



APIE MENTOR COORDINATOR GUIDE 2023 - 2024

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Austin Partners in Education (APIE)

Austin Partner in Education (APIE) was created as an independent 501(c) (3) organization through a partnership between Austin ISD and the Austin Chamber of Commerce. Our mission is to provide college and career readiness support through individualized academic and mentoring programs to prepare students for success. APIE realizes this mission through its school-coordinated programs including Secondary School Mentoring, Math Classroom Coaching, GEAR-UP and College Readiness.

APIE Contact Information

APIE Mentor Program
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School Connections Manager
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wnguyen@austinpartners.org

Austin Partners in Education
Brooke Elementary
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Note: Your school can choose not to invite mentors who are approved and trained by APIE to support your students. The mentors serve at the discretion of the school's mentor coordinator and principal. Their placement must be in the best interest of the school and the children. Background check approval does not mandate placement of mentors.

If your school chooses to not place an APIE mentor, please notify the APIE School Connections contact, Wen Nguyen, on whether this mentor can be placed at another school or does not meet the requirements of the mentor program.

The APIE Mentor Program

The APIE Mentor Program is a school-based program available at any AISD middle and high school interested in participation. **The program has been approved by AISD and has met standards required to work in the district.**

1. APIE manages the mentor program during the first stage of coordination: recruitment, screening, and training.
2. AISD campuses manage the second stage: pairing/matching, receiving parental consent, and scheduling mentor sessions. Campus principals identify a staff member to serve in the **Mentor Coordinator (MC)** role. The MC will need time in their schedule to support the program and coordinate in addition to their primary responsibilities. The MC is usually a counselor but can also be a parent support specialist, assistant principal, or another staff member.
3. APIE provides ongoing support to mentors after they begin, such as sharing resources and training opportunities, periodic check-ins with mentors, and sending out end of year surveys.

About Mentoring

Mentoring is a purposeful relationship between a young person and a caring adult. Mentors build relationships with young students to help them feel valued at school, have someone to support them in achieving their goals, and encourage them to learn, grow, and believe in themselves. They provide student-centered support that depends on the needs and interest of their mentee. Research indicates that youth participating in mentoring relationships:

- Have improved academic experiences including better attendance, a more positive attitude towards school, and an increased likelihood of pursuing higher education.
- Are less likely to initiate alcohol/drug use while being mentored and less likely to engage in other high-risk behaviors.
- Have more positive social attitudes and relationships.

Mentor Program Overview

APIE mentors are community members from various walks of life who volunteer to provide relationship-based, student-centered mentoring. Mentors are expected to meet weekly with students one-on-one (occasionally in groups of 2-3 students), during the school day, during a time that works best for the mentor and the school (most often during lunch, advisory period, or an elective period).

Mentor Requirements

Mentors must:

- Complete a background check every new school year.
- Be able to meet with a student at their AISD campus weekly for 30-60 minutes.
- Fill out a mentor profile to provide details on their experience, skills, talents, background, interests, and availability.
- Attend a 90-minute orientation to learn best practices to build an effective mentoring relationship as well as important policies and procedures to follow.

- Log mentor sessions each week to reflect on the session, help prepare for the next session, and provide valuable information for the program.

APIE Responsibilities:

APIE's School Connections Manager manages the first phase of coordination and provides ongoing support which includes:

Task	Activity
Mentor Recruitment	APIE recruits mentors through outreach to Austin businesses, organizations, universities, and community groups.
Process Background Checks	We run background checks for mentors in accordance with AISD and federal regulation.
Gather Mentor Profiles and Signed Agreement	All mentors are required to fill out information about themselves, including experience, interests, talents, availability, etc to help with the student-mentor pairing process. They sign an agreement to follow program policies and guidelines.
Facilitate New Mentor Orientation	The orientation includes: Strategies to build trusting and healthy relationships with their mentee, FERPA, and mandatory reporting.
Introduce Mentor and Mentor Coordinator	APIE will send introduction emails so the mentor and Mentor Coordinator can begin communication.
Provide a Mentor Coordinator Portal	Coordinators will have access to a list of APIE mentors who have approved background checks and are ready to be placed.
Maintain Mentor Session Logs	Mentors will log their weekly mentor sessions, provide a summary of session activities and/or topics, and plan for the following week.
Check-in with Mentors	APIE will check-in with mentors monthly by email and/or video calls.
Share Mentor Resources and Training Opportunities	APIE will share resources with mentors as well as supplemental training opportunities throughout the school year.
Support and Collaborate with Mentor Coordinators	APIE will check in with MCs to learn about ways to support and collaborate to meet the student and campus needs. You are welcome to reach out as well. We can try to tailor the program to your needs.
Coordinate a Mentor Appreciation Event	Mentors will be invited to a mentor appreciation event in the Spring.
Survey Mentors	APIE will send an end-of-year survey to all mentors to learn about their experience and use their feedback to improve the program.

Mentor Coordinator Responsibilities

Task	Activity
Attend Coordinator Training (<i>Recommended for new MCs</i>)	Develop an understanding of the mentor program.
Meet with APIE (<i>Optional/Recommended</i>)	Review campus priorities and mentoring goals for effective collaboration.
Determine Logistics	Determine space (library, office, etc.) & times (class periods) mentoring can occur at your campus.

Staff and Parent outreach	Provide information about the mentor program and collect Student Referral forms . <i>Find the “Forms” link on the MC portal.</i>
Review Student Interest Form and Mentoring Agreement with potential mentees	Explain mentoring to students and have them fill out the Student Interest Form and sign Mentee Agreement . Find these in the “Forms” section of the MC portal
Staff awareness	Ensure staff understands the mentor process including front office procedures and other information.
Collect signed parent consent forms every new school year.	Ensure parents approve of their child’s participation. Mentors can only meet with students with a current signed consent form.
Communicate with mentors	Provide information for new mentors specific to your campus.
Pair students with mentors	Review mentor profile and student referral form to help pair mentor and student. Find Mentor Profiles in the MC Portal at the far right of the Mentor’s name.
Check Mentor’s ID before 1 st meeting	Please confirm that the name and date of birth of mentor on portal matches their photo ID.
First meeting	Introduce mentor and student at the first meeting, review procedures and meeting times, location, etc.
Update mentor statuses and adding student information	Update mentor status in the MC portal and add mentee’s name and student ID.
Check-in with students	Check in with mentees to learn how the mentoring experience is going for them, answer questions, & address concerns.
Communicate with mentors	Communicate with mentors to keep them updated on testing dates, school events, answer questions, and address concerns.
Mentor recognition (optional)	When the opportunity occurs, such as holidays, National Mentor Month (January), or end of year celebrations, show appreciation to mentors & encourage mentees to participate in the process.

Background Check Requirement

In accordance with TEA and AISD policy, all mentors must be screened by a criminal history background check. Mentors are required to register each year to become an Approved Mentor. You will not see an APIE mentor’s name on your MC portal if they have not completed a background check this year.

Returning Mentors

Each year all RETURNING mentors must sign up at www.austinpartners.org so that their background checks are current. Campuses receive a list of approved mentors on their Mentor Coordinator portal. Returning mentors do not have to attend the New Mentor Orientation again, but MUST register for the new year and sign the Mentor Agreement.

New Mentors

All new mentors also must complete a background check. New mentors should:

1. Go to www.austinpartners.org and click the “Volunteer” button.
2. Next, select the “APIE Secondary School Mentor Program” button.
3. Choose an AISD middle or high school on the drop-down menu where they wish to mentor.

4. Next, they will review mentoring expectations and fill out a mentor profile.
5. Once their background check is cleared, they will be invited to attend the required orientation.

AISD Employees

Current Austin ISD employees who wish to mentor at a campus they do not work at must register with APIE or another mentoring organization. They should indicate when registering that they are currently employed by AISD and in what capacity. The orientation is not mandatory but is optional.

How long do background checks take?

It can take 7-10 business days for background checks to be processed. Prospective mentors will receive a confirmation or denial email from APIE and the background check company. If their background check is approved, the mentor will appear on your MC portal.

If a mentor has a criminal history, the background check company, True Hire, will notify the mentor directly by email. These volunteers will **not** appear on the MC portal. **If they do not appear on your list; do not pair them with a mentee as they are not approved.** However, a mentor may not appear on your portal due to issues with the registration process. Please contact APIE to resolve these issues.

Verifying Mentor's ID

Because APIE uses an online background check system, it is essential that this additional step is taken to ensure the accuracy of the information provided by volunteers for their background check.

APIE verifies a new mentor's ID during the New Mentor Orientation which occurs on Zoom. Your campus must also check a mentor's ID before they meet with a student. Please confirm that the name and birthdate on their photo ID matches the information listed on your MC portal.

It is the responsibility of the school to verify this information before allowing mentors to begin meetings with students on your campus. **APIE accepts no responsibility for misrepresentation or inaccurate information submitted during registration.**

What if the name and/or date of birth on the ID is different from info on the MC portal?

If the information is inconsistent, please notify APIE so that a can communicate with the mentor and update the information so a new and accurate background check can be processed.



New Mentor Orientation

All new mentors are **REQUIRED** to attend the orientation. This serves as both an overview of the mentoring process as well as a screening of potential mentors. Orientation includes best practices of mentoring adolescent youth, strategies for building a trusting relationship, FERPA and confidentiality guidelines, and AISD policies and procedures. Returning mentors do not have to complete the training. **New mentors cannot meet with students until they have attended orientation.**

The New Mentor Orientations are scheduled for 90 minutes 3 - 4 days a week in September and October. The orientation will be offered after October through February when needed.

Student Referral Process

Eligibility Criteria

Any student who is enrolled in a participating AISD middle or high school can be referred for an APIE mentor. Parents, teachers, administrators, and counselors may refer a student and students can self-refer. A few common reasons students are invited to be mentored include, but not limited to, they:

- Need a space for undivided attention and encouragement.
- Could benefit from a positive role model to help them reflect and set goals.
- Would like support with career exploration and/or college preparation.
- Need a break from the challenges they face during the school day.
- Could use support developing and/or practicing social and emotional skills.

APIE provides a student referral form that coordinators have the option to use as a resource. This form can be found in the MC portal. Mentors do not have crisis or counseling training and may have very limited experience working with youth. There are at least 3 situations when a student would not be assigned a mentor:

- A student has explicitly stated that he/she does not want a mentor.
- Parent/guardian has not given written consent for participation.
- A student has significant emotional, behavioral, or intellectual needs that require professional or medical interventions.

Student Referral Form

This form is available on page 12 of this guide. You can also find it on the Mentor Coordinator Portal under "Forms".

Student Interest and Mentee Agreement Form

The Mentor Coordinator or another person on campus needs to meet with students who are invited to participate in this program to fill out the Student Interest Form and Mentee Agreement. This will help the student identify areas they want to focus on during their time with their mentor and understand the expectations.

This form is available on pages 13 and 14 of this document. You can also find it on the Mentor Coordinator Portal under "Forms".

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Parents/Guardians MUST sign a consent form every school year before meeting with a mentor. Your campus is responsible for keeping a copy of this signed form on file. Because mentors meet individually with students, it is necessary that parents/guardians are notified of the student's referral and can decline their child's participation.

APIE provides the consent form as a PDF and as a link. Mentor Coordinators can find and distribute the forms from the MC portal. You can print the consent form or send them the link to electronically sign from the ease of their computer or phone. APIE will forward any forms signed electronically to the MC. **Mentor Coordinators need to manage and store signed consent forms.**

Parents/guardians will have the option to waive their FERPA rights on the consent form so that you can share student information with mentors to help them best serve the students' needs.

There are also **optional** media release permissions that require responses on this form. Parents do not have to waive FERPA rights or allow media release for their child to participate in the program. The form offers the following items for media release to APIE:

- Student data for evaluation purposes.
- Photography and/or video for public relations, recruitment, or other media purposes.
- Student's name and grade level to be included in print with their image.

Mentor – Mentee Pairing

Please try to pair mentors with students within two weeks from introduction. If your campus cannot pair a mentor, APIE can help with the referral process or ask the mentor to transfer to another school.

Mentor Profile: Mentors are required to fill out a Mentor Profile which provides information about their race/ethnicity, experience serving youth, skills, interests, background, availability, et cetera. Mentor Coordinators can review a mentor's profile to help them determine which student they will be paired with to support. It is recommended that students not be paired with mentors who do not align with the interests expressed on the profile. Common interests and common life experiences are important factors to consider during the matching period.

Mentor coordinators can also use the student's Referral Form to help them when matching mentors and students with one another. This form provides background information about the student, in case the coordinator is not familiar with their backgrounds.

Recommended Considerations:

Mentor-Mentee pairing is at the discretion of the Mentor Coordinator.

- We recommend male mentors **only** be matched with male and male-identifying students. Female mentors may be paired with any gender with consideration of the student's needs, experiences, and comfort-level. It is also important to check in with the mentor to determine their comfort-level mentoring a student of a different gender.
- Students of color need and appreciate role models who share their racial and cultural backgrounds. We recommend pairing students and mentors of color together when possible.

- Pairing bilingual mentors with emergent bilingual students who share the same native language can allow them to cultivate a trusting relationship much quicker and more effectively.
- Healthy mentoring relationships can also develop between students and mentors who have shared experiences like experiencing family separation, bullying, being a first-generation college student, being part of the LGBTQ+ community, etc.

Before the First Mentor Session

Before the mentor and student meet each other:

- Please meet with the student to fill out the Student Interest Form and Mentee Agreement. This will help the student identify areas they want to focus on during their time with their mentor and understand the expectations.
- Share appropriate details about the student, logistics and campus-specific information, and your plan to introduce them to the student. Details should not be FERPA protected unless the parent has waived their FERPA rights on the Parent Consent Form.
- Ensure they have a regular, appropriate space to meet each week. (library, vacant space in front office or counseling area, career and college center, etc) **The cafeteria is not usually a good choice for mentors and their students to meet and have uninterrupted time together.**
- Provide any suggestions for activities the mentor should try with their student. APIE also share a list of suggested activities and topics, but any suggestions from the coordinators is also appreciated.
- Introduce the student and mentor at the first meeting. The Mentor Coordinator's presence for even a few minutes helps initiate conversation and encourage connection between the mentor and mentee.

Monitor and Support

Coordinator Role:

As the relationship develops, the role of the coordinator is to monitor and support. Ensure the mentor knows how to contact you and include one other campus contact in case you are unavailable that day. The mentor may contact you to mutually resolve issues that will help support the student. Please make sure the mentor understands the following:

- Parking, school check in, and school procedures
- Meeting location and time frame
- FERPA and confidentiality
- Gift policy – under \$25.00 and rare (special occasion like birthday or last meeting of the year)
- Communication procedures

Coordinators should check in with students on a regular basis to ensure the relationship is continuing smoothly and to address any concerns.

APIE Role:

Starting this school year, APIE will ask mentors to fill out a Mentor Session Log each time they meet with their mentee. They will need to include the duration of the session, topics/activities, and plan for the next session. This opportunity for reflection can help mentors be intentional and student-centered.

APIE will check-in with mentors at least once a month via email. APIE will also provide resources and offer additional trainings that are relevant to mentoring.

Remind App Text Messaging

For the first time, APIE will offer mentors and mentees the ability to message each other through the Remind App which APIE will manage and monitor. Communication will be exclusively for mentors and mentees to confirm with each other that mentor sessions will occur each week.

Mentor – Mentee Challenges

There is no way to know at the beginning of a mentor-mentee relationship what issues may manifest as they meet. It is important to follow up with students during the first month and throughout to make sure they are having a good experience.

Warning signs that the relationship is not developing well include:

- A student avoids meeting with their mentor.
- The mentor is not showing up consistently for mentor sessions.
- The student indicates they are not enjoying their time with the mentor.
- A mentor seems overwhelmed in determining how to support their mentee.
- **The mentor is breaking program rules. (read next section, Inappropriate Behavior)**
- A student is breaking program rules.
- The student is inviting other students to join the mentor sessions.

During the New Mentor Orientation, APIE prepares mentors for possible challenges and to notice warning signs during relationship development with their mentee. APIE will check in with new mentors after the first session, the first month, and monthly throughout the school year.

Ultimately, if a student does not want to participate, then the mentorship should discontinue. Please notify the mentor and if appropriate, pair them with a new student who has expressed interest in mentorship.

Inappropriate Behavior

If you or anyone else at the school ever has concerns regarding the conduct of a mentor, please report this immediately to Austin Partners in Education. Although APIE screens mentors and provides training that include expectations of proper behavior, it is not guaranteed that they will follow all protocols. Mentors can be asked to leave the program for any reason at the student's or school's request.

Mentor Retention

Office Staff: The way mentors and volunteers are greeted when they come to your school will directly influence their feelings towards the program. Discuss the mentor program with the front office staff. Explain sign-in procedures and how to direct mentors to the appropriate places.

Schedule Changes: Please keep mentors updated about events that will prevent or change their weekly mentor sessions.

Share the best method for mentors to check if their mentee is at school the day of mentoring.

- Some schools have mentors call the front office.
- Some mentor coordinators call or email mentors if students are absent.

Continuous Support: Many mentors return each year because they have developed strong connections with their mentees. However, many mentors still do not feel connected to their school. Regular communication with mentors allows them to feel connected to your school, express concerns, and share student progress. Share your best mode of communication with mentors, so they can reach out to you when necessary.

Appreciation Events

APIE coordinates and invites mentors to an appreciation event every Spring. Planning an appreciation event at your school for mentors is a great way to build community with them. APIE can provide appreciation certificates. January is Mentor Appreciation Month and a great time to honor mentors.

April is School Volunteer Appreciation Month for AISD. Coordinators will be asked to select Mentors of the Year to be recognized on the AISD website and who can also be honored on your campus.

Mentor Transitions

Please notify the mentor and APIE when their mentee has left your school. Mentors may be able to transfer with the mentee or mentor a new student at your school. APIE can help with these transitions.

Do you have questions or need support?

Contact: Wen Nguyen, APIE School Connections Manager

Phone: 512-637-0983

Email: wnguyen@austinpartners.org

Student Referral: APIE Mentor Program 2023 - 2024

Date _____

School _____

Student Name _____

Grade _____

Referral by (circle one)

TEACHER

PARENT

COUNSELOR

OTHER: _____

I am referring the above-named student for the reason(s) checked below:

- ☐ Absences
- ☐ Always tired/sleepy
- ☐ Anxiety
- ☐ Being bullied
- ☐ Bullying others
- ☐ Class work
- ☐ Depressed/sad
- ☐ Family issues/concerns
- ☐ Fighting/arguing
- ☐ Friends/social skills
- ☐ Homework
- ☐ Hyperactive
- ☐ Inattentiveness
- ☐ Self-esteem
- ☐ Withdrawn
- ☐ Other (please explain: _____)

Additional Information:

This form is for school use, you do not need to share with APIE.

APIE Mentor Program: Student Interest Form

This information will help pair you with a mentor. Mentors also provide information about themselves including areas of experience, knowledge, and interests.

Student Information

Name: _____ Gender: _____ Age: _____

Grade: _____ Race/Ethnicity: _____ Advisory Teacher: _____

What type of support would you like to receive from a mentor?

Social Support

- ☐ making new friends
- ☐ confronting peer pressure
- ☐ combating bullying or harassment
- ☐ building communication skills
- ☐ expressing thoughts and emotions
- ☐ dealing with conflict
- ☐ safe space to be myself

Challenges

- ☐ missing a loved one
- ☐ lack of resources
- ☐ family conflicts
- ☐ pregnancy/parenthood
- ☐ divorce
- ☐ drug/alcohol struggles
- ☐ school
- ☐ Other: _____

Special Interests

- ☐ help with specific subject _____
- ☐ career and/or college exploration
- ☐ public speaking and presentations
- ☐ art/creativity _____
- ☐ time management
- ☐ entrepreneurship
- ☐ sports
- ☐ other _____

I would most benefit from a mentor who is (check all that apply):

- ☐ Empathetic
- ☐ Creative
- ☐ Calm
- ☐ Energetic
- ☐ Good Listener
- ☐ Patient
- ☐ Talkative
- ☐ Shared Identity _____
- ☐ Other _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND/OR COMMENTS:

This form is for school use, you do not need to share with APIE.

Mentee Agreement Form: APIE Mentor Program

I am reviewing this agreement with: (Mr/Ms) _____

- I understand that this mentor program invites **volunteers** from the community to support students as mentors during the school year.
- My parent or guardian must sign a **permission form** before I can begin meeting with a mentor.
- I agree to make every attempt to meet with my mentor **during the designated time each week**. The day and time will be determined by the campus mentor coordinator.
- If I cannot attend a scheduled mentor session, I will notify the campus mentor coordinator as early in advance as possible.
- **My mentor and I will NOT share contact information, including on social media**, without written parent permission and approval from my campus mentor coordinator.
- I understand that contact outside of school or on social media is not authorized by Austin Partners in Education (APIE) or Austin ISD.
- If I feel that I am in a harmful or uncomfortable position of any type with my mentor, **I will report concerns to the Mentor Coordinator or another AISD staff member at my campus** within 48 hours.
- I understand that participation in **this mentor program is voluntary**. I will notify the mentor coordinator if I choose to end the mentoring relationship. The mentor coordinator or mentor may end the mentoring relationship with notice as well.

Student's Printed Name

Signature

Date

This form is for school use, you do not need to share with APIE.