

# Parent Mentor Operating Guidelines

Ratified by the Parent Mentor Council on: 10/8/09

Parent Mentor services are a valuable asset to school districts and families and without the support, services and training benefits sponsored and provided by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities (OCECD) it would not be as strong and effective of a program. The following guidelines are implemented to continue to reach the level of professional development and consistency throughout the state. The goal is to assist all Ohio Parent Mentors in providing school districts and families with support and services for their children with disabilities.

## **Article I - NAME**

Parent Mentors of Ohio (PMO) is the Ohio Parent Mentor project sustained by state, federal, and/or other funds and managed by the Ohio Department of Education; Office for Exceptional Children (OEC) and the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities.

## **Article II – MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Parent Mentors of Ohio (PMO) is to provide the necessary support and resources, free of charge, to families of children with disabilities and the professionals that serve them.

## **Article III- VISION**

Districts have a responsibility to develop, support, and implement a system of education services for all students.

The basis of the Parent Mentor Program is the expectation that students with disabilities be ensured an appropriate and meaningful education when parents and educator communicate effectively and operationalize the partnership planning required by IDEA.

Districts choose to implement the Parent Mentor Program to promote necessary and effective communication by providing information and support to families about special education issues and by providing a mechanism to convey the family perspective back to the system.

## Article IV – SCOPE OF WORK

Purpose: The purpose of the Parent Mentor Program is to help parents of children with disabilities effectively navigate the educational system in partnership with school district personnel. This is accomplished by providing information and support to families and by creating a mechanism to convey the family perspective to school district officials.

Objectives:

- A. The Parent Mentor must meet the following criteria:
  - 1. Be employed at a minimum of .5 full time equivalency (FTE).
  - 2. Be a parent of a child with a disability.
  - 3. Be a member or have knowledge of the community serviced by the project.
  - 4. Has experience with leadership in the parent community.
  - 5. Is experienced in and knowledgeable about the special education system.
  - 6. Has demonstrated excellent communication skills.
  - 7. Works in conjunction with various professionals and school officials to meet the needs of students.
  - 8. Is knowledgeable about the support systems in the community.
  - 9. Has previous experience in facilitating training and or providing parents with resource information.
  
- B. Roles and responsibilities of the Parent Mentor(s) must include working with the district representative:
  - 1. Develop the project budget and implement services.
  - 2. Submit project evaluation data upon request.
  - 3. Attend statewide fall and spring conferences and a minimum of 3 regional Parent Mentor meetings.
  - 4. Establish a professional development plan aligned with the particular needs of the district.
  - 5. Attend job-related professional development sessions to fulfill goals established in the professional development plan.
  - 6. Obtain and distribute materials/resources to parents of children with disabilities and district personnel to improve student achievement.
  - 7. Provide, organize and/or conduct workshops or training and provide ongoing technical assistance to parents, district personnel and community members.
  - 8. Promote Parent Mentor services within the school district and community (i.e., establish parent support groups and/or

support parent networking as needed, help parents find and access community resources).

9. Attend IEP meetings at parent or district request.
10. Promote a program of compliance with current federal regulations, Ohio Operating Standards, and local site policy relating to services, facilities, and management within the Parent Mentor duties.

C. Maintain current knowledge of legislative matters considered by the state legislature and or federal government, relating to the education of children with disabilities.

D. Develop and maintain parent and professional partnerships as liaisons with other Parent Mentor associations and related organizations to promote collaboration and improve student achievement.

E. Roles and responsibilities of the district must include:

1. Identification of a district representative (by title) who will provide ongoing supervision and support to the Parent Mentor(s).
2. If a project is part of a consortium, identify a contact person from each district.
3. Ensure the Parent Mentor is involved in district activities (e.g., attend staff meetings, participate in training, and serve on committees).
4. Work with the Parent Mentor to develop the project budget and implement services.
5. Manage the budget and submit revisions if needed.
6. Make facilities and resources available to the Parent Mentor(s).
7. Provide access to a private telephone, a site e-mail address, office equipment and/or clerical support and copies of laws and regulations, including a copy of Ohio's Operating standards for Ohio's Schools Serving Children with Disabilities.
8. Attend the fall and spring conferences with the Parent Mentor.
9. Work with the Parent Mentor to develop a professional development plan aligned with the particular needs of the district and Parent Mentor.
10. Submit project evaluation data upon request.

## **Article V – MEMBERSHIP**

- A. Membership shall be available to district(s) pending an application/approval process by ODE and OCECD. Districts applying must subscribe to the PMO Operating Guidelines, rights, and responsibilities.
- B. Membership in the PMO shall be of three types:
  - 1. State funded through a project with Ohio Department of Education: Person employed as Parent Mentor with an approved State funded grant through Ohio Department of Education.
  - 2. Federally funded through a project with the Ohio Department of Education: Person employed as Parent Mentor with an approved federally funded grant through the Ohio Department of Education.
  - 3. Other funding sources: a person employed as a Parent Mentor funded by a school district or private agency.

## **Article VI – REGIONAL MEETINGS**

All Parent Mentors must attend a minimum of three Parent Mentor regional meetings to meet orientation, training, support and job responsibility and consistency requirements as outlined. Failure to meet this requirement may jeopardize the project resources.

All regional meeting minutes must be maintained and submitted to the webmaster within one week of the regional meeting date. The Council members in each region are responsible to ensure minutes are submitted on times. Minutes must include all persons present and absent. A minimum of one meeting must provide professional development training hours.

## **Article VII – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (PDP)**

- A. Parent Mentors of Ohio projects will be required to complete a Professional Development Plan as outlined annually.

Attend two mandatory state-wide conferences the annual Fall and the Spring Conference. Training hours will be provided.

- B. The time frame for completion of requirements is July 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup>. Required mailing of Professional Development Plan (PDP) form with your goals outlined to OCECD prior to the Fall Conference. Your reviewed and OCECD initialed PDP will be returned no later than the end of the Fall Conference.
1. Must include evidence of the identification of three needs and three goals.
  2. At least one goal needs to be tied to the section of supplemental hours. Supplement hours to start once current PDP is completed. Supplementary hours completed in April, May or June not to exceed a total of ten hours, may be applied to the supplemental hours for the following year.
  3. Attach documentation to the PDP to support goal attainment. Please only submit copies (no originals, please) and indicate which goal it meets by writing the goal number on it.
  4. Must provide copy of certificate of attendance for approval of hours (for both Core and supplemental hours).
  5. All Parent Mentors must participate by completing their PDP annually. This includes all three types of members. This means you.
  6. Review this document with your supervisor as part of your yearly evaluation.
  7. Your PDP will again be reviewed prior to the Spring Conference. You will be advised at that time if it is complete and/or if it needs to be re-submitted.
  8. Note – you could have potentially already accomplished some of your supplemental hours prior to approval at the Fall Conference. This is all right.

#### **Article VIII - ODE and OCECD**

- A. The Parent Mentor projects funded from State Funds identified in the State budget under special education enhancements as well as federal discretionary funds. The "per" project amount is determined by the budget allocation divided by the number of projects.
- B. The Ohio Department of Education, OEC in collaboration with the OCECD manages the project Scope of Work. There are 52 (number may vary slightly year to year) continuation grants funded (subsidy) with state monies renewed on an annual basis unless a district chooses not to participate and discontinues the grant. If this occurs, other districts may apply for the open

project through a process established with OEC.

- C. The Office of Exceptional Children reviews and approves project applications.
- D. If a district needs to submit a budget amendment the district must submit a new Project application front page, brief budget narrative and a new budget grid to the OEC, Resource management section.
  - 1. The OEC will review and e-mail a letter to the district indicating approval or denial of proposed budget amendment.
- E. Project Scope of Work entails evaluative data collection that shall be provided to OEC according to established timelines.
- F. OCECD Co-Director and/or OCECD State Training Coordinator and OEC, Ohio Dept of Education, work together to provide technical assistance and plan Parent Mentor training at state conferences, regional trainings, and trainings at OCECD. They also advise the Parent Mentor of Ohio Council and attend those meetings.
- G. OCECD Grants Manager/ Bookkeeper, arranges logistics and sends the notices to Parent Mentors of Ohio and their district representatives for state conference and trainings and attends Parent Mentor of Ohio Council meetings. Types of technical assistance OCECD gives to Parent Mentors of Ohio are:
  - 1. OCECD offices will refer parents to the appropriate Parent Mentor.
  - 2. Consultation with your county's parent advocate regarding special education questions and case consultation.
  - 3. Free OCECD publications for parents when Parent Mentor sends to OCECD a registration form for each parent. Publications such as: *How to Write an IEP, Behavior Focused IEP's, Parents' Rights in the Special Education Process, Building Communication Through Letter Writing, Transition Drives the IEP, Understanding AD/HD, etc.*
  - 4. Option to purchase at a reduced rate the OCECD publications as above when not obtaining parent registrations. (as outlined in PMO manual).
  - 5. OCECD sponsored invitation to trainings and conferences.
  - 6. Opportunity provided to attend an annual orientation in the fall for all new mentors to acquaint them with the PMO manual, reporting to ODE and their job responsibilities.

7. Assistance provided in planning, coordinating, and conducting topical workshops in your school district or area.
8. Research provided on specific topics, disabilities, organizations, and resource by OCECD librarian.
9. Send informational e-mail throughout the year to all Parent Mentors of Ohio and parent Organizations providing updated information on IDEA & related topics.
10. Consultation provided regarding program and systemic issues.
11. Updates on legislative and policy issues at state and federal levels.

### **Article IX– PMO COUNCIL**

- A. The PMO council shall coordinate the ongoing exchange of information between Parent Mentors projects, the OEC, the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities and other interested entities.
- B. The PMO Council shall consist of the following:
  1. Council Chairperson;
  2. Council co-chairperson;
  3. Two Parent Mentors from each region who will serve as regional representatives;  
(All parent mentors are expected to serve on the council)
  4. council recorder;
  5. A Committee representative; and
  6. OEC/OCECD representatives.
- C. The Council shall provide oversight of the Chairperson.
- D. The Council shall assign additional duties to the Parent Mentor committees in alignment with the Plan of Action.
- E. There shall be three scheduled annual Council meetings/conference calls and the Chairperson may schedule other meetings as needed.
- F. *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall be the rules of order for the orderly transaction of business in council meetings/conference calls. A majority of the council shall constitute a quorum. The votes of a majority of the quorum shall be the act of the council. No council vote, in the absence of a quorum.

## **Article X – COUNCIL POSITIONS QUALIFICATIONS**

- A. The Council Chairperson: Will have served one year as a current or past council member, and will have served two years as council co-chair.

The Council Co-Chairperson: Will have served one year as a current or past council member.

- B. Regional Parent Mentor Representative: Will have a minimum of one-year experience as a Parent Mentor.
- C. Council Recorder: Open to any council member.

## **Article XI - COUNCIL POSITIONS TERMS AND DUTIES**

- A. The Council Chairperson shall serve a two year consecutive term and have the following duties:
1. Schedule the three meeting dates. Send reminders of upcoming council meetings to council members and webmaster.
  2. Set agenda with input from the Office of Exceptional Children and the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities.
  3. Act as liaison with the Office of Exceptional Children and the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities.
  4. Preside at PMO conferences and Council meetings, including the meeting at which the Co-Chairperson succeeds the Chairperson.
  5. In conjunction with OEC and OCECD, review and verify draft minutes from recorder.
  6. Send council meeting draft minutes to web master within three (3) weeks of meeting.
  7. Contact council members who have missed two or more consecutive meetings to discuss continued participation on the Council.
  8. Establish collaborative relationship with co-chairperson to work on general Council business.
  9. Facilitate with parent mentor support committee and Co-Chairperson new council member orientation in the fall.
  10. With Council approval, appoint Special Committees and the members.
  11. Represent the PMO Council between its meetings and

- report to the council all important interim actions.
12. Perform other duties as may be assigned by the Council.
- B. The Co-Chairperson shall serve a two year consecutive term and have the following duties:
1. Assume the Chairperson role at the end of the term of the Chairperson.
  2. Monitor compliance with the operating guidelines. Maintain records i.e., regional meeting minutes.
  3. Facilitate Council meeting for chairperson in case of absence.
  4. Establish collaborative relationship with chairperson to work on general council business.
  5. Facilitate with parent mentor support committee and chairperson new council member orientation in the fall.
  6. Perform other duties as may be assigned by the Council.
- C. The Recorder shall serve a one year term and have the following duties:
1. Attend all council meetings and record minutes.
  2. Type a draft copy of minutes and send to chairperson, and co-chairperson, OCECD and OEC to approve before dissemination.
  3. Find replacement and notify chairperson if unable to attend council meeting.
- D. Each Committee Chairperson shall have the following duties:
1. Schedule and preside at Committee meetings including maintaining and distributing meeting minutes.
  2. Report Committee decisions and recommendations to the Council for final action.
  3. Perform other duties as may be assigned by the Council.
- E. Council members shall serve a two year term and have the following responsibilities:
1. Each region selects one member annually by June 30<sup>th</sup>.
  2. The council member's term begins at the annual fall meeting.
  3. All members current, outgoing, and new, attend the council meeting in the fall.
  4. Attend a minimum of three (3) council meetings/conference calls per year.
  5. Share council news with region.
  6. Share regional news with council members.
  7. Recruit Parent Mentors for committees.

8. Be responsible for all meeting materials, discussions and general information. Notify chairperson if unable to attend.
9. Participate on related council committees.
10. Regional Council representatives are responsible for bringing to the council's attention questions and concerns from other Parent Mentors in their Region.
11. Council members are responsible to ensure regional minutes are submitted to web master within one week of regional meeting dates.

## **Article XII – ELECTIONS/COUNCIL SELECTIONS**

The election process for the following positions:

- A. The Co-Chairperson:
  1. Council Chairperson will distribute an application (included in Council Chairperson manual) to current and past, eligible council members by September 1<sup>st</sup>.
  2. Council Chairperson will distribute ballot and completed applications to Council members by September 30<sup>th</sup>.
  3. The returned ballots will be tallied and new Council co-chairperson will take office at the fall Parent Mentor Council meeting.
- B. Regional Parent Mentor Representative:
  1. Parent Mentors may volunteer to represent their region.
  2. Regions may elect a representative.
  3. Current regional representatives may appoint representatives.
- C. Council Recorder: Volunteer basis or appointed by Chairperson at fall Parent Mentor Council meeting.
- D. Committee Chairperson: Elected by the members on the committee.
- E. If a vacancy occurs for Chairperson, the co-chair shall fill that position for the un-expired term and continue as Chairperson to serve their term as Chairperson.

If a vacancy occurs for Co-Chairperson, the Chairperson, will follow the election process to fulfill that position for the un-expired term.

If a vacancy occurs for Regional Parent Mentor Representative, a new representative will be selected from the region of the vacancy.

If a vacancy occurs for Council Recorder, the council will ask for a volunteer. If no one volunteers the council chairperson will appoint a council recorder.

If a vacancy occurs for a Committee, the council will seek a volunteer from the council membership.

### **Article XIII – COMMITTEES**

- A. There shall be the following Committees to fulfill the PMO purposes and objectives:
  - 1. Archive committee;
  - 2. Parent Mentor Support;
  - 3. Public Relations;
  - 4. Skills and Knowledge.
  
- B. The duties of the Committees are:
  - 1. The Committees shall elect a Committee chairperson with the duties as established in Article XI of these guidelines.
  - 2. As needed, meet before or between Council meetings to discuss the issues and innovations of the Committee.
  - 3. The Archive Committee shall: Preserve the history of the PMO by recording a visual and written documentation of important events, conferences, and people associated with the program.
    - a. Create and organize visually attractive and historically correct photograph albums for display at the fall and spring PMO conferences;
    - b. Create digital pictures for computer and power point presentations;
    - c. Attend work session.
  - 4. The Parent Mentor Support Committee shall: brainstorm ideas and develop strategies to help mentors support each other. Facilitate new mentor orientation annually. Complete other duties as assigned by council.
  - 5. The Public Relations Committee shall: enhance and positively promote the Parent Mentor program and its Mission by providing information about the program to families, educators, communities and legislators. The Public Relations Committee shall develop and share

strategies on how to effectively increase awareness of the PMO.

6. The Skills and Knowledge Committee shall plan the conferences, which include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - a. Assess training needs;
  - b. Select themes/coordinate topics;
  - c. Contact and schedule presenters and speakers;
  - d. Prepare details of the conference;
  - e. Communicate with the Conference Coordinator;
  - f. Organize and manage the registration process;
  - g. Assign facilitators to introduce presenters, review submitted Professional Development Plans, and conduct session evaluations;
  - h. Compile a summary of the conference evaluations, ratings and comments and make recommendations for distribution to the council including the need for follow-up presentations;
  - i. Solicit support, as needed, for these functions from the council; and
  - j. Perform other duties as may be assigned by council.

- C. A Special Committee and its members may be appointed and charged by the Council Chairperson with Council approval, in order to consider a special issue, the completion of which shall be reported to the council.

#### **Article XIV – CONFERENCES**

The PMO will hold an annual conference in the fall and a conference in the spring within the same school year.

SST Parent/Family Contacts will be invited to attend all state, regional, and local Parent Mentor trainings and conferences at their own expense.

#### **Article XV – REVIEWS AND AMENDMENTS**

These guidelines will be reviewed annually by a Council appointed special committee, Council Chairperson and/or council Co-Chairperson.

By simple majority vote the Parent Mentor council may amend these guidelines.

The full text of any amendment shall be available to the Parent Mentors, via the OCECD Website at [www.ocecd.org](http://www.ocecd.org). Click on the Parent Mentors of Ohio button to the right on the home page.