Austin, TX 78738
512-533-7400

Principal: *Keegan Luedecke*

Mentor Coordinator:

Kendall Hill, hillk@ltisdschools.org

West Cypress Hills Elementary

6112 Cypress Ranch Boulevard, Spicewood, TX 78669
512-533-7500

Principal: *Amy Russ*

Mentor Coordinator:

Dustin Boren, borend@ltisdschools.org

MIDDLE SCHOOLS (Grades 6-8)

Bee Cave Middle School

5400 Vail Divide, Austin, TX 78738
737-931-2400

Principal: *Melanie Beninga*

Mentor Coordinator:

Kim Thornley, thornleyk@ltisdschools.org

Hudson Bend Middle School

15600 Lariat Trail, Austin, TX 78734
512-533-6400

Principal: *Laura Keogh*

Mentor Coordinator:

Surita Scholla, schollas@ltisdschools.org

Lake Travis Middle School

4932 Bee Creek Road, Spicewood, TX 78669
512-533-6200

Principal: *Rebecca Hudson*

Mentor Coordinator:

Sandy Casares, casaress@ltisdschools.org

HIGH SCHOOL (Grades 9-12)

Lake Travis High School

3324 Ranch Road 620 South, Austin, TX 78738
512-533-6100

Principal: *Debbie Garinger*

Mentor Coordinators:

Jill Escalante, escalantej@ltisdschools.org

GW Byers Saumers, Communications Specialist

LTISD Administration Office
3322 Ranch Road 620 South, Austin, TX 78738
512-533-6099, saumersg@ltisdschools.org

Congratulations!

YOU'RE A LTISD MENTOR!

Mentor:

School:

Address:

School's main phone:

Campus Mentor Coordinator:

Contact this person about any schedule changes.

Coordinator's phone:

Coordinator's email:

Principal:

Assistant Principal:

LTISD Calendar: <https://www.ltisdschools.org/domain/621>

School's website:

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Please always bring your driver's license, check in with your campus office, and print a Raptor name badge in the front office. Wear your Raptor name badge the entire time you are on school grounds. Return your Raptor name badge to the front office upon departure.

If you prefer, you may contact the school's front office (at main number listed above) to confirm the student is present prior to your mentoring session. If you are unable to attend a session, please contact the campus mentor coordinator with as much advance notice as possible.

Follow all other school policies and procedures.

MENTORS MAKE AN IMPACT.

Mentors...

- Are role models
- Provide friendship, encouragement and support
- Help a student improve their self-esteem
- Provide one-on-one attention
- Encourage students to improve academically and to understand the relevance of their schoolwork in their daily lives
- Provide opportunities for students to develop personal growth by increasing their self-awareness and realizing their full potential
- Improve the student's planning skills by exploring future opportunities that are compatible with the student's unique talents and interests

Mentor benefits:

- Sense of pride in the student's progress
- Personal growth and development through insights gained from the student
- Deeper sense of individual worth through being trusted and needed
- Meaningful involvement in the community

Student benefits:

- Support and guidance from a caring adult
- Sense of security in having a relationship with a trusted adult
- Increased self-esteem and motivation to succeed
- Improved self-confidence
- Appreciation for the value of gaining knowledge
- Assistance with academic skills (if desired by mentor)
- Encouragement to attend school regularly and to stay in school
- Reinforcement of coping and problem-solving skills
- Awareness of social responsibility and a concern for others
- Ability to set and achieve realistic goals

A study conducted by the Association of Psychological Science* shows **mentoring has a positive impact on these important aspects:**

Social-Emotional Development

- ★ Mentors may challenge negative views the child may hold of themselves and turn the mentoring into a "corrective experience."

Cognitive Development

- ★ Through mentors, children can acquire new thinking skills and become receptive to adult values, perspectives, and advice.

Identity Development

- ★ Mentors may help shift a child's conception of their present and future selves.

*Dubois, David L., et al. "How Effective Are Mentoring Programs for Youth? A Systematic Assessment of the Evidence." *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2011, pp. 57-91., doi:10.1177/1529100611414806

QUALITIES OF SUCCESSFUL MENTORS

Commitment to mentor the same student for a minimum of one school year

Mentors have a genuine desire to be a part of others' lives, to help them with tough decisions and to see them become the best they can be. They have to be invested in the mentoring relationship over the long haul. Mentors must be there long enough to make a difference.

Respect for students' abilities and rights to make their own choices in life

Mentors cannot come with the attitude that their own ways are better or that participants need to be "rescued." Mentors who convey a sense of respect and equal dignity in the relationship will win the trust of their students and the privilege of being advisors to them.

Ability to listen thoughtfully and accept different points of view

Most people are willing to give advice or express opinions. It is much harder to find mentors who will suspend their judgments and really listen. Mentors often help simply by listening, asking thoughtful questions, and giving students an opportunity to explore their own thoughts with minimum interference. When students feel accepted and respected, they are more likely to ask for and respond to good ideas.

Ability to empathize with the student's struggles

Even without having had the same experiences, they can empathize with the student's feelings and personal problems.

Ability to see solutions and opportunities as well as barriers

Good mentors balance a realistic respect for the real and serious problems faced by their students with optimism about finding equally realistic solutions. They are able to make sense of a myriad of issues and point out sensible alternatives. When unsure, they are able to admit it to the student and work together to seek solutions.

Flexibility and openness

Good mentors recognize relationships take time to develop and communication is a two-way street. They are willing to take time to get to know their students, to learn new things that are important to them (music, styles, and philosophies), and even to be changed by their relationships. Be relaxed, be yourself, and keep a sense of humor.

Reflective

Ask yourself – What is the single most important information, concept, or behavior you want your student to learn from you? What would have helped you when you were the student's age?

MENTORING GUIDELINES

YEARLY BACKGROUND CHECKS

Mentors are required to pass a background check on a yearly basis.

COMPLETE AN INITIAL TRAINING

All new mentors will complete a brief training with the LTISD Communications Specialist.

COMMITMENT

Participate in the mentoring program for the duration of the school year, at a minimum.

MEETINGS

Meet with your mentee at least three times per month (once per week is preferred) for the duration of the school year. Mentor meetings may be 30-45 minutes during lunch. Meetings are to take place only on school grounds. Meetings must take place in rooms with open doors or in sight of school personnel.

COMMUNICATION / TEXTING

Per school board policy, it is **not permitted** for mentors to communicate privately with a student via phone, text, email, or social media.

TRANSPORTATION

Mentors are prohibited from transporting students in personal or motorized vehicles.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Physical contact between a mentor and student should be limited to a handshake or a pat on the back. What may be intended as a friendly interaction might be viewed as something entirely different by someone else.

INCENTIVES

Mentors are discouraged from giving students gifts as incentives. Students should always strive to be self-motivated. Do not ever loan or give money or food to students. Examples of appropriate incentives are smiles, words of encouragement, and birthday cards. Please make promises sparingly and keep them faithfully.

CONFIDENTIALITY & REPORTING

All academic and personal information concerning your student is strictly confidential. Student records are not available to the mentors due to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.

The law requires you to report any information your student might share with you in regards to homicide, suicide, physical/emotional abuse, or any illegal activity. It is **NOT** a breach of confidentiality to discuss a student's problems with appropriate school personnel. Report this information to the campus mentor coordinator and he/she will assist you. Do not promise a student you will keep this information confidential.

YOUR FIRST MENTORING MEETING

SAY HI: Greet the student warmly, with a smile and a firm handshake. Remember to say, “*I am Ms./Mr. Jones,*” if that’s how you wish to be addressed. Do not use your first name unless you expect the student to use it too. Students are often more comfortable addressing adults as Mr. or Ms., just as they address their teachers.

SCHOOL TOUR: Ask the student to take you on a tour of the school. This is a painless way to become comfortable with each other before embarking on more personal topics. Note the people whom the student points out or introduces you to because you might want to get to know them in the future.

A PLACE TO TALK: Especially in the beginning, remember to repeat the student’s name several times and be as relaxed as possible. Find a comfortable spot and sit next to the student. Though it may seem more natural to you, sitting across the table can be more threatening to an insecure student. Focus your conversation on being positive, encouraging, and reassuring.

GETTING ACQUAINTED: Describe yourself briefly – talk about your background and where/if you are employed. Be careful not to sound as if you want to impress the student. That can be intimidating to the student. At this point, the student is probably more interested in knowing where you grew up, the size of your family, what you imagined doing as an adult, and other aspects of your life you might have in common. In turn, ask the student about his/her family, favorite sports, favorite outings, and special things happening in his/her life.

CONFIDENTIALITY: During your first meeting, be sure to discuss mentoring: What it means to each of you, what your expectations are and how you intend to handle issues of confidentiality should they arise. At the outset, establish your ground rules: where and when you will meet, some of the things you might do together, how long you will be able to spend at the school and when to schedule your next meeting.

ACADEMIC TUTORING: You may wish to talk about how the student is doing academically. Do not push the matter if you sense the student is reluctant to talk. If the student seems accepting, offer to help by looking over homework or organizing materials, but be patient and careful not to intrude. Remember a mentor is a friend, and tutoring is a matter of mutual choice, not an obligation. There are many ways to encourage a child to pursue his education without offering direct subject matter assistance.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY: State law requires you to report disclosures about abuse. Discuss the situation with the campus mentor coordinator, counselor, or principal. They will help you contact the proper authorities, such as the Texas Department of Child Protective Services. Remember your role is not to investigate the situation. Your role is to be supportive of the student and your legal duty is to make a report, which sets in motion the process of getting appropriate help for the child.

IDEAS FOR GETTING ACQUAINTED

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

1. Tell me about yourself.
 2. What do you like to do for fun?
 3. What are your hobbies?
 4. Who do you live with? Tell me about your family.
 5. What's something special about you?
 6. What school subject do you like and what school subject is difficult?
 7. What would you like to do after you graduate from high school?
 8. What would you like us to do each week when I am here?
-

ACTIVITY IDEAS

1. Play a board or card game.
2. Color, draw, or just doodle.
3. Share a snack or lunch with the student. (Please check with the campus mentor coordinator about possible food allergies and the school's food and drink rules.)
4. Discuss one of the student's favorite TV shows, movies, songs, or books. This can often lead to a discussion on values and goals or reality versus fiction.
5. Ask if the student would like to keep a journal in which the two of you could write to each other. (This can be useful for students who have difficulty opening up verbally.)
6. Ask if the student would like to plan the next meeting.
7. Share personal experiences and ways you have overcome obstacles.
8. Use role-playing to help the student gain confidence to take on a difficult task.
9. Discuss the student's future plans.
10. Talk about families and relationships.
11. Work on an arts and crafts project together.
12. Ask the student to share a favorite role model and reasons he/she likes this person.
13. Develop goals with the student and let them know you believe in him/her.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IF...

...the student changes schools?

Follow the student, if you can. Be sure the mentor contacts at both schools know of your decision. If you cannot meet with the student at the new school, please contact your mentor coordinator for other arrangements.

...the student has a problem he/she does not want to share with family or teachers?

Listen carefully. Then help him/her problem-solve by using decision-making steps: 1) Identify the problem; 2) Brainstorm all possible solutions; 3) Think of the pros and cons of each possible solution; 4) Select a solution and implement it; and 5) Evaluate the results and make changes, if needed. Ask the campus mentor coordinator or the student's counselor for direction, if needed.

...someone asks for details about my mentor experience?

Discuss the activities and the program rather than giving specific information about the student.

...the student asks a question I cannot answer?

It is okay not to know all the answers. Perhaps you can offer to help the student find the answer, or offer to help find someone who is more knowledgeable about the topic.

...the student asks my opinion about a sensitive, religious, or moral issue and I realize my opinion may differ from his/her family's opinions?

Remember you do not take the place of a parent or guardian. You can explain to the student that some topics are best discussed within the family and that your opinions might differ from those expressed at home. Generally, you can give simple, direct answers to questions without elaborating on "why." The campus mentor coordinator or school counselor can help you determine appropriate limits to particular topics.

...a teacher asks me to help the student with a specific subject matter or assignment?

It is your decision; determine if you feel comfortable with the request. Remember, however, that tutoring is not a requirement for mentors.

...someone asks me a personal question about the student?

Simply explain that, as a mentor, you cannot respond to personal questions about the student.

...the student misbehaves while in my company?

Though you are never expected to assume the role of disciplinarian, it is reasonable for you to explain what you consider to be appropriate behavior in a given situation. Let the student know your expectations and what you will do in the future (e.g. report the incident to the counselor, terminate the session, only meet in a school office or whatever seems appropriate to you). Be clear, firm, and consistent.

...I am asked to address a discipline issue with the student?

Explain that discipline is not something you are qualified to handle and suggest the student speak with the principal or counselor instead.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (CONT.)

WHAT IF...

...the student responds to most questions with “yes” and “no” answers?

Practice asking open-ended questions. If the problem persists, discuss it with the campus mentor coordinator or counselor to brainstorm some topics that would make you and the student more comfortable.

...the student does not seem to care about completing his education?

Be patient and accepting. You can introduce discussions that explore issues related to careers and economics, such as, “If you worked at McDonald’s, how much would you earn in a week?” “What are the advantages to such a plan?” “Disadvantages?” Though you can be clear in stating your belief that completing an education is essential, be non-judgmental in your exploration of alternatives and consequences.

CLOSURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP

Sometimes, life just happens. In fact, that is a huge part of what you have tried to teach your student. Perhaps the student is moving far away or maybe you are? Perhaps the student has outgrown the need for your services? Or, maybe you have come to realize your student might be better served by a different mentor. No matter the reason, it can sometimes prove to be a difficult goodbye.

Inform the mentor coordinator

Mentors should discuss guidelines for ending the relationship with the campus mentor coordinator. If it seems appropriate, talk to the campus mentor coordinator about a replacement mentor for your student.

Inform the student

After receiving guidance from the campus mentor coordinator, meet with the student to explain why the current arrangement must end. Tell the student your meetings aren’t ending because of something they did wrong. Students can understand schedule changes, illness and moving. But they cannot understand the disappearance of a mentor without explanation. Encourage the student to verbalize his/her feelings about the change in the relationship. Set an example: be honest, candid and supportive, regardless of the reason for the termination.

Focus on the positive

Discuss the achievements your relationship has encouraged. Talk about your feelings and be supportive and positive, especially about what the future may hold for your student. If possible, agree on a specific date for your last meeting when you could plan something special.

A final caution

Do not make promises you may not keep, including the promise you will always keep in touch.

men-tor

[men-tawr, -ter]

Noun

A wise and trusted counselor or teacher.
An influential senior sponsor or supporter.

REMEMBER...

- A mentor doesn't** take the place of the student's parent, teacher or counselor.
- A mentor doesn't** give medication to an ill child, or promote any commercial product or brand name.
- A mentor doesn't** propose any religious doctrine or belief. Mentors respect each student's beliefs and religious habits.
- A mentor doesn't** criticize school procedures or personnel.
- A mentor doesn't** take ownership of a student's problems or become overly involved.
Support students as they learn to assume responsibility for themselves.
- A mentor doesn't** wait too long to discuss concerns with the campus mentor coordinator.
- A mentor doesn't** have to tutor the student.
- A mentor doesn't** fail as a mentor if the student drops out. Many forces contribute to such decisions. You can be certain the student will remember you cared.
- A mentor doesn't** have to participate in discussions where the language or the topic makes the mentor uncomfortable. If such a problem develops, contact the campus mentor coordinator.

Mentoring is a rewarding, challenging, and exciting experience! Your decision to become a LTISD mentor reflects your commitment to supporting and guiding the educational and personal growth of youth in our community. We appreciate the time, effort, and support you are so generously willing to give.

Thank you for mentoring Lake Travis ISD students!