

# OVERVIEW OF MENTORING PROGRAMS

## 1. The Components of a High Quality Mentoring Experience

Mentoring is a crucial component of the P-TECH 9-14 model. Through mentoring, industry professionals are invited into the school community. They offer students with meaningful academic, workplace learning and social/emotional support. Likewise, mentoring gives students with an adult role model and a guide who works in the field they are studying. Mentors can also provide emotional support, encouragement, and meaningful feedback on coursework.

Effective mentoring programs provide consistent contact with the mentors, clear expectations and guidelines for both mentors and students, and structures within which mentors and students can interact. These can include field trips, outings, and guided discussions. High-quality programs include mentors who can speak to and address challenges in students' lives, can relate to students, and understand the role of a mentor. Mentors and students need to meet on a regular basis, working together on projects, coursework, or homework. Some mentor relationships will continue for several years, while others may last just a year or for the duration of an internship.

Schools should select a diverse group of mentors and consider making gender-based matches, if possible. Schools may consider inviting other employers to provide enough mentors to serve all students as well as give students exposure to a range of companies. Quality mentoring programs also exhibit a commitment to ongoing mentor training and development, as well as procedures for monitoring and evaluating the program.

## 2. Mentoring's link to other components of the school

The mentor's primary role is to provide insight into the world of work and to engage the students in an ongoing dialogue about the skills needed for success in the 21st century workplace. Mentors can discuss practical questions and issues related to careers in their specific industry. In situations where students are struggling with academics, personal issues and/or attendance, mentors can provide much needed non-academic social/emotional support to help students stay engaged in school. The main role of mentors is to:

- Develop a strong, trusting positive relationship that spans school, work and personal domains;
- Assist students in developing professional networks;
- Help students in developing greater initiative, increased independence, and self-reliance;
- Help students identify and resolve potential obstacles;
- Support students as they prepare for internships; and
- Provide feedback and advice during internship experiences.



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School staff and Industry Liaisons should work with teachers to develop mentoring activities that align with the school’s programming. A great place to start is the Workplace Learning curriculum. Mentors can help students understand key workplace competencies, such as leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, communication, and ethics. Mentors can also play a role in project-based learning in academic subjects that focus on an industry issue or question. It may be helpful to provide some form of course credit so that students are accountable for the discussions that they have with their mentors.

In Workplace Learning classes, students learn about issues in the workplace such as time-management, coping with stress, managing conflicts with co-workers, and practicing professional etiquette. Employer mentors provide real-world examples of how a professional confronts and deals with these issues. Students also practice peer mentoring, in which mentoring activities are often structured around students supporting each other in academic courses.

As students progress through the six-year P-TECH 9-14 school program, their relationships with their mentors will likely evolve and grow. In the early years the mentoring is more general with a mentor building the foundation of the relationship through a presence at the school and involvement in Workplace Learning projects. As students progress through the school program, their relationships with their mentor will grow and become more clearly aligned to students’ particular needs and interests. This is often associated with students’ internships and apprenticeships.

## OUTCOMES BY YEAR:

<b>YEAR 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exposure to industry employees as mentors and show strong industry presence at schools</li> </ul>
<b>YEAR 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mentors support workplace learning projects</li> </ul>
<b>YEAR 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mentors offer tailored college and career guidance and serve as project managers to virtual enterprise students; In the summer, mentors support internship program</li> </ul>
<b>YEAR 4-6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mentors support job shadowing and apprenticeships; Mentors continue to offer college and career guidance as students approach graduation</li> </ul>

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### 3. School Staff Work Closely with Mentors

It is important that the mentorship program is integrated into the school community. School staff, including guidance counselors and teachers, should interact with mentors on a regular basis on field trips and in supporting group mentoring activities at the schools. In particular, teachers need to be willing to:

- Review weekly participation reports and follow-up with students as needed
- Attend all Events
- Introduce online prompts as a lesson plan
- Provide feedback on curriculum.

The school leadership should to have a real and meaningful investment in mentoring. It is important that they believe it is an integral component to the school and P-TECH 9-14 model. This includes ensuring that there is time within the schedule for mentoring, identifying point people to work on the mentoring program (which includes hiring a Workplace Learning Coordinator), and taking time to network in the effort to attract more industry partners and mentors to the program.

### 4. Different mentoring models

A P-TECH 9-14 school may choose to use a variety of different mentoring models. By using a combination of models it provides different opportunities for the student and gives mentors options to chose from based on the time they have to commit. Some of the different models include:

- Traditional mentoring (one adult to one young adult)
- Small group mentoring (one adult to as many as four young people)
- Team mentoring (several adults working with small groups of young people, in which the adult-to-youth ratio is not greater than 1:4)
- Large group mentoring (one or two adults to 7-10 students)
- Peer mentoring (caring youth mentoring other youth)
- E-mentoring (mentoring via email and the Internet).

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## Three Sample Tiers for Mentors:

<b>Tier 1</b> Individual Mentor: Online and face-to-face	<b>Tier 2</b> Classroom Mentor: Classroom/ Events only	<b>Tier 3:</b> Internship Mentor Online and face-to-face
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend kick-off event</li> <li>Mentor 1-3 students</li> <li>Attend 2 other events</li> <li>Complete weekly online activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend kick-off event</li> <li>Attend 5 other events (this could include project days, class speakers, exhibit days, and/or site visits)</li> <li>This could also include class Skype sessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Serve as worksite coaches for students during their internship experience</li> <li>Participate in internship fairs, mock interviews, and other readiness workshops in the Spring semester</li> </ul>

## 5. In-Person Mentoring v. Technology-Enabled Mentoring

In-person opportunities help build powerful relationships between mentors and students. The benefits of in-person mentoring include helping students define individual goals and find ways to achieve them, exposing students to new experiences, encouraging positive choices, promoting self-esteem, supporting academic achievement, and introducing the students to new ideas. In-person mentoring also gives students the opportunity to talk and think through a problem at home or school. It also helps with relationship building between the mentor and the mentee. The primary challenge of in-person mentoring is scheduling, as most working professionals are not available for mentoring activities during the school day. In addition, it requires close supervision to guarantee that appropriate boundaries and safety are maintained. Schools should have at least one staff person assigned to support in-person group mentoring activities, and in programs where one-to-one mentoring activities take place, mentors must be carefully screened.

Industry professionals are busy, so online tools can provide a meaningful and convenient way for professionals to contribute their time and talents in schools. E-mentoring takes place via the Internet and allows mentors and mentees to develop a relationship by exchanging messages online. It makes mentoring available to mentors and young people who otherwise might not be able to meet easily because of time or travel constraints. It can help young people learn more about high-tech communications and improve their writing skills, and offers young people the chance to develop a relationship with one or more adults. The challenges of e-mentoring include technology availability and the lack of training on how to use the technology. In the same way that structure has to be considered for in-person mentoring, it also is vital to a well-run online mentoring program. Both the mentor and mentee need to be invested in weekly communication, and it is helpful if this structure is provided for the student, at least in the beginning of the program.

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The most beneficial scenario would be to have a mentoring program that has a combination of both in-person and online mentoring. For example, for those partnerships focusing on online mentoring, the school might want to host two mandatory, face-to-face opportunities for mentors and students: one at the beginning and one at the end of the school year. Speaking opportunities, worksite visits, and project days also give mentors opportunities to meet their students in person. Likewise, if a program is focused on in-person mentoring, the instructor for the Workplace Learning class could embed time within the curriculum for students to correspond at least once a week with their mentors via an online platform. It is helpful to create an incentive system that empowers students to login on their own or in class on a weekly basis. By giving students a designated time to converse with their mentors, outside of when they meet in-person, they have the opportunity to further the relationship and have more accessibility to their mentor as well as learn how to manage their time and professional correspondence.

## 6. Mentoring Resources

Several organizations have developed resources that can help support an effective mentoring program.

### a. icouldbe

- Overview: “The mission of icouldbe is to provide at-risk middle and high school students with an online community of professional mentors, empowering teens to stay in school, plan for future careers, and achieve in life. Icouldbe uses technology to re-imagine the power of mentoring by bringing students and mentors together in a safe, evidence-based virtual e-mentoring community.”
- Curriculum: [http://www.icouldbe.org/standard/public/pg\\_curr\\_map.asp](http://www.icouldbe.org/standard/public/pg_curr_map.asp)

### b. Virtual Enterprise

- Overview: Virtual Enterprises (VE) is a simulated business that is set up and run by students with the guidance of a teacher/facilitator and a business partner. This program allows students to experience all facets of being an employee in a firm in an actual business environment. Students are involved in every aspect of a running a business. This simulation enables students to understand how employees, workgroup teams, and departments interact with each other and work together for the goal of the company. In addition, the simulation conveys the expectations of the workplace. With communication links to nearly 3,000 VE firms around the world, the program exposes students to different cultures, business practices and currencies and gives students a broader international perspective. By combining a rigorous curriculum with hands-on application of many academic skills, VE aims to prepare students for both careers and college.”<sup>1</sup>
- Curriculum: <http://schools.nyc.gov/ve/aneu/newyork/menu/curpage/2button/2button.htm>



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### c. Virtual Enterprise

- Overview: The iMentor model is designed to work in collaboration with schools to enable mentors to effectively advance a young person’s ambitions for college and life. The model is a blended model in that it offers a direct-service program with in-person sessions as well as an online portion that allows for communication and additional opportunities for implementing the curriculum. iMentor assists public high schools that face critical challenges preparing students for college by providing every student in the school with a mentor. This community of mentors is integrated with existing supports in a school to create a college-going culture. Students are matched one-to-one with same-gender, college-educated mentors for three to four years. Once matched, mentors and mentees exchange weekly emails and meet once a month in person. iMentor utilizes technology to enhance personal relationships. Their online mentoring platform facilitates mentor-mentee engagement through a secure email system, curriculum guidance and resources, and meeting scheduling. It also allows staff to implement an effective program with a pair matching algorithm, case management tools, and real-time program evaluation tools.<sup>2</sup>
- Curriculum: <http://www.imentor.org/college-ready-program>

For more information about the P-TECH 9-14 model, please visit [ptech.org](http://ptech.org)