

Volunteer Tutoring Programs in SBISD: A Best Practices Overview

Tutor

A caring volunteer who strategically works with a student or group of students on a regular basis to enhance academic skills and performance

Communication

- School communicates with tutors regularly about school and classroom events, program information, resources and materials, tips and strategies
- Tutors communicate with school to confirm student attendance prior to visit
- Teacher and tutor communicate regularly to share feedback regarding student's needs and progress
- School provides networking opportunities for tutors to share with each other

Evaluation

- Annual survey of tutors, educators, parents, and students to obtain feedback regarding program effectiveness
- Annual summary of measurable results, both qualitative and quantitative (academic indicators, survey results, anecdotal evidence) reviewed for continual program improvement

Volunteers

- Annually register and are cleared through SBISD Online Volunteer Registration system
- Match expertise to student need
- Understand expected time commitment, goals for the program and needs of individual student
- Must feel confident that they can do what is expected of them
- Receive initial and follow up training
- Feel valued, needed and supported by school personnel
- Have a dedicated campus location for tutor activities
- Have access to high quality instructional materials to effectively support the student
- Maintain student confidentiality
- Treat campus personnel with respect and understanding

Materials

- Content-area materials, and/or classroom materials to support tutoring activities are readily accessible and tutor is trained in strategies for their use
- Materials are coordinated and aligned with classroom instruction
- Are well-maintained in organized, orderly system

Students

- Targeted students are those "on the brink of success"
- Targeted based on strategic campus identification process or student self-referral
- Understand goals for their time spent with tutor
- Are willing to work with a tutor
- Appreciate their tutors and treat them courteously
- Are appreciated by their teacher(s) for participating in tutor program
- Progress is assessed regularly

Principals

- Provide support, vision and clearly-articulated goals for program
- Value and understand benefits of tutors in supporting teachers and students
- Provide training opportunities for teachers in effective ways in which to utilize volunteer tutors to enhance student success
- Regularly include volunteer programs on agenda for CIT

Teachers

- Value and understand benefits of tutor support
- Integrate tutors into their instructional/intervention plan
- Communicate regularly with tutor about student needs, classroom information
- Assure materials are ready for tutors upon their arrival for tutoring session
- Provide feedback to tutors, coordinators and principal
- Have appropriate expectations for tutors

Training

- Provides tutors with variety of instructional and support strategies that are aligned and coordinated with current SBISD best practices and beliefs
- Is intentional and ongoing
- Includes information about content area as well as social and emotional child development, learning styles and cultural backgrounds
- Includes strategies for effective tutoring such as reinforcing correct responses and properly correcting inaccurate responses
- Includes strategies for guiding student behavior and 40 Developmental Assets
- Includes strategies for building positive trusting relationships between students and tutors
- Includes strategies for accessing and utilizing materials
- Includes overview of logistics of program
- Is provided for all staff working with or interfacing with tutors

Tutoring Sessions

- Planned, structured sessions are matched to student attention span and utilize a variety of methods and activities that support SBISD instructional strategies
- Are of adequate frequency and duration to be effective
- Occur in appropriate, dedicated campus space
- Allow opportunities for tutors and students to form relationships that promote student learning and volunteer satisfaction
- Scheduled to minimize absence from class during instructional time

Logistics

- Coordinator for Tutoring Program (best if there are both a campus coordinator and a tutor/volunteer coordinator)
- Dedicated space for tutoring
- Coordinated scheduling for tutoring to minimize loss of classroom instructional time
- Includes communication strategy for student attendance
- Provides email or other communication opportunity for tutors to communicate regularly with teacher
- Includes strategy for feedback and tutor material dissemination. Could be via email or folder for each child/tutor with:
 - (1) work to be accomplished in session
 - (2) calendar
 - (3) two-way opportunity for feedback

Coordinator

- Believes in and communicates value of tutor program
- Assures ongoing, strategic communication between all stakeholders
- Coordinates and monitors scheduling of volunteers
- Coordinates training of tutors
- Supports campus, program and/or district level tutor recruitment efforts
- Gathers, analyzes and reports data regarding program
- Receives support from SBISD Community Relations Staff

Parents

- Give active consent for child to participate in tutoring program
- Give permission for school to provide adequate information about their child's grades and/or other feedback to help volunteer gauge student progress as partner in education
- Receive feedback about tutor's impact on student's progress

Recognition

- Appreciation of tutors is intentional and ongoing and begins on day one
- Begins in the front office where volunteers are greeted with a welcoming smile and attitude
- Does not have to be formal or costly
- Enables tutors to feel supported, valued and appreciated
- Comes from district, principal, teachers, coordinators, parents and students
- Includes year-end event
- Is given to teachers and student participants as well

Spring Branch ISD Overarching Beliefs about Tutoring

Adopted by the SBISD Volunteer Advisory Board
October 2006

Students

- ★ **Academic Tutoring**—The primary mission is direct academic support for students.
- ★ **Targeted Students**—Students targeted are those “on the brink of success.” Students whose extensive needs are beyond what a tutor can provide in terms of time, expertise or resources may be better served by other academic intervention strategies.
- ★ **Identification**—Students should be given the opportunity to “self-select” for tutor program participation. Alternatively, students should be selected based on a strategic campus identification process. Success, in large part, is due to a student’s readiness and willingness to be part of a tutoring program.
- ★ **Matching**—Students should be matched with volunteers who are well-prepared to assist the student in his/her area of critical need.

Tutors

- ★ **Orientation**—Prospective tutors must be provided with a realistic set of expectations and goals, timeframe and logistical plan for volunteerism.
- ★ **Training**—Tutors must receive comprehensive initial and ongoing training.
- ★ **Cadre Model**—Maximized opportunities for program success result when a cadre of tutors is recruited from a single corporate or community partner. This strategy enables cohesive program implementation, communication and synergy. Benefits to tutors include increased sense of community, increased camaraderie, and resource support. Where possible, a Tutor Coordinator serves as the counterpart to the Campus Coordinator to provide leadership for the volunteer tutor group.

Campus

- ★ **Program Coordinators**—*Coordination of services is key.* The campus must designate a staff member to serve as the Tutor Program Coordinator. The coordinator serves as a liaison to the tutors, teachers and campus leader to coordinate program implementation, communication and planning.
- ★ **One Size Does Not Fit All**—No single model works for all schools and/or grade levels; however, all models are undergirded by best practices and should align with campus and district intervention model. Programs should be based on a strategic plan with clearly-defined goals for whom will be served, what content area or academic focus will be supported and anticipated outcomes. Programs should be monitored and evaluated annually. Campus leaders must value the tutor program.
- ★ **Capacity Building**—Staff should be cross-trained and should communicate about tutor programs to assure program sustainability.
- ★ **Communication**—Regular, frequent communication between tutors, coordinators, teachers, administrators and the Community Relations office assures successful program implementation. Campus may set up designated email address and/or folder system for tutor communication.
- ★ **Recognition and Support**—Campus staff and students should recognize, support and value the volunteer efforts of tutors in both formal and informal ways.
- ★ **Measurable Objectives**—Campus staff should work together to develop measurable objectives for students, tutors and campus staff so that qualitative and quantitative data may be collected to measure impact of the program on all stakeholders.

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Making Connections

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