



# Cahn

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PRINCIPALS FELLOWSHIP**

GOLDEN Geckos Mentoring Program:  
Growing Organized Leaders that are Determined Educated and Noble

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Whispering Pines Elementary School

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Cahn Cohort 20

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## ABSTRACT

At Whispering Pines Elementary School, raising students' Reading and Math proficiency is a primary academic objective. Critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and technological growth all depend on these subjects. This objective encourages economic competitiveness and educational equity. Our goal is to integrate the Golden Geckos Mentoring Program, which focuses on partnering students performing one grade level below expectations with a mentor to work together to set goals, monitor progress, make modifications, and celebrate successes.

Mentors will inspire and guide students, helping them overcome challenges and develop a deeper interest in Reading and Math. This partnership will provide valuable support and real-world insights that can significantly impact students' academic journeys. It will not only boost students' confidence, but also expose them to diverse career opportunities, motivating them to excel in Reading and Math and ultimately contributing to the attainment of the established 70% proficiency goal in Reading and Math.

## INTRODUCTION

Whispering Pines Elementary School is a thriving and dynamic institution that meets the educational needs of young minds within the community. It is located at 18929 SW 89<sup>th</sup> Road in the quaint neighborhood of Cutler Bay, Florida. With a capacity of 724 students, Whispering Pines Elementary School maintains a close-knit atmosphere that fosters a sense of belonging among its students and families. There are currently 481 students enrolled at WPE which signifies its importance within the local educational landscape. Whispering Pines Elementary School serves students from Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 5, ensuring a comprehensive and foundational education for children during their formative years.

The student body of Whispering Pines Elementary School is varied and inclusive, which contributes to the school's rich and lively cultural atmosphere. The student body is composed of students from various racial and ethnic origins. Almost 70% of the students are Hispanic, which is a reflection of the school's setting in the sizable Hispanic community of Cutler Bay, Florida. One-fifth of the students, or 15%, identify as White, which is a sizable component of the student body. Black students make up 10% of the student body, which adds to the school's racial diversity. Multiracial students make about 4% of the student body and 1% of the student body is Asian. Whispering Pines Elementary School's diverse student demographics are a testament to its commitment to providing an inclusive and enriching educational experience for all students. Such diversity fosters an environment where students can learn from one another's perspectives, appreciate different cultures, and prepare for a globalized world.

The school's mascot, the Gecko, symbolizes adaptability and resilience, traits that are encouraged among its student body. In the vibrant hallways of Whispering Pines Elementary, the colors of green and yellow dominate the scene, reflecting the school's spirit and unity. This dedication to a consistent uniform color scheme fosters a sense of equality among students while allowing them to express their individuality in other ways.

Whispering Pines Elementary School takes pleasure in teaching students valuable life skills, morals, and a love of learning in addition to academic knowledge. The school's mission, which focuses on each student's holistic development and equips them for the challenges of the future, is to "Foster Lifelong learners within an atmosphere of shared respect, achievement, and teamwork." This represents the school's dedication to giving students the skills and values they will need to keep learning throughout their life, in addition to an education. The focus on mutual respect encourages friendliness and inclusion among students and faculty, fostering a positive environment for both academic and social emotional well-being. Furthermore, the focus on achievement underscores the school's dedication to helping each student reach their full potential. Whether it's academic accomplishments or personal goals, Whispering Pines Elementary aims to guide students toward success. The value placed on teamwork encourages collaboration and cooperation, preparing students for the collaborative nature of the modern world. Whispering Pines Elementary School's mission to nurture well-rounded individuals who are not only academically prepared, but also equipped with the social and emotional skills needed to thrive in an ever-changing society serves as a guiding principle for the school's educational philosophy and the development of its students.

Within the community, Whispering Pines Elementary stands as a shining example of educational excellence. It has garnered a reputation for being a high-performing school, and this reputation is well deserved. The 2023 standardized assessment data underscored this excellence, revealing that students in accountability grades 3-5 at WPE outperformed their peers within the district across key subjects, namely Reading, Math, and Science. In the realm of Reading, WPE's students displayed remarkable proficiency, with an impressive 64% achieving proficiency. This accomplishment far surpassed the district's average, which stood at 51%. The school's commitment to fostering strong literacy skills among its students is evident in these results. Similarly, in the domain of Math, Whispering Pines Elementary students showcased their mathematical prowess, with a remarkable 71% achieving proficiency. This achievement surpassed the district average by a significant margin, which was at 54%. WPE's dedication to promoting mathematical literacy and problem-solving skills is evidently paying off. The trend of excellence continues in the field of Science, with 60% of WPE students achieving proficiency, compared to the district's average of 52%. This impressive performance highlights the school's commitment to nurturing young scientists and fostering a deep understanding of the scientific world. Whispering Pines Elementary's outstanding performance in these critical subject areas not only reflects the dedication and hard work of its students but also the effective teaching and support provided by the school's educators and staff. WPE continues to be a beacon of educational achievement within the community, setting a high standard for academic excellence.

Whispering Pines Elementary School has consistently proven itself as a stellar STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) school over the past four years. Its unwavering commitment to academic excellence and innovation has resulted in a commendable track record, particularly in the fields of math and science. During this four-year journey, Whispering Pines Elementary has made significant strides in fostering a dynamic learning environment that encourages students to explore, question, and engage with the STEAM disciplines. Through tailored curricula, hands-on experiments, and cutting-edge technology integration, the school has nurtured a generation of young minds eager to embrace the challenges of the future. One of the most remarkable aspects of this journey has been the continuous improvements in Math and Science education. The school's educators and administrators have worked tirelessly to refine teaching methodologies, incorporate the latest research-based strategies, and provide students with the resources they need to excel in these critical subjects. Whispering Pines Elementary's sustained commitment to STEAM education, coupled with its dedication to enhancing math and science learning, underscores its position as a leading institution in the region. As we look ahead to the future, the school is poised to continue shaping young learners into confident, capable, and innovative individuals ready to make their mark in the STEAM fields and beyond.

Additionally, Whispering Pines Elementary School won the coveted Green School Challenge, marking an incredible milestone. With this award, the school is recognized for its persistent commitment to environmental sustainability and stewardship. WPE has established itself as an institution that is green and ecologically sensitive because of creative initiatives like energy conservation, recycling and eco-friendly education. This success not only confirms the school's dedication to developing responsible citizens, but it also encourages the adoption of sustainable practices by students, faculty, and the community at large. Winning the Green School Challenge is evidence of Whispering Pines Elementary's leadership in fostering a greener future and gives everyone connected to the school cause for celebration.

Whispering Pines Elementary School is a pillar of excellence within the community and continues to give students the most rewarding educational experience thanks to the fact that over 90% of the instructional staff has at least 15 years of teaching experience at the school and the administrative team has successfully fostered an environment focused on academics, creativity, and growth.

#### STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Being that Whispering Pines Elementary School's goal is to attain 70% proficiency in Reading and mathematics in Grades 3-5, how effective will the Golden Geckos Mentoring Program be in facilitating learning gains amongst students performing one grade level below proficiency?

#### METHODS

Students who performed one grade level below expectations in Reading and/or Math on the FAST AP1 Assessment were carefully selected to participate in the Golden Geckos Mentoring Program. This decision was driven by a thorough analysis of their academic data, which clearly indicated that these students were teetering on the brink of proficiency. Recognizing the potential within them, we believed that their involvement in a mentorship program would prove instrumental in maintaining their focus and guiding them toward achieving their distinct annual objectives.

In an effort to empower and support our students, school administrators recently convened meetings with participants of the Golden Geckos Mentoring Program. These sessions were strategically designed to foster a constructive dialogue about goal setting, academic progress, and the vital mentoring partnerships that are at the core of this initiative. The first and foremost agenda of these meetings was goal setting. Students were encouraged to reflect on their academic aspirations, both short-term and long-term. School administrators emphasized the importance of setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) goals, tailored to each student's unique needs and circumstances. By actively involving students in this process, they gained a sense of ownership over their academic journey, enhancing motivation and commitment.

The discussions then shifted towards academic data. Administrators presented an overview of the students' academic performance, including insights from the FAST AP1 Assessment, which served as a benchmark for their current standing. This data-driven approach allowed students to gain a clearer understanding of their strengths and areas that required improvement. It also highlighted their proximity to proficiency, motivating them to redouble their efforts. Central to these meetings was the mentoring partnership itself. Administrators stressed the importance of open communication and collaboration between students and their mentors. They outlined the supportive role mentors play in providing guidance, encouragement, and helping students navigate any challenges they might face. This dialogue fostered a sense of trust and rapport, as students could express their concerns and expectations from the mentoring relationship. These meetings were not just about information dissemination but also about active engagement. Administrators encouraged students to ask questions, seek clarification, and share their thoughts and concerns. They wanted to ensure that students felt heard and understood, reinforcing the idea that the school community was fully invested in their success.

After meeting with the administrative team, students met with their mentors the next week. The initial meetings between mentors and students in the Golden Geckos Mentoring Program marked a pivotal step in shaping the course of each student's academic journey. These sessions were meticulously designed to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility within the students while building a strong foundation for the mentorship relationship. During these meetings, the focus was on discussing the goal setting form, creating personal goals, and collaboratively crafting a combined goal with the mentor. The mentorship journey commenced with mentors introducing the goal setting form to their respective students. This form was a comprehensive tool that facilitated the goal-setting process. Mentors explained the significance of goal setting as a means to provide direction, motivation, and a tangible framework for measuring progress. Students were encouraged to explore their individual strengths, weaknesses, interests, and ambitions, which would serve as the basis for setting meaningful goals. With the goal setting form as their guide, students were prompted to identify their personal academic goals. These goals were tailored to each student's unique circumstances and aspirations. Mentors played a crucial role in guiding students through this introspective process, asking probing questions to help students clarify their objectives. Whether it was improving their reading comprehension, excelling in math, or developing better study habits, students were empowered to define their academic priorities.

The next phase of the meeting involved the creation of a combined goal between the student and mentor. This collaborative goal was a cornerstone of the mentorship relationship, emphasizing teamwork and mutual commitment. Together, the mentor and student examined the personal goals and discussed how the mentor could best support the student in achieving them. This often led to the identification of specific actions, strategies, and milestones.

To ensure that the goals were effective and actionable, mentors guided students in framing their goals using the SMART criteria - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. This framework helped students define their goals with precision, making them more attainable and trackable. Whether it was raising a math grade by one letter grade in the next semester or completing a certain number of reading assignments within a specified time frame, students left the meeting with a clear vision of their objectives. Throughout these meetings, mentors emphasized the importance of accountability and regular reflection. Students were encouraged to keep journals or track their progress in a way that suited them. The mentor would serve as a supportive but vigilant partner in this process, periodically checking in with the student to assess progress, address challenges, and provide guidance as needed. Beyond setting goals, the initial meetings also focused on establishing effective communication channels between mentors and students. Both parties were encouraged to openly discuss their expectations, preferred methods of communication, and the frequency of meetings. This dialogue promoted a sense of trust and understanding within the mentoring partnership, ensuring that students felt comfortable reaching out for support when needed. In these initial meetings, the mentors not only facilitated the goal-setting process but also laid the groundwork for a nurturing and collaborative mentorship relationship. The combined goals became a shared vision that both mentor and student could work towards, fostering a sense of unity and motivation. As a result, students left these meetings not only with clear objectives but also with a renewed sense of purpose and the knowledge that they had a dedicated mentor by their side to help them achieve their aspirations.

After the initial meetings with administrators and mentors, the next critical step in the Golden Geckos Mentoring Program was for students to engage their parents in the goal-setting process. This collaborative effort aimed to ensure that parents were not only informed but also actively supportive of their child's academic aspirations. Here's how this process unfolded:

1. **Reviewing the Goal Setting Form:** Armed with the insights gained from their meetings with administrators and mentors, students sat down with their parents to review the goal setting form. This document encapsulated their academic goals, both personal and combined with their mentor. It served as a tangible roadmap for their academic journey, outlining specific objectives and strategies for achievement.
  
2. **Facilitating Open Discussion:** During these discussions, students took the lead in explaining their goals, why they were important, and the strategies they had devised to reach them. Parents played a crucial role in asking questions, seeking clarification, and providing valuable input. This open dialogue allowed parents to gain a deeper understanding of their child's academic needs and aspirations.

3. **Obtaining Parental Signatures:** To formalize their commitment and endorsement of their child's goals, parents were asked to sign the goal setting form. This signature symbolized not just consent but active engagement and support. It underscored the collaborative nature of the program, with both school and home environments working in harmony to nurture the student's academic growth.
4. **Reinforcing Accountability:** The involvement of parents also emphasized the importance of accountability in achieving the set goals. Parents became additional stakeholders in the process, agreeing to play a role in monitoring progress, providing encouragement, and helping their child overcome challenges along the way.
5. **Returning the Form:** Once the goal setting form had been reviewed, discussed, and signed by parents, students returned the completed form to their mentors. This marked a significant milestone in the mentoring partnership. It demonstrated that the student, mentor, and parents were all aligned in their commitment to the student's academic success.
6. **Tracking Progress:** The goal setting form was not a static document; rather, it served as a dynamic tool for tracking progress. Throughout the academic year, students, mentors, and parents would periodically revisit these goals, assessing achievements, adjusting strategies as needed, and celebrating successes along the way. The form became a living record of the student's growth and development.

By involving parents in this process, the Golden Geckos Mentoring Program reinforced the notion that academic success is a collaborative endeavor. It emphasized the vital role that parents play in supporting and nurturing their child's educational journey. These interactions not only enhanced communication between students, parents, and mentors but also created a strong support system that would bolster each student's efforts toward achieving their annual goals.

The ongoing mentorship within the Golden Geckos Mentoring Program is built on a strong foundation of regular check-ins and support to ensure that students remain on track toward their academic success. These monthly meetings, scheduled to occur by the 10th of each month, are not just about tracking progress but also about fostering a positive and uplifting atmosphere for the students. Mentors understand the significance of consistency in fostering student growth. By scheduling monthly meetings, mentors provide students with a dependable structure for reviewing their progress, addressing challenges, and receiving the support they need. This regularity reinforces the commitment to the student's success. During these check-in meetings, mentors and students collaboratively review the progress made toward their academic goals. This assessment is not merely about grades and numbers but also about personal growth and development. Mentors encourage students to reflect on their achievements, no matter how small, and celebrate their successes, reinforcing a positive mindset.

Mentors play a pivotal role in helping students overcome challenges. Whether it's tackling a difficult subject, managing time effectively, or dealing with personal obstacles, mentors offer guidance and strategies tailored to the student's unique circumstances. The emphasis is on problem-solving, resilience, and self-improvement. Beyond academic advice, mentors provide emotional support and motivation. They listen attentively to the students, ensuring that their concerns are heard and validated. Mentors offer encouragement, reminding students of their potential and the importance of their goals. This support extends beyond the confines of the classroom, emphasizing holistic growth. To maintain transparency and accountability, mentors electronically input the date of their meetings with students on a shared file. This digital record serves as a reliable reference for all parties involved, including administrators and parents. It ensures that no meeting is missed and that the mentoring process remains organized. Every interaction within the mentorship program is grounded in positivity and upliftment. Mentors create a safe and nurturing environment where students feel valued and empowered. This approach fosters a growth mindset, encouraging students to see challenges as opportunities for learning and improvement. While there is a structured monthly check-in, mentors are flexible and adaptive to students' evolving needs. They understand that each student's journey is unique, and their support must reflect that. If a student faces a sudden challenge or requires additional assistance, mentors are readily available to provide guidance outside the regular schedule.

In addition to participating in monthly meetings with mentors, students participate in group meetings with the administrative team. This is a vital component of fostering a culture of academic growth, responsible decision-making, and positive behavior. These meetings serve as a platform to celebrate and reward students' dedication and achievements while reinforcing the importance of their continued efforts. The consistency of these monthly meetings ensures that students receive timely acknowledgment for their progress. By recognizing achievements, administrators motivate students to maintain their focus on academic growth and making sound educational decisions. Students are not just expected to meet their goals; they are celebrated for their hard work and perseverance. This positivity inspires them and their peers to strive for excellence. The recognition encompasses a range of achievements. It's not solely about academic success; it's also about responsible decision-making and displaying good behavior. This inclusive approach acknowledges the holistic development of students, valuing their character and choices alongside their academic performance. Students who demonstrate academic growth, make good educational decisions, and exhibit positive behavior are rewarded with awards, prizes, and snacks during the recognition ceremonies. These incentives not only celebrate their achievements but also serve as motivators for continuous improvement.

In addition to monthly recognition, there's a special incentive for students who demonstrate adequate progress toward their goals by March 2022. These students are invited to participate in a Glow Party, a fun and engaging celebration that underscores the significance of achieving their annual goals. The Glow Party, in particular, fosters a sense of community and peer engagement. It's an opportunity for students to come together, share their accomplishments, and enjoy a memorable experience. This strengthens the bonds within the mentoring program, promoting a supportive network of peers. The Glow Party invitation serves as a beacon for students to keep their long-term goals in sight. It underscores that the journey toward academic success is not just about the end result but the progress made along the way. Students are encouraged to stay committed and persistent in their efforts. The active involvement of administrators in these meetings sends a powerful message. It communicates that the entire school community is invested in the success of these students. The presence of school leaders reinforces the significance of these achievements. These recognition meetings empower students by



giving them a voice and a platform to showcase their growth and achievements. It encourages them to take ownership of their educational journey and make positive choices.

The Golden Geckos Mentoring Program seeks to provide these students with the tailored support and guidance they need to bridge the gap and reach their full potential. It's not just about addressing their academic challenges but nurturing their overall growth and self-confidence. We are dedicated to ensuring that each student in the program receives the personalized attention and encouragement required for their academic journey. Through this program, we are committed to helping these students flourish and excel, setting them on a path towards academic success and a bright future.

### RESULTS

There are 88 students in Grades 3, 4, and 5 participating in the Golden Geckos Mentoring Program. Thirty 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students, thirty-nine 4<sup>th</sup> grade students and nineteen 5<sup>th</sup> grade students all scored on grade level below proficiency on the first administration of the FAST Assessment. Being that these students are deficient in Reading and/or Math, the goal is to ensure proficiency by the end of the school year integrating the Golden Geckos Mentoring Program. The progress demonstrated by students in the Golden Geckos Program across each grade level is a testament to the effectiveness of targeted educational strategies and the program's dedicated efforts.

In the third grade, students have made substantial strides in their academic journey. Their proficiency rate in Reading increased to 38%, marking a noteworthy achievement. In math, they also showed significant growth, with a proficiency rate reaching 43%. These gains can be attributed to a combination of factors, including personalized interventions, incentives, goal setting, and mentorship. Fourth-grade students have likewise experienced substantial improvements. Their Reading proficiency rate increased to 36%, showcasing their dedication to enhancing their literacy skills. In Math, their progress is even more striking, with a proficiency rate of 56%. The implementation of tailored strategies and support mechanisms has undoubtedly played a pivotal role in these achievements. Fifth-grade students have also demonstrated commendable growth. Their Reading proficiency rate reached 38%, reflecting their commitment to advancing their reading abilities. In Math, they achieved a proficiency rate of 43%, further underlining the program's success in fostering mathematical skills.

These achievements underscore the significance of providing a comprehensive and individualized approach to education. By identifying students' specific needs and crafting interventions that address those needs, the Golden Geckos Mentoring Program has managed to empower students to reach proficiency levels that were once deemed impossible. The combination of focused interventions, incentives for motivation, clearly defined goals, and mentorship has proven to be a winning formula in helping students thrive academically. As these students continue their educational journey, the program's ongoing commitment to their growth and development promises to unlock even greater potential, enabling them to build a strong foundation for future success.

## REFLECTIONS AND FUTURE PLANS

Tamela Brown- Fellow

The Cahn Fellowship had a significant influence on both my work as a school leader and the launch of our mentorship program, the Golden Geckos. The participants' expertise, skills, and views greatly influenced the creation and success of this new endeavor. The Cahn Fellowship provided me with significant insights into effective leadership strategies and practices as a school leader. My leadership toolset evolved as a result of the program's training sessions, mentorships, and contacts with expert educators. I learned how to build a more inclusive and collaborative school culture, which was critical for implementing our program. The fellowship stressed the value of empathy, adaptability, and clear communication in leadership, all of which were critical in winning support from teachers and staff for our initiative.

We realized the potential of mentorship in addressing the needs of students when we developed the idea for our project. The program was created to draw on the knowledge and dedication of our instructors and staff. It enabled our school community to work together to achieve a similar goal: to assist struggling students and nurture their academic success. The Cahn Fellowship changed my leadership perspective and fostered the development of a program that positively impacted our students and contributed to their success.

My understanding of Adult Development Theory has had a profound influence on my position as a school leader. Understanding this idea has given me important new perspectives on the many phases of adult growth and how they affect the people I interact with. As a school administrator, I now understand that teachers, staff members, and even parents may be at various stages of development with their own unique requirements, motivations, and difficulties. Due to this insight, I can approach situations with more empathy and modify my leadership approach as needed. For instance, I can provide my team members with more specialized professional development possibilities, more focused assistance, and a work atmosphere that caters to their various developmental requirements. Adult Development Theory has also influenced my approach to mentorship and coaching within the school community. It has given me a greater understanding of my teachers' and staff's personal and professional development paths. This information has not only helped me to be a more successful mentor, but it has also helped to build a culture of continual learning and growth at the school. I can now give appropriate assistance for everyone's growth stage, whether they are early-career educators seeking direction or seasoned teachers wishing to further enhance their leadership abilities. Finally, Adult Development Theory has improved my capacity to lead, mentor, and promote the development of people with whom I work, resulting in a more dynamic and healthier educational environment.

Our initiative, The Golden Geckos Mentoring Program, has significantly influenced our school's performance. We faced devastating numbers in the 2021-2022 school year, with 27% of students in grades 3-5 performing one grade level below in Reading and a shocking 43% performing one grade level below in Math. These findings highlighted the critical need for focused interventions to overcome our pupils' academic disparities.

Surama Flores- Ally

Although the results are trending in a positive manner, our goal is to continue implementing the program as it has been a phenomenal experience for all involved. The Golden Geckos project has had a far-reaching influence on our school's academic environment that goes beyond statistics. The significant rise in the number of students meeting their reading and math benchmarks attests to the initiative's efficacy. It helped students achieve their academic goals and inspired confidence in their skills. The program's emphasis on creating and achieving individual objectives encouraged students to take responsibility for their education, promoting a passion of learning that transcended the classroom.

One of the most major changes in my leadership style has resulted from the program's rich learning opportunities. Interactions with colleagues, mentors, and academic experts have broadened my views, introducing me to innovative instructional strategies, research-backed methodologies, and new perspectives on leadership. This exposure to a variety of ideas and methods has widened my leadership toolkit, allowing me to make better informed decisions and create good change in my school community. Overall, the Cahn Fellowship Program has enabled me to become a more innovative, flexible, and empathic leader, fueled by a thorough grasp of educational best practices and the importance of mentorship in developing leadership success.

Lily Woo's session, Leadership Decisions on 9/11, was challenging and inspiring. Her insights on the leadership decisions made during that crisis were not only poignant, but also extremely thought-provoking. The necessity of adaptation, empathy, and clarity in leadership during challenging times struck me. Her comments about the need for leaders to remain cool, making quick choices, and communicating effectively struck a chord with me. It made me think about how I would lead in a crisis within my school community, highlighting the need for clear communication.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each of the teachers and staff members at Whispering Pines Elementary who volunteered their time to mentor our students. Your dedication and commitment played an invaluable role in the success of our program. Additionally, thank our students and their parents for entrusting us with their education. Your trust and support mean the world to us, and we are committed to providing the best learning experience possible.

We appreciate Mr. Cahn as the visionary for the Cahn Leadership Program. This opportunity has afforded us the chance to experience the most engaging and meaningful professional development possible for educators. We will always be grateful for everything you do to uphold our reputation as leaders in education.

We are thankful for Dr. Barbara McKeon. Your wit and humor brighten our days while making this an enjoyable experience. Your unwavering focus on meeting deadlines sets a high standard we all appreciate. Thank you for being an invaluable part of our team. Your contributions are truly exceptional. Talisa Martinez, we're grateful! We had a flawless experience because of your careful arrangement of sessions, hotel accommodations and transportation. It's admirable how meticulous you are about every little thing. We appreciate your efforts in making our travels enjoyable, relaxing and productive. We value your commitment, knowledge, dedication and expertise.

The arranging of our stays was handled expertly and with great care by Talissa Martinez, who we thank for her efforts. Everything was handled seamlessly and her meticulous attention to every little detail was evident to all. Thank you, Talisa for your commitment.

We appreciate all of Raul Garcia's steadfast support and direction during our time in the Cahn Fellowship Program. You are an excellent mentor. Your knowledge, guidance and commitment have been crucial to our development.

## APPENDICES

- Appendix A: GOLDEN Geckos Parent Letter
- Appendix B: Sample GOLDEN Geckos Goal Setting Form

Appendix A

Growing Organized Leaders that are Determined, Educated and Noble  
Geckos

Dear Golden Geckos Mentors,

Thank you for volunteering to be a Golden Gecko Mentor during the 2022-2023 school year. We held our first group meeting with our Golden Geckos this morning and it was a great experience for all involved. **Our Golden Geckos have FSA scores that are one grade level below expectations in Reading and/or Math. Being that these students are quite fragile, we know the relationship they form with you throughout the year will definitely assist them in staying focused on reaching their annual goals.** Attached to this message is a sample Golden Geckos Goal Setting Form. We discussed the contents of the forms with students this morning as well as the importance of staying focused on working towards reaching their individual goals. Based on each student's data from the most recent administration of the FSA, goals were developed. **In addition to these goals, the following goals will be created based on need in Reading and/or Math:**

1. **iReady-** Each student's iReady goal has already been placed on their form. Students must complete a minimum of 45 minutes per week with a 75% or higher pass rate in Reading and/or Math. This should equate to approximately two or three lessons per week.
2. **Personal Goal-** This goal will be created by the student.
3. **Combined Goal with Mentor-** This goal will be created during your initial meeting with your student(s).

**The mentor will conduct an initial meeting with each assigned student.** The initial meeting will consist of the following:

1. Introduction and discuss contents of student's Golden Geckos Goal Setting Form.
2. Assist students in creating a Personal Goal.
3. Create a Combined Goal with a Mentor.

Once this is done, students must sign the Golden Geckos Goal Setting Form and take it home to obtain a signature from a parent or guardian. **All original forms must be returned to each student's homeroom teacher. The mentor will briefly meet/check in with each assigned student at least one time by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month).** The purpose of these brief monthly sessions is to have a conversation with each student to ascertain their progress towards meeting goals, discuss things that are going well for them, and assist in guiding them towards overcoming challenges they encounter along the way. If you determine that a student requires additional support beyond your realm of expertise, please advise Ms. Flores for additional guidance. **After each monthly meeting, mentors will electronically input the date they met with students on a shared file. All interactions between mentors and students must be positive and uplifting as the ultimate goal is to ensure support is provided that keeps students focused on academic success.** The administrative team will meet with The Golden Geckos once per month to reward and celebrate students that demonstrate monthly progress towards meeting their goals based on iReady data, Electronic Gradebook data, and various additional sources of input. **A Glow Party Celebration will be held at the end of the school year for all Golden Geckos that demonstrate consistent growth throughout the year.**

Again, thank you for your guidance, support, and willingness to mentor a WPE Golden Gecko! 😊

Sincerely,

Tamela Brown, Principal

## Whispering Pines Elementary School Golden Geckos Goal Setting Form

<b>Student:</b> _____	<b>Teacher:</b> _____	<b>Mentor:</b> _____	<b>Grade:</b> _____
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Reading					
AP1 Level	AP1 Scale Score	AP2 Level	AP2 Scale Score	PM3 FAST Goal	Student Initials

Math					
AP1 Level	AP1 Scale Score	AP2 Level	AP2 Scale Score	PM3 FAST Goal	Student Initials

<u>Reading</u>	<u>Math</u>
1. Academic Goal (iReady):	1. Academic Goal (iReady):
2. Personal Goal:	2. Personal Goal:
3. Combined Goal with Mentor:	3. Combined Goal with Mentor:

**Dear Parent or Guardian,**

**We have reviewed assessment data with your child and assisted in developing annual goals. Please review this chart with your child, sign, and return it to your child's homeroom teacher. Let's work together to ensure your child's success throughout the school year. 😊**

**Mentor's Signature:**

**Parent's Signature:**