

WHO are the mentors?

They are staff, not just supporting services staff, who have been employed with MCPS for at least five years. They want to share knowledge and guidance with colleagues as they strive to meet short- and long-term goals. They have had a range of work experiences, participated in MCPS committees and spent time volunteering outside of work. They are leaders and problem solvers who communicate effectively, are trustworthy and are organized. They are not your direct supervisor.

WHY should I get involved?

It could change your life. A successful mentoring relationship is a friendship where two people share opinions, thoughts and ideas. The program is focused on professional development and growth, which can lead to job security, job advancement, better job satisfaction and increased pay.

HOW do I get started?

Visit www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/development/teams/programs/ss_pgs.shtm or call program coordinator Monique Riddick in the Office of Organizational Development at 301-353-8556.

The Supporting Services Mentoring Program

designed by...

Montgomery County Public Schools
Service Employees International Union Local 500

Making Our Respect Compact Real

- Resolving differences
- Enhancing collaboration
- Supporting our coworkers
- Promoting civility
- Encouraging creativity
- Communicating openly
- Team building through trust

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Mentoring can make all the difference...



Supporting Services Mentoring Program

Part of the Supporting Services Professional Growth System



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Supporting services employees come to work every day ready to face the challenges of their jobs. They work as bus drivers, cafeteria staff, technicians, paraeducators, graphic artists, building service workers and in hundreds of other positions. Sometimes, employees want to learn how to do their jobs better. Maybe they want to pick up a new skill or explore different career possibilities within MCPS.

Mentoring can help.

MCPS has started a mentoring program for its supporting services staff, one of the final pieces in the Supporting Services Professional Growth System. The program will help new employees and existing staff excel in their current jobs, direct them to training and on-the-job work experiences and prepare them for career development opportunities. Permanent supporting services employees will be able to take part in the mentoring program. The program is also a part of the MCPS commitment to employees, as laid out in Goal 4 of the strategic plan: *Our Call to Action: Pursuit of Excellence*.

Mentoring is defined as guidance and counsel from a trusted source. It is an active and supportive relationship that can be beneficial professionally and personally. The mentor and mentee learn from each other by sharing ideas and thoughts, by reflecting on strategies and practices and by providing encouragement.

Mentors, trained by the Office of Organizational Development, can offer support in a variety of ways. They can help mentees explore possibilities for new kinds of work, develop a strategy for pursuing a specific career path, suggest training, coaching and tutoring opportunities and recommend ways to cope with difficult situations. The program also can provide an opportunity to meet people from different backgrounds and in different jobs.

Mentees have responsibilities as well. They are asked to participate in an initial information meeting, be open to meeting before and after hours and have a willingness to act on feedback from their mentor.

There are many reasons for supporting services employees to get involved in the mentoring program. To perform better in their current job. To change

careers in MCPS. To find a helpful training course. To receive encouragement from a trusted source. The options are endless. Visit www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/development/teams/programs/ss_pgs.shtm for more information.



Here are answers to frequently asked questions about the Supporting Services mentoring program.

Q. What happens in a mentoring relationship?

A. Mentoring is a professional development opportunity where employees can learn how to do their jobs better, improve skills and investigate new career options. Mentors can provide resources, contacts and a network of information and offer ways to improve. Mentors might help set up job shadowing, for example. Or they may suggest reading a certain book or attending a seminar or training. Mentors can also recommend ways to cope with difficult situations, as well as provide encouragement, advice and understanding.

Q. What are the benefits of the program?

A. There are many. Mentoring:

- Fosters satisfied and productive employees
- Improves recruitment and boosts retention
- Builds a professional learning community
- Creates a positive work environment

Q. How does the selection process work?

A. Mentees select a mentor candidate from a list that highlights professional information about each mentor. Mentees should strive to match themselves with a mentor who has job skills they wish to emulate and from whom they can gain knowledge and understanding. The mentee contacts the mentor candidate by phone or e-mail to discuss goals for the mentoring. If both agree that this relationship will be beneficial, a meeting is scheduled. If at any time, a mentee feels the mentor selected is not a good fit, that's OK and another mentor is selected.

Q. What can a mentee expect from a mentor?

A. A successful mentor relationship is based on trust, commitment and communication between the two parties. Mentees will receive guidance in a variety of ways, including modeling and constructive feedback. Mentees can expect confidentiality.

Q. How often are mentor and mentee expected to meet?

A. Once paired up, a mentor and mentee will meet for a minimum of four hours each month. The program recommends a one-year commitment, but a mentoring relationship can often last for years.