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Williston School District

**Williston School District
Leadership Team**

November 19, 2013

Energy Solutions
Michael Benjamin
740Osborn Road
Barnwell, SC 29812

Re: Williston-Elko Middle School Mentoring Program

Dear Michael:

The Williston-Elko Business, Education and Community Partnership (BEC) is a collaborative partnership of our local schools, business, industry and community to provide improvements for the children of our community. BEC is starting a mentoring program that will focus on developing our students to become the best they can be. Our future business and community leaders are the students in our schools today. We owe it to these students to ensure they have every opportunity possible to develop a strong self-esteem, self-confidence, and a respect for the community in which we live. The mentoring program is designed to identify qualified adults (mentors) to work with middle school students (mentees) to provide students with a level of support and positive influence they may not otherwise experience in their lives. BEC would like you to consider volunteering a few hours every month to mentor a child in the community.

The BEC mentoring program will focus on middle school students that meet school determined requirements. BEC mentors are required to have a SLED background check and then will be provided training to better understand the roles and responsibilities of the mentoring program. Background checks will be conducted at no cost to you.

Being a mentor is not necessarily developing a close friendship between mentor and mentee, nor does mentoring require that you become a source of emotional or financial support for the mentee. Rather the focus is on developing the mentees as competent students, with good life skills that will be able to work themselves productively into the larger society. Players in this effort - besides the mentor and mentee - are the school and the student's care givers. The pool of potential middle-school mentees consists of students that could well use a high degree of outside help. The hope is that as students go through the program they become better students, and develop into great employees as well as community leaders.

The attached sheet provides a few frequently asked questions about mentoring and mentor programs that may assist you with obtaining a better understanding of this program.

If you or someone you know is interested in participating in the BEC Mentoring Program please contact **Cathy Smith at 803.266.8069** or csmith@williston.k12.sc.us by **December 6, 2013**. We hope to provide mentor training in January 2014 and begin the mentoring process in February 2014.

We look forward to your participation in the BEC Mentoring Program. Our future is in the hands and minds of today's children.

Sincerely,

Bob

Bob Bruns, Chair

Mentor Program FAQs

• Why do youth need mentors?

Numerous research studies have proved that children need positive relationships with caring adults. While parents are usually there to fill this need, youth in out of home care situations don't have this parental resource. Several studies also show that if caring adults are available to youth, they will be more likely to become successful adults themselves. Mentoring can actually be seen as an investment in children and the future!

• What kind of skills do I need to be a mentor?

When asked what makes a good mentor, youth have answered: Being open minded; easy to talk to; having good listening skills; being able to have fun; having knowledge of community resources; able to teach new things; not a parent; someone to look up to; someone who offers encouragement; someone who gives guidance; someone who is trust worthy.

• How much time is required to be a mentor?

After the screening process is complete and you are approved as a mentor then you will be required to have a minimum of two face to face contacts per month and a total of four hours per month. You must agree to maintain the mentee relationship at least six months to one year. The remaining contacts may be face to face, e-mail, texting, web cam, etc.

• What are the requirements for potential mentors?

Our program requires a rigorous screening and matching process to ensure that the youth/mentor relationship gets the best chance of being successful from the start. Having access to reliable transportation is a requirement for being a mentor. While employment or volunteer work in human services is helpful for a mentor of the youth it is not a requirement.

• What training will I receive if I am selected to become a mentor?

After you go through the orientation and screening process and all of your paperwork is completed you will be obligated to attend a training session. This will answer general questions and cover information on a number of topics to make your mentor/mentee relationship go as smoothly as possible.