School-Integrated Mentoring: Transforming Student Engagement through Relationships

Beth Fraster, Mass Mentoring Partnership
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Introductions

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Connect with us!

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MMP’s vision is for young people to engage in the empowering youth-adult relationships that create more vibrant and resilient communities.
Introductions

Delia Hagan
Program Manager
MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership

Connect with us!

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About MENTOR

• Unifying champion for expanding quality youth mentoring relationships in the US for more than 25 years.
• Supports a network of 26 state and local affiliates and 50+ Technical Assistance Providers who support mentoring programs locally.
The Importance of Relationships
“The perception that teachers care about their students is among the strongest predictors of student performance.”

Carol Dweck, Gregory Walton & Geoffrey Cohen, Stanford University, 2011
“Relationships are the soil in which children’s social-emotional learning skills grow.”

-- Susan Jones and Suzanne Bouffard, Harvard University, 2012
Relational Psychology
Positive youth development is an intentional, pro-social approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive; recognizes, utilizes, and enhances youths' strengths; and promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths.

Youth.gov
“Developmental relationships are close connections that powerfully and positively shape young people’s identities and help them develop thriving mindsets”
1. What stood out as you listened to the voices of these young people?

2. What are the formal and informal ways that young people encounter supportive relationships in your program/organizations?

3. What are the barriers to creating empowering, supportive relationships?
Success Mentors
What is Success Mentors?

• An evidence-based, resource-friendly mentoring model that targets chronic absenteeism
• Emphasizes frequent interactions with students to foster a sense of belonging while identifying and responding to barriers to attendance
• Relies on the frequent sharing of information between mentors and school administrators, both to respond to student needs and inform whole-school prevention approaches
• Emphasizes strengths-based approaches to student and family engagement
The Success Mentors Model

Goal: Students come to school (so they can benefit from school)

School builds a welcoming, family-centered environment & culture that values relationships.

Whole School Relationship-Building Strategies

Targeted Mentoring Intervention for Students Most in Need of Support

Strengths-based messaging

Weekly Data Meetings

Mentors build relationships with students, celebrate successes, and uncover true student needs.

Mentors collaborate with school to coordinate social services to meet students’ individual needs & consider appropriate family engagement responses.

School identifies patterns in student needs and uses this information to inform whole-school and targeted strategies.
What Does a Success Mentor Do?

- Matched with students with history of chronic absenteeism or at risk of becoming CA
- Reach out to and engage students’ families
- Work with school staff for support and interventions
- Communicate by phone call/text home if absent
- Recognize and celebrate successes
- Meet with mentees one-on-one or in small groups
- Track mentees' attendance and improvements

Weekly Student Success Meetings

Weekly Meeting Best Practices

- Meeting takes place same day and time each week and follows standard agenda
- Led by principal or principal’s designee
- Include Success Mentors (or lead Success Mentors)
- Invite key community-based partners
- Community-based partners sign confidentiality agreement to review student-level data

Evidence of Impact

• Students with prior histories of chronic absenteeism with a Success Mentor gained nearly two additional weeks of school (9 days) which is educationally significant.

• In the top 25% of schools, students with Success Mentors gained one additional month of school.

• High school students with Success Mentors (including those overage for their grade) were 52% more likely to remain in school the following year.

• Mentees reported they liked having a mentor and the mentor helped improve their attendance, schoolwork, motivation and confidence.

Balfanz, 2016
Evidence of Impact

- Impacts on High-Need Student Groups
  - Low-income (free or reduced lunch-eligible) students were 15% less likely to be chronically absent if attending a school with the Success Mentors & Student Support Model in place than control group
  - Students living in the shelter system attending a Success Mentors school were 31% less likely to be chronically absent

Balfanz, 2016
What Does Strengths-Based Really Mean?
Action Planning
Wrap-Up

- What’s one take away from your Action Planning exercise?
- Who do you want to share it with?
Funded by OJJDP, the NMRC disseminates information about “What Works” in mentoring through evidence reviews on the effectiveness of program models and specific programs, practices, and services for specific populations of mentees.

- Disseminates high-quality program implementation resources, including tools, program curricula, and training materials.

- Provides FREE technical assistance to youth mentoring programs to help them more deeply incorporate evidence-based practice into their work.

- Sign up for the monthly e-newsletter here.
Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the mission of the center is to disseminate evidence based practices and build and facilitate communities of practice to help students attend every day, be engaged in school, and succeed academically, so that they graduate high school prepared for college, career, and civic life.

The Center, which launched this year, provides webinars for the public about early warning systems, tiered supports for students depending on their level of need, data-driven solutions to student challenges, and training and technical assistance for schools in need. Find out about the supports available here: http://new.every1graduates.org/nsaesc/

Sign up for the Center’s listserv here.
Action Planning:

- [Notes from the Field: If You Want Great Schools, First Work with Parents to Create ‘Actionable Demand’](#)
- [Identifying and Analyzing Stakeholders and their Interests, Community Toolbox, Chapter 7 Section 8](#)

School-Integrated Mentoring:

- [Relationships Matter: A Toolkit for Launching an Elementary Success Mentor Attendance Initiative](#)
- [Success Mentors Resources & Tools](#)
- [Checklist for Developing and Launching a Success Mentors Program](#)

• Youth.gov (n.d). Positive Youth Development.


• 3-4 April, 2017. National Student Attendance, Engagement and Success Center Virtual National Convening.


• Meeting the Challenge of Combatting Chronic Absenteeism: Impact of the NYC Mayor’s Interagency Task Force on Chronic Absenteeism and School Attendance and Its Implications for Other Cities, Balfanz & Byrnes, 2013, Everyone Graduates Center & Johns Hopkins University