Introduction

Mentoring can have a tremendous impact on the life of a young person both now and in the future. eMentors offers students the chance to develop a relationship with a caring adult role model. eMentors helps students increase academic motivation, improve their reading and writing skills, provide pathways to career awareness, and promote social competence and self-confidence.

Educators play a crucial role in planning for and facilitating the program. Thank you for your participation!

Our Goals

Through eMentors, we aim for students to:

- **Gain a better understanding of the skills needed for a career in the professional world.**
- **Broaden their knowledge of career options.**
- **Improve their communication skills such as writing and interpersonal skills.**

Table of Contents

All material in this book is copyrighted by BestPrep.

BestPrep's eMentors Program
7100 Northland Circle N., Suite 120
Brooklyn Park, MN 55428

www.bestprep.org
763-398-0900
info@bestprep.org

Our Model

BestPrep connects a classroom with a company. A dedicated BestPrep Coordinator is assigned to oversee the **"connection"** in conjunction with the educator and Company Coordinator.

Educators, Company Coordinators and BestPrep Coordinators plan the details of the connection, including the educator's seven **Guiding Question** choices and scheduling 2 virtual connection activities

Educators introduce the program. Students begin sending their weekly messages under the supervision of the educator.

Mentors and students participate in 2 virtual activities. 1 activity focuses on building the mentor-student relationship and 1 activity focuses on broadening students' understanding of future career opportunities.

Students and mentors continue writing until the program concludes.

Expectations of Teachers

The success of eMentors depends on efficient communication and collaboration between educators and the BestPrep Coordinator. eMentors typically runs for eight weeks. Therefore, a breakdown in communication can cause students to miss significant portions of the program. If you have a preferred method or time for communicating, please tell your BestPrep Coordinator.

Always keep your BestPrep Coordinator informed about any of the following:

- Student adds/drops
- Student absences or schedule conflicts on the pre-determined writing day
- Students missing mentor messages
- Program boundary violations

Using the Online Portal

Mentors and students will use an online message portal to communicate with each other. Students will receive a link and then type a message to their mentor in the portal text box. All messages are screened automatically for boundary violations.

Educators will receive a spreadsheet each week from their BestPrep Coordinator that details which students have not written their messages. Please review the spreadsheet and check in with students who haven't sent messages. If a student does not write for more than two consecutive weeks, we may consider removing them from the program.

Program Boundaries

eMentors is a school-based program. Please consider the following as boundary violations:

- A request to borrow something
- An invitation to a social outing
- Sharing a personal email
- Sharing phone numbers or addresses

- A request to join social media
- A request for contact outside the program parameters
- Rude, vulgar, or disrespectful statements

Parent Permission & Confidentiality

Using a parent permission slip to participate in eMentors is optional. Two sample parent permission slips are included in the back of this booklet. Please let your BestPrep Coordinator know right away if a student does not have permission to participate in the program.

BestPrep will not share student information, apart from name, except at the request of the educator. For example, you may ask us to notify a mentor if a student is chronically absent or their first language is not English.

Educator Resources

BestPrep provides a number of resources for educators to use throughout the program. Below is a sample of what is available upon request.

- An interactive **program overview** powerpoint for students which introduces the program and explains why they should take advantage of it.

- A printable **Student Guide** which lays out the student's role and expectations for participation.

- A **Message Etiquette handout** with an example of a good and bad message plus analysis and explanation.

Sending Messages

BestPrep will match students and mentors according to gender before the connection begins. Educators will receive a copy of the student/mentor match list. This document includes a section for scoring messages (see page 6).

Educators should set aside time on a given day of the week for students to write their online messages in class. This should be the same day (e.g. Wednesday) every week.

Please note that mentors are unable to send a message to their student unless the student sends a message first. Please update your BestPrep Coordinator of any unresponsive mentors.
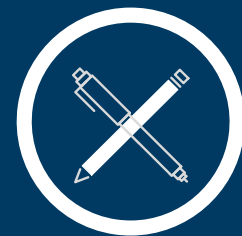
Guiding Question Prompts

BestPrep has prepared more than a hundred weekly prompts across thirteen distinct topic areas. Each one includes multiple points of reflection and questions for mentors and students. We call these prompts Guiding Questions. Educators will receive the complete bank of Guiding Question choices prior to the program start. You will choose seven Guiding Questions for students to engage with over the course of the program. You may also choose to write your own.

Top Tips
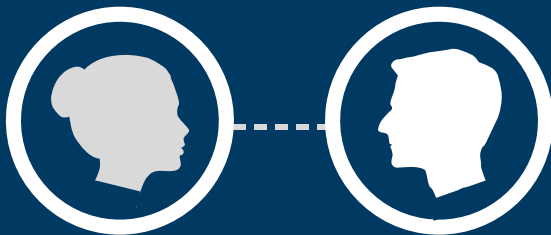
Students are not limited to the questions and topics of the Guiding Questions. Encourage your students to ask their mentor about their personal lives, and to share as much as they are comfortable with in return. There should be a natural flow of conversation from week to week.

Incorporate the Guiding Question prompts into your classroom curriculum as much as possible. Hold discussions on what mentors wrote and how it relates to what students are working on in class.

Message Content

We strongly encourage educators to set aside time to go over proper online messaging etiquette and conventions. Below is a summary of the components we believe make for a strong student message.

Introduction: Hello/Dear _____,
Paragraph One: Open with a casual, conversational statement, then answer any questions asked in a previous message. Follow up with a question of their own.

Paragraph Two: Discuss the Guiding Question prompt in detail. Talk about how the prompt relates to their life and their experiences in school or work.

Paragraph Three: Ask mentors about their job and how the Guiding Question prompt relates to their daily task.

Closing: Sincerely/Thank you,

Hello John,

How are you? In response to your question last week, I am involved in student council and varsity volleyball. Apart from that, I like to watch movies and hang out with my friends. What do you do in your spare time?

I was curious if you went to college after high school and, if so, which one did you attend? I'm interested in Business Management. I was hoping you could give me some ideas about internships or jobs I could do that would help improve my college application.

How does what you do now relate to your education? You mentioned you work with numbers a lot. Did you you take many math classes?

Sincerely,
Sariya

Message Tracking & Scoring

Educators should strive for as close to full participation each week as possible. BestPrep strongly recommends that educators make eMentors a graded assignment to incentivize higher participation. BestPrep provides educators with a spreadsheet that tracks which students have responded and displays the content of each message. Educators will also receive an individualized link to the portal for all of their students so they can see message exchanges in real time. Students will also get a copy of each message they send in their email inbox.

Sample Rubric

Below is a sample rubric for evaluating student messages.

	4 Points	3 Points	2 Points	1 Points	0
Message Formatting	The message is written in a professional manner and follows a business letter format.	The message is mostly written in a professional manner and mostly follows a business letter format.	The message is somewhat written in a professional manner and somewhat follows a business letter format.	The message is not professional and does not follow a business letter format.	No msg sent
Spelling & Grammar	The message contains proper spelling & grammar.	The message contains good spelling and grammar with 1-2 mistakes.	The message contains good spelling and grammar with 3-4 mistakes.	The message contains good spelling and grammar with 5+ mistakes.	No msg sent
Guiding Questions	The message addresses all parts of the week's Guiding Question prompt.	The message addresses most of the week's Guiding Question prompt.	The message addresses some of the week's Guiding Question prompt.	The message does not address the Guiding Question prompt.	No msg sent
Message Length & Punctuality	The message is written on time and is the required length (at least 3 paragraphs)	The message is written on time and is almost the required length (2 paragraphs)	The message is written late and is almost the required length (2 paragraphs)	The message is written late and is much shorter than the required length (1 paragraph)	No msg sent

Top Tips

Pre-Connection

- Determine which two virtual activities you would like your students to participate in. The BestPrep Coordinator will reach out to the company to make sure the activities are feasible for the mentors as well.

- Introduce the program to students prior to their first time sending a message, and consider having students research the company.

During the Connection

- If a student is struggling or short on time, it's always better to send a short message than no message at all. Please note that mentors are unable to send a message to their student unless the student sends a message first.

- Ask students to share more about their eMentors experience with the rest of the class. This will allow students to hear about a variety of careers and backgrounds.

Program Checklist

- ☐ Connect with your BestPrep Coordinator.
- ☐ Share class size, title, demographics, etc.
- ☐ Determine 7 Guiding Question topics and 2 virtual connection activities.
- ☐ If using, distribute and collect permission slips.
- ☐ Introduce the program using the Student Presentation powerpoint.
- ☐ Distribute and discuss the eMentors Student Guide.
- ☐ Provide students with a copy of the Guiding Questions.
- ☐ Send first message in the portal.

- ☐ Review weekly message exchanges to keep track of which students are completing the assignment.
- ☐ Maintain regular communication with the BestPrep Coordinator about missing messages, student adds & drops.
- ☐ Make sure the 2 virtual activities are planned and completed.
- ☐ Make sure students complete the post-program survey.
- ☐ Take the post-program teacher survey.