



**Big Brothers  
Big Sisters®**

**High School Leadership Program**

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: Who is running the program?**

A: HSLP is a partnership between Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Capital Region (BBBSCR) and the Schenectady City School District. Select high school classes are paired with elementary classes.

### **Q: What is the benefit?**

A: HSLP provides valuable leadership skills, soft skill acquisition, and career development experience for high school students. It also provides teaching and classroom management skills to high school students interested in teaching careers. Elementary students receive one-to-one mentoring, with an emphasis on academic, social, and emotional lessons tailored to each student.

### **Q: How does it work?**

A: High school mentors are paired one-to-one with elementary student mentees to create a "match" based on similar interests, personalities, and other factors. A BBBSCR employee will work with each pair/match to help foster the relationship and help them achieve mutually agreed upon goals.

### **Q: How often do they meet?**

A: The mentors will meet with their mentees once a week, for about 45 minutes, following a class schedule developed by BBBSCR staff and your child's school. The high school students will be bussed to the elementary schools by district transportation. The meetings happen during your child's school lunch/recess time and the entire classroom of high school mentors will meet with their paired elementary classroom at the same day/time each week.

### **Q: What happens during the time?**

A: The match meetings will begin with lunch and catch-up time between the mentors and their mentees. Students can bring lunch or receive lunch through the elementary school. The meetings will continue with different components, including customized curriculum developed by BBBSCR. There will also be time for group projects, one-to-one mentoring, and individual activities.

## Q: How are the mentors screened?

A: BBBSCR will conduct background checks and reference checks for all high school mentors participating in the program.

## Q: What is the responsibility of the parent/guardian?

A: The district requires a signed parental form for students to participate. Big Brothers Big Sisters also requires an enrollment/permission form. After your child is enrolled, a BBBSCR staff member will reach out routinely by phone with progress updates and a chance for you to provide input, ask questions, and receive family supports.

## Q: Do the students receive extra credit?

A: The high school students receive service hour credits for participating, develop skills for their resume, and have the chance to receive a college recommendation letter from BBBSCR staff.

## Q: What safety guidelines are in place?

A: A trained BBBSCR employee and district staff will be present at all times the pairs are together. No contact is allowed between the pairs outside the class. No social media contact is permitted between the pair. The high school mentors will receive extensive training on safety precautions, trauma informed care, and mandatory reporting.

## Q: Who is Big Brothers Big Sisters?

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Capital Region operates under the belief that inherent in every child is the ability to succeed and thrive in life. Affiliated with Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, the nation's largest donor- and volunteer-supported mentoring network, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Capital Region makes meaningful, monitored matches between adult volunteers ("Bigs") and children ("Littles"), ages 6 through 18, in communities across the Capital Region. We develop positive relationships that have a direct and lasting effect on the lives of young people. The Big Brothers Big Sisters' mission is to create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth. The Big Brothers Big Sisters' vision is that all youth achieve their full potential.

Research shows that the Big Brothers Big Sisters' mentoring program is the single most effective way to help vulnerable youth achieve success and reach their potential. Compared to others their age, boys and girls who are matched with a Big Brother or a Big Sister are:

- 46% less likely to begin using illegal drugs
- 27% less likely to begin using alcohol
- 52% less likely to skip school
- 33% more confident in their school performance
- 40% less likely to get arrested

**Questions? Contact Lisa O'Sullivan, Program Director at: [LisaO@bbbscr.org](mailto:LisaO@bbbscr.org) or 518-862-1250.**