

Welcome to the 2018-2019 school year!

We hope you had a great summer and are feeling rested and ready to learn! We are excited to work with you again this year while you endeavor toward earning your high school credits and meeting your goal of graduation! One of the great parts of the SPS Online Program is that we (your teachers) are available to help you with your questions as you go through each of your classes. We are also here to support and encourage you. And this year, we have added a new and exciting opportunity to continue to better support you on your learning journey!

“What might be this new and exciting opportunity?” you ask. Drum Roll Please...You have been assigned a mentor to help you on your learning journey!

Below are a few questions you might be asking yourself about this new part of the program:

What is a mentor?

- A mentor is someone who is here to help you with questions you may have around navigating PEAK, technology issues, time management, and anything else that might come up as you go through your courses.
- A mentor monitors your course progress to ensure that you are staying on track to complete your courses this semester so that you can graduate!
- A mentor tracks your attendance and reports it to the state.
- A mentor encourages you to keep going even when the going gets tough.

Why did the SPS Online Program add this new Mentorship Program?

The short answer: We want you to graduate and mentorship is a great way to help you reach that goal.

The longer answer: Research shows that students do better in their courses when they have constant contact with their teachers/mentors. Research also shows that mentorship programs help build stronger connections between teachers and students which results in great success for students both academically and in attendance areas.

It is our hopes that by creating this new mentorship program, we (your teachers) can help you with any challenges that might arise sooner rather than later. We know that if too much time passes between when the challenge occurs and when it is addressed, there is a big risk of you not finishing your course and earning your credit toward graduation!

Finally, we like being teachers and we like working with you and building connections with our students! We are a community of online learners but we don't have to feel isolated in that learning. We want to create strong connections so that we can all support one another on this path!

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Who will my mentor be?

Your mentor will be one of the SPS Online Teachers. More than likely, this teacher/mentor will be a teacher you have already worked with in the past.

How will I know who is my mentor?

There are three ways to find out who is your mentor:

- 1) Look for an email from your mentor. The subject line of the email will say something about "mentor".
- 2) Look at your PEAK Dashboard. You have been enrolled in a non-graded course (like a homeroom) and you can find your teacher contact information on the Dashboard Card.
- 3) If all else fails, email Dennis.

What do I have to do as a mentee?

You have a few responsibilities as a mentee and some of these will be new for you this year. Please carefully read the list below so you know what is expected of you. The biggest change is that we will be requiring a once a month face-to-face check-in meeting/work session so we can better support you. More information about that meeting can be found below.

Your responsibilities as a mentee:

- 1) **Attend a once monthly, two-hour check-in/work time meeting with you mentor.**
*** Don't worry, we will have food and beverages!

You may be asking yourself, why have a monthly meeting?

The reason for this is that we know that building relationships is key in feeling connected to your learning (even in online school), and these meetings are a way to do just that! They also play an important role in helping you stay on track and get all of your questions about your courses and the program answered!

- This monthly check-in is an opportunity for you to connect with your mentor and ask any questions you may have about your courses or the program.
- It is also an opportunity for your mentor to check your progress in each of your courses to ensure that you are on track for finishing on time.
- Finally, you will have the opportunity to do school work in a room with your teachers and other students, which means, you can get lots of help with your coursework and the program.

What will happen at these meetings?

- You will spend 10 - 15 minutes with your mentor, where the two of you will go over your progress in your courses and talk through any questions you have about your courses or the program.

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- You will spend the remaining 1 hour and 45 minutes working on your coursework. If you have any questions about your coursework, there will be teachers there to answer questions!
- You will eat yummy treats and drink delicious beverages.
- You will be able to spend time with other students in the program who will be there at the same time!

What if I am unable to attend one of the monthly meetings?

- It is best if you do make it to the meeting, but if you are sick, and unable to attend the meeting, you need to email your mentor before the monthly meeting to let them know you are unable to attend. Your mentor will then make an alternative meeting time with you.
 - If you do not email your mentor to let them know that you will be absent, your absence will count as a “no call, no show”. Your classes will be put on hold, so you will not have access to PEAK. To get back into your courses, you must contact your mentor so you can schedule a new meeting time AND get back into your courses. This will have an adverse effect on your attendance.

When are the monthly meetings?

- Tuesday the 18th of September from 9-11.
- Tuesday the 16th of October from 9-11.
- Tuesday the 13th of November 9-11.
- No December Meeting
- Tuesday the 8th of January 9-11.
- You are required to attend.

Pro-Tip: Put these on your calendar now! If you take 5 minutes to do this now, you won't forget later!

Where are these meetings located?

Generally, your monthly check-ins will be held in the SPS Online Tech Services Building where Dennis Gray's office is located. The address is 180 D Street. Enter from the East side of the parking lot. If you need help with directions, email your mentor!!!

*** Due to scheduling conflicts, it is possible that the meeting location will be moved. Your mentor will send you an email if this is the case.

Update: Dennis' office has moved to the Tech Services Building. That address is above.

2) Communicate: Read all of your emails and respond.

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Email is the primary mode of communication for your teachers and mentor and it is through email that they will be delivering important information. If you miss information because you are not reading emails, that is going to make getting through the program more challenging.

- **Step 1:** Look for an email that reads: Welcome Mentee! This will be the email that introduces you to your mentor and gives you basic information about how you will be expected to make contact with your mentor.
- **Step 2:** Send them an email back to say hello...it is just the nice thing to do...and how people communicate through email! Engage in conversation!
- **Step 2.5:** At times your mentor will be calling you and/or sending emails to you as a way to check in! Answer their call and email! Go team "Let's Graduate!"

3) Check-in with your mentor TWO times a week:

Attendance is still part of online school, even though you aren't going to a physical location. **The state of Oregon requires that you check in two times a week with your mentor and are making adequate progress in your course. If you are not making progress and do not make contact with your mentor for 10 consecutive school days, you will be will be dropped from the SPS Online Program as per state law.**

So, save yourself the trouble and check-in! It takes 2 minutes, 2 times a week!

How-To Check-In with your Mentor:

- Each mentor may have a different preference as to how you check in, so it is important that you read their first email to you about how they expect you to check in.
- **Update:** This is different than last year when you had to check in twice a week with your teachers. Although you are encouraged to still do so, **YOU ONLY NEED TO CHECK IN WITH YOUR MENTOR TWICE A WEEK FOR ATTENDANCE PURPOSES.**
- To check-in, you are expected to send your mentor an email TWICE a week. In your check-in, you need to let them know:
 - How you are doing in your courses.
 - How far along are you.
 - What are you learning.
 - What is causing a struggle?
- Some mentors may send out emails with a fun question for you to answer as an option for a check-in. Other mentors may have a website for you to go to when it is time to check-in. Again, check your email for an email that reads "Welcome Mentee" to learn how your mentor expects you to check-in!

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Tip 1: It is important that in your check-in you provide your full name. Your email addresses are not always the same as your name!

Tip 2: Set a twice a week reminder on your phone to check in with your mentor. By doing so, you will never forget! Trust me, this is helpful!

Tip 3/Update: A check-in must be complete for it to count toward attendance (see above requirements), just typing the words "Checking In" or something similar and incomplete does not count.

4) Check your Mentee/Mentor Connection Class on your PEAK Dashboard.

Dennis has enrolled you in a special mentee class. There is no graded work to be done in this class, but your teacher may post announcements and other handy resources here to help you along your journey.

Update: This new homeroom/dashboard class is new this year.

We are so excited about this school year and working with you! One final tip to remember is that the more you show up for your school work, the easier the work will be and the more you will get out of it. It is going to be a great year!