



ACSA Mentoring Program: Overview for Mentors and Proteges

Introduction

ACSA mentoring is a unique and informal professional support service focused on the operational, technical and managerial aspects of the job. It helps educational leaders define, adjust and clarify their roles. It differs from Leadership Coaching, which is more formal and focused on growth of leadership capacity through intensive professional development.

ACSA Mentoring is voluntary and collaborative. It is based on permission and trust, bound by ethics and confidentiality. It provides emotional and professional support through skilled listening, caring and specific feedback, and guidance by a wise, successful and experienced practitioner who has walked in the protégés shoes.

Mentoring provides a detached outside perspective of the protégé and site or district context, using challenges and needs as learning opportunities. It is non-judgmental and non-evaluative, with topics entirely determined by the protégé. Services can be provided on- or off-site, in person, via telephone or e-mail as determined by the protégé and mentor.

Mentors will strive to foster in their protégés a sense of belonging to a larger community of educational leaders by introducing them to ACSA events; to area and state leaders; by encouraging their participation in local, regional, and state professional events; and by facilitating a sense of connection to formal and informal networks of leaders.

What are the goals of the ACSA Mentoring Program?

The goals of the program are to:

1. Focus on growth and refinement of operational, technical and managerial skills and functions to enable the protégé to better focus on improved student learning and instructional leadership;
2. Foster an understanding of cultures, expectations, and one's place and possible contributions to the teaching and learning environment;
3. Provide feedback, encouragement and support to protégés in responding sensitively to cultural, ethnic, and gender differences among students and communities;
4. Provide a willing non-judgmental ear, counsel when sought, and reflective questions that may challenge the protégé to reflect on operational issues and past and present accepted practices that detract from a focus on learning and instruction;
5. Serve as a welcoming introduction to CSA, its services, and informal local and regional networking; and,
6. Provide guidance and encouragement to protégés who aspire to higher positions in site, district, county, and state leadership.



Who are potential ACSA mentors?

Mentors will include recently retired, up-to-date educational leaders with a history of success, as well as experiences, successful current practitioners. Regions will be encouraged to develop a diverse cadre of mentors who can work with protégés from across the administrative spectrum including: coordinators; assistant principals; principals; directors; assistant superintendents; superintendents; confidential and classified leaders; and leaders in human resources, pupil services, categorical programs, curriculum and instruction, assessment, special education, business, information technology.

ACSA Mentors

What are the qualifications to serve as an ACSA mentor?

Mentors must be:

- ACSA members
- Experienced, successful, knowledgeable educational leaders
- Up-to-date on requirements, expectations and challenges of the protégé
- Excellent listeners, paraphrasers, questioners and facilitators
- Collaborative in nature, with the highest ethics, confidential and trustworthy
- Enthusiastic, able to commit the time needed, suited to the protégés schedule
- Responsible and dependable
- Knowledgeable and respectful of district structures, personnel, culture and expectations
- Understanding and accepting of the norms, goals and limitations of mentoring
- Proficient in ACSA mentoring and possibly ACSA/NTC coaching
- Knowledgeable of ACSA organizational structures, services and professional development resources
- Able to introduce the protégé to formal and informal local and regional networks within and outside of ACSA

What does the training for ACSA mentors include?

An initial one-day Mentor Orientation Training, developed and presented by ACSA staff, will include:

- Orientation to mentoring structure, norms, goals and limitations
- Orientation to ACSA coaching and professional development services
- Introduction to : guided practice and feedback in rapport and trust-building, generational awareness, listening, paraphrasing, clarifying and meditational questioning, detecting bias and limiting dispositions, and providing feedback
- Description of opportunities for ongoing mentor support and networking
- Review of ACSA structures, resources and opportunities for involvement and enrichment



How will ACSA mentors be supported and kept up-to-date?

Mentor support for the long- and short-term will include:

- Professional and comprehensive one-day Mentor Orientation Training
- Mentor Resources Binder provided to each mentor during training
- Mentor Program Web site updated and maintained by ACSA staff with contributions by ACSA mentors
- Mentor seminars/follow-up trainings at ACSA's annual Leadership Summit and regional conferences
- ACSA web-based resources posted by staff, councils and committees
- ACSA updates and articles in EdCal and Leadership magazine

ACSA Protégés

Who are potential ACSA protégés?

Mentoring serves those who see supportive professional development as “who we are” and “what we do” as educational leaders. Acsa protégés are leaders focused upon growth as a defining professional practice. Participating in mentoring as a protégé is regarded as a vital experience in life-long professional learning.

ACSA protégés will include:

- New educational leaders
- Experienced leaders new to a position, district or region
- Veterans who desire a confidential, professional connection with a successful, experienced practitioner
- Educational leaders who want to invest in the growth of their leadership, including: coordinators; assistant principals; principals; directors; assistant superintendents; superintendents; confidential and classified leaders; and leaders in human resources, pupil services, categorical programs, curriculum and instruction, assessment, special education, business, information technology.

Educational leaders who seek guidance in furthering their careers through professional reading, coursework, on-the-job-experience and networking

How can mentoring services be requested?

Each region will determine and publicize its own procedure. ACSA staff may be contracted through the ACSA Mentoring Program Web page. Inquiries for mentoring services received by ACSA staff will be referred to the Region Presidents or designee.



Program Structure

How is ACSA Mentoring structured and administered?

ACSA Mentoring may be administered as a region or district program. At a region level, the program is administered independent by each of the 19 ACSA regions under the authority of the region president. Region responsibility includes:

- Mentor recruitment, selection and monitoring
- Protégé recruitment
- Mentor-protégé matching
- Regional mentor support and networking
- Coordination/communications with participating districts
- Collection of fees (if any) and honorariums to mentors (if any)

For larger school districts, with approximately 10,000+ ADA, ACSA Mentoring can also be district-based, with in-house training for central office staff and principals. Mentors could be central office staff and senior principals; while protégés could be new site and central office leaders, and veterans with new assignments. Mentor-protégé matching can occur within the district, with training of mentors by ACSA and ongoing mentor support through ACSA.

When can mentoring take place?

Mentoring take place at times and dates determined by the mentor and the protégé. It can occur on- or off-site; during the workday, if supported by the district, or after hours; face-to-face, by phone, or via e-mail. While there is no set minimum or maximum number of contact hours, mentoring, as a support service, generally occupies from one to three hours per month.

How are mentors and protégés matched?

Mentor-protégé matching is done at the region level, or the district level for a district-based program, where each mentor and protégé is best known. In addition:

- Regions may take advantage of Mentoring Program profiles for mentors and protégés, provided in the Mentor Resource Binder, to assist in matching.
- Matching will consider similar experience in the protégés job and successful experience of the mentor in a similar position; matching of district and mentor; distance and mentor availability; format in which the protégé may request mentoring services, such as face-to-face, phone, or e-mail; personality matching; and, special characteristics requested by the protégé, such as gender, background, race or ethnicity.



What are the costs of ACSA Mentoring?

The costs for ACSA mentoring are the responsibility of each region or district program. The required one-day Mentor Orientation Training may be contracted by a regions or district at the total cost of \$600 + travel expenses for the presenters and \$25.00/mentor for the Mentor Resources Binder. The Orientation Training features:

- ACSA mentoring: ACSA's Mission, Vision and Goals in Action
- How ACSA Mentoring Works
- Mentoring Techniques
 - Rapport and trust-Building
 - Generational Awareness
 - Listening
 - Paraphrasing
 - Positive Presuppositions
 - Providing Feedback
 - Questioning
- Dynamic Benefits of ACSA Membership and ACSA Leadership Opportunities
- Professional Support for ACSA Mentors

No charges are anticipated for mentoring seminars or trainings at ACSA's annual Leadership Summit or regional conferences.

Annual Costs for mentoring services are to be determined by each region within the following guidelines:

- Mentoring can be provided by ACSA members as a voluntary service to members and non-members as support and as an introduction to ACSA.
- Mentoring can be provided as a low-cost service, reimbursing the mentor for travel costs through an honorarium of up to \$300.00/year per protégé.
- Mentoring can be provided at a low-cost to non-members as support and as an introduction to ACSA, but as a free benefit of ACSA membership.
- Mentoring costs could be paid by the protégé, by the district, by the region or through a cost-sharing agreement.



In Conclusion

Mentoring is really what ACSA is all about. Despite all the information provided, mentoring really is pretty simple. It is about bringing two people together in an informal relationship focused on professional support. ACSA mentoring invites experienced, successful educational leaders to lend a caring, confidential, non-judgmental ear to both new leaders and to veteran leaders with new responsibilities, to provide guidance, support, feedback, and to share operational/technical expertise. Mentoring can be coordinated “in house” by a school district. ACSA provides all the mentor training and ongoing support. The people involved really make it work by reaching out to one another.



For more information:

Please visit www.acsa.org/mentoring, or contact:

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