

TIPS ON CLARIFYING THE MENTORING EXPERIENCE

The following list was designed to help clarify what can be accomplished through the mentoring program. Utilize this list in developing the Individual Mentoring Plan.

- Plan an in-person visit to the protégé's school or the mentor's school
- Discuss the expectations for the guidance program
- Share tips on working with other counselors
- Brainstorm ideas for helping develop lesson plans for guidance activities
- Provide sample lesson plans of guidance activities
- Share classroom management techniques
- Examine student work from guidance activities together via email, fax or mail
- Share reports completed in state reporting
- Demonstrate recordkeeping
- Ask questions to help prioritize issues and concerns
- Develop an action plan for professional growth
- Share resources, materials for a guidance curriculum unit, professional readings, etc.
- Attend a workshop together
- Role model all aspects of professionalism
- Encourage reflection

HANDLING CONCERNS BEYOND THE GUIDANCE PROGRAM: Some issues may surface for the protégé that stem from the school or district. The protégé may be unsure how to handle feelings of being overwhelmed from a lack of assistance, isolation from adults, and exhaustion on a regular basis. They may also be dealing with vague expectations from an administrator, policy questions, lack of useful feedback at their building, and in-service that doesn't appear to meet their needs. Such issues are more related to the home district. The mentor can show support by encouraging the protégé to seek out someone in the building or district to help with local questions and issues.

Protégés may have a mosaic of mentors for support in different venues. The role of the mentor is to support the work and encourage professional growth in the guidance program. There will be local needs that a local mentor may better address.

HOW TO MANAGE THE LONG-DISTANCE RELATIONSHIP: We are not always fortunate enough to be in the same building, or the same district. While face-to-face mentoring is very beneficial and most desired, distance and time may require other modes of mentoring such as telephone and E-mentoring.

E-mentoring uses technology to connect mentor and protégé across time and/or distance. Successful E-mentoring requires:

- Access to the technical support services as needed
- Regular, consistent contact between mentor and protégé
- Consideration of the needs of the protégé and mentor
- Ongoing program evaluation
- Professional use of the technology

(Adapted from www.mentoring.org/)

MENTORING PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The Career Education Mentoring Program provides support and guidance for new counselors by encouraging activities the protégé wants to accomplish with assistance from the mentor. At the introductory meeting, mentors and protégés complete the Decision Points Checklist and Individual Mentoring Plan as a start to the mentoring year. These will guide the team's mentoring experiences throughout the year.

The experiences are planned around guidance program standards. A sample listing of suggestions is provided, but the protégé and mentor may propose other activities that are pertinent to the protégé's counseling responsibilities. The MSCA District Chair and DESE staff will be available to help teams design the Individual Mentoring Plan.

DECISION POINTS CHECKLIST: This checklist will help establish structure for the mentoring team. It will be completed as part of the first meeting for the mentoring year. It can be used to establish communication norms, identify possible areas of interest to the protégé, and reporting and record keeping practices.

ESTABLISHING THE INDIVIDUAL MENTORING PLAN: Completing the Individual Mentoring Plan will identify experiences to address and a timeline. This plan can be revised at any time during the year. The goal is to plan experiences that support work the protégé needs to accomplish during the school year. The following is a research-based list of areas of concern indicated by new educators. Reviewing this list together, the protégé may identify specific areas of concern that the mentor can help with. This list and the sample of experiences will provide a good starting point to decide focal points for the protégé in the coming year.

An Overwhelming Workload

- Can include assignments within and outside of the counseling expertise
- May work with a difficult or overloaded class
- Supervision of one or more extracurricular activities
- Meeting deadlines of unanticipated forms
- Multiple preparations for different courses

Time Management

- Often feel overwhelmed by the amount of daily work
- Timing lessons and activities may be a source of frustration
- Balancing personal and professional obligations may be difficult
- Find it problematic to keep school hours within reason and ends up with work encroaching all aspects of life

Relationships with Parents and Colleagues

- Worries about parent conferences and conflicts
- Confrontations with colleagues
- Fear of not "fitting in"

Socio-cultural Awareness of Sensitivity

- Find themselves in a diversity of culture and ethnicity

- Feel unprepared in dealing with students who are at-risk, abused, come from complicated home lives, are pregnant or transient

High-Stakes Accountability

- Wrestle with matching classroom learning objectives to assessments with standards and benchmarks
- Feel anxiety over being accountable for student performance

Student Motivation

- Concern that students will not be receptive to their instruction and refuse to learn
- Unsure how to deal in a mainstreamed classroom of special needs students

Technology in the Classroom

- Continual change in technology and knowing how to use it
- Limited number of and less than desirable equipment

Solitary Work Environment

- Feeling of loneliness and isolation
- Feel alone with students all day and void of adult interaction

Classroom Management

- Cannot anticipate many behavioral events that occur in the classroom
- Often feel unprepared and out of control when disruptions occur
- Feel incompetent when they don't know how to handle classroom problems
- Exhibit anxiety when they cannot control distractions

Classroom Instruction

- Must develop all lessons from the start
- May have difficulty in adapting what was learned in college to effective lessons for students
- Often have a wide variety of subject matter to cover

MENTORING EXPERIENCES FOR EACH SEMESTER: The protégé will work on two mentoring experiences each semester. As these experiences are completed, they will be sent to the mentor for their review. As the work is in progress, the mentor can work with the protégé to complete the experiences. After the work is sent to the mentor, a mentor review form will be completed and forwarded to the MSCA District Chair. This form indicates the mentor and protégé have been working together and completed that specific experience from the Individual Mentoring Plan.

A total of four experiences should be completed over the school year. The timeline is determined by the mentoring team with input from the MSCA District Chair. The team is allowed flexibility in selecting the appropriate experiences and setting the timelines.

MENTOR/PROTÉGÉ LOGS: The quarterly logs are a means to check what has been worked on and decide what additional contact and what work in the Individual Mentoring Plan needs to be completed. Some activities are repeated on each log but does not indicate those activities should be completed each quarter. They are there as reminders of things the team may want to discuss.

ON-SITE VISIT: An on-site visit provides opportunity to gather more information, observe how things are organized and review resources. This is another opportunity for

the mentor and protégé to dialogue, share resources, and check their progress in working together. Consider making the visit on a scheduled professional development release day unless the visit is to observe student/counselor interactions. The visit is to support the needs of the protégé and not for evaluating.

The purpose of the visit needs to be determined prior to making the visit. The visit can be made to either team member's school. When making the visit, check in at the office, where the host team member will meet the guest and make introductions to the hosting administrator. It is important that you take the time to plan this visit and follow the time together with a reflection of what was gained.

The visit may address many things, but the primary purpose is to support the needs of the protégé. Here are some suggestions for the visit:

- Identify any concerns to be addressed prior to the visit
- Begin the visit on a positive note
- Tour the facilities
- Examine guidance program organization, curriculum and/or resources
- Discuss previously determined areas/topics
- Talk about balancing career and personal life
- Be sure concerns or needs have been addressed
- Allow time to reflect together
- Check with the MSCA District Chair if there are any questions

After the visit is completed, submit a report to the MSCA District Chair to inform them that the visit has taken place. The report will be made by the person making the visit and will be signed by the visiting partner's administrator. This report ensures reimbursement to the school for substitute, if needed, and travel expenses. The person making the visit will submit a mileage reimbursement request and have their school submit a substitute reimbursement request to MCCE.

EVALUATING THE MENTORING PROGRAM: An online evaluation will be sent to all participants in the spring. The evaluation will review the program, the relationship, benefits and learning, program materials, as well as program strengths and weaknesses.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTORING

Confidence and enthusiasm are gifts resulting from a quality mentoring relationship, both for the protégé and for the mentor. These gifts can be greatly enhanced through understanding, planning, and reflective practices. As with the guidance program and all endeavors, the magic of the mentoring relationship takes shape through disciplined planning, understanding, and the willingness to learn and teach at unexpected moments. The information and processes in this notebook should guide you to a fruitful mentoring relationship. Start with enthusiasm and build confidence through the mentoring year.

REFERENCES & RESOURCES

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