



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOLS RESEARCH SNAPSHOT

High school students mentored middle school students at the same K-12 school site during the 2024-2025 school year. Researchers studied the experiences of both mentors and mentees to understand how structured interactions affected each group.

GUIDING AND GROWING TOGETHER: A STUDY OF MENTOR AND MENTEE EXPERIENCES IN SECONDARY STUDENTS

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PURPOSE

Mentors play a vital role in influencing, supporting, motivating, collaborating with, and guiding younger students. The impact of mentorship can be observed through measurable outcomes, including academic performance, attendance, behavior, and self-evaluations. Establishing a structured and strategic mentor program has the potential to significantly enhance these outcomes. This project aimed to streamline the mentorship process and evaluate the impacts of mentor-mentee relationships through both qualitative and quantitative data.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What processes best support student-to-student mentorship programs during the school day?
- How does mentoring impact high school mentors?
- How does mentoring impact middle school mentees?

ACTION RESEARCH SUMMARY

The middle and high school discipline deans met several times during the first semester to review all secondary student data in three categories: grades, attendance, and behavior infractions. Four middle school students were identified as mentees based on a need for support in all three categories. A mentor was selected for each mentee based on common interests, leadership skills, and their willingness to work with a younger student. The high school discipline dean trained mentors and instructed them on how to build an appropriate and trusting relationship, ask meaningful questions, listen actively, and offer appropriate alternatives to negative behaviors. Mentors and mentees met weekly during an elective class to discuss grades, behavior, attendance, and a rotating topic to build trust. Mentors guided mentees in problem-solving skills to improve their experiences during the school day. Mentors also met with the deans to inform them of any issues beyond their capacity as student leaders. Both groups completed pre and post-surveys to capture insight on their experiences. Deans tracked grades, behavior, and attendance.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

Opportunities. Both mentors and mentees reported positive experiences with participation in the program. The K-12 structure of the school could facilitate mentorships across various grade levels, as well as opportunities for mentees to transition into mentors over time.

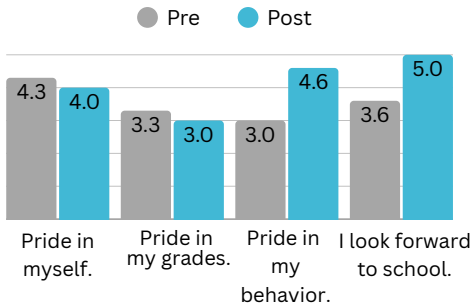
Challenges. The sample size was small. Four mentors and four mentees participated, but only three mentors and three mentees responded to all surveys. This makes it challenging to draw conclusions that can be scaled to larger groups. A small number was appropriate for the first year because deans met with each mentor individually to discuss the needs of their mentee, and this took a substantial amount of time.



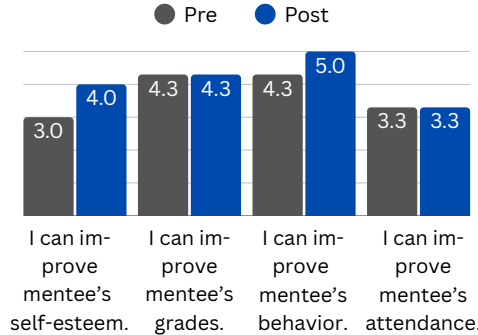
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Participants were given a self-evaluative pre- and post-survey. 3 of 4 mentors and 3 of 4 mentees responded to all surveys. They rated statements about grades, self-esteem, behavior, and attendance from **1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)**. The greatest growth was evident in the mentees' pride in their behavior, their desire to attend school each day, and the mentors' leadership.

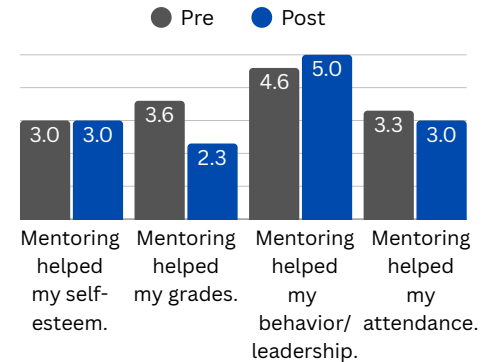
Mentee Self-Evaluation



Mentor Perceptions



Mentor Experiences



Mentee Improvement Averages



- 64% improvement in grades.
- 29% decrease in minor behavioral infractions.
- 44% decrease in major behavioral infractions.



- 39% decrease in unexcused absences.
- 21% decrease in tardies.

Mentor Quotes

"I think I helped impact behavior for my mentee the most because...she was getting in trouble less and less."

"The experience was good and it showed me that my decisions can influence younger kids."

"[Mentoring] helped me to talk better, showed me that someone looks up to me, and helped me be more of a leader."

IMPLICATIONS

Mentorship experiences showed a variety of positive impacts on the mentors and mentees. As schools continue to seek innovative solutions for attendance issues, mentoring could be an option that helps chronically absent students look forward to attending school because mentees reported a change in motivation during the program. Mentees also showed improvements in grades and an increase in pride in their behavior, which is supported by decreases in minor and major behavioral infractions.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The researchers plan to continue the mentoring program during the 2025-2026 school year. Mentors in the 2024-2025 cohort will continue with the same mentees. New students will be added to the program based on data from discipline deans' schoolwide analysis of attendance, grades, and behavior infractions.

References

FSUS K-Kids Mentoring Program (2021-2024).

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all families for allowing their students to participate.

Collaborate with FSUS!



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