



**Illinois Statewide Parent Mentor Initiative
FY26 Application for Programmatic Support: New Partners**

Statement of Intent: Due July 15, 2025
Full Application: Due August 1st, 2025

Training and Program Management:

Parent Engagement Institute
at Palenque LSNA and
Southwest Organizing Project

Grant Administration:

Southwest Organizing Project



FY26 Application for Programmatic Support: New Partners

TO PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS:

Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP) is issuing this application for programmatic support for new community partners to help lead the Parent Mentor Program (referred to throughout as “PMP”). This application is presented by SWOP, in partnership with the State of Illinois and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). We anticipate adding new partner organizations to lead the Parent Mentor Program in their communities, each starting with an average of 2 public elementary or middle schools. Our priority will be partnering with community-based organizations rooted in school communities with 75%+ low-income students and communities that do not currently have a parent mentor partner organization. School communities must be public elementary or middle schools in Illinois.

For videos and background info on the Parent Mentor Program, please visit our website www.parentengagementinstitute.org.

We anticipate that the subcontract amount will be a minimum of \$52,000 per school to run the program for the full school year in two public schools, recruiting and supporting a cohort of 6 or 8 parent mentors in each school (12 or 16 parent mentors total) for the full school year. See Part II D for a sample budget (Page 14-15). Applications to work in a different number than 2 schools will also be considered.

Important Dates and Process:

Organizations that intend to submit an application must take 4 actions:

First, all **Organizations must attend a virtual informational session**(must pre-register to receive the Zoom link).

Info Session Date: June 26, 2025 10:00 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

Register here for Info Session: [Meeting Registration - Zoom](#)

(if the info session has ended look for video recording on our website).

Second, all **Organizations must complete and submit the “Statement of Intent”** no later than 5pm on July 15, 2025.

Statement of Intent Form: <https://forms.gle/J1HaKNgwMXmHMke1A>

Third, all **Organizations must complete and return the “Full Application”** no later than **5pm on Friday, August 1st, 2025**.

Applications must be submitted on the Google Form portal: <https://forms.gle/hbzaEsJhhktg5awe7>

Fourth, all **finalists must participate in a Site Visit between August 11-22, 2025**. Finalists will be notified by Aug 8.

See pages 17-19 for Application Instructions.

Programmatic questions related to the Parent Mentor Program should be directed to Adriana Velazquez at avelazquez@swopchicago.org

General Application dates at a glance:

June 16, 2025:	-Application Released
June 26, 2025:	-Application Informational Session (will be recorded)
July 15, 2025:	-Statement of Intent Due, before 5pm (Statement of Intent Form)
August 1, 2025:	-Application Due before 5pm CT
August 11-22:	-Finalist Site Visits
September 12, 2025:	-Program In-person Kick-off Meeting

More dates will be shared to finalists in the future

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PART I

A. Date of Release: Monday, June 16th, 2025**B. Issuing Institution**

The institution issuing the application is:
Southwest Organizing Project
2558 W. 63rd St
Chicago, IL 60629
(773) 471-8208

C. Info Session

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First, all **Organizations must attend a virtual informational session**(must pre-register to receive the Zoom link).
Info Session Date: June 26, 2025 10:00 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

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Applications must be submitted on the Google Form portal: <https://forms.gle/hbzaEsJhhktq5awe7>

Fourth, **all finalists must participate in a Site Visit between August 11-22, 2025**. Finalists will be notified by Aug 8.

If an application is missing attachments, it will not be considered a full application and significant points will be deducted. Absolutely no exceptions will be made for late applications. SWOP will not accept applications submitted by facsimile or email. *See pages 17-19 for Application Instructions.*

To be considered, applications must be in the possession of SWOP staff by the designated date and time listed above. In the event of a dispute, the Applicant bears the burden of proof that the application was received on time at the location listed above.

D. Format Requirements

All applications must be presented on 8½ x 11-inch document using a 12-point type. The **Application Narrative must not exceed 5 pages**. The appendices and organizational information are not included in the page limitation.

The entire application, including appendices, must be sequentially page numbered.

E. Contract Amount

It is anticipated that Applicants will receive notification by SWOP regarding funding decisions no later than September 5th, 2025 to an agreement with SWOP to commence providing service. The notification will be followed by the Contract. The Contract will be for one year only. **We anticipate that the award amount will be at least \$104,000 to run the program for the full school year in 2 public schools, recruiting and supporting a cohort of 6 or 8 parent mentors in each school (12 or 16 parent mentors total) for the full school year. Applications for a different number than 2 schools will be considered. See Part II D for budget details.**

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F. Eligible Applicants

Programs are to be administered by private non-profit organizations. Applicant organizations must submit papers showing organization incorporation; their own 501(c)3 status; organizational chart; most recent audit; DUNS number; and other documents as requested in the application..

G. Estimated Length of Agreement

SWOP estimates that the term of the agreement will begin in August or September 2025, and continue through June 30, 2026, contingent on State approval. The contract will be for one fiscal year only.

H. Withdrawal Disclaimer

SWOP may withdraw this application at any time.

I. (a) Modifications by Applicants

To make a modification to an application after it has been submitted, the Applicant must submit a complete replacement application package accompanied by a letter requesting the replacement modification be considered. This **must be** received at the Google Form portal no later than 3 days after the original application was submitted.

(b) Modifications by SWOP

If it becomes necessary or appropriate for SWOP to change any part of the application, a modification to the application will be available on the Parent Engagement Institute website (www.parentengagementinstitute.com), and it will be issued to all attendees of the Info Sessions.

J. Clarifications, Negotiations, or Discussions Initiated by SWOP

SWOP may contact any Applicant prior to the final award for the following purposes:

As part of the review process, SWOP may request an Applicant clarify its application. Discussions may be held to promote understanding of the requirements and the application and to facilitate arriving at a contract that will be the best aligned to serve the intent of the Parent Mentor Program.

When SWOP knows or has reason to conclude that a mistake has been made, SWOP shall request the applicant to confirm the information.

K. Objections

You may submit a written protest of our actions to the SWOP address above to the attention of Jeff Bartow, Executive Director. SWOP must physically receive the protest by noon of the **seventh calendar day** after you knew or should have known of the facts giving rise to the protest.

L. Late Responses

Late applications will be penalized in the review process but will be retained by SWOP.

M. Additional Information

SWOP reserves the right to request additional information that could assist with the award decision. Applicants are expected to provide the additional information within a period of no longer than 48 hours. Failure to provide the information could result in the rejection of the application.

N. Commencement of Service

SWOP is not obligated to reimburse applicants for expenses incurred prior to the complete and final execution of the written agreement. If an applicant receives a notification of approval to provide programmatic support from SWOP, then it is reasonable to assume that SWOP will be forwarding the applicant a contract. No services can be reimbursed prior to the full and complete execution of the contract.



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O. Contract

The legal agreement between SWOP and each successful applicant will be in the form and format prescribed by SWOP. If selected for funding, the applicant will be provided a contract for their signature and return. The contract will be for one year only.

Part II

A. Background

WHO WE ARE:

A partnership between *Palenque LSNA* and *Southwest Organizing Project*, the **Parent Engagement Institute (PEI)** builds the capacity of community organizations, parent leaders, and schools to replicate the **Parent Mentor Program** model and build transformative parent leadership in schools and communities across Illinois and beyond.

OUR GOALS:

1. **Powerful Parents & Families** - Parents grow personally and professionally, and are leaders that shape the changes we need in our homes, schools, and communities.
2. **Powerful Students & Classrooms** - Parents collaborate with teachers to co-create caring, encouraging, loving, and sustainable spaces for students and the entire school community to engage, learn, and grow.
3. **Powerful Community-Centered Schools** - Parents' leadership is centered within schools, organizations, and communities, and talent pipelines are created to fill school gaps and build economic liberation for families.
4. **Powerful Communities** - Parents organize with community organizations to build a parent-led movement that creates the long term change that we need. In the process, parents and families experience intergenerational healing and transformation.

Therefore, Southwest Organizing Project, hereafter referred to as SWOP, is issuing an application for programmatic support for new partners to implement the Parent Mentor Program (PMP) in Illinois. For videos and more information on the Parent Mentor Program, please visit our website www.parentengagement.institute.

The funding for this application comes from the Illinois State Board of Education, and allocated by the Illinois General Assembly. Partner organizations will be subcontractors of SWOP. In this application we are only accepting applications for public elementary and middle schools in Illinois.

B. Structure of a Parent Mentor Program

At its roots, a Parent Mentor Program is a collaborative effort between a community organization and a school to increase parent engagement and leadership. Through the PMP Initiative, **community-based organizations** will partner with local schools to recruit and train **6 or 8 parents per school to assist teachers 2 hours every day**. Parents are assigned to a classroom (not their own child's) where they are mentored by a teacher and work one-on-one and in small groups with children. After reaching at least 100 volunteer hours in a school semester, parent mentors receive a modest stipend of \$1500. A "full year program" means 2 school semesters and two rounds of at least 100 hours; in other words, a parent mentor who starts in the fall has the opportunity for 2 stipends of \$1500, each after successfully completing at least 100 volunteer hours in a semester.

In addition to the **much-needed support for over 1500 teachers and over 38,000 students**, the PMP provides intensive parent professional development. Parent mentors **build the relationships to navigate the school system successfully** and strengthen skills they need to support their children throughout school. In turn parent mentors become community leaders and share their skills and knowledge with neighbors. The PMP uses schools as a base for **workforce development**, building ladders of opportunity to teaching and other careers. Over 700 parent mentors have earned a paraprofessional or educator credential since 2023.

The Parent Mentor Initiative helps build the foundation for school transformation. **Parents, teachers, and administrators form strong working relationships** and collaborate to improve schools both in terms of academic skills and cultural responsiveness. Schools draw on the strengths of families. As families begin to use the school as a place to access adult education classes and multiple services, **schools become vibrant centers of community**.

It is a holistic strategy to address equity gaps through supporting kids in classrooms, fostering deep and long-lasting parent-teacher relationships, providing a support network for parents to pursue their dreams, and eventually leveraging community resources and support for fully funded and culturally responsive schools. Let's look at how it works.

Role: COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

The **Community Organization**, like yours, is the lead partner – responsible for the overall success of each Parent Mentor Program. The Community Organization is responsible for designating an organizer on staff to run the Parent Mentor Program, building and maintaining the relationship with schools, troubleshooting, and most of all: recruiting, training, providing stipends, and managing Parent Mentors.

Community Organization Responsibilities:

- Hire, supervise, and support the Community Organizer and one Parent Coordinator per school
- Build/maintain strong school relationships
- Maintain Close Contact with your PEI Program Support Manager, including coaching sessions at a minimum once a month
- Submit all requested reports and vouchers thoroughly and on-time to SWOP
- Pay Parent Mentor and Parent Mentor Coordinator Stipends On-Time
- Provide leadership development training and opportunities for Parent Mentors in the school, in the community, and throughout your organization
- Raise matching funds and leverage other resources to support the Parent Mentor Program
- The community organization is ultimately responsible for the success of the entire program – including everything that follows below.

Why do we seek Community Organizations as Lead Partners?

We believe - and have seen it in action - that Community Organizations are uniquely prepared to implement the Parent Mentor Program in a way that accomplishes not only goals 1-3 above, but specifically Goal 4 - Powerful Communities.

We know that Partners:

- understand the needs and assets of their communities,
- have trusted relationships,
- can connect families to a variety of resources,
- reflect and honor the diversity of backgrounds and wisdom in their community,
- bring a sense of stability among changing conditions in schools and neighborhoods,
- possess a variety of leadership experiences and skills that support broader leadership development among families,
- can serve as a regional hub extending across district and school boundaries,
- and can bridge the relationships between communities and their schools.

As such, we seek Partners who are committed to implementing the Parent Mentor Model toward the aims of:

- Community support & resource sharing,
- Hiring and supporting PMP Organizers and Coordinators who come from the community to lead the work,
- Building the capacity of community organizations and institutions, and
- Developing parent-led organizing

Role: LOCAL SCHOOLS

The Parent Mentor Program only re-grants to not-for-profit Community Organizations, not schools. However, we do require that Community Organizations demonstrate a strong relationship and partner with their **Local Schools**. A PMP cannot work without full cooperation and enthusiasm from the school. We recommend starting out with parent mentors primarily placed in PreK-3rd grade classrooms, however we have also seen success in middle school grades as well.

School Responsibilities

- Principal submits letter of support for application, demonstrating commitment to the program

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- Provides space inside the school including a desk for the parent coordinator, a meeting space for initial parent mentor interviews, and meeting space for Parent Mentor weekly training and workshops throughout the school year.
- Principal or principal designee supports Parent Mentors through the district's volunteer approval process
- Principal or principal designee joins community organization staff during interviews with Parent Mentors to get to know prospect parent mentors and supports community organization in determining Parent Mentors classroom placement and schedule.
- Principal participates in progress meetings with organizations at least twice annually to assess the program and to discuss collaborative projects that respect, promote, and develop parent assets in the school
- Principal attends annual Parent Mentor Convention
- Provides initial faculty meeting time to discuss PMP and application process for teachers who would like a Parent Mentor in their classrooms, and provides time and space for Parent Mentor-Teacher Meet-and-Greet before parent mentors begin in classroom.
- Facilitates establishing common meeting, planning, or training time for parent mentors and teachers as needed
- Support the collection of teacher surveys and other data collection as needed. Data collection may include aggregate classroom data on student outcomes in the classrooms in which Parent Mentors are assigned and student outcome data for the Parent Mentors' own children attending the school.

Teacher Participation

Guidelines

- Teachers submit an application for the opportunity to have a parent mentor in their classroom.
- Participating teachers develop a work plan for the parent mentor 4 days a week, 2 hours a day, and meet with the parent mentor as necessary to discuss lessons, goals, and student progress.
- Participating teachers approve and sign parent mentor timesheets, together with parent mentor coordinator.
- Teachers participate in a pre- and post-survey
- Teachers participate in at least 2 PMP meetings during out of school time at the beginning and end of the program.
- Teachers understand that the primary role of the parent mentor is direct support to students (i.e. one-on-one or small groups), not grading, errands, classroom organization, etc.

Recommendations

- Community organization staff, PMP Coordinator and school administration together determine parent mentor - teacher classroom schedule.
- Community organization staff builds relationships with participating teachers.
- Teachers form part of an advisory council or leadership team, along with parents and community organization staff, to discuss program decisions and growth.

Role: PARENT MENTOR ORGANIZER

Each Community Organization will hire or designate a **Parent Mentor Organizer** on their staff to manage the program. The Community Organizer is responsible for the day-to-day oversight of the program. Each Community Organizer will be responsible for anywhere between 2 and 8 schools. In each school, they will hire and support a Parent Mentor Coordinator and recruit a team of Parent Mentors. The Organizer also serves as a sort of "leverager" – one of the Organizer's primary responsibilities is to make sure that the program is having an impact both inside and *outside* the classroom. This could include seeking out volunteer projects on-campus that Parent Mentors can help with, identifying issues in the community where Parent Mentors could provide leadership, and building connections with the community-based organization.

Parent Mentor Organizer Responsibilities:

- Submit monthly reports to SWOP, and meet regularly for coaching sessions with the Parent Engagement Institute Program Support Manager

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- Attend all Parent Engagement Institute trainings and Wednesday virtual workshops
- Recruit, interview, select, and supervise Parent Mentor Coordinator and Parent Mentors, as well as Parent Volunteers to participate in the program.
- Work with Parent Mentor Coordinators to provide 5-day initial training to parent mentor group.
- Work with Parent Mentor Coordinators to plan and conduct weekly meetings/workshops/trainings with Parent Mentors
- Work with school administration to place Parent Mentors in classrooms, 4 days/week, 2 hours/day and make sure their talents are well-utilized
- Have one-on-one meetings with parents, teachers, administrators, and community leaders
- Engage Parent Mentors in leadership development opportunities both inside the school and in the community
- Maintain good communication with school staff and administration
- Organize workshops across schools
- Participate in Monthly Statewide Meeting and additional statewide meetings as needed
- Collect student outcome data and surveys from Parent Mentors and teachers. Data collection may include aggregate classroom data on student outcomes in the classrooms in which Parent Mentors are assigned and student outcome data for the Parent Mentors' own children attending the school. Ensure that all payment records and assessment tools are accurate and timely.

Role: PARENT MENTOR COORDINATOR

Each school will have one **Parent Mentor Coordinator**, a designated parent who will help recruit, mentor, train, and supervise a cohort of at least 6 Parent Mentors.

Parent Mentor Coordinators

Guidelines

- PMP coordinators are parent leaders, meaning they come to the work with more of a parent perspective than a school bureaucracy perspective.
- Both the community organization and school leadership are part of the hiring decision process for PMP coordinator.
- PMP coordinator position is part-time and seasonal. PMP coordinator must be available during weekday mornings during school days and may not be school staff with a conflicting work schedule.
- PMP coordinators participate in the weeklong PEI train-the-trainers, monthly statewide PMP meetings and Wednesday virtual workshops.
- PMP coordinators work for the community organization but are primarily based at the school working daily in person.
- PMP coordinators sign a contract and submit weekly timesheets to the community organization.
- The school offers desk space and some printing/copying ability for the coordinator.
- PMP coordinators maintain parent mentor files in the community organization office.
- PMP coordinators are responsible for recruiting the target # of parent mentors.
- PMP coordinators co-lead the initial parent mentor training.
- PMP coordinators will check in on classrooms to make sure the parent mentor role is being respected and will notify the PM organizer if a problem arises.
- PMP coordinators approve parent mentor timesheets and monitor classroom activity.
- PMP coordinators plan weekly workshops in collaboration with PMP organizer and school staff.
- PMP coordinators ensure surveys, school data, check requests, timesheets, and other documents are submitted on time.
- PMP coordinators support, motivate, and build leadership and unity in the parent mentor cohort and support each parent mentor to reach their personal goals.



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- PMP coordinators will work with their parent mentors to plan a “Beyond the Classroom Event” in the school at least once per year

Recommendations

- PMP coordinators (eventually) are graduates of the PMP.
- The PMP organizer and all PMP coordinators meet together on at least a biweekly basis.
- PMP coordinators build relationships with all community organization staff to be an effective liaison between the community organization and the school.
- PMP coordinators build relationships with school administration, teachers, staff, and parents.

Role: PARENT MENTORS

The heart and soul of the Parent Mentor Program are the Parent Mentors. Each school should support a cohort of a minimum of 6 Parent Mentors that are each volunteering in a specific, designated classroom, attending weekly workshops and training, and finding ways to demonstrate their leadership outside the classroom. Parent Mentors are not placed in their own child’s classroom.

Parent Mentor Responsibilities

- Parent mentors are assigned to a classroom for two hours per day, four days a week. Parent mentors may not be assigned to the classrooms of their own children.
- The primary role of the parent mentor is direct student support in the classroom. Parent mentors can assist with grading, errands, and classroom organization only on an occasional basis.
- Recess or lunchroom supervision may not be a required responsibility for parent mentors.
- Parent mentors may not supervise children alone and must always be in sight lines of school staff when working with children.
- Parent mentors may volunteer in their classrooms for more than 2 hours per day, but only 2 hours per day “count” towards their total hours to fulfill stipend requirement.
- Parent mentors sign in and out daily on timesheets. Both teachers and parent mentor coordinators approve timesheets on a weekly basis.
- Parent mentors maintain a consistent schedule and notify both the teacher and the PMP coordinator as soon as possible if there is a change to the schedule.
- Parent mentors receive a stipend after successfully completing their total required hours in a school semester.
- Share resources and information with the school community.
- Turn in required paperwork on a timely basis.

Recruitment Guidelines

- Parents and legal guardians are first priority in recruitment. Grandparents and other relatives who play an active role in the child’s education are encouraged to participate as volunteers, but parents and legal guardians are first priority for parent mentor stipends.
- Parent mentors must pass the school district’s volunteer requirements. In most cases, this means they must pass a background check and TB test.
- At least 60% of each parent mentor cohort should be new parent mentors every year. This is a training program designed to build a growing network of parent leaders, not a permanent paraprofessional position.
- Every parent mentor is interviewed by community organization, PMP Coordinator, and principal or designee.
- Parent mentor cohort reflects a diverse range of education levels, language skills, and experience. Parent mentors are not “screened out” due to education or language skills.
- Parent mentors sign a contract with the community organization and school.
- Parent mentors participate in a pre- and post-survey and agree to allow a community organization to collect their children’s report cards or other academic performance metrics as requested by PEI.



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Recommendations

- PMP coordinators recruit parent mentors proactively and relationally, recruiting beyond the “usual suspects.”
- Local School Council (LSC) members are encouraged to join the program as volunteers, but are not eligible for a parent mentor stipend (may pertain to CPS only)

Role: PARENT ENGAGEMENT INSTITUTE (PEI)

Our Relationship is More than a Grant. Beyond the direct grant funding, PEI Partner organizations are guided to the above goals with the following Supports:

1. Direct monthly coaching and goal setting with a designated PEI Program Support Manager
2. Implementation Supports for the PMP Model
3. Professional Development for Parent Mentors
4. Training and Onboarding for Partner PMP Staff
5. A Network of Community and Power Building Across Partners
6. Communications & Stakeholder Awareness Efforts
7. Data Guidance, Evaluation, and Continuous Quality Improvement
8. Grant Administration Guidance

Based on over 30 years of running local Parent Mentor programs, PalenqueLSNA and SWOP have developed the Parent Engagement Institute (PEI) to coach other community organizations and school districts to replicate the Parent Mentor model and join our network. PEI provides an orientation, a yearlong calendar of professional development workshops for partner organizations, a peer support network, site-specific coaching, and the program documents needed to help make sure your program is successful and true to the original values.

C. What We Are Trying to Accomplish

The Parent Mentor Program is a unique program because it is designed to have a multiplier effect. It is partly an education program, partly a parent engagement program, partly a leadership development program, and partly a jobs program.

Education. Our success depends on how well we do to contribute to the education of our students. For this reason, we use surveys of teachers, students, and school administrators to track the impact that Parent Mentors are having on education.

Engagement. Second, we believe that the active engagement of parents in a school is a value unto itself. That is why we track the number of parents, parent hours, and parent activities that we contribute to a school. We seek to engage not only the Parent Mentors who can make a major time commitment, but also to engage all parents as volunteers in the school in ways that serve the school community.

Leadership Development. Oftentimes the greatest impact of a Parent Mentor Program is felt when Parent Mentors grow to become strong leaders and advocates in their school and neighborhood communities - becoming teachers, community organizers, school board members, and advocates. We track the trainings that all Parent Mentors attend, and we track the various ways (volunteer projects, etc.) that Parent Mentors contribute to the school and neighborhood, inside and outside of the classroom.



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Workforce Development. The Parent Mentor Program is an apprenticeship in the education field that includes extensive training and weekly workshops that support parents' personal and professional goals. We see the Parent Mentor Program as one step in creating Ladders of Opportunity in our communities.

Overall, we are seeking to build a program that grows the capacity of communities across the state in a way that improves classrooms, schools, and neighborhoods through grassroots leadership development. Below are quotes from PMP participants, to demonstrate how all these outcomes look in practice.

FROM PARENT MENTORS

"[The program] is moral support, backing, and that I'm not alone. I have learned that there is help; you just have to look for it. I started as a parent mentor, and now I'm on the education committee, the Local School Council. LSNA has opened many things for me. There are many things to do. Sitting in your house nobody is going to tell you what your rights are. You have to get involved."

"One student I work with before did not even speak when you asked him a question but now he is very social and will tell you about his day. This program is also important to me because I have learned how to help my own family."

"Now that I see what goes on in the school day to day. At first I was the one to hold a lot of animosity towards teachers and administration; now I want to see what I can do to help. Now I'm willing to put my whole, full, undivided attention to the school to do whatever it takes to make it more successful."

"In the Parent Mentor Program, you learn you have a leader within yourself."

FROM TEACHERS

A parent mentor program at a school is a treasured gift for everyone. First, for the students, they are an extra set of hands, eyes, and ears to help/care for them. The students love to see their friends' mothers and fathers and their mothers and fathers working at the school. It lets the students know just how IMPORTANT school is. The primary students LOVE their parent mentors.

Second, for the school, it gives us even more of a sense of family when you see dads and moms of our students working here. We have grown into not just parents, teachers, and children, but a family.

Third, for the parents it gives them a sense of pride, accomplishment, ownership, and understanding of what a teacher's job actually entails. A lot of times our parents in our community are hesitant, scared, or don't feel they have a right to be in the school. Parent mentors overcome those feelings to take the steps needed to be here. They have decided to take ownership of not only their children's education, but also the school itself.

Last, but not least, what does the Parent Mentor Program do for a teacher? Oh my goodness, how many words can I type? Helping with whatever comes up, working with kids, giving a child who was absent a test they missed, reading to the class, wiping my tears when I breakdown from stress and cry, practicing sight words/letter sounds/math flashcards in small groups, working in centers with kids, and a zillion (not million) other things!

-- Angela Vacco, Mozart Elementary School, kindergarten teacher

FROM PRINCIPALS

"I think this program is outstanding. It opens doors for parents; It helps teachers; It helps students."

"The parent mentors work as partners with our school. Students view this partnership as a positive and develop feelings of trust and safety."

"The Parent Mentor Program opens doors for parents in terms of communicating with administrators to realize the commonalities and resources on both ends."



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"Through the intensive training and a yearlong internship, parent mentors become empowered individuals who create dreams or put forth those already in place."

"It has been a fabulous way for our parents to contribute in a regular consistent way to the overall learning, supporting children in the classroom."

"I believe in the program 100%"

"Keep it up – recruit more parent mentors!"

"Continue the work of building positive relationships that foster a strong climate of learning for adults & children"

"United and growing as partners is the 'dream come true'!"

D. What We Fund

This application is for community organizations seeking to apply as NEW PARTNER. The subcontract amount will be at a minimum \$104,000 to start up the program in 2 schools. Applications for a different number than 2 schools will be considered. All awards are pending state approval.

A New Partner, also known as a Start-Up Partner, is a Community Organization that has experience working with schools, but is not running an ISBE-funded Parent Mentor Program currently. Start-up Partners would hire a Parent Mentor Organizer to begin work in August in order to launch their programs during the 2025-2026 school year. The expectation is that a Start-up Partner will employ at least **one Parent Mentor Organizer**, to work in **at least two Local Schools**, supervising **at least two Parent Mentor Coordinators** (one per school), and **at least 12 total Parent Mentors**. The Community Organizer may begin as soon as the contract commences, with the Parent Mentor Coordinators beginning shortly after, and Parent Mentors ready to begin in the classroom by November or earlier.

Below is a sample budget that Start-Up Partners can expect for their first year. (Final budget numbers are pending approval by the Illinois State Board of Education.)

START-UP PARTNER (sample) 1 elementary school (Full-Year Program)

Organizer Salary and Benefits	7,500
Parent Mentor Coordinators in 1 schools	21,120
Stipend for 6 PM's at each school (\$1500 stipend, 2 semesters, 6 mentors, 2 schools)	18,000
Program and meeting expenses (may not include food, drink, or technology)	400
Travel (based on Illinois mandated rate)	250
Total direct costs	47,270
Approved Admin & Indirect Costs (up to 10% of direct costs)	4,727

MINIMUM ANTICIPATED GRANT TOTAL PER SCHOOL \$52,000*

* Amount per school would be higher with cohort of 8 parent mentors to \$62,000

*Matching funds raised by the organization to cover additional expenses and staff time

ANTICIPATED TOTAL FOR START-UP PARTNER GRANT for 2 SCHOOLS: \$104,000

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E. Application Timeline

Release Application	Virtual Info Session	Statement of Intent Due	Full applications submitted	Finalist Applicant Site Visits	Partnership decisions shared	Kick-Off (In Person, in Chicago)	Hiring, Orientation & Train-the Trainer 101	Parent Mentors Start in Classroom
June 16, 2025	June 26, 2025	July 15, 2025, by 5pm	August 1, 2025, by 5pm	August 11-22, 2025	Early Sep	Sep 12	Sep - Oct	Nov or earlier

F. Grant Requirements

Designated staff of all PMP partner organizations are required to attend a yearlong calendar of professional development workshops, coaching sessions, and meetings provided by the Parent Engagement Institute (PEI). In addition to these mandatory workshops and meetings, SWOP and PEI staff will be available for technical assistance as necessary. Partner organizations should be prepared to share insights and informally evaluate the Parent Mentor Program's overall progress. Partners will be asked to participate in an independent evaluation so that recommendations for continuous quality improvement may be formulated. **Organizations should anticipate attending an in-person Kick-Off Event September 12; 10 days of orientation in the fall; monthly partner meetings; weekly virtual professional development workshops; and an end-of-year statewide convention. These trainings are for all parent mentor organizers and coordinators. You will receive a calendar for the year and we anticipate a hybrid of remote and in-person meetings.**

Staffing

The designated staff at all partner organizations must be culturally competent and, where necessary, multilingual and/or able to provide high quality language access.

Record Keeping and Reporting

Reports must demonstrate performance standards and otherwise meet the work plan contractually agreed upon. Partners failing to fulfill their work plan by more than **20%** in a particular quarter or falling below **90%** of the same performance standard in two consecutive quarters must submit a corrective action plan to SWOP within 14 working days. This new plan must be implemented within a specified time period. Contracts are subject to cancellation if the applicant fails to implement corrective action or fails to achieve minimum requirements in two successive quarters. Partners must submit **monthly reports** to SWOP. A form and technical assistance will be provided by SWOP for organization use. Contracting Organizations must maintain record keeping systems that are organized in such a way that a logical progression from service delivery to reimbursement may be ascertained. It must be possible to aggregate all reports submitted and trace the data back to source documents. SWOP will provide the required standardized forms for Organizations to use. Community Organizations will also be required to distribute, collect, and submit to SWOP evaluation surveys at the beginning and end of every year.

The following data will be collected:

- Number of participating schools, parent mentors, teachers, and students
- Attendance and total service hours provided by parent mentors
- Number of additional school parents ("parent volunteers") engaged through the PMP
- Parent pre- and post- surveys tracking growth in their school engagement over the year, based on the three phases of the "ecology of parent engagement": induction, integration, and investment¹
- Teacher pre- and post-surveys assessing parent mentor impact

¹ Hong, Soo. A Cord of Three Strands: A New Approach to Parent Engagement in Schools. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2011) p. 181.



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- f. Principal survey
- g. Community Organization survey
- h. Parent education and career pathway data
- i. Parent training topics and attendance
- j. Evaluation tools for trainings/meetings

In addition to monthly reporting, the Parent Engagement Institute will regularly train, mentor, and support the work of Parent Mentors and Community Organizations.

This and other relevant data will be collected in template reporting documents. Partners must submit reports electronically through the standardized process of reporting.

Participation in Statewide Parent Mentor Initiative Network

In addition to the activities enumerated above, all Community Organizations are expected, at a minimum, to do the following:

- Participate in Orientation Week (5 days in the fall)
- Participate in initial Train-the-Trainer 101 and Kick-Off (5 days in the fall);
- Attend all Parent Mentor Partner Monthly Meetings (mainly virtual);
- Attend all Parent Mentor Weekly Professional Development Workshops (1.5 hours per week on Wednesdays, virtual);
- Participate in the planning of Statewide Parent Mentor Initiative events and activities, such as the annual convention;
- Report numbers on a monthly basis (see next section);

Financial Reports

Requests for reimbursement will be submitted on a monthly basis through the form provided by SWOP. Appropriate supporting documentation, which may include (but is not limited to): employee timesheets, payroll records, receipts, utility/telephone bills, and staff travel documentation must be available for SWOP review. Claims will be made in accordance with contractual line-item budgets. Claims must be submitted to SWOP within 10 days after the end of each month for services provided during that month. Partners will be reimbursed quarterly, within 45 days of the end of each quarter or whenever SWOP is reimbursed by the State of Illinois for services.

Site Visits

Organization performance will also be monitored through site visits. Site visits will be conducted at least once per fiscal year. Site visits include, but are not limited to: interviews with all staff involved with the program, including supervisors and overall administrative staff; review of case folders, database systems, organization program evaluations process; and technical assistance when necessary. Site visit evaluations with recommendations for improvement will be sent to the organization. Organizations required to submit a corrective action plan will be monitored more frequently.

G. Required Application Format and Content

Please submit the narrative and all attachments via the Google Form portal: <https://forms.gle/hbzaEsJhhktq5awe7>

The Application Narrative should not exceed 5 pages in length. The page requirement does not include the organizational information and required attachments.

The sections must be written in a narrative form, addressing each of the bullet points or questions. Points will be assigned to each section. Applications that do not address specific questions will lose points accordingly.

Applicants should adhere to the following format:

- **Application narrative should not exceed 5 pages**, not including organizational information or other required attachments



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- Application should be submitted font size 12
- Applicants must use required Google form to submit organizational information, the narrative, and all attachments.
- Attachments - Attach copies of the following:
 - ☐ Application Narrative
 - ☐ A Signed letter by your organization's Executive director/CEO committing to achieve the performance indicators as designated.
 - ☐ Organization's documentation of non-profit status or 501(c)(3) Letter
 - ☐ Organization's most recent full organization budget :
 - ☐ Organization's current Year to date Financials :
 - ☐ Organization's Current Audit and single audit if required along with any management letters
 - ☐ Organization's Current 990 Forms (Federal and State) .
 - ☐ Organization's Proof of current SAM registration :
 - ☐ Organization's Proof of GATA compliance (screenshot of compliance page) :
 - ☐ Organization's certificate of good standing from the secretary of state (within the last 30 days):
 - ☐ Your organization's Completed [Internal Controls Questionnaire \(ICQ\)](#) :
 - ☐ Your organization's Completed [Programmatic Risk Assessment \(PRA\)](#) :
 - ☐ Your organization's Board List and Organization Chart:
 - ☐ Resumes for all staff associated with the program and job descriptions for applicable positions :
 - ☐ Signed letter from the School Principals, committing to working with the organization to establish or maintain a parent mentor program in that school. (See template on last pages of this document.)
 - ☐ *Optional* – Letters of Support from organizations you will utilize for referrals, outreach, etc.

H. Judging Criteria

The Parent Mentor Program is a unique approach to community organizing and educational improvement. We anticipate adding new partner organizations to lead the Parent Mentor Program in their communities, each starting with an average of 2 public schools. Our priority will be partnering with community-based organizations rooted in school communities with 75%+ low-income students and communities that do not currently have a parent mentor partner organization. School communities must be public elementary or middle schools in Illinois.

Below is a list of the qualities that we **require** of Applicants, as well as a list of qualities that we **desire** in Applicants. Please read this list carefully and write your applications with these qualities in mind.

Qualities We Require of Applicants

- You must be able to demonstrate that the school where you intend to operate is interested in hosting this program. This should be demonstrated by a letter signed by the principal or other designated leader of the school. Schools without a principal letter of support will not be considered.
- We recommend start-up partners focus on schools that work with early grades, PreK-3rd grade; however the classrooms could go up to 8th grade.
- We prioritize Parent Mentor Programs in Title 1 schools. Preference is 75%+ low-income schools.
- Organizations must make some contribution of matching funds to this program – this can be contributions from a partner school, office space, part of a supervisor's time, etc.

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Additional Qualities of Applicants

- Lead applicant is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit community organization.
- Application demonstrates a partnership between a community organization and school, with a history of collaboration and partnership.
- Organizations agree to place parent mentors in at least 2 schools. Applications for a different number of schools will be considered.
- Proven track record of program administration and reporting.
- Application is for a community where a parent mentor partner organization is not currently located. (See the homepage <https://www.parentengagement.institute/> for the FY25 list of parent mentor partner organizations.)
- Emphasis on under-resourced schools and communities, as shown by lack of services, inequitable school funding, and percentage of low-income students.
- Organizations with a history of grassroots leadership development and civic engagement.
- Demonstrated ability to recruit, hire, and support low-income parents to be organizational leaders and staff.
- Schools that have a track record of parent and community engagement.

I. Application Instructions

Please submit the [Statement of Intent form](#) by July 15th at 5pm, indicating your intent to submit a full application by Aug 1.

To submit the full application, please submit the narrative and all attachments via the Google Form portal by August 1 at 5pm: <https://forms.gle/hbzaEsJhhktq5awe7>

Please read this section carefully, and note the point values that will be given to each section. You will be given only 5 pages in the Project Narrative, to make the case for why your organization should be considered.

Point Values for Each Section

Application Narrative	90 Points
Organizational Info & Attachments	10 Points
Total Points	100 Points

📄 Application Narrative (90 Points). You may write the Narrative as a Word document and attach it to the application in the Google Form.

Your Application Narrative should tackle the following issues, in order. The Point Breakdown is listed below. As always in your applications, be specific. (For instance, rather than saying that you have “many years’ experience working with lots of different schools,” instead say “we have partnered with Parker School on a parent-led afterschool program for 8 years.”)

Application Narrative Section 1: Qualifications and Experience. (40 out of 90 Points)

In Section 1, please address the following issues. Please address each of these sub-headings in Section 1.

- o **A. Introduction.** Why you want to start a Parent Mentor Program and how the Parent Mentor Program fits into your organization’s mission.
- o **B. Relationship with Your Schools.** In your application, demonstrate how you will be able to hit the ground running based on your relationships with your school partners. Please describe the schools (including what grade levels the school offers), your history of working together, and why you chose these particular schools for the Parent Mentor Program.

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- o **C. Leadership Development & Civic Engagement.** We are looking for organizations with a track record of grassroots leadership development and civic engagement. Tell us about how your organization is made up of and driven by grassroots leaders and what you have been able to accomplish, build, heal, change, or transform in your community so far.
- o **D. Organizing and Program Management Experience.** Please give a brief description of the organization's overall staffing structure, and describe the specific experience of the staff who will be overseeing this program and why they are suited to this work. Please describe the other roles and responsibilities (if any) the Community Organizer will need to carry in addition to the Parent Mentor Program. If a Community Organizer has not yet been hired, please describe your recruitment and hiring process.

Application Narrative Section 2. Community Context. (20 out of 90 Points).

Section 2 of your Application Narrative should address why your community would be interested in the Parent Mentor Program. Please include in this section relevant **demographic data, community history, recent shifts, community assets, challenges, or other factors** that you think make your community and schools a prime opportunity for the Parent Mentor Program; and **relevant information from your own observations and experiences** about why your community would be eager to build this program.

Application Narrative Section 3. Work Plan and Vision. (30 out of 90 Points).

Section 3 of your Application Narrative is a chance to describe your dreams for your Parent Mentor Program, and what kinds of opportunities will make the program powerful, unique, and transformational for both the school and the community organization. Please include in this section:

- o **A. Recruitment and Hiring.** The Parent Mentor Coordinator is central to the success of the Parent Mentor Program. What is your plan for hiring parent mentor coordinators who are parents and/or community leaders? What is your plan for recruiting the initial cohort of parent mentors and teacher mentors?
- o **B. Community Assets, Resources, Programs, or Partnerships** you would integrate into your Parent Mentor Program.
- o **C. Organizing Issues or Opportunities** within your schools, organization, or community with which you plan to engage your parent mentor cohort as leaders, beyond their 2 hour per day classroom responsibilities. What are you hoping to accomplish, build, heal, change, or transform through the Parent Mentor Program, beyond the classroom?
- o **D. Sustainability.** The contract will be for one year only, with the hope of renewal, pending program performance and available funding. In the event that ISBE funding is not available after this grant, what are some ways you might seek to sustain your Parent Mentor Program?

(Note: All partner organizations will receive extensive training and coaching on how to run the program. You do not have to have all the answers, but we want an idea for what your organization uniquely brings to the Program.)

? Organizational Information and Support Materials (10 Points).

Organization Information and Support Materials are an opportunity to let us know the basics about your organization.

You will receive a maximum of 10 points overall for successfully completing the Organizational Information and all Supporting Materials.

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When you fill out the Google Form, you will provide Organizational Information and you will attach the Narrative as well as the following supporting materials:

Supporting Materials:

- ☐ Application Narrative: Your responses to the narrative questions listed above on pages 18-19. No more than 5 pages.
- ☐ A Signed letter by your organization's Executive director/CEO committing to achieve the performance indicators as designated.
- ☐ Organization's documentation of non-profit status or 501(c)(3) Letter
- ☐ Organization's most recent full organization budget :
- ☐ Organization's current Year to date Financials :
- ☐ Organization's Current Audit and single audit if required along with any management letters: (If your organization does not have an audit due to budget size, email rrodriguez@swopchicago.org and dnarvaez@swopchicago.org to discuss alternatives that you can upload.)
- ☐ Organization's Current 990 Forms (Federal and State) .
- ☐ Organization's Proof of current SAM registration :
- ☐ Organization's Proof of GATA compliance (screenshot of compliance page) :
- ☐ Organization's certificate of good standing from the secretary of state (within the last 30 days):
- ☐ Your organization's Completed [Internal Controls Questionnaire \(ICQ\)](#) :
- ☐ Your organization's Completed [Programmatic Risk Assessment \(PRA\)](#) :
- ☐ Your organization's Board List and Organization Chart:
- ☐ Resumes for all staff associated with the program and job descriptions for applicable positions :
- ☐ Signed letter from the School Principals, committing to working with the organization to establish or maintain a parent mentor program in that school. (See template on last pages of this document)
- ☐ *Optional* – Letters of Support from organizations you will utilize for referrals, outreach, etc.

Note: If awarded, SWOP will require that your organization provide a Certificate of Insurance listing SWOP as co-insure (Minimum of \$1 million liability policy, Officers and Directors insurance, and Sexual Abuse and Molestation policy.)

J. Application Review, Scoring and Selection

Applications will be reviewed by a review panel that may include academics, educators, representatives from the Parent Engagement Institute, and representatives of other community organizations. Panel members will initially read and evaluate applications independently using guidelines furnished by the SWOP and will subsequently participate in a review panel meetings as needed during which applications will be discussed. Scoring will be on a 100-point scale. Scoring will not be the sole award criterion. While recommendations of the review panel will be a key factor in the funding decisions, SWOP maintains final authority over funding decisions and considers the findings of the review panel to be non-binding recommendations.



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Appendix I

ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

(This organizational information will be requested in the Google Form application portal:
<https://forms.gle/hbzaEsJhhktq5awe7> You do not need to fill out this page as a separate document.)

Organization Name

Address

FEIN#

TIN#

DUNS #

Total Organizational Budget

Executive Director

Executive Director	Email Address	Phone#
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Contact Person	Email Address	Phone #
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Community and School District(s) Served by your Program:

Names of schools and principals with whom you seek to partner:

Number of Parent Mentors You Seek to Recruit, Support, and Place in Classrooms:

Authorization/Certification:

With my signature, I hereby affirm that I am duly authorized to submit applications on behalf of the Applicant organization. To the best of my knowledge, the data and statements in this application are true and correct. The Applicant agrees to comply with all Federal/State statutes and Rules/Regulations applicable to the program.

Name_____ **Date**_____

Title_____

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Appendix II

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

A COMPLETE APPLICATION MUST INCLUDE:

- 1) _____ ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION (submitted via [GoogleForm](#))
- 2) _____ APPLICATION NARRATIVE (attach to the [GoogleForm](#))
 - a) _____ Qualifications and Experience
 - b) _____ Community Context
 - c) _____ Work Plan and Vision
- 3) _____ ATTACHMENTS (attach to the [GoogleForm](#))

Attachments must include:

 - a) _____ A Signed letter by your organization's Executive director/CEO committing to achieve the performance indicators as designated.
 - b) _____ Organization's documentation of non-profit status or 501(c)(3) Letter
 - c) _____ Organization's most recent full organization budget :
 - d) _____ Organization's current Year to date Financials :
 - e) _____ Organization's Current Audit and single audit if required along with any management letters:
(If your organization does not have an audit due to budget size, email rrodriguez@swopchicago.org and dnarvaez@swopchicago.org to discuss alternatives that you can upload.)
 - f) _____ Organization's Current 990 Forms (Federal and State) .
 - g) _____ Organization's Proof of current SAM registration :
 - h) _____ Organization's Proof of GATA compliance (screenshot of compliance page) :
 - i) _____ Organization's certificate of good standing from the secretary of state (within the last 30 days):
 - j) _____ Your organization's Completed [Internal Controls Questionnaire \(ICQ\)](#) :
 - k) _____ Your organization's Completed [Programmatic Risk Assessment \(PRA\)](#) :
 - l) _____ Your organization's Board List and Organization Chart:
 - m) _____ Resumes for all staff associated with the program and job descriptions for applicable positions :
 - n) _____ Signed letter from the School Principals, committing to working with the organization to establish or maintain a parent mentor program in that school. (See template on last pages of this document)
 - o) _____ *Optional* – Letters of Support from organizations you will utilize for referrals, outreach, etc.

All of the above must be submitted via the Google Form portal by Friday, August 1st, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. CST



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Appendix III

Principal Letter of Support [Template](#) (2 pages)

ADD SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

Date

Dear Parent Mentor Program Review Committee:

I am writing to express my interest and enthusiasm in opening our school, (school name) , to the Parent Mentor Program in partnership with (organization) during the 2025-2026 school year. I have read and I understand the list of school and teacher responsibilities (see reverse).

I am excited to bring the Parent Mentor opportunity to our school because _____

Thank you,

Principal Signature

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The Parent Mentor Program requires that Community Organizations demonstrate a strong relationship and partnership with their **Local Public Schools**. The Parent Mentor Program works best with full cooperation and enthusiasm from the school. For more information on the Parent Mentor Program please visit www.parentengagement.institute.

School Responsibilities

- Principal submits a letter of support for the application, demonstrating commitment to the program.
- Principal commits to actively support community organization staff to ensure enough teachers participate in the program according to the required parent mentor recruitment goal in their grant.
- Provides **initial faculty meeting time before the school year begins for a “Teacher Presentation”** on the Parent Mentor Program, which will include an application process for teachers who would like to participate, and provides time and space for Parent Mentor-Teacher Meet-and-Greet before parent mentors begin.
- Provides space inside school including a desk for the parent coordinator, meeting space for initial parent mentor interviews, and meeting space for Parent Mentor weekly training throughout the school year.
- Principal or principal designee joins community organization staff during **interviews with Parent Mentors** to get to know prospect parent mentors and supports community organization in **determining Parent Mentors classroom placement** and schedule.
- Principal or principal designee works with Parent Mentor Coordinator to guide parent mentors through the **school district volunteer approval process**.
- Principal participates in progress meetings with organizations at least twice annually to assess the program and discuss collaborative projects that respect, promote, and develop parent assets in the school.
- Principal celebrates with parent mentors at annual Parent Mentor Convention
- Facilitates establishing common meeting, planning, or training time for parent mentors & teachers as needed.
- Supports the collection of teacher surveys and other data collection as needed.
- Contacts the Parent Mentor Coordinator to ask questions or share ideas or concerns about the program.

Teacher Responsibilities

- Teachers submit an application for the opportunity to partner with a Parent Mentor.
- Participating teachers sign and approve parent mentor timesheets.
- Teachers communicate with the parent mentor coordinator if they have any questions or concerns.
- Teachers participate in a pre and post-survey.
- Teachers participate in at least 2 PMP meetings during out of school time at the beginning and end of the program: a “Parent Mentor and Teacher Meet & Greet” before the classroom work begins and an evaluation discussion at the end of the year.
- Teachers understand that the primary role of the parent mentor is direct support to students (i.e. one-on-one or small groups), not grading, errands, classroom organization, etc.
- Teachers contact the Parent Mentor Coordinator to ask questions or share ideas/concerns about the program.