

Anchorage School District Gifted Mentorship Program Mentor Guide



Gifted Mentorship Coordinator

ASD Education Center

5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd.

Anchorage, AK 99504-3135

Office (907) 742-3841

Cell (907) 529-1479

Fax (907) 742-4778

www.asdk12.org

Welcome to the Program

Thank you for your interest in the Gifted Mentorship Program. Being a mentor takes time and energy, and without your support this program would not exist. Students who participate in the program benefit in multiple ways: They develop skills that go beyond their high school curriculum and gain experience in a potential career field. Additionally, students improve their confidence, personal empowerment, self-knowledge and make clearer connections between work and school. Many students report increased motivation to achieve, a matured sense of responsibility and a better understanding of their true potential. Most students leave their mentorship feeling inspired by their mentor. The mentor also benefits from the experience; previous mentors have experienced a rejuvenated spirit, clarified goals, new friendships, changed perspective of today's youth, and satisfaction as a role model for their profession.

Every mentorship is unique, and not all situations or circumstances can be addressed in a single document. Feel free to contact the Mentorship Coordinator with any questions or concerns.

Program Overview

The Anchorage School District's Gifted Mentorship Program has provided services to gifted students for over 20 years. All ASD secondary schools are served by this program in order to meet the advanced needs of gifted students that are not provided for in the regular school curriculum. Students who are juniors or seniors may apply to this program, and acceptance is based on the following:

- Minimum 92nd percentile on a national standardized test
- Excellent teacher recommendations
- High GPA with advanced coursework
- Interest, motivation and commitment by the student

Mentor Responsibilities

The mentorship officially begins with a placement conference. This meeting includes the mentor, student, parent, and Mentorship Coordinator. At this meeting, an outline of goals, activities and project ideas will be discussed. The student and mentor will develop a schedule for the mentorship. Required paperwork will be signed, and important topics such as confidentiality and liability will be discussed. Placement conferences typically take place after school hours at the mentor's place of business and are usually about 30 minutes.

Student Requirements

The student must meet the schedule and goals determined at the placement conference. They must also complete several assignments. Students are responsible for all assignments, tracking their hours and for communicating with their mentor. Students must:

- Complete 45-60 hours, as directed by their mentor.
- Write a journal documenting all hours.
- Complete and write up 3 interviews with professionals in the field.
- Get a picture with their mentor; creativity is encouraged.
- Review an article from a professional journal related to the field.
- Meet with the Mentorship Coordinator every two weeks.
- Complete and present a final project.

All work is submitted to the Mentorship Coordinator for review and comments. All grading of assignments is done by the Mentorship Coordinator. Students should ask their mentor for help in setting up interviews, completing their final project and finding an appropriate article to review.

Final Project Guidelines

The mentorship concludes with a final project presentation. The final project should reflect the student's advanced learning during the mentorship. Students are encouraged to begin thinking about their final projects as the mentorship begins and should share their ideas with the mentorship coordinator as well. The student should be asking for your input and advice for this final project. You will be invited to attend the presentation, which can be given at the mentorship site, at the student's school in a relevant class or at another appropriate location.

Here are the guidelines that are shared with students to prepare them for presenting their final project

- The project should display advanced learning in the field.
- The project is unique, reflecting the experience of the student.
- The presentation of the project should be to a group (including the mentor, mentorship coordinator, and parent) at the mentorship site, school or other location.
- The presentation of the project should be designed as a learning experience for the audience or be designed as a project that is useful to the mentor.

Suggestions for Mentors

- Create a working timeline of activities and projects. These activities can include observing professionals, job shadowing, interviewing, researching, reviewing professional materials, attending meetings and conferences, producing materials, assisting with projects and working on mentorship required assignments.
- Develop a system of communication with students. Do you want them to call, text and/or e-mail?
- Provide an alternate contact person who can answer questions or assist the student if you are unable to meet as scheduled.
- Encourage your mentorship student to ask questions and provide feedback to you on his or her understanding and interests. Let the student know when it is appropriate to talk to you or ask questions.
- Students appreciate presentations on specific topics which are helpful to the mentorship; they are thrilled to be invited to seminars, conferences or lunch meetings.
- These students benefit from experiencing your career and from learning about your experiences and preparation for a career in this field. Your motivation, education, job application process, career rewards and challenges are greatly valued and remembered when you share them with students.

Final Evaluation

Upon completion of the mentorship, you will be asked to evaluate the students and the program via a survey. Your feedback regarding both the student and the program are highly valued. Any suggestions you make to improve the program or student selection process will also be taken into consideration and are kept confidential.

Thank you again for your interest, feel free to contact the Mentorship Coordinator at any time with any questions, comments or concerns.

FAQs

How much time does a mentor spend with a student? Students must document a minimum of 45 hours for a mentorship; however, this does not mean all of the time is with their mentor. Students can document hours they spend reading or studying topics suggested by the mentor or time spent with other colleagues.

How much time is given to complete the mentorship? Students can begin in September and must finish by April 1st. Most mentorships take place over a three-month window; however, it is entirely up to the mentor to schedule time at their convenience.

How do I get matched with a student? When a student is accepted to the program, the Mentorship Coordinator will get in touch with you. The Mentorship Coordinator reviews all applications and interviews all students.

When and how often will the student be with the mentor? The student is expected to spend 3-4 hours a week at their mentorship site; however, the amount of hours a week is based on the mentor's availability and can be flexible.

Is the mentor liable for the student when at the mentorship site? No, students and parents sign an ASD liability waiver as part of their paperwork; you may request a copy of this or have the student sign any paperwork you or your organization require.

How do I protect confidential information? The student and parent sign a confidentiality agreement at the placement conference. You may request a copy of this and may ask the student to sign a confidentiality statement from your organization. You may also ask students to step out of a meeting or other situation in which you feel they should not be present.

What kind of training does the student receive before starting the mentorship? Students must attend a mandatory training that covers the requirements for the program and the expectations for communication and behavior in their mentorship.

My company requires additional training/requirements before the student can be at the site. Can I ask the student to comply? Absolutely! Students will complete any training required by the mentor. This can also be discussed at the placement conference.

What do I do if the student does not show up? Please contact the Mentorship Coordinator as soon as possible. You should also contact the student directly. Students are expected to communicate with their mentor and to be punctual. Any time a student does not meet these expectations, please contact the coordinator.

What if the student is not meeting my expectations? Please contact the Mentorship Coordinator as soon as possible. It may also be a good idea to have a direct conversation with the student as a reminder of the expectations.

What if I go on vacation and can't meet with my student for a while? This is totally fine. The program is flexible, and the student should be able to work around your schedule. The student can also spend time with other colleagues at your discretion.

Can I allow the student to work with other professionals in my office? Yes, this is encouraged. The more the student can see and do, the better experience for all involved.

May I take the student on a field trip (i.e. job inspection, etc.)? Yes, students are encouraged to take advantage of any opportunity to do and see more in their field of interest.

Am I responsible for grading the student? No, the Mentorship Coordinator does all of the grading of assignments and the final project. You will be asked for feedback to evaluate the student at the end of the mentorship.

Will I be paid for being a mentor? There is no pay for being a mentor; however, many mentors find that working with a student is very rewarding. You will be invited to a catered reception at the end of the mentorship, receive a small gift of thanks and will be recognized for your time.