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# Strategies and Solutions for Implementing a Distinguished Success Ambassador Program to Promote Student Achievement

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# Strategies and Solutions for Implementing a Distinguished Success Ambassador Program to Promote Student Achievement

NATIONAL YOUTH-AT-RISK CONFERENCE – MARCH 6, 2017

EBONY PAYNO, SCHOOL COUNSELOR (FCS) & FOUNDER OF SWD

# Breaking News!

- ▶ **Who** – The Target Population
- ▶ **What** – Program Purpose
- ▶ **Why** – The Need
- ▶ **When** – Program Timeline and Sample Schedules
- ▶ **Where** – Program Locations
- ▶ **How** – Program Implementation and Resources



# The WHO



"It gives me the responsibilities of being a leader. I also enjoyed helping and encouraging other students."

"I love going around (to advisements) meeting new people and also helping my fellow peers."

"It has given me opportunities that I never thought I would have. It's a great program."

"It encouraged me to help other students at my school."

"It gave me an opportunity to show my leadership skills as well as gain new skills."

# The **WHAT**

- ▶ “Cross-age peer mentoring refers to programs in which an older youth (mentor) is matched with a younger student (mentee) for the purpose of guiding and supporting the mentee in many areas of his/her academic, social, and emotional development. These programs are “cross-age” because there is a gap between the age of the mentor and mentee, which allows for effective role modeling and positions the mentor as a wiser and older individual, as with adult-youth mentoring. But these programs are also “peer” programs because they focus exclusively on youth-youth relationships.”

- Garringer and MacRae, 2008

# The **WHAT** Cont.

## ▶ **Success Ambassadors / Peer Mentors**

- ▶ Develop leadership in oneself and in others
- ▶ Give peers confidence and help them make effective decisions
- ▶ Serve as an advocate who will help underclassmen and other students at neighboring schools develop academically, behaviorally, and socially
- ▶ Promote a safe learning environment where positive growth is promoted
- ▶ Promote confidence and positive conflict resolution tactics
- ▶ Promote and display successful matriculation through high school

# The **WHY**



- ▶ **DOUBLE IMPACT**
- ▶ **SCHOOL CLIMATE**
- ▶ **PERSONAL/SOCIAL SKILLS**
- ▶ **SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY**
- ▶ **RESILIENCY**
- ▶ **TRANSITIONAL NEEDS**
- ▶ **POSITIVE PEER-TO-PEER RELATIONSHIPS**

## The **WHY** Cont.

- ▶ Academic Resilience and Motivation
- ▶ Student Empowerment
- ▶ Increase School Morale / Connectedness
- ▶ Academic Support and Assistance
- ▶ Safe Learning Environment
- ▶ Expand Peer Network
- ▶ Positive Role Modeling
- ▶ Empathy and Understanding



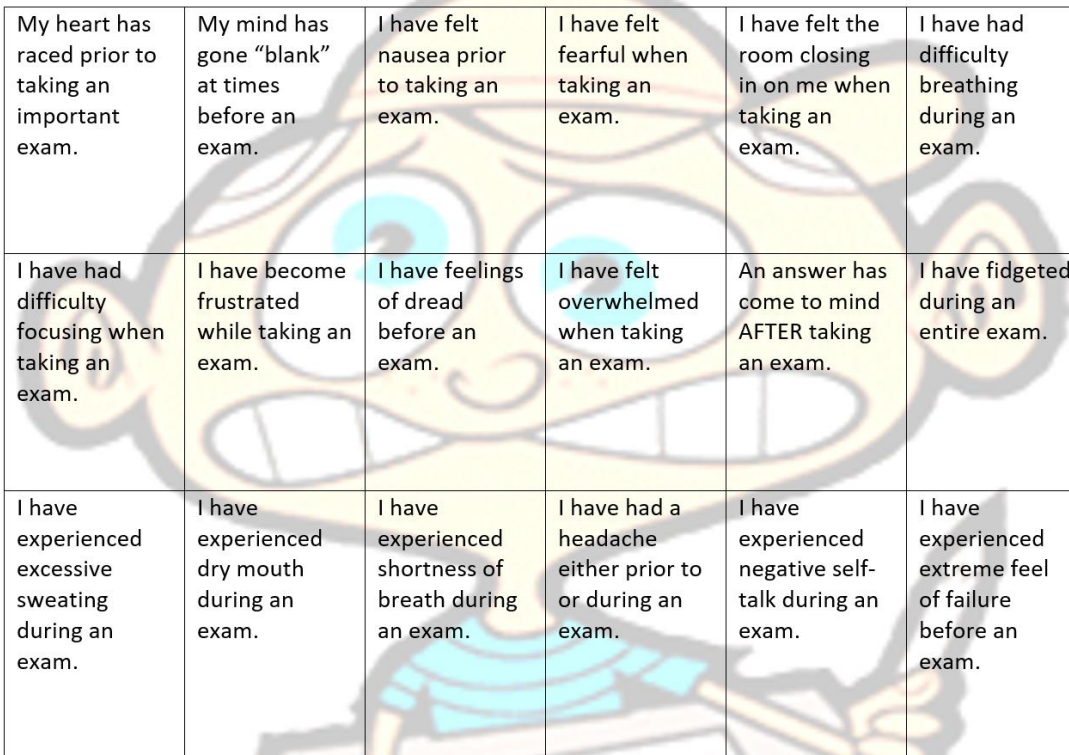


## The **WHY** Cont.

- ▶ Identify the need at your school/organization
- ▶ Personalize your approach
- ▶ Evaluate current and past programs
- ▶ Develop a needs assessment
  - ▶ Staff
  - ▶ Student
  - ▶ Parent

# Activity Break: Sample Script

## Test Anxiety Activity: Find Someone Who...

A cartoon monkey character with a large head, wide eyes, and a mischievous grin, wearing a blue and white striped shirt. It is positioned behind the table, with its head and arms visible.

My heart has raced prior to taking an important exam.	My mind has gone "blank" at times before an exam.	I have felt nausea prior to taking an exam.	I have felt fearful when taking an exam.	I have felt the room closing in on me when taking an exam.	I have had difficulty breathing during an exam.
I have had difficulty focusing when taking an exam.	I have become frustrated while taking an exam.	I have feelings of dread before an exam.	I have felt overwhelmed when taking an exam.	An answer has come to mind AFTER taking an exam.	I have fidgeted during an entire exam.
I have experienced excessive sweating during an exam.	I have experienced dry mouth during an exam.	I have experienced shortness of breath during an exam.	I have had a headache either prior to or during an exam.	I have experienced negative self-talk during an exam.	I have experienced extreme feelings of failure before an exam.

# The **WHEN**

- ▶ Semester (Fall/Spring)
- ▶ Quarters (Four Quarters Total)
- ▶ Summer Activities
- ▶ Pre-Planning Training

# Sample School Bell Schedule

## Schedule (Regular Bell Schedule)

Warning Bells	8:25 & 8:30	
First Period	8:35 - 9:28	
Second Period	9:35 - 10:32	
Third Period	10:39 - 11:32	
Fourth Period	11:39 - 1:37	Lunch (Advisement/Mentoring)
Fifth Period	1:44 - 2:37	
Sixth Period	2:44 - 3:40	
Buses Leave	3:50	



Lunch A	(L) 11:32 – 11:57 (25min)	(C) 12:04 – 1:04 (60min)	(A) 1:05 -1:37 (32min)
Lunch B	(A) 11:39 – 11:57 (18min)	(L) 11:57 – 12:22 (25min)	(C) 12:29 – 1:37 (68min)
Lunch C	(A) 11:39 – 12:22 (43min)	(L) 12:22 – 12:47 (25min)	(C) 12:54 – 1:37 (46min)
Lunch D	(C) 11:39 – 12:47 (68min)	(L) 12:47 – 1:12 (25min)	(A) 1:19 – 1:37 (20min)
Lunch E	(C) 11:39 – 12:39 (60min)	(A) 12:40 – 1:12 (32min)	(L) 1:12 – 1:37 (25min)

# The **WHEN** cont.

**\*\*Peer Mentoring**  
(Success Ambassador)  
program takes place  
during Advisement or  
Homeroom during the  
day.

8:00 – 8:55 am	Collaborative Planning Zero Period
9:00 – 10:04 am	1 <sup>st</sup> Period
10:08 – 11:12 am	2 <sup>nd</sup> Period
11:16 – 11:55 am	Advisory/ILT (SA Program)
11:59 – 12:23 pm 12:35 – 1:29 pm	A Lunch 3 <sup>rd</sup> Period*
12:30 – 12:53 pm	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Academy Lunch
11:59 – 1:04 pm 1:06 – 1:29 pm	3 <sup>rd</sup> Period B Lunch
1:33 – 2:37 pm	4 <sup>th</sup> Period
2:41 – 3:45 pm	5 <sup>th</sup> Period

# The **WHEN** cont.

**\*\*Peer Mentoring takes place during a period in the middle of the day (lunch time).**

## **Mondays:**

11:36am - 1:46pm ("B" lunch - 12:28-12:54)

Instructional time with Peer Mentor Coordinator (review of script and schedule for the week)

## **Tuesdays:**

11:36am - 12:28pm- Instructional time (work on project, etc.)

12:28pm - 12:54pm- "B" lunch

12:54pm - 1:20pm- Back in classroom prior to mentoring

**1:20pm - 1:46pm- Mentoring at the high school**

## **Wednesdays:**

11:36am - 11:50am- Instructional time (work on project, etc.)

**12:00pm - 1:00pm- Mentoring at the elementary school**

1:00pm - 1:20pm- Back in classroom prior to lunch

1:20pm - 1:46pm- "D" lunch

## **Thursdays:**

11:36am - 12:28pm- Instructional time (work on project, etc.)

12:28pm - 12:54pm- "B" lunch

12:54pm - 1:20pm- Back in classroom prior to mentoring

**1:20pm - 1:46pm- Mentoring at the high school**

## **Fridays:**

**11:36am - 1:10pm- Mentoring at the elementary school**

1:20pm - 1:46pm- "D" lunch

# The **WHERE**

- ▶ High School Level
- ▶ Middle School Level
- ▶ Elementary School Level
- ▶ Non-profit Organizations
- ▶ Summer Camps
- ▶ Corporations



# Activity Break: Sample Script

SA SCRIPT

*Don't Let Obstacles Knock You Down!*

*(Conflict Resolution)*





# The HOW



## Structure of the Program

- ▶ Total Advisors = Approx. 20 – 30 (Comprised of male and female students recommended by staff)
- ▶ Success Ambassadors meet with the program coordinators at least twice a month (Mondays)
- ▶ Success Ambassadors work with students once a month in advisement (following the meeting with coordinators)
- ▶ Success Ambassadors refer to scripts when conducting team building activities or lessons (either self created or provided by coordinators)

## The **HOW** Cont.

- ▶ Success Ambassadors serve as TAs (Teacher Assistants)
- ▶ Success Ambassadors serve as Peer-Tutors
- ▶ Success Ambassadors conduct restorative circles
- ▶ Lead by example
  - ▶ Must demonstrate academic success
  - ▶ Must be making positive strides toward graduation
  - ▶ Be dedicated to the overall mission of the program
  - ▶ Participate in mandatory trainings
  - ▶ Participate in bi-monthly Monday meetings
  - ▶ Must have no discipline or attendance infractions

# The **HOW** Cont.

## ▶ **Success Ambassador Council (optional):**

- ▶ 3-4 Members (voted on by fellow advisors)
- ▶ Responsible for script selection/creation
- ▶ Responsible for special projects (ie. name badges, t-shirts, community service, Recycling club, etc.)
- ▶ Assists with disseminating important information to all ambassadors
- ▶ Communicate important findings/updates to the program coordinators on a regular basis
- ▶ Coordinate the operation of restorative circles and Peer-tutoring program

# The **HOW** Cont.

## ► **Success Ambassador Activities in the Classroom**

- Engage students in appropriate group discussions (i.e. conflict resolution)
- Conduct team building and ice breaker exercises and restorative circles
- Develop a positive rapport with students
- Using scripts to guide student activities/ discussions when needed
- Sample topics include: study skills, time management, grades, decision making, problem solving, peer relationships, social media, etc.



# The **HOW** Cont.

## ▶ **Advisement Teachers...**

- ▶ Supervise all activities and report back to the program coordinators any conflicts that arise
- ▶ Do not need to give additional supplies to ambassadors (they will have everything they need)
- ▶ **Do not** leave the classroom during Success Ambassador activities!

## ▶ **Program Coordinators...**

- ▶ Continuously assess the overall effectiveness of the program
- ▶ Meet with Success Ambassadors bi-monthly to dispense advisement material if needed and discuss weekly outcomes
- ▶ Provide weekly feedback and suggestions pertaining to all ambassador concerns
- ▶ Ensure that the overall integrity and efficiency of the program is maintained

# Activity Break: Strategy Sharing

- ▶ What has been an effective approach at your school/organization?
- ▶ What are some of the obstacles or challenges you've faced?
- ▶ What tips and suggestions do you have?
- ▶ What questions and concerns do you have for implementing this program at your school?
- ▶ What creative scheduling options can you create?
- ▶ How can you gain staff and administrative support?
- ▶ How can you create student interest as a peer mentor/mentee?

# The Classifieds

## Sample Teacher Evaluation

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Peer Mentor Names: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please rate the following items on a scale of 1 to 5 regarding the peer mentors assigned to your class (1 being exceptional, 3 being average, and 5 being poor.)

1) Overall, how valuable was the experience the peer mentors provided for your class? ( 1    2    3    4    5)

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

2) How helpful were the lessons (scripts) that are being implemented weekly? (1    2    3    4    5)

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

3) How well do the peer mentors implement weekly lessons in a constructive manner? (1    2    3    4    5)

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

4) How well do the peer mentors interact with your students (Are they a positive influence)? (1    2    3    4    5)

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

5) Do you feel your students (9th grade) benefit from the peer mentoring program? (1    2    3    4    5)

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

6) Have you been able to notice any tangible positive results from the program? (i.e. fewer discipline problems, increased student academic performance.)

\_\_\_\_\_

# The Classifieds Cont.

Peer Mentor Name \_\_\_\_\_

## **Sample End-of-Semester Mentor Reflection:**

1. How do you feel about peer mentoring up to this point? (Are you burned out or do you feel senioritis kicking in?)
2. Do you want to remain a peer mentor for next semester?
3. Would you like to change some things about mentoring? If so, what would you suggest be changed while still maintaining the program's purpose and goals?
4. If so, do you want to change peer mentor partners?
5. If so, do you want to change peer mentor classes (for 9<sup>th</sup> grade)?
6. If so, do you want to change your mentee at the elementary school level?

## **Mentor Coordinator Reflection:**

(Rate the following on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Excellent, 3 = Average, 5 = Poor))

1. Attitude/Enthusiasm toward being a peer mentor.

1      2      3      4      5

2. Overall grades and effort in this course.

1      2      3      4      5

3. Attendance/Behavior in this course.

1      2      3      4      5



# The Classifieds Cont.

## Sample Peer Mentor Disciplinary Contract

Contract Agreement Date:\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Peer Mentor:\_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Contract:

This contract serves as a FINAL WARNING and notice that if you break ANY rule pertaining to peer mentoring or receive a negative report for ANY reason, your position as a peer mentor will be IMMEDIATELY TERMINATED. This includes any negative report given by any staff member at school. This also means that when you are removed from peer mentoring during 4th period, you have relinquished your choice for an elective during 4th period.

Signatures:

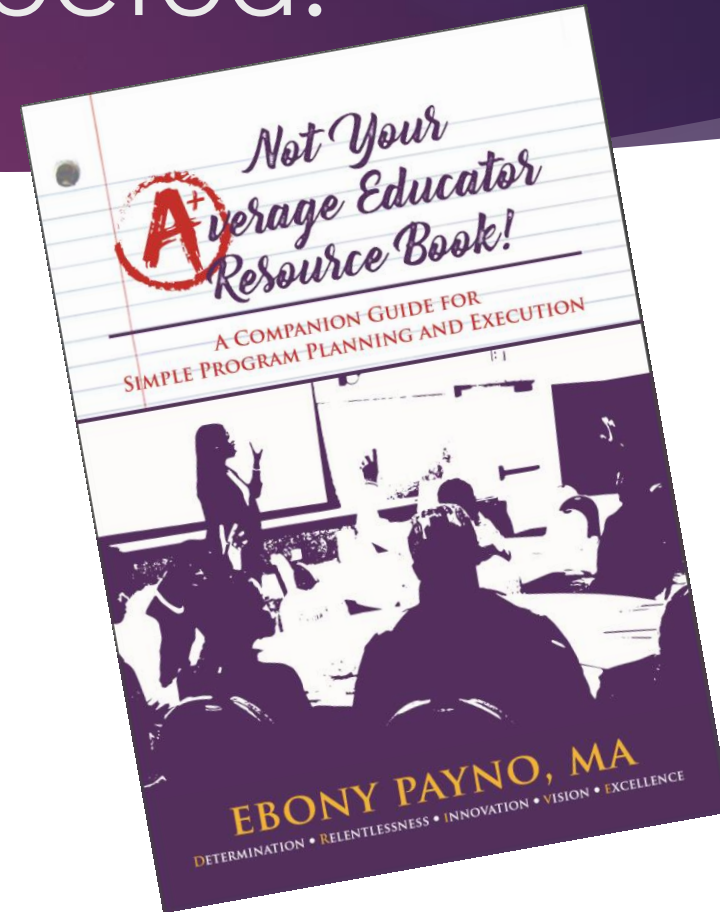
Coordinators:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Student:

Print:\_\_\_\_\_ Sign:\_\_\_\_\_

# Staying Connected!



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