Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

Meeting Date: 2/11/2014
Prepared By/Phone Number: James Swift/854-6044
Elected/Appointed Official/Dept. Head: Leslie Browder, County Executive, Planning & Budget, Human Resources, Facilities Management
Commissioners Court Sponsor: Judge Sam Biscoe

for Pom

AGENDA LANGUAGE:

Consider and take appropriate action on request to approve the addition of a Mentoring policy to the Travis County code.

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF REQUEST AND ATTACHMENTS:

Mr. Leroy Nellis, former County Executive, took the initiative to initiate the development of a mentoring policy before retiring from Travis County. It was his vision to see the county put in place a policy that encouraged employees of Travis County to mentor area students by putting in place a policy that allowed paid time off for this endeavor.

Attachments:

Proposed Mentoring Leave Policy 10.0401

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends that the policy be added to the County code.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

Issues to Address:

Currently, Travis County does not have a mentoring leave policy in place.

Opportunities:

1. Encourage Travis County employees to participate as mentors to students in our local community.

2. Develop leadership skills for employees and the mentees.

3. To give back to the community.

4. To build an enduring career network for the mentee.

5. To gain insights and different perspectives from the future workforce of Travis County.

FISCAL IMPACT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Paid time off for mentoring leave, if and when utilized, does not increase or reduce the salary budgeted for individuals who take advantage of the mentoring leave.

REQUIRED AUTHORIZATIONS:

See attached memo

ATTACHMENTS:

None

Human Resources Management Department

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 29, 2014

TO: Leslie Browder, County Executive, *for DM*
Planning & Budget, Human Resources, Facilities Management

Debbie Maynor, Director *DM*
Human Resources Department

FROM: James Swift, Employee Relations Specialist *JS*
Human Resources Department

SUBJECT: New Mentoring Policy

A Mentor affects the professional life of a protégé by fostering insight, identifying needed knowledge, and expanding growth opportunities. Traditionally, the mentoring relationship consists of an experienced executive providing guidance and advice to an individual with less experience.

Mentoring gives a person the extraordinary opportunity to facilitate a mentee's personal and professional growth by sharing knowledge learned through years of experience. While the primary intent of a mentoring role is to challenge the mentee to think in new and different ways, the mentee is not the only one who gains from the arrangement. Being a mentor can give a person a sense of personal fulfillment, increased confidence and a revitalized interest in work.

Mr. Leroy Nellis took the initiative to develop a mentoring policy before retiring from Travis County. It was his vision to see the county adopt a Mentor policy that encouraged employees of Travis County to mentor area students by putting in place a policy that allowed paid time off for this endeavor.

A draft of the mentoring policy was reviewed by County Executives and the County Attorney's office for feedback and comments. Their input was used in developing the final version that is being presented for adoption and implementation.

The Mentoring Leave policy encourages our regular full time employees to become involved in mentoring activities in the local community. Mentoring Leave Codes to identify the time used by employees for mentoring will be used to generate reports that allow for monitoring the use of mentoring leave.

Below are some key points to the proposed mentoring policy:

- Department and County Executives determine eligibility for employee participation based on certain criteria. Participation is managed and monitored by departments.

- Participants are expected to follow the specific guidelines of the program in which they participate. Eligible mentoring programs are those which are provided by school districts utilized by students residing in Travis County.
- Mentoring Leave provides two (2) hours per week, per school year of paid time off work for employees to participate in programs

If you have any questions or comments please contact James Swift at 854-6044 or Debbie L. Maynor at 854-9170.

Attachments:
Mentoring Leave Policy

Cc: Planning and Budget Department
County Auditor-Payroll

Section 10.0401 Mentoring Leave

(a) Purpose: Travis County recognizes that mentoring is an effective method of improving student performance which leads to improved schools and the general well-being of a community. Travis County desires to encourage its regular full time employees to become involved in these activities by establishing this program to provide paid leave while mentoring. This policy outlines the minimum standards for using the County's Mentoring leave. Individual departments may have additional requirements to enable employees' participation.

(b) Definitions: When used in this policy,

(1) "ISD" means an independent school district that serves territory within Travis County.

(2) "Mentee" means a student assigned to a Travis County employee who is Mentoring that student.

(3) "Mentor" means a trusted and faithful friend who listens, supports and guides young people on a consistent basis over a specified period of time and includes providing encouragement, advice, or similar support. A Mentor typically works with a Mentee once a week for 30 to 60 minutes during school hours. A Mentor is not a counselor, substitute parent or disciplinarian.

(4) "Mentoring" may include any one or more of the following:

a. Weekly meetings with individual students;

b. Tutoring or providing individual or small group teaching assistance with specific subjects, especially math, using the ISD's curriculum;

c. Specific purpose Mentoring for an event or special assistance like helping Mentees prepare college applications, coaching for college entrance exams, judging academic competitions, serving as a guest speaker, and similar activities; or

d. Technology assistance to teachers and administrators on a scheduled basis.

(c) Departmental Implementation of Program: The supervisor makes recommendations to the department head regarding who participates in the Mentoring program: there is no requirement to participate. The department head determines department participation goals, supports employee participation by committing to allow employees to be a Mentor with a school for one full school year, and assigns an employee who is interested and has appropriate skills to be the

department's Program Coordinator. The Program Coordinator does not have to be a supervisor or manager.

(d) Role of Department Program Coordinators: The Program Coordinator keeps a written record of approved department Mentors, the school they are assigned to and the schools' contact information including each school's on-site mentor resource. The department Program Coordinator is responsible for the following:

1. confirming the supervisor has approved employee participation in the program ,
2. creating and keeping a list of all department mentors, and
3. serving as a point of contact for the department and school(s)

(e) Role of Supervisor: The supervisor determines appropriate participation levels of individual employees based on business needs of the department and, participation goals for the program. The supervisor approves weekly program time on the time sheet in compliance with time allowances for the program and addresses any concerns with the employee raised by the independent school district. The Human Resources Management Department (HRMD) is available to assist supervisors resolve any concerns. The employee's supervisor is responsible for verifying that an employee is eligible to participate in this program based on the following:

1. Regular full-time employee status of the employee;
2. Absence of any disciplinary action, such as suspension or disciplinary probation, within the prior 12 months;
3. Absence of any Performance Improvement plan while Mentoring; and
4. Approval of mentoring is based on the business needs of the department.

(f) Termination of Participation in Mentoring Program: Mentors may terminate their commitments at any time by notifying the school and their supervisor. The school may terminate an individual Mentor's participation at any time by notifying the Mentor and the department Program Coordinator. The supervisor in consultation with the department head may terminate an employee's participation as a Mentor when at least one of the following occurs:

1. The employee is not meeting the County requirements related to discipline or performance or restrictions on activities of Mentors,
2. The business needs of the Department change,
3. The employee's job performance or behavior is diminished,
4. The employee does not maintain the terms of the Mentor commitment, and
5. The employee's criminal background changes unacceptably.

mentoring on their timesheets with the appropriate designation. Time includes traveling to and from the school; as an alternative, mentors may use their lunch break for traveling to and/or from the school for mentoring. Mentoring and travel time during the work day that exceeds two hours per week shall be taken as other leave such as vacation, compensatory time, or unpaid leave. The supervisor may approve the use of a flexible work schedule. Time spent as a Mentor that is outside an employee's regular work day cannot be reported as mentoring leave. Mentoring leave is not considered productive time for overtime compensation. Mentors may not claim mileage reimbursement for travel to and from the school for Mentoring. County vehicles cannot be used for any Mentoring activity; including traveling to and from the school. A separate code for Mentoring leave is used on Time Sheets for tracking and reporting purposes.

(k) Role of ISD: The ISD designates the schools that will participate in a Mentoring program. The ISD is responsible for providing program guidance, program criteria, program application and its eligibility requirements for Mentors and screening applicants, selecting and assigning Mentors.

(l) Responsibility for Criminal Background Checks: The ISD is responsible for all Mentor screening, including criminal background checks if desired.

Order of the Travis County Commissioners Court
Amending the Travis County Code

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Travis County Code, it is ordered that the Travis County Code is amended by adding the following section:

1. Section 10.0401 Mentoring Leave to Chapter 10. Travis County Guidelines and Procedures Manual.

The change ordered shall become effective on March 1, 2014

ORDERED on: (date) _____.

Travis County Commissioners Court

_____
Samuel T. Biscoe
Travis County Judge

_____
Ron Davis
Commissioner, Precinct 1

_____
Bruce Todd
Commissioner, Precinct 2

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Gerald Daugherty
Commissioner, Precinct 3

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Margaret Gómez
Commissioner, Precinct 4