To: MAIS Administrators, Counselors
From: MSAISnet Program Administrator, Chris Price
Subject: MSAISnet Mentor Roles & Responsibilities

What is the definition of a "Mentor" as used by MSAISnet?

When a school decides to participate in the programs offered by MSAISnet, they are asked to provide on-site personnel to serve as the "go-to" person for the online students. "Mentor" is the title MSAISnet uses for that person designated by his/her school to be the individual responsible for enrolling, monitoring, assisting, and advocating for their online students. This Mentor should be prepared to act as the single point of contact with MSAISnet for the individual school. MSAISnet considers Mentors to be a vital component to a student's successful online experience.

How to be a Successful Mentor

- Be available to give support to students who are taking online courses
- Help students become good time-managers
- Communicate frequently with students about concerns or problems they may have
- Proctor unit and semester exams and input confidential exam passwords when necessary
- Communicate with online instructors on student issues
- Encourage students to stay on track with their course pacing
- Help students stay motivated about online courses
- Make sure students have frequent access to a computer with reliable internet access
- Be available to proctor password protected module and course exams

Because the Mentor is an integral part of the online experience, school administrators should carefully select the person to fulfill this role. The individual should have sufficient technical knowledge to coordinate the processes necessary for the students to log onto the system, interact in the courses, and take proctored exams.

Since each school (and often each individual computer as well) has variations in firewall settings, pop-up controls, etc., the Mentor must have the knowledge and ability necessary to troubleshoot issues and alter settings to allow the online programs to function correctly. The Mentor should recognize when plug-ins may be necessary and capable to (have the appropriate passwords, permissions, and account rights at their local school) make these downloads and updates on school or student computers.

Issues that have surfaced during the first few years, which we are hoping to avoid in the future, to make the online experience more successful for students:

- Mentors selected for the role with little to no technical (computer/internet) knowledge. Subject area knowledge for each course is not necessary if the students are receiving content and instruction from the online instructor but the Mentor must have the technical knowledge to serve the role properly.

- Mentors selected who do not have internet access at their home. Mentoring online students requires consistent interaction and supervision. The Mentor must have ready access to the internet (preferably school, home, and mobile).
- Mentors with little to no previous experience in online commerce. The first step to enrolling a student into an online course is completing the web-based enrollment form and submitting payment using the online link. A necessary qualification for selection as Mentor should include the ability to complete online forms and transactions.
- Mentors with limited availability to students for encouragement, accountability, and/or exam proctoring. Many students are self-motivated, but most need the Mentor to maintain a high level of accountability. The Mentor must establish a routine with students for exam proctoring, as the exams are password protected and only the Mentor has access to these necessary passwords.
- Mentors who do not regularly check the progress of their enrolled students. The Mentor should spend adequate time with each student to develop pacing guidelines to complete the course successfully in the allotted time and should frequently verify that the student is progressing sufficiently.

Basic mentor account instructions:

Log into your account using the credentials (Username/Password) assigned and emailed to you:

https://accelerate-tiva.agilixbuzz.com/

Select the student you wish to view
Click on the specific student enrollment (course) you wish to view
Click on the lesson you wish to view (note -- the view you see is the same as what the student sees when he or she accesses the course
If you click on a quiz or exam, and then click on the down arrow adjacent to the lower case " i " located on the right hand side of the screen, you can select to view various features

Note the three bars near the upper left corner of the screen. Clicking this icon allows you to return to the Select Student screen or manage other functions. If you have selected a student, these other functions include viewing a Calendar of due dates for course assignments, viewing Grades, and contacting Support.
Under the Grades tab, select a specific enrollment/course. Note that the next screen displays a Target Due Date – this is based on steady progress from the start and end dates. Also, note that this page has a printer icon at the top so can be printed for a paper copy of assignments and "due dates." On this page you may also click on a specific assignment and view various features.

*** To view student grades in past courses: ***
Log in, then click on the student's name, then click on the three bars in upper left, then click Grades, then "*Past Courses*" tab, then select the course. Record the grade from here or, if you would like a hard copy -- click the print icon at the top, then click print, then click "Open PDF in Preview", then save that pdf to your computer.

Note: Enrollment extensions may **only** be granted by an MSAISnet administrator -- extension requests for consideration should be made to MSAISnet <u>well in advance</u> to the active end date. Extensions are only considered for enrollments that have not reached the set end date.

MSAISnet best practice recommendations:

After 23 academic terms of service for over 105 unique schools, I feel we have encountered most of the issues that can arise during the utilization of an online program. In addition to our *Information & Pricing* document and our *Mentor Roles & Responsibilities* document, I recommend each participating school administrator/Mentor review the following best practice recommendations. As always, if you or one of your students have any issues, feel free to reach out via email, text, or phone and I will address them as promptly as possible.

- Make sure to pay ahead of time – as indicated in our operating procedures, we do not enroll until both an enrollment form and payment have been received. Therefore, allow enough time between the enrollment form submission date and the proposed start date to make payment. If a Mentor submits an enrollment form but then must receive payment from a parent, and then make a request to the finance manager to submit the school's payment to MSAISnet, and then that check must be signed by a couple of people before mailing, immediate enrollment is unrealistic. Using a school credit card at the electronic payment link significantly expedites the process and is recommended.

- On the enrollment form, provide a contact number for the Mentor where he or she can be reached directly as well as afterhours and not a general school number. Students tend to get locked out of their accounts or have issues that need the attention of their Mentor after school hours. I do not contact a Mentor unless there is an issue worthy of a conversation and typically, I simply direct the Mentor to contact the student to discuss since policies and expectations are set locally.   Proper communication of local school policies and expectations at the beginning of an enrollment significantly reduces student issues and related conversations.

- Recall that MSAISnet is a program made available to your school and then offered by your school to your students. Each participating school uses MSAISnet resources in the manner they see fit and each school establishes their own policies and performance expectations. The local school awards any grades or earned credits so local administrators/Mentors may supplement the program with additional assignments if desired or exempt students from completing online assignments/modules.

- Mentors should not allow students to fall off the pacing schedule unless there are unique circumstances. Expectations for students should mimic the traditional classroom setting and should be clearly expressed. Students should be accountable for continually making progress towards completing their enrollment and Mentors should be available as necessary to proctor password protected exams.

- If a student reports a problem with an enrollment, such as he or she cannot log into the program or the slides on a module are not advancing, the Mentor should log in as the student using the Mentor's device and verify function/nonfunction. Attempting the same while connected to a different network is also proper procedure for troubleshooting. 99% of the time when I am contacted by a Mentor because a student is having an issue with the functionality of the program, I can log in as the student and operate the program successfully on my device. The problem turns out to be a device setting, a firewall setting, a pop-up blocker, or some other local issue that must be handled by local personnel (the Mentor or local IT). During the enrollment process, the Mentor is cc'd on the student "Welcome" email so that the Mentor will have a copy of the student's credentials specifically for this reason.