“The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled.”

— Plutarch
LAKE TRAVIS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT CAMPUSES

Bee Cave Elementary (Kindergarten - 5th)
14300 Hamilton Pool Road, Austin, TX 78738 (512) 533-6250
Principal: Jennifer Andjelic
Mentor Coordinator: Courtney Trimmer

Lake Pointe Elementary (Pre-Kindergarten - 5th)
11801 Sonoma Drive, Austin, TX 78738 (512) 533-6500
Principal: Kelly Freed
Mentor Coordinator: Laura Elder

Lake Travis Elementary (Pre-Kindergarten - 5th)
15303 Kollmeyer, Austin, TX 78734 (512) 533-6300
Principal: Angela Frankhouser
Mentor Coordinator: Rishay Ackley

Lakeway Elementary (Kindergarten - 5th)
1701 Lohmans Crossing, Austin, TX 78734 (512) 533-6350
Principal: Sam Hicks
Mentor Coordinator: Michelle Monahan

Serene Hills Elementary (Kindergarten - 5th)
3301 Serene Hills Drive, Austin, TX 78738 (512) 533-7400
Principal: Julie Nederveld
Mentor Coordinator: Ariana Barrera

West Cypress Hills Elementary (Kindergarten - 5th)
6112 Cypress Ranch Boulevard, Spicewood, TX (512) 533-7500
Principal: Amanda Prehn
Mentor Coordinator: JoAnn Bryan

Lake Travis Middle School (Grades 6- 8)
4932 Bee Creek Road, Spicewood, TX 78669 (512) 533-6200
Principal: Sherry Baker
Mentor Coordinator: Cynthia Smith

Hudson Bend Middle School (Grades 6- 8)
15600 Lariat Trail, Austin, TX 78734 (512) 533-6400
Principal: Thomas Payne
Mentor Coordinator: Sonja Ferguson

Lake Travis High School (Grades 9-12)
3324 RR 620 South, Austin, TX 78738 (512) 533-6100
Principal: Gordon Butler
Mentor Coordinator: Angela Hrapchak
IMPORTANT INFORMATION

SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT

☎ Please contact the school before each visit to confirm your student’s attendance.

School: ______________________________________________________
Address: ____________________________________________________
Phone: _______________________________________________________
Email: ________________________________________________________

⇒ Other people you will want to know!

Assistant Principal: ____________________________________________
Counselor: ___________________________________________________
Other: _______________________________________________________
Important Phone Numbers: ______________________________________

⇒ School Procedures

Mentor Sign-In book located in Front Office

Who to contact when you are absent: ______________________________
Phone: __________________________
Email: __________________________
INTRODUCTION

Mentoring in the Lake Travis Independent School District is a **rewarding, challenging, demanding and exciting experience**! The program’s design is to involve community volunteers in ongoing efforts to encourage students to improve both academically and personally. Mentor volunteers also encourage students to focus on their future education and career goals.

Your decision to become a mentor reflects your commitment to supporting and guiding the educational and personal growth of youth in our community. We appreciate the time, effort and care that you are so generously willing to give.

**ment-or**

[men-tawr, -ter]

*Noun*

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

What the research shows:

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

- **Social—Emotional Development:** Mentors may challenge negative views that 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.

WHO IS A MENTOR?

Mentors are caring, supportive adults who offer students ongoing guidance for their academic and personal growth. They respect children and are willing to make a long-term commitment to his/her success.

What can Mentors do?

- Serve as a role model
- Act as a friend and provide encouragement and support
- Help a student improve self-esteem
- Encourage students to improve academically and to understand the relevance of their schoolwork in their daily life
- Provide opportunities for students to develop personal growth by increasing their self-awareness and realizing their full potential
- Explore future opportunities that are compatible with the student’s own special talents and interests

Mentor Requirements

- Participate in the Mentor Me LT Program for the duration of the school year
- Meet with the student at least twice a month (once a week is preferred) for the duration of the school year. Mentor meetings may be 30 - 45 minutes during lunch or after school
- Attend a Mentor Training Session conducted by LTISD Office of Communications, Media and Community Relations
- Agree to a background check to be conducted by the Texas Department of Public Safety. The mentor must also utilize the Raptor Visitor Management system each time he or she is on campus
- Agree that all meetings with your student will take place on school grounds.
PURPOSES OF THE MENTORING Program

Many students can benefit personally and academically from one-on-one attention, including a large number of at-risk students.

Some students have not been able to develop positive relationships with trusted adults who can motivate and support them in achieving their goals.

**Purposes are:**
- To strengthen the student’s self-esteem
- To improve the student’s planning skills
- To develop the student’s interpersonal skills
- To improve the student’s academic achievement

**Benefits the Mentor receives:**
- 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

**Benefits the Student receives:**
- Support and guidance from a caring adult
- Sense of security in having someone to trust
- Increased self-esteem and motivation to succeed
- Improved self-confidence
- Appreciation for the value of gaining knowledge
- Assistance with academic skills
- 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
MENTORING GUIDELINES

In order to participate in the LTISD Mentoring Program, mentors must follow these guidelines at all times.

MEETINGS:
Meetings between the mentor and the student are to take place only on school grounds in designated areas – library, cafeteria, classroom – during school hours. All meetings must take place in rooms with open doors or in sight of school personnel. Please always bring your driver’s license, check in with your campus office and wear your Raptor name badge. Contact your campus office to be sure your student is in school or to cancel should you be unable to attend. Get to know your campus mentor contacts. They are the ones who will be able to assist you if a difficult situation develops. Remember to follow all school policies and procedures.

COMMUNICATION / TEXTING:
Per school board policy, it is not permitted for Mentors to communicate privately with a student via phone, email or social media. Contact reidm@ltisd.schools.org for more information.

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 pat on the back. What may be intended as a friendly interaction between two people may be viewed as something entirely different by someone else.

INCENTIVES:
Students should always strive to be self-motivated. Mentors are discouraged from giving students gifts as incentives. Do not ever loan or give money or food to students. “Friends” do not maintain relationships by supplying each other with these items. Examples of appropriate incentives are smiles, words of encouragement and birthday cards. Please make promises sparingly and keep them faithfully.

CONFIDENTIALITY:
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 or she will assist you. Do not promise a student that you will keep this information confidential.
QUALITIES OF SUCCESSFUL MENTORS

Personal commitment to be involved with another person for an extended period – one year minimum

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 individuals and for their 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 participants an opportunity to explore their own thoughts with minimum interference. When people feel accepted and respected, they are more likely to ask for and respond to good ideas.

Ability to empathize with another person’s struggle

Even without having had the same experiences, they can empathize with their students’ 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 that 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.
WHAT DO WE DO WHEN WE FIRST MEET?

GREETINGS: Greet the student warmly, with a smile and a firm handshake. Remember to say, “I am Ms. 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 do 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 will probably want to know them better at a later time.

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. Sitting across the table from one another, though it may seem more natural to you, can be more threatening to an insecure student. Focus your conversation on the positive – on encouragement and reassurance.

GETTING ACQUAINTED: Take the time to describe yourself briefly – your background and where/if you are employed. Be careful not to sound as if you want to impress the student. That is not really necessary, and it can be intimidating. 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 that you both might have in common. In turn, ask the student about his/her brothers and sisters, favorite sports, favorite outings and special events in 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 faring academically. Do not push the matter if you sense that 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 that 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 school 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. It is your role to be supportive of the child and your legal duty is to make a report, which sets in motion the process of getting appropriate help for the child.
GET ACQUAINTED ACTIVITIES

Possible Prompts
- Tell me about yourself.
- What do you like to do for fun?
- What hobbies do you have?
- Who do you live with? Tell me about your family.
- What’s something special about you?
- What subject do you like and what is difficult for you in school?
- What would you like to do after you complete high school?
- What would you like for us to do each week when I am here?

Possible Activities
- Introduce yourself and share some of your interests with the student. You could possibly show the student a few pictures.
- Ask the student to give you a tour of the campus. This will help the student to relax and begin to share some information with you.
- Spend most of your time asking open-ended questions and listening. Help the student to think for himself/herself.
- Talk about mutual interests. Above all, listen. Do not be afraid to discuss what problems the student is having.
- Let the student help plan the next meeting.
- Share a snack or lunch with the student. *(Please check with campus coordinator about food and drink)*
- Discuss one of the student’s favorite TV shows, movies, songs or books. This can often lead into a discussion on values and goals or reality versus fiction.
- Ask the student if he/she would like to keep a journal and the two of you could write back and forth to each other. This can be especially useful for students who have difficulty opening up verbally.
- Share personal experiences and ways you have overcome obstacles.
- When a student shares a problem with you, help him/her problem solve by using the 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 5) Evaluate the results and make changes, if needed.
- Ask the student to share a favorite role model and reasons for liking this person.
- Use role-playing to help the student gain confidence to take on a difficult task.
- Bring a newspaper article that you think the student may be interested in and ask his/her opinion.
- Attend a special event in which the student is participating.
- Discuss the student’s future plans.
- Talk about families.
- Remember special occasions (cards). Do not put yourself in a position of providing monetary assistance.
- Work on an arts and crafts project together.
- Develop goals with the student and let them know you believe in him/her.
If the student changes schools, what should I do?

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.

If the student has a problem that he does not want to share with family or teachers...

Ask the student’s counselor for direction. Listen carefully.

If a friend asks for details about your mentor experience...

Discuss the activities and the program rather than giving specific information about the student. Encourage the friend to take the mentor training so the expectations of the program will be clear.

If the student asks a question you cannot answer...

It is okay, in fact, it is normal, not to know all the answers. Perhaps you can offer to help the student learn the answer, or at least, you can find someone who would be more knowledgeable.

If the student asks your opinion about a sensitive, religious or moral issue and you realize your opinion may differ from that expressed by his family...

Review the role of the mentor and remember that you are not to take the place of the parent. 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 about “why.” The counselor can help you determine appropriate limits to particular topics.

If a teacher asks you to help 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.

If another adult asks a personal question about your student...

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

CONTINUED...

**If the student misbehaves when in your 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 what your expectations are 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.

**If you are asked to address a discipline issue with the student...**

You must explain that discipline is not something you are qualified to handle and suggest to the student that he/she speak with the principal or counselor.

**If the student seems to respond to questions mostly with “yes” and “no” answers...**

Practice asking open-ended questions. If the problem persists, discuss it with the counselor and see if there are some topics that would make you and the student more comfortable.

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

Be patient. Accept students for where their thinking is at this time. There are discussions you can introduce that explore issues related to careers and economics. “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.

Now, ask yourself – What is the single most important information, concept, or behavior that you want your student to learn from you?
CLOSURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP WITHOUT HARMING THE CHILD

...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 that 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 contact. If it seems appropriate, talk to the campus mentor contact about a replacement mentor for your student.

- **Inform the student**
  After receiving guidance from the coordinator, meet with the student to explain why the current arrangement must end. Encourage your student to verbalize his/her feelings about the change in the relationship. Set the 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 own feelings and be supportive and positive, especially about what the future may hold for your student. If possible, together, set a specific date for your last meeting when you might be able to plan something special.

- **A final caution**
  Students must not be allowed to feel that the meetings ended because of something they did wrong. They can all understand schedule changes, illness, and moving. But, just as with a friend, they cannot understand the disappearance of a mentor without explanation. Do not make promises you know you may not keep, including that you will always keep in touch.

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1 Adapted from the Partners in Education Guidelines. Wichita Falls ISD and Organizing Effective School-Based Mentoring Programs: How To start A Mentor Program. Fastback 333 by Susan Weinberger. Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation
YOUR PRESENCE IS THE GIFT!

Please remember…

A MENTOR DOES NOT Take the place of the student’s parent, teacher, or counselor.

A MENTOR DOES NOT Give medication to an ill child, or promote any commercial product or brand name.

A MENTOR DOES NOT Propose any religious doctrine or belief. Mentors respect each student’s beliefs and religious habits.

A MENTOR DOES NOT Criticize school procedures or personnel.

A MENTOR DOES NOT Take ownership of a student’s problems or become overly involved. Support students as they learn to assume responsibility for themselves.

A MENTOR DOES NOT Wait too long to discuss concerns with the Mentor Contact.

A MENTOR DOES NOT Have to be a tutor.

A MENTOR DOES NOT Need to feel like a failure if the student drops out. Many forces enter into such decisions. You can be certain that the student will remember that you cared.

A MENTOR DOES NOT Have to participate in discussions where the language or the topic makes the mentor uncomfortable. If such a problem develops, contact the Community Relations Liaison

Thank you for your interest in Lake Travis ISD. Please contact the Community Relations Liaison at 512-533-6099 to begin your rewarding experience in our school district.

reidm@ltisd.org

14