

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
DENTON ISD and BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS LONE STAR**

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This Memorandum of Understanding serves as an agreement between Big Brothers Big Sisters Lone Star (referred to as BBBS) and the Denton Independent School District (referred to as Denton ISD).

BBBS will continue to combine efforts with Denton ISD in order to serve and to support at-risk youth more effectively, to help them stay in school and to progress positively from grade level to grade level. With the collaboration and support of Denton ISD, BBBS will provide (in addition to our standard Community Based program) School Based Mentoring programs to Denton ISD elementary, middle and high school students as school priorities are identified and volunteer participation permits.

This agreement will be valid for a period of three years, allowing for an annual review as necessary. The following is a detailed description of Big Brothers Big Sisters' mentoring programs, as well as a listing of each party's related roles and responsibilities.

BBBS PROGRAMS

At the center of all of Big Brothers Big Sisters' mentoring programs are one-to-one relationships. In the traditional program, each mentor (a "Big Brother" or "Big Sister") spends time with his/her mentee (a "Little Brother" or "Little Sister") each week—at least twice each month. BBBS has developed an array of program options (briefly described below) to best engage volunteer mentors and the students who need them.

Littles ("Little Brother" and "Little Sister") in the traditional Community-Based and School/Site-Based mentoring programs are typically ages 7 to 14 at enrollment, though 6 year olds may be considered (especially if an older sibling is being matched), and high school students are targeted as "Littles" in some partnerships. Once matched, Bigs (a "Big Brother" or "Big Sister") and Littles are encouraged to remain together until the Little graduates from high school or turns 18 (whichever is last). However, if the match wishes to remain in the BBBS program, and if the young adult "Little" is pursuing his/her educational goals, a match may stay "active" through age 21.

Community-Based (CB) Mentoring – The "classic" mentoring model, where the volunteer Big goes to the child's home and takes the child into the community (to libraries, sporting or cultural events, the mall, the park, etc.) in order to spend time together. In a CB program, the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) joins the match relationship—participating in the enrollment interview and monthly match support contacts.

Most volunteers serve as a Community-Based "Big" individually, however our "Big Couple" and "Big Family" expand the experience by involving the volunteer's spouse/partner and/or own children as active participants in the match. Big Couples and Big Families typically are matched with Little Brothers ages 11 and younger.

Though some Denton ISD students are served through BBBS' "Community-Based" program, these matches are handled entirely between Big Brothers Big Sisters and the children's legal guardian.

School/Site-Based (SB) Mentoring – Similar to the Community-Based program, except that all contact occurs during the school day at the Little's school—with school personnel consent and support. Mentors often eat lunch with their mentee or the match (Big and Little) will "hang out" in the school's library, gym, computer lab or other designated space. A "School-Based" program happens at a school. A "Site-Based" program happens at a designated and supervised non-school location, such as at a Boys and Girls Club site, a city library, etc.

While parental involvement in a School/Site-Based match is not as intense as in a Community Based match (not requiring a parent interview, for example), a parent/guardian must give signed, written consent for their child to participate in the program, and participation in match support contacts at least three times a year is required.

School-Based matches may become "School Plus" matches if desired—giving the match permission to have additional contacts (once or twice a month) outside of the school setting. (Away-from-school contact always starts and ends at the child's home. A Big is never to take his/her Little from the school/site location.) For a School Plus match to happen, the Little's parent/guardian must be interviewed and agree to participate in monthly match support contacts.

- **High School Bigs (HSB)** – A "School-Based" program involving high school students, ages 16 and older, to serve as mentors (Teen Bigs). Typically HSB programs match students from high school classes (such as AVID or PAL) with 2nd-5th graders at a neighboring elementary school. BBBS staff actively provide additional supervision and support to these programs, as both the Littles and Teen Bigs are viewed as beneficiaries of the experience.
- **"Big Hope"** – As our faith-based partnership, "Big Hope" connects a church/congregation to a local elementary school via a School Based mentoring program. Church leadership provides mentor recruitment and school/volunteer support, while BBBS staff provide professional volunteer and child enrollment and match support services.
- **"Beyond School Walls" (BSW)** – This initiative is a site-based mentoring program in reverse, as BBBS brings groups of students to a partner's workplace, allowing each mentor/mentee match to spend time together in the corporate (or similar) setting. BSW programs can meet during the day (often over lunch) or immediately after school.
- **"Generations"** – Like with BSW, "Generations" brings groups of students from their elementary school to a local retirement center, allowing students to be mentored by residents there. BBBS staff provide on-site supervision and support, as well as transportation from and back to the students' school

Within each of these mentoring programs, each student and mentor has a professional staff member (called a Match Support Specialist) that performs three functions:

- Supervision of the match relationship, including providing activities and ongoing training for the mentors.
- Proactive resource linkage to address the student's/family's needs.
- Function as a liaison between BBBS and school staff at their assigned school locations.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In order for each mentoring partnership to work efficiently and effectively, the roles and responsibilities for each party must be defined.

Under this agreement for all School Based programs:

BBBS WILL:

- Work in a partnership with Denton ISD to recruit volunteers for the program.
- Screen volunteers who have completed the following: application including three references, employment history, residence history, criminal background check (to be completed by the Denton ISD), and in-person interview. Volunteers will be accepted into the mentoring program in accordance with Big Brothers Big Sisters of America's Standards of Practice and Service Delivery expectations.
- Coordinate with the Denton ISD the completion of the district's annual application including the Criminal Background Check—insuring that an approved Criminal Background Check is received before matching a volunteer with a Denton ISD student.
- Maintain volunteer information according to the terms of the verified BBBS Confidentiality Agreement that each volunteer signs.
- Adhere to all federal, state and local laws concerning student confidentiality, the administration of surveys, and nondiscrimination.
- Train volunteers to work with at-risk youth, and advise them of Denton ISD policies and procedures for volunteers in the schools as well as guidelines for satisfactory progress at the student's grade level.
- With the cooperation of the Denton ISD Chief Learning Officer, provide orientation and materials on the BBBS mentoring program to assigned school liaisons at each Denton ISD school.
- Inform school staff about the requirements of the program and maintain ongoing contact with the school liaison.
- Interview and provide program orientation to the student after obtaining parental consent using the BBBS Parent Permission Form, which shall be provided to Denton ISD. Students will be interviewed at the school. Information will be kept confidential according to FERPA guidelines and district policy.
- Collaborate with school liaison to make appropriate social service referrals for families enrolled in the program.
- Strategically match students and mentors using information obtained from the volunteer and student, paying close attention to the strengths and interests of the mentor to align with the student's needs and development.
- Introduce the student, mentor and Match Support Specialist at the school for school-based mentoring, reviewing the rules of the program. BBBS will inform the

school liaison of the new match and confirm procedures for obtaining information on the student's school progress.

- BBBS will inform in writing by letter or email to parent/guardian when their student is matched to a mentor, inviting the parent to become engaged in and supportive of the match relationship. BBBS will inform the school liaison of matches made, as well as the contact information for the Big Brother or Big Sister.
- Develop match goals for each student based on information obtained from the referral form, guiding the mentor in how to best help the student achieve his/her goals.
- Maintain monthly contact with the mentor and student. Maintain at least quarterly contact with the school liaison and, when possible, the parent.
- Make available to appropriate matches the School Plus program, making possible (with additional screening, parental involvement and consent, and match support services) outside-of-school contact between mentor and student.
- Conduct yearly evaluations with the mentor, student, parent (when possible) and school liaison to measure the progress of the student and the mentoring relationship. This would require obtaining survey information from school personnel, grade reports, standardized test scores, attendance and other evaluation data as needed.
- Work with the Denton ISD Chief Learning Officer and school liaisons to support at-risk youth and their families.
- Provide semester updates to the Denton ISD Chief Learning Officer regarding the progress of the mentoring program.

DENTON ISD WILL:

- Work in partnership with BBBS with the recruitment of volunteer mentors.
- Collaborate with BBBS to support grants and other funding to support the implementation and growth of the mentoring program for the Denton ISD.
- Consult with BBBS to establish priority schools that are the most in need of services and that have as well the appropriate commitment to supply information and cooperation to BBBS for multiple matches.
- Designate a school liaison for each school participating in the program who acts as a contact for the agency and assures that access and information are available to BBBS representatives.
- Recruit and refer students, based on the eligibility criteria defined by the agency, via the school liaison.
- Assist BBBS in obtaining parental permission for students to participate in the voluntary program by sending home paperwork on behalf of BBBS, via the school liaison. Additionally Denton ISD will seek ways to support BBBS efforts to enhance parental support of the mentoring program and match relationships.
- Assist BBBS with Volunteer Enrollment by conducting the initial Criminal Background Check, confirming BBBS mentor applicants who have been approved to volunteer.
- Share information relevant to evaluation and case planning through a clearly established channel after a release of information form has been signed by the parent. Relevant information may include grades, attendance, standardized test scores, ARD meeting reports, discipline records, teacher reports and any other

school progress information that does not violate FERPA guidelines and district policy.

- Provide a place for mentors and students to meet.
- Inform relevant school staff of the student's participation and make any special arrangements on campus, customarily through the school liaison, to support meetings between the mentor and the student.
- Work with BBBS to support at-risk youth and their families.
- Provide informational materials and links to BBBS to be used to enhance the mentoring program and match relationships.

This agreement is subject to review and revision at the request of either party by August first of each year. Either party may terminate this agreement by notification of intent of termination given at least three months in advance of the desired date of termination.

Signatures:

James K. Wilson, III, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools, Denton ISD

Date

Mike Mattingly, Ed.D.
Chief Learning Officer, Denton ISD

Date

Executive Director, BBBS Lone Star – Denton County

Date

Chief Program, Big Brothers Big Sisters Lone Star

Date

Approved as to form:

School Attorney

Date