



BTCS Reading Buddies: Mentorship Component

Reading Buddies is a regional community project designed to support at-risk students in kindergarten through second grade with a positive adult mentor relationship and incentives aimed to ensure that students enter third grade *reading on grade level*. Third grade is an extremely important benchmark for young learners. **Studies show that students not *reading on grade level* by third grade are four times less likely to graduate high school on time.**

Things to know about becoming a BTCS Reading Buddies mentor:

- Needs to enjoy working one-on-one with a kindergarten, first, or second grade student
- Willingness to promote the importance of good literacy skills
- Must undergo a TBI background check at the expense of the school system
- Volunteers are needed in all 5 BTCS elementary schools. You may volunteer in the elementary school of your choice!
- A brief and simple training session is provided. *No experience in early childhood or literacy education is necessary.*
- Relationship building is a major focus of the program.
- Age appropriate, hands-on type literacy materials are provided by the classroom teacher for all mentoring sessions.
- Weekly commitment of *one 30-minute visit during the school day with the assigned student on the same day/same time each week*. We are very flexible with the need to cancel due to emergency/last minute work responsibilities, medical appointments, illness, travel, etc.

Reading Buddies initiative student benefits:

- *Positive, ongoing relationship with a caring adult*: Studies show that students who have a relationship with a caring adult are more likely to report strong social and emotional outcomes, avoid risky behaviors, and have better academic outcomes.
- *Consistent caring adult support in stressing the importance of learning to read and that education is important!*
- *Exposure to the world of work*: Volunteers from the local business community, faith-based community, King University, first responders, and the medical community have participated in the Reading Buddies program during the workday.
- *Exposure to spectacular places to visit/world travel*: Several BTCS Reading Buddies are retired and travel during the school year!!
- *Rise in student academic achievement*: Pre-Covid, the literacy initiative was annually evaluated by the STAR Early Literacy Assessment (kindergarten) and the STAR Literacy Assessment (grades 1-2). Students paired with a Reading Buddy showed significant achievement gains!

WE HOPE TO WELCOME YOU TO SCHOOL AS A BTCS READING BUDDIES VOLUNTEER!