



# Grand Area Mentoring Annual Report 2020/2021

"Mentoring helps set kids on course toward a healthier future – for them, for their families, for our community." –GCS D faculty member, May 2021

>> Regarding the Covid-19 pandemic, 96% of volunteers felt "reasonably safe" while mentoring this year.

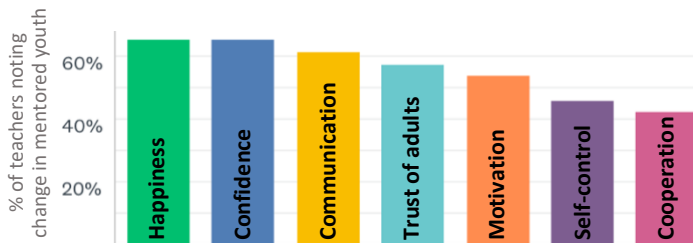
"Having a mentor is like a best friend. She's my family. She always makes me feel better and more confident. She encourages me to keep trying and not give up on things." –8th grade mentee participant of seven years

## Attitude/Happiness

"All of the kids I see being mentored have more confidence, they're more focused and follow directions better, and they also seem to be happier." –GCS D faculty member, May 2021

"We know from studies on adverse childhood experiences that a connection with an adult can help mitigate childhood trauma." –GCS D faculty member, May 2021

>> Seven social-emotional areas where faculty and staff have seen youth benefit from mentoring include...

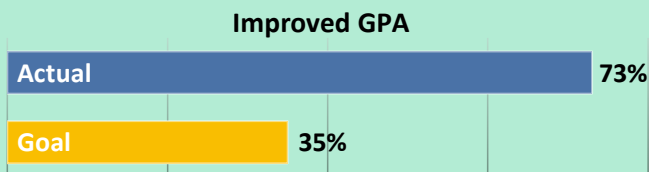


>> 98% of mentees reported feeling happier.

"Mentoring makes me want to come to school and feel happier when I come to school. I can think about myself, but I have an open spot now to where I can think about others." –5th grade student who experienced trauma and depression

## Academic Performance/Personal Motivation

The U.S. Dept. of Education set a goal of 35% improvement in academic performance for mentored youth.

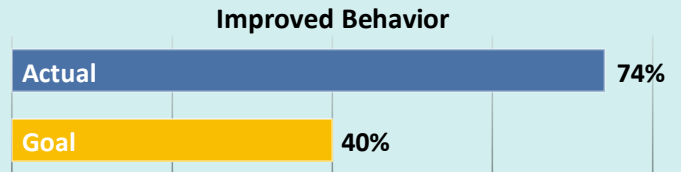


>> 89% of teachers agree that mentoring is an important strategy to support vulnerable students who exhibit antisocial behavior, have few friendships, demonstrate poor commitment to school, earn poor grades, or live in a troubled neighborhood.

"My mentor is really smart about people. We go job hunting sometimes, and he gives me feedback about my body language, like standing up straight and taking my hands out of my pockets. I also feel more confident when it comes to matters of social confrontation. He'll ask me questions like 'What's it worth to you to stay in that situation and fight?' He talks to me about stuff from his own personal experience." –8th grade student who spent time in foster care and struggles with depression

## Behavior/Relationships

The U.S. Dept. of Education set a goal of 40% reduction in disciplinary actions for mentored youth.



"Mentoring gives the students a friend to socialize with after school and can help them work through some of their struggles." –GCS D faculty member, May 2021

>> 100% of mentors agree that their mentees demonstrated improved social skills.

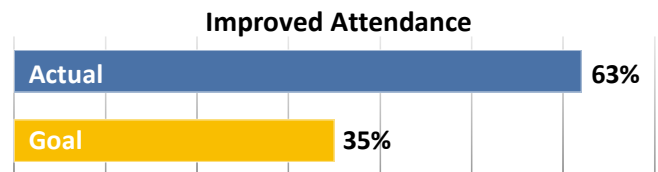
"My mentee was able to open up and be less reserved and more playful... She seemed to let herself have more fun." –Moab mentor, May 2021

"I have noticed my mentee taking more interest in others (outside of himself), which has been really neat to watch." –Moab mentor, May 2021

"When my mentee was acting disrespectfully, I communicated my needs and feelings; he adjusted his behavior to be responsive to those needs." –Moab mentor, May 2021

## Attendance/Attitude about School

The U.S. Dept. of Education set a goal of 35% reduction in skipped school for mentored youth.



"Mentoring has tremendous value for the students. I've seen better attendance and happier students." –GCS D faculty member, May 2021

"My mentee texted me and asked me advice about her dress code policy at school. She wanted to do a protest, and I offered her another possible option. We talked about creating a petition. In the end I don't think the protest ever happened. I was touched she wanted my advice." –Moab mentor, May 2021

"Thanks to mentoring, my students have a much more positive attitude about school." –GCS D faculty member, May 2021

## Volunteer Support & Value

>> 100% of mentors agree that Grand Area Mentoring staff understood the situations they faced with their mentees.

>> 96% of mentors agree that Grand Area Mentoring staff taught them how to handle difficult situations that arise in mentoring or were there to help them.

“Mentoring is the most positive difference you can make in a kid’s life.” –Moab mentor, May 2021

“It’s a rewarding, long-term commitment that helps the entire community.” –Moab mentor, May 2021

“Mentoring is one of the most valuable things I do every week.” –Moab mentor, May 2021

MENTORS: “Overall, I would rate the value of my volunteer time...”

4.7★  
average rating



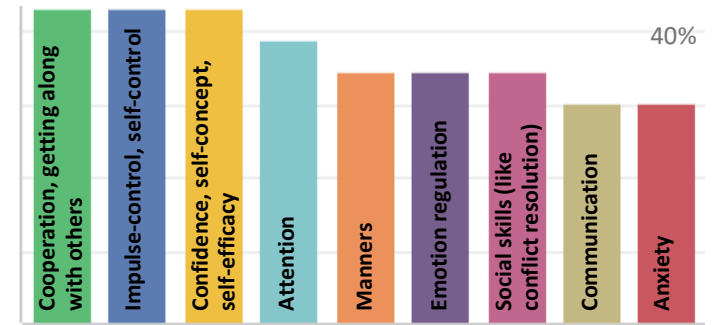
## Demographics and Risk

Socio-economic status: 95% free or reduced lunch      Ethnicity: 35% minority

Average age: 12 years

Gender: 60% male, 40% female      (youngest 7, oldest 21)

Behavioral and Emotional Risk: According to mentors, the top nine areas where their mentees face challenges include:



## Opportunities

“Covid-19 related protocols and limitations were obstacles.” – Moab mentor, May 2021

19% of teachers/staff don’t know if the director and mentor coordinator are knowledgeable and easy to reach. 46% don’t know if Grand Area Mentoring provides excellent support to its volunteer corps. 30% don’t know if mentors are well trained and effective. And 38% don’t know if Grand Area Mentoring keeps its participants safe.

“It would be nice if mentees could ride in a vehicle with mentors with parent’s permission.” –Moab mentor, May 2021

“Now that I’m in the community-based mentoring model, I feel much more disconnected from everyone else involved in the program.” –Moab mentor, May 2021

In response to feedback, Grand Area Mentoring set goals for the 2021/2022 school year, which include: resume school-based mentoring in accord with district guidance, communicate with and thoroughly train district staff in program-related matters such as referring students and program protocols, explore with risk management the possibility of student transportation in volunteer vehicles, and provide opportunities for mentors and mentees to connect across the program.

## Mentor Orientation & Advanced Training

Training & enrichment opportunities offered during the 2020/2021 school year included the following, all in Zoom format:

1. 2-hour Mentor Orientation
2. Covid-Safe Mentoring
3. Strength-Based Mentoring Part 1
4. Cyberbullying Prevention and Response
5. Strength-Based Mentoring Part 2
6. Suicide Prevention
7. Strength-Based Mentoring Part 3
8. Community-Based Mentoring
9. Nonviolent Communication Book Club

## Number of Students Served

Grand Area Mentoring focused on sustaining matches through the pandemic, a dangerous and stressful time – and a period when creating new matches proved difficult, if not impossible. Despite long odds, the program grew over the course of the year, starting from 50 matches.

- 69: number of mentees in 2020/2021
- 22: maximum number of students on waitlist
- 3.5 years: average match duration, a record
- 87%: percentage of matches lasting more than one year

Recruitment has kicked off for the 2021/2022 school year. A new cohort of mentors will be trained on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

## New Projects & Year Ahead

1

**Incentive Manual:** Grand Area Mentoring has created a program that will directly address the challenges facing students. Mentored youth will have the opportunity to earn appropriate payouts for improved behavior. Incentive plans will be scaffolded, building upon mastered concepts and habits. Their mentor will monitor their progress and help them work toward a performance outcome. Rewards, available in Grand Area Mentoring’s incentive store, will be chosen by the mentee.

2

**Educational Scholarships:** With the help of a grant from Grand County, Grand Area Mentoring will pilot a program to extend mentoring relationships through high school. Starting with the class of 2024, each participating youth who graduates while still matched with their mentor will earn a \$1,000 educational scholarship. The purpose of this plan is to both support teens through their challenging high school experience and to partially finance their post-secondary education. 95% of mentees qualify for free or reduced lunch, so this program targets children at higher risk of dropout and who might otherwise have few resources upon graduation.

3

**New Matches:** Grand Area Mentoring will once again focus on creating new matches in the 2021/2022 school year, starting with a new cohort in October.