

2019-2020

STUDENT/PARTNER ALLIANCE

Mentee Handbook





Dear Students,

Welcome to Student/Partner Alliance!! We are very happy to have you as part of our program and to get to know you over the next four years.

This handbook is intended to help you and your parents better understand our program and our expectations. We hope that you will always feel comfortable to contact us with any questions or any concerns about anything. Your success and your safety are our top priorities.

Best wishes,

Margaret Momber
Executive Director
mmomber@studentpartneralliance.org
908-522-0405

WHAT IS A MENTOR?

A MENTOR IS:

- A trusted guide and friend
- Someone who will listen to you
- Someone who will help you explore new opportunities
- Someone who will have good ideas about how to deal with difficult situations
- A Coach
- An Advisor
- Consistent and dependable
- A positive role model
- Someone who always puts your safety and well-being first

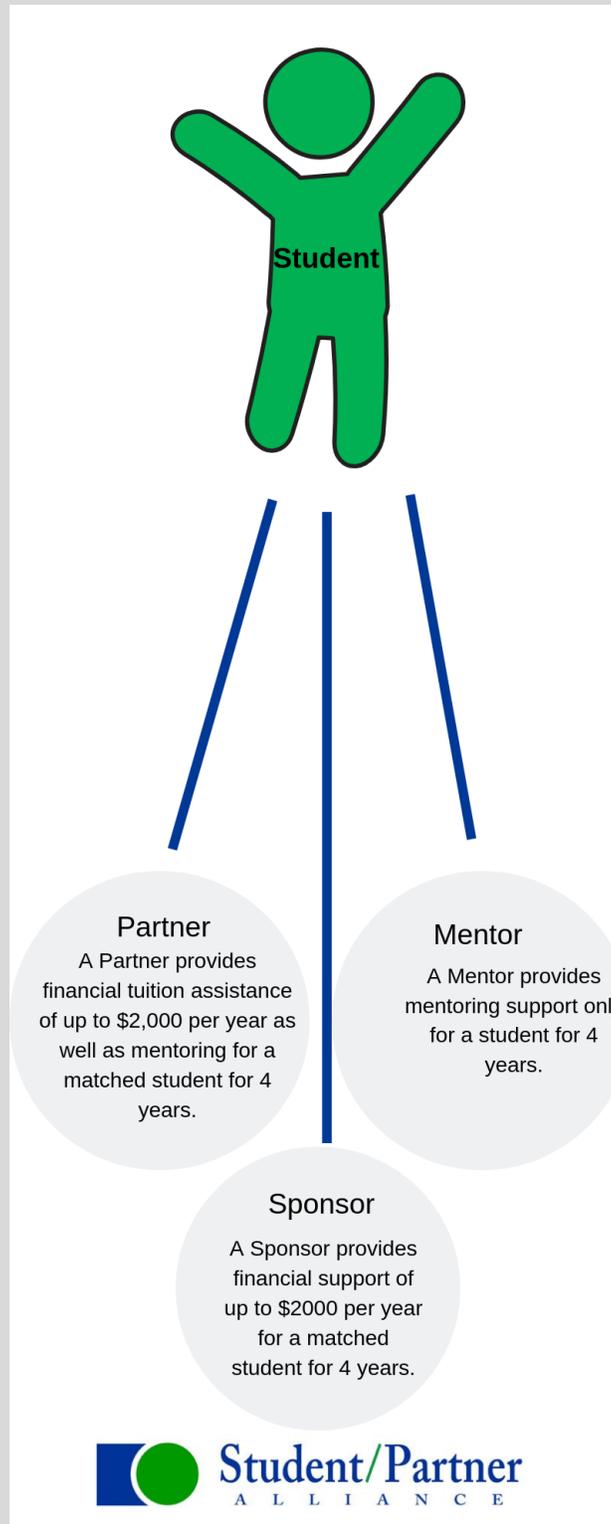
A MENTOR IS NOT:

- A parent
- A peer
- An “ATM” (students are never allowed to ask their supporters for money)
- Someone to constantly unload on
- A taxi-service
- A therapist
- A tutor



WHY MENTORING MATTERS

The combination of a quality education and a supportive mentor can allow you to reach your goals and succeed in high school, college, and life.



DECODING "PARTNER," "SPONSOR," & "MENTOR"

What is a Sponsor?

- A sponsor can be an individual, corporation or a foundation that provides the student with scholarship money so that he/she can attend school.

What is a Mentor?

- A trusted guide and friend
- Someone who listens to you
- Someone who will help you explore new opportunities
- Someone who will have good ideas about how to deal with difficult situations
- Someone who encourages you
- A Coach and Advisor

What Partner is:

- Partners are the combination of a sponsor and a mentor, providing scholarships money and mentoring.



WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR MENTOR?

The relationship that you develop with your mentor is unique and you can benefit from their guidance and support.

Expect your mentor to be a professional and dedicated person who wants to help you succeed as he or she acts as an extra support system during your high school career.

If at any time you feel that your "mentor" or "partner" is not behaving appropriately with you, please call the S/PA office right away at 908-522-0405.



ABOUT STUDENT/PARTNER ALLIANCE

Student/Partner Alliance is a scholarship and mentoring program. Our objective is to support you financially and with a mentor during your four years in high school.

What to expect as a S/PA student?

- A 4-year scholarship (Once you are admitted into our program, we agree to support you during your four years at high school as long as you work hard and remain at the school where you were admitted. **You do not need to reapply each year.**
- You will be matched with a mentor for 4 years.
- You should expect to attend S/PA organized events throughout the year including:
 - A breakfast or lunch with your mentor at your school
 - A fall service day at the Community Food Bank of NJ
 - A holiday party in January at a S/PA affiliated school
 - A spring event such as Bowling or a volunteer day at the Newark Conservancy



WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU



Work Hard in School

- S/PA staff and your mentor will review your report cards carefully including tardiness, absences, and teachers' comments. We expect you to work hard and maintain a GPA of 2.5 or better.
- Be on time for school.

Establish and maintain a relationship with your mentor.

- Keep in contact with your mentor and be responsive to their texts, emails, and calls. Try to reach out at least once a month, if not more.
- Your mentor wants to be your friend and advisor.
- Invite your mentor to your extracurricular events such as your sporting events, plays, band performances, etc.

S/PA MENTORING PROGRAM

STRUCTURE AND EVENTS

STUDENT/PARTNER ALLIANCE was conceived as a program offering a combination of financial and coaching support to high school students residing in the urban areas of Greater Newark, Elizabeth, and Jersey City in order to improve the students' chances of attaining a quality education at a nearby private school.

STUDENT/PARTNER ALLIANCE is unique because we provide scholarships and mentors. This unique combination has led to 100% graduation rates for our students over the past six years.

PROGRAM: At the beginning of each academic year, incoming students attend a S/PA orientation with their parent(s)/guardian, to learn about S/PA's program and the benefits of having a mentor. You will also learn about the events that S/PA has arranged for you to meet with their mentors.

Each fall, a mentor training workshop is offered for all new mentors, so our mentors can learn about the role of a mentor, how to be an effective mentor, S/PA events, their student mentees and expectations of the mentoring relationship.

Throughout the year, S/PA sponsors events where you and your mentor can meet and spend time together in a comfortable environment. These activities are fun, and sometimes help the community. Yearly scheduled events have included:

- Student/Partner/Mentor Breakfasts/Lunches 2X yearly (October; and again in March/April, at each school)
- Day of Service at Community FoodBank (November)
- Holiday Party (early January – families invited)
- Bowling and pizza party (April/May)

TIPS FOR BEING A GOOD MENTEE

1. Make eye contact with your mentor when you meet.
2. Communicate openly with your mentor and let your mentor know of any difficulties that you are having in school.
3. Be responsive when your mentor communicates with you.
4. Attend all the events and show up on time. If you are running late, you cannot attend, or you get sick suddenly, tell your mentor as soon as possible.
5. Ask your mentor questions about his or her interests.
6. Invite your mentor to any extracurricular events or activities.
7. Be reliable.
8. Ask your mentor for advice. They want to help.



COMMUNICATION TIPS

You'll meet your mentor for the first time at school at a breakfast or lunch.

Questions to ask:

- Where do you work?
- Where did you grow up?
- What kind of hobbies do you have?
- What are your favorite foods, books, etc.?
- How should we communicate moving forward?

How to communicate with your mentor:

- Via phone
- Via text
- Via email

Do not use social media to communicate with your mentor.



GUIDE TO SUCCESS

High school can be a hard time, filled with new experiences and academic challenges. Your mentor can be helpful in navigating these challenges and serving as an extra point of support.

FRESHMAN YEAR:

- Attend all S/PA activities and regularly communicate with your mentor
- As you get used to your new school, stay organized and learn to manage your time efficiently as you make time for studying, family responsibilities and friends.

SOPHMORE YEAR:

- Attend all S/PA activities and regularly communicate with your mentor
- Find a club or sport that you like and become active in it
- Take a practice PSAT

JUNIOR YEAR:

- Start thinking about college and speak with your guidance counselor about financial aid
- Start preparing for the SAT/ACT, take the SAT/ACT
- Attend a college fair and talk to your mentor about your college interests

SENIOR YEAR:

- Complete all of your financial aid paperwork and send in your applications.
- Speak with your mentor as you determine which college is right for you.



WORDS FROM S/PA GRADUATES

"Because of Student/Partner Alliance, I was able to complete a high school that helped me grow academically and emotionally. Without the support of S/PA, attending SVA would not have been possible for me and my family..."

"I hope one day I will be able to help other students achieve their dreams just as you have helped me. The value of your support will always be treasured."

"My mentor motivated me and gave me advice on how to manage my work."

"My mentor did multiple things to help me throughout the two years that I was assigned to him. From giving me opportunities to gain community service hours at my school (considering he is an active member or advisor occasionally at the school), to using his connections from working with the alumni office at my school to get me in touch with someone who works in what I wish to major in college."

"Being a first generation student, my mentor helped in many different ways. She had answers to the questions I had during my college process. I really liked the fact how the experiences I was having at school she could relate to because she is an alum of my school. She understood what hardships and even the goals I was reaching for."

"She gave me tips about the college process as well as informed me about information I needed through my four years."



Student/Partner

A L L I A N C E

Student Handbook Signed Pledge

September 2019

I _____, pledge that I have read the Student/Partner Alliance Student Handbook. I understand and agree to the terms of the S/PA program, and my responsibilities as a S/PA Student.

I understand that it is my responsibility to go to school and to maintain good grades in all of my subjects. I know that if I am struggling in a subject, that it is my responsibility to ask my teachers or my school for extra help in the subject.

I also understand that it is my responsibility to stay in touch with my mentor/partner, to respond when he/she reaches out in a timely manner, and to always be respectful of them.

_____: Printed Name

_____: Signature

_____: Date