



# APIE MENTOR COORDINATOR GUIDE 2024-2025

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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, and College Readiness.

APIE Mentor Program  
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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 so we can determine if this mentor can support another campus.*

## 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. We also provide ongoing support to mentors after they begin including: reviewing weekly session logs, sharing resources and training opportunities, monthly check-ins with mentors, and conducting end-of-year surveys.
2. AISD campuses manage the second stage: pairing/matching, requesting parent 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.

## Mentor Program Overview

APIE mentors help students increase their sense of belonging, strengthen their social-emotional skills, and improve their academic experience. APIE mentors are volunteers from various backgrounds (i.e. college students, working professionals, retirees, etc). They meet with students during the school day once a week (*or biweekly on a case-by-case basis*) at a time that works best for the mentor and the school (typically during lunch, advisory, or an elective period).

## Mentor Requirements

- Complete a background check every new school year.
- Be able to meet with a student at their AISD campus weekly or biweekly for 30-60 minutes.
- Fill out a mentor profile to provide details about their experience, skills, talents, background, interests, and availability.
- Attend a 90-minute orientation to learn program objectives and expectations, best practices to build a healthy mentoring relationship, and important policies to follow.
- Participate in a one-on-one interview.
- Log mentor sessions each week to confirm time with student and type of support provided.

## 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 businesses, organizations, universities, community groups and on volunteer websites.
Gather Mentor Profiles and Signed Agreement	All mentors must fill out information about themselves including experience, interests, skills, availability, etc. We share this information with the school. They sign an agreement to follow program policies and guidelines.
Facilitate New Mentor Orientation	New mentors must attend a 90-minute orientation with APIE.
Check a new mentor's ID during orientation	APIE confirms the mentor's name and birthdate on their background check match their government ID.
Interview new mentors	Conduct a 15-minute interview to assess suitability and safety.
Introduce Mentor and Mentor Coordinator	APIE sends introduction emails so the mentor and Mentor Coordinator can begin communication.
Maintain a list of mentors and mentees	Coordinators will have access to a list of APIE mentors who have approved background checks and are ready to be placed.
Monitor Mentor Session Logs	Mentors must log their weekly mentor sessions to record the amount of time they spent with a student and the type of support provided.
Check-in with Mentors	APIE will check in with each mentor monthly.
Share Mentor Resources and Training Opportunities	APIE shares resources and supplemental training opportunities with mentors throughout the school year.

Support and Collaborate with Mentor Coordinators	APIE will check in with MCs to offer support and review 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 sends 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
Meeting with APIE	Receive a program overview, review the coordination process, and discuss specific mentoring needs for your campus.
Determine Logistics	Determine space (library, office, etc.) & times (class periods) mentoring can occur at your campus.
Student, Staff, and Parent outreach	Provide information about the mentor program and collect <b>Student Referral forms</b> .
Review Student Interest Form and Mentoring Agreement with potential mentees	Explain mentoring to students and have them fill out the <b>Student Interest Form and sign Mentee Agreement</b> .
Request signed parent consent forms every new school year.	Ensure parents approve of their child's participation. Students must have a current signed consent form before beginning.
Pair students with mentors	Review mentor profile and student interest form to help pair mentor and student.
Update APIE	Notify APIE when a student is paired with a mentor. Provide student's name and ID.
First meeting	Introduce mentor and student at the first meeting, review procedures and meeting times, location, etc.
Communicate with mentors	Keep them updated on student absences, testing dates, school events, etc.
Check-in with students	Check in with mentees after the first meeting and at least once a month to learn how mentoring is going for them, answer questions, & address concerns.
Mentor recognition (optional)	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 meet with students. Every year, APIE will notify you once a mentor has completed the steps required to begin mentoring.

## Returning Mentors

All RETURNING mentors must sign up with APIE so our records and their background checks are current. APIE will notify you once a returning mentor is ready to begin.

## New Mentors

APIE verifies a new mentor's ID during the New Mentor Orientation which occurs on Zoom. We will notify you once a new mentor is ready to begin.

## ID Verification

It is also the school's responsibility to verify the mentor's ID matches the name and birthdate on VOLY before allowing mentors to begin meeting with students on your campus. **APIE accepts no responsibility for misrepresentation or inaccurate information submitted during registration.**

### What if the mentor's name or birthdate on their government ID does not match the info VOLY?

If the information is inconsistent, please notify APIE so that we can resolve the issue with the mentor.

## 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 must indicate that they are a current AISD employee. The new mentor orientation is optional for AISD employees.

## New Mentor Orientation

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

## Mentor Coordinator Forms

All the forms listed below are available on our APIE webpage [here](#).

## Student Referral Process

### Eligibility Criteria

Any student 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:

- Need a space for connection and encouragement.
- Could benefit from a positive role model to help them reflect and set goals.
- Would like support with career and college exploration or preparation.
- Could use support developing social and emotional skills.

Mentors do not have crisis or counseling training and may have little to no experience working with youth. There are at least 3 situations when a student would not be assigned a mentor:

- A student has significant emotional, behavioral, or intellectual needs that require professional or medical interventions.
- A student has explicitly stated that he/she does not want a mentor.

- Parent/guardian has not given written consent for participation.

[Student Referral Form](#): You can share this form with staff and parents to gather referrals.

## Student Interest and Mentee Agreement Form

The Mentor Coordinator needs to meet with students 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.

## 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.

APIE provides the consent form as a PDF and as a link. We can contact the parents and send the consent form if it is helpful to you. You can print the consent form or send parents the link to sign from their computer or phone. APIE will forward any forms signed electronically to you. Parents will have the option to waive their FERPA rights on the consent form. If waived, you can share student information with mentors that may help them best serve the student's needs.

Electronic Consent Forms: [Parent Consent Form English](#)    [Parent Consent Form Spanish](#)

Printable Consent Form: [Parent Consent Form English and Spanish](#)

## Mentor-Mentee List

APIE will share an online spreadsheet with you that lists mentor's name and contact information. Once they are paired with a student, please add the student's name and ID to this sheet.

## Mentor – Mentee Pairing

Please try to pair mentors with students within two weeks of 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 must fill out a Mentor Profile which provides information about their race/ethnicity, age, gender, experience serving youth, skills, interests, background, availability, etc. This information can help determine which student will be paired with each mentor. We recommend pairing students with mentors from shared backgrounds, experiences, and interests. Common interests and life experiences are important factors to consider during the matching period.

## Recommendations:

Mentor-Mentee pairing is at the discretion of the Mentor Coordinator. Please notify APIE once you have decided which student a mentor will support.

- We recommend pairing male mentors with male and male-identifying students.
- Students of color can benefit from 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.
- Consider shared experiences like immigrant parents, transferring schools often, 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 with the mentor before you introduce them to the student. Details should be FERPA protected unless the parent has waived their FERPA rights on the parent consent form.
- Ensure the student and mentor have a regular, appropriate space to meet each week. (library, vacant space in front office, courtyard, etc) The cafeteria is not usually a good choice for mentors and students to meet due to noise and other interruptions.
- Introduce the student and mentor at the first meeting. Your 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. Coordinators should check in with students at least once a month to ensure the relationship is continuing smoothly and to address any concerns.

Ensure the mentor knows how to contact you and provide a backup contact when you're not on campus.

### APIE Role:

APIE asks mentors to complete an online mentor session log each time they meet with their mentee. They must include the duration of the session and the type of support provided. APIE will check in with each mentor at least once a month. APIE will also provide resources, a monthly newsletter, and offer supplemental trainings relevant to mentoring.

## Mentor-Mentee Challenges

It's hard to anticipate what issues may occur as mentors and students meet. It is important to follow up with students after the first session, and at least once a month, to ensure things are going well. Please notify APIE if you notice any warning signs that the relationship is not developing well:

- 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 warning signs during relationship development with their mentees. APIE will check in with new mentors after the first session and monthly throughout the school year. We will notify you if we notice warning signs.

If a student does not want to participate in mentoring, find out why and discontinue the mentorship. Please notify APIE. If appropriate, we can pair the mentor 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 reviews expectations of proper behavior with mentors, it is not guaranteed they will follow all protocols. Mentors can be asked to leave the program for any reason at the school or APIE's request.

## Mentor Retention

**Office Staff:** How mentors and volunteers are greeted when they come to your school will directly influence their feelings toward 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:

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

**Continuous Support:** Regular communication with mentors helps them feel connected to your school, express concerns, and share student progress. Share the best mode of communication for you with mentors, so they can reach out to you when necessary.

## Appreciation Events

APIE invites mentors to an appreciation event every Spring. You are welcome to plan an appreciation event at your school for mentors. It's 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.

## 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.

Please contact APIE's mentor program manager, Wen Nguyen, with any questions.

[wnguyen@austinpartners.org](mailto:wnguyen@austinpartners.org), 512-637-0983.