




**GREATER  
WINSTON  
SALEM INC**

# SENIOR ACADEMY

## MENTOR HANDBOOK



**WS**  
Winston-Salem



**FCS**  
Forsyth County Schools



# SENIOR ACADEMY MENTOR HANDBOOK

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### INTRODUCTION

ABOUT GREATER WINSTON-SALEM, INC.  
SENIOR ACADEMY PROGRAM OVERVIEW  
CONFIDENTIALITY

PAGE 3

### MENTOR RESOURCES

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MENTORING RELATIONSHIP  
QUALITIES OF AN EFFECTIVE MENTOR  
ENCOURAGING STUDENTS TO GO TO SCHOOL  
ETHICAL PRINCIPLES & REQUIREMENTS FOR MENTORS

PAGE 6

### MENTORING PROCEDURES

STUDENT AND MENTOR START PROCEDURES  
TALKING POINTS FOR INITIAL MEETINGS  
SENIOR ACADEMY MID-YEAR MEETING  
BEHIND THE SCENES

PAGE 9

### GRADUATION & CAREER PLAN

GRADUATION AND CAREER PLAN RESOURCES  
GOAL ACHIEVEMENT  
IS COLLEGE FOR EVERYONE?  
MAKING COLLEGE AFFORDABLE

PAGE 12

### STAYING INFORMED

SENIOR ACADEMY NEWSLETTER  
SENIOR ACADEMY FACEBOOK PAGE  
SUGGESTED READING LIST FOR MENTORS

PAGE 14

# INTRODUCTION

## ABOUT GREATER WINSTON-SALEM, INC.

Greater Winston-Salem, Inc. drives Winston-Salem and Forsyth County's economic growth through initiatives in economic recruitment and retention, talent and workforce development, advocacy, and entrepreneurial support. We are committed to bringing an innovative mindset and collaborative efforts to initiatives that develop a vibrant community that's good for business growth and sustainability.

## TALENT & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STAFF:

**TERRI CUMMINGS** | Vice President, Talent & Workforce Development  
336.728.9205 | tcummings@winstonsalem.com

**ALESIA HILTON** | Director of Career Readiness  
336.728.9222 | ahilton@winstonsalem.com

**TINA LONG** | Workforce Programs Manager | **Senior Academy Primary Contact**  
336.728.9204 | tlong@winstonsalem.com

## SENIOR ACADEMY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Thank you for your commitment to serving as a mentor. This guide is meant to help you in your role as you build a positive relationship with the student selected for you. Mentorship is a special and rewarding experience that can have a strong positive impact for both the mentor and the mentee. In addition to this handbook, staff at Greater Winston-Salem, Inc. and your student's school are available to support your mentorship journey.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

There are federal and state laws that protect the privacy rights of students and their families. As a mentor, you will be subject to instances in which personal and confidential information is shared. As mentors carry out their responsibilities, they sign a legal Confidentiality Form to not disclose any confidential information acquired while mentoring. Confidential information includes any materials, conversations, messages, data, knowledge of personal information having to do with students associated with or any conversation overheard while present at any Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools. However; there are instances when mentors must break confidentiality if they believe abuse or neglect is present and/or if the student's behavior presents clear and imminent danger to themselves or others. Mentors should report such instances immediately to school administration (student's counselor or principal).

## ABOUT SENIOR ACADEMY

In the Senior Academy program, each mentor and student will work together to create goals that help the student plan for high school graduation and beyond. Our goal is to see every student that participates in the program obtain their high school diploma.

As a mentor, you will work with your student to set attainable goals, identify positive problem-solving strategies, and research potential career and/or higher education opportunities that can help them create a pathway to a successful future.

The Senior Academy program is an initiative of Greater Winston-Salem, Inc. The program is facilitated in partnership with Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools.

## HOW STUDENTS ARE SELECTED

High school seniors who need between 7-9 credits in order to graduate, need more than one course in any core area, or are recommended by their guidance counselor, are invited to participate in the Senior Academy Program.

## HOW STUDENTS SIGN UP

A guidance counselor or school liaison will meet with the student to discuss the program and gauge his or her interest in participating. The student and his or her parent or guardian then consent to participation. If a student is 18 or older, parental consent can be waived.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### MENTOR

- Provide one hour per week to meet with the student.
- Develop interest in the student's future and serve as a caring adult and advocate.
- Provide encouragement to help the student achieve graduation and career plan goals.
- Communicate progress to the program manager.
- Award student incentives as progress is made.
- Assist in program evaluation by completing mid-year and year-end surveys.

### STUDENT

- Work with mentor to identify goals and create action plan to achieve them.
- Discuss with mentor career interests, military, or higher education options to plan for the next steps after high school graduation.
- Commit to the mentorship relationship - build trust, attend scheduled meetings, and work to meet identified goals.

## SENIOR ACADEMY MANAGER

- Coordinates program and communication between mentors and schools.
- Recruits mentors from the business community.
- Works with graduation coaches to help facilitate the program and assist with on-site logistics at each school.
- Works with local employers to generate program support such as providing incentives and hosting enrichment opportunities for students - college tours, employer tours, etc.
- Provides volunteer training.
- Communicates regularly with mentors through newsletters, the Facebook group, and one-on-one communication.

## SCHOOL COORDINATOR (GUIDANCE COUNSELORS & GRADUATION COACHES)

- Coordinates school and district participation in the program.
- Determines student eligibility and need for program services.
- Recruits students and helps to obtain student and parent permission forms.
- Helps create a graduation and career plan with each student.
- Communicates regularly with Senior Academy mentors.

## LOGISTICS

You will check in at the main office before your weekly meeting. You will pick up your Graduation & Career Plan Folder from Student Services before going to meet your student. School-specific needs such as parking and sign-in procedures will be provided by each school. In some cases, virtual meetings may be an option but must be pre-approved. Virtual meetings will be recorded.

## IMPACT

As a mentor, your participation in the Senior Academy program makes a significant impact. In the program's +10-year history, over 1,000 students have graduated high school representing a 96% graduation rate on average. Of similar at-risk students, schools report a range of 39-57% graduation rates. The district as a whole has a graduation rate of 86.2%.

"I learned how to apply for college, financial aid, and scholarships. My mentor helped me plan for my future after high school by giving me helpful insights and rewarded me for trying harder."

ISAIAH  
SENIOR ACADEMY PARTICIPANT

# MENTOR RESOURCES

## TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

Successful mentors understand that positive changes in the lives of young people do not happen overnight. Mentors and students must meet long enough and often enough to build a relationship that helps the student feel supported and safe, develop self-confidence and self-esteem, and see new possibilities in life.

### SUCCESSFUL MENTORS:

- Take the time to build the relationship.
- Become a trusted friend.
- Are people that students can depend on for guidance and advice.

While establishing a friendship may sound easy, it often is not. Adults and youth are separated by age and, in many cases, by background and culture. Even mentors with good instincts can stumble or be blocked by difficulties that arise from these differences.

It takes time for students to feel comfortable just talking to their mentor, and longer still before they feel comfortable enough to share a confidence. Learning to trust—especially for young people who have already been let down by adults in their lives—is a gradual process. Students cannot be expected to trust their mentors simply because program staff members have put them together. Developing a friendship requires skill and time.

## QUALITIES OF AN EFFECTIVE MENTOR

Becoming a mentor means embarking on a unique relationship which needs trust, confidence, and a mutual commitment to be successful. Here are some ways that you can encourage a positive mentorship experience:

- Be a friend. Talk with student, not at them.
- Have realistic goals and expectations.
- Have fun together.
- Give your student a voice and choice in goal setting.
- Be positive. CELEBRATE SUCCESSES!
- Let your student have much of the control over what the two of you talk about— and how you talk about it.
- Listen to your student. Help them understand the importance of eye contact.
- Respect the trust your student places in you.
- Help the student realize you are their advocate and can be their voice.
- Remember that you are responsible for building the relationship.

## UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF A MENTOR

Understanding the formula to being a successful mentor also includes being aware of your unique role in the life of your student. As a mentor, it is important to understand that mentoring is not about meeting every need. While you possess valuable experience and wisdom, understanding that setting healthy boundaries is key to the mentor-mentee relationship.

- Mentoring relationships are most successful when mentors consider themselves listeners, encouragers, supports, and co-learners.
- While you are the adult in the mentoring relationship, avoid being a parental figure to the student.
- Recognize the difference between being a mentor and counselor. As a mentor, the purpose of your relationship with the student to guide and support versus analyze and diagnose.
- Successful mentors are great listeners. Offer a listening ear and support while allowing students to create their own solutions for problems.
- Spiritual and religious beliefs will vary by individual. Avoid promoting personal spiritual religious beliefs and related values on your student.

## ENCOURAGING STUDENTS TO GO TO SCHOOL

Many teenagers seek independence and think they know best. No matter how hard parents and schools try, some students may be reluctant or refuse to go to school. Here are some ideas that parents can follow in dealing with teenagers and school refusal. We share them with you as a mentor to provide insight into some of the issues teenagers face in their daily lives—and to provide you with talking points that you can explore, as appropriate, with your student.

- Talk about the importance of showing up to school every day, make that the expectation.
- Talk about maintaining daily routines.
- Assess if your student is genuinely sick. Complaints of headaches or stomachaches may be signs of anxiety.
- Talk to your student. What are their feelings about school? What interests them at school? Are there any difficult situations? It helps if you open these discussions in a relaxed way so that your student knows you are demonstrating concern, not authority.
- Peer pressure can lead to skipping school, and students without many friends can feel isolated.
- Encourage meaningful extracurricular activities to develop positive relationships and have success outside of a classroom setting. This can help make students feel part of the group, important to school, and more motivated.

- Talk about part-time work. Make sure that the hours your student is working do not impact their ability to go to school the next day, or interfere with school assessment expectations or exam preparation.
- Familiarize yourself with the school's attendance policy. This can help when trying to reason with teenagers.

## ETHICAL PRINCIPLES & REQUIREMENTS FOR MENTORS

As a mentor, you are assuming the responsibility of becoming a trusted person in a student's life. In order to maintain a positive relationship with your student that helps them achieve their goals, it is important to be aware of the requirements of this role. The ethics of a mentoring relationship include promoting the welfare and safety of the young person, being trustworthy and responsible, acting with integrity, and respecting the young person's rights and dignity.

All Senior Academy mentors are required to register as a volunteer with Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools, complete a background check, and remain in compliance with all rules and regulations required of them by WS/FCS. In addition, the following guidelines are required by Senior Academy:

A. APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL CONTACT - Mentors should ensure that any physical contact should remain appropriate in nature.

B. APPROVED ACTIVITIES - Mentor meetings and extracurricular activities associated with the Senior Academy program, including graduation ceremonies, are the only approved activities allowed between mentors and students. Mentors are not permitted to meet with students outside of school or approved field trips.

C. TRANSPORTATION - Mentors are not permitted to transport a student in a personal vehicle.

D. DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA USE - Mentors are not permitted to communicate with students on any social media platforms. While communication may occur via phone or text, these communications must only be for the purposes of the program, such as scheduling.

E. PAYMENTS, PURCHASES, OR FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS - Mentors are not permitted to spend money on mentees - cash payments, gifts, and other financial transactions are prohibited.

F. MANDATORY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT, AND SUICIDALITY AND HOMICIDALITY - Mentors are obligated to report any serious concerns regarding their student's health and safety to the school.

*Sources: Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring, 4th Edition, Mentoring.org. Research Corner: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships, National Mentoring Partnership*



# MENTORING PROCEDURES

When you have been matched with a student, you will receive an email with your student's name, his or her guidance counselor's name, and confirmation of the day, time, and location of your weekly meetings. You will then confirm with the Senior Academy Manager that you are able to meet with your student at the suggested time. Mentoring duties consist of your weekly meetings with the student, as well as other Senior Academy program events.

## WEEK ONE

### GETTING AQUAINTED:

Exchange information about yourself with your student. Some students may be a little guarded so give them a chance to "warm up" to this new relationship. Some sample questions for your use are listed below:

- Tell me a little about you.
- Do you have any hobbies or special interests?
- What plans do you have for the future?
- What do you like and dislike? (This can include school, work, social activities, etc.)
- What is your favorite subject?
- What is your least favorite subject?

### WRAP UP:

Finish the first session with a summary of the purpose of Senior Academy:

- Talk about Graduation & Career Plan and what your sessions will involve. (review of grades/classes, attendance, behavior, etc.)
- Inform student of program timeline, special events, and goal achievement awards.
- Confirm meeting time for your next session.

## WEEK TWO

### GETTING AQUAINTED:

Build upon your initial meeting by continuing to get to know your student:

- What is a typical day like for you?
- Describe your evening routine (do you work, visit friends, cook or go out to eat, etc?)
- Describe your "perfect day" (real or imagined).

### ACADEMIC & CAREER REVIEW:

Review and summarize the purpose of Senior Academy and how you will be working with the student.

- Conduct a Career Review.

- Talk about careers that interest your student.
- Discuss the student's post-secondary plans.
- Conduct an Academic Review.
- Discuss how your student is getting along in classes.
- Discuss progress on credit recovery classes, if applicable.

### WRAP UP:

Remind student of their individual goals for Senior Academy.

- Discuss what they will be working on over the next week.
- Remind student of criteria for obtaining goal achievement incentives.
- Confirm next meeting time.
- Answer any questions the student may have.

## WEEK THREE

### GETTING COMFORTABLE:

Hopefully by now your student feels somewhat comfortable with your weekly meetings. The questions this week focus on strengths and weaknesses. Have your student create a list and use it to help them focus on things they can work on to develop their strengths and improve upon things that are more of a challenge:

- What do you think your academic strengths are?
- What do you think your academic weaknesses are?
- What is a personal strength you possess? (not academic or school-related)
- What is a personal weakness you possess? (not academic or school-related)
- In what ways can you make the most out of your strengths?
- How can you develop strategies to recognize your weaknesses so that they do not impede you from achieving your goals?

### ACADEMIC & CAREER REVIEW:

Review and summarize the purpose of Senior Academy and how you will be working with the student.

- Discuss how classes are going.
- Review progress and attendance reports.
- Discuss and set the next short-term goals (studying for a test, completing a reading assignment, etc.)

## SENIOR ACADEMY MID-YEAR MEETING

The Senior Academy Mid-Year Meeting is an opportunity for all mentors to gather with Greater Winston-Salem, Inc. staff, WS/FCS graduation coaches, and counselors to network and share their progress with the program objectives. Students do not attend this meeting.

The Mid-Year meeting occurs in January and consists of a luncheon, presentation, and networking time. Importantly, the Mid-Year meeting is an opportunity to thank mentors for their time and volunteer efforts! Giveaways and raffle gifts are provided by the business community to show their thanks for your vital volunteer work.

This year's event is a special meeting because Greater Winston-Salem Inc. was awarded Chamber of the Year by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives. Gaining national recognition for our work that includes the Senior Academy program is an extension of all the mentors, WS/FCS staff, and sponsors from the business community that make the program what it is today.

Mentors are asked to mark their calendars to attend the Mid-Year meeting in addition to the weekly visits with their student.

## SENIOR ACADEMY BEHIND THE SCENES

Senior Academy Behind the Scenes is a field trip opportunity for Senior Academy students. Mentors are welcome but not required to attend.

Behind the Scenes includes a luncheon with presentations on various career opportunities for students to explore career options. Following lunch, students will visit JC Penney to shop for professional clothing with a \$100 stipend provided by JC Penney.



# GRADUATION & CAREER PLAN

## GRADUATION & CAREER PLAN RESOURCES

Resources and program information will be provided to each mentor electronically. You may receive resources through email, Teams, or other communication. This information includes tips for college exploration & applications (CFNC, FAFSA), as well as career opportunities, technical and skilled trades, and more.

## GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

With the gracious donations from our donors, the Senior Academy Program is fortunate to award our students with incentives for completing and accomplishing their educational goals. Students along with their mentors set goals in order to reach desired status. Goals may consist of any of the following:

- Improvement in attendance
- Improvement in grades
- Reduced tardiness
- Improved organizational skills
- Good behavior

## IS COLLEGE FOR EVERYONE?

A four-year college degree isn't necessary for many of tomorrow's good jobs. Students should be encouraged to think about what choices may be right for them after high school graduation. With your student, you can help identify goals and possible career paths.

Have your student ask themselves these questions:

1. Who am I? ( Getting to know yourself)
2. What occupations are out there? (Explore career possibilities)
3. What is right for me? (Choosing a direction)
4. How do I get there? (Making it happen)

For example, the emerging economy will need lots of technicians able to install, service and repair all the high-tech machinery filling up hospitals, offices and factories. Today it's difficult to find a skilled plumber or electrician. Those jobs need people.

Trade schools offer specific vocational training for a wide variety of skilled careers. Sometimes this requires getting an associate's degree at a community college, but many times it involves attending a technical school for a year or so.



Here is a partial list of specific career options:

- Welding
- Landscaping
- Electrical
- Transportation / CDLs
- Forestry
- Cosmetology
- Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)
- Masonry
- Locksmithing
- Phlebotomy
- ASE Certifications (Automotive)
- Aviation Mechanic

## MENTOR TIP

Help your student with online research. Visit the websites of potential employers, community colleges, and colleges and universities that interest your student so they familiarize themselves with the organizations.

## MAKING COLLEGE AFFORDABLE

The College Foundation of North Carolina (CFNC) is a free service of the State of North Carolina that helps students plan, apply and pay for college. To help students prepare for college and a career, visit [cfnc.org](http://cfnc.org) to familiarize yourself with the college application process, financial aid options and associated deadlines.

In addition, encourage students to apply for scholarships and check with school counselors, organizations they belong to, employers, etc. about other sources of financial assistance, such as scholarships.

Keep in mind that students should NEVER pay for scholarship information. They can find out about scholarships and other types of financial aid for free. Direct students to [CFNC.org](http://CFNC.org), and encourage them to set up an account so they can complete and submit college applications and requests for financial aid.

## STAYING INFORMED

If you have any questions, your contacts at Greater Winston-Salem, Inc. and at your student's school are available to help. In addition, the experience is much more rewarding for you and your student when you stay involved with your fellow mentors and stay informed of all program updates.

### SENIOR ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

It is important for you to review the monthly Senior Academy email newsletter. It provides updates about the program, important dates, accolades and distinctions about students and other useful information that can inform the mentor relationship you are building with your student.

### SENIOR ACADEMY FACEBOOK PAGE

As a resource, we have created a Facebook page for mentors to share their thoughts and suggestions about the mentoring process. Do not post your student's names or school names. This is a private group, so you will need to request access via Facebook. You can find the page by searching Senior Academy Mentors in Facebook.

### SENIOR ACADEMY RESOURCE WEBPAGE

Senior Academy mentors have access to a Resource webpage on our website, [winstonsalem.com](http://winstonsalem.com). Please bookmark this link to refer to throughout the school year. The resource page contains important WS/FCS schedules and guidelines, contact information and procedures for the school where you mentor, and additional resources.

# SUGGESTED READING LIST FOR MENTORS

The following list of books has been suggested by former and current Senior Academy mentors. These are helpful resources to assist you with making a meaningful connection with your student.

## **THE OTHER WES MOORE**, by Wes Moore

Two kids named Wes Moore were born blocks apart within a year of each other. Both had difficult childhoods; both ran into trouble with the police. How, then, did one grow up to be a Rhodes Scholar, decorated veteran, White House Fellow, and business leader, while the other ended up a convicted murderer serving a life sentence? *The Other Wes Moore* tells the story of a generation of boys trying to find their way in a hostile world.

## **A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING POVERTY**, by Ruby Payne, PhD.

If you work with people from poverty, some understanding of how different their world is from yours will be invaluable. This breakthrough book gives you practical, real-world support and guidance to improve your effectiveness in working with people from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

## **THE LAST DROPOUT—STOP THE EPIDEMIC**, by Bill Milliken

This is a non-fiction book by Bill Milliken, founder and vice chairman of Communities In Schools (CIS). It addresses one of the biggest social issues of our time, the American dropout crisis. *The Last Dropout* explains how the entire community can and must play a role in education reform, reversing this startling trend.

# THANK YOU TO OUR INVESTORS

---

ATRIUM HEALTH WAKE FOREST BAPTIST  
NOVANT HEALTH  
REYNOLDS AMERICAN  
TRUIST  
WELLS FARGO

BETHANY MEDICAL

CITY OF WINSTON-SALEM

COOK MEDICAL

FLOW AUTOMOTIVE

FORSYTH COUNTY

FRONT STREET CAPITAL

HANESBRANDS, INC.

KELLY OFFICE SOLUTIONS

KILPATRICK TOWNSEND & STOCKTON, LLP

MERCEDES-BENZ OF WINSTON-SALEM

TRULIANT FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

TWIN CITY DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

WINSTON-SALEM/FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS

WOMBLE BOND DICKINSON (US) LLP