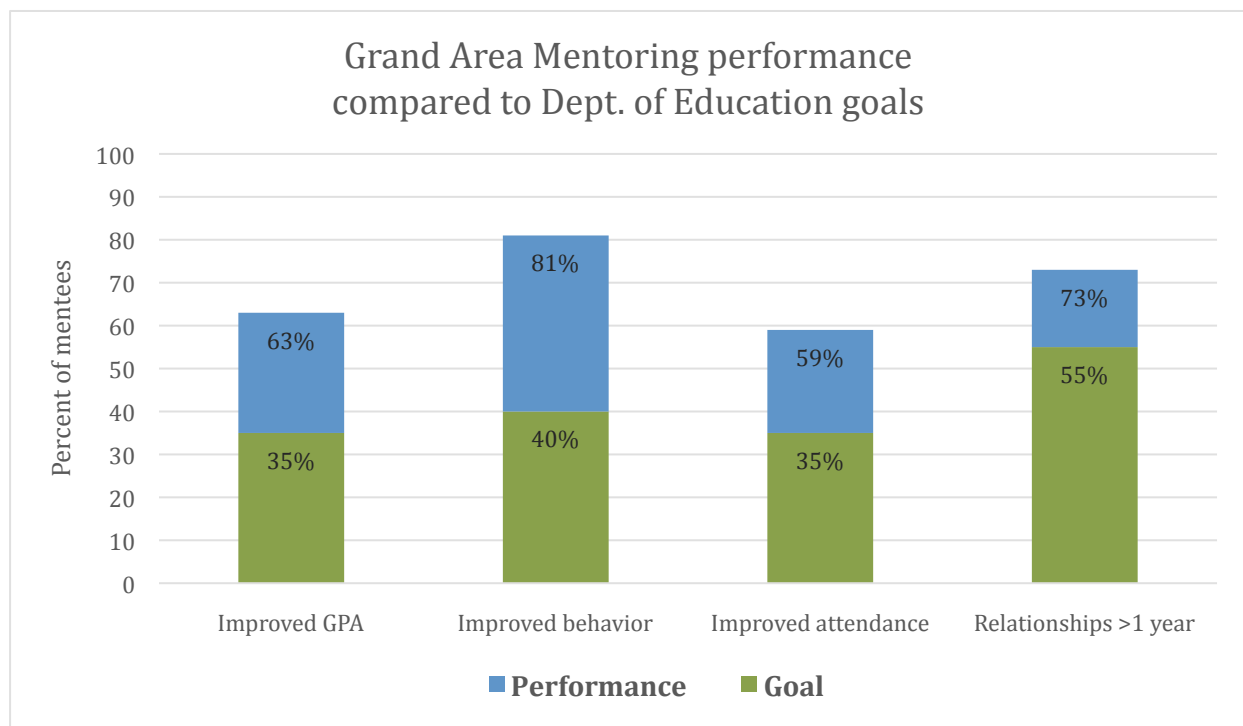


Grand Area Mentoring 2016/2017 Annual Report

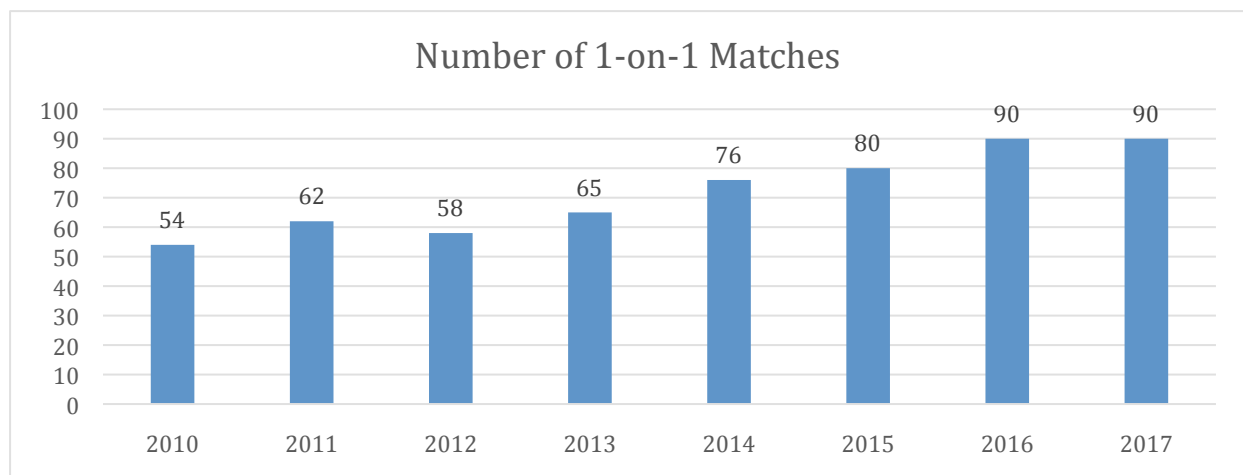
“Building developmental relationships with young people is the single most influential thing that adults can do to help them succeed in school and in life.” –Search Institute, REACH Strategies Guidebook

Summary

Grand County School District launched Grand Area Mentoring in 2005 with the goal of helping the region’s at-risk youth. In partnership with the U.S. Department of Education, the program identified four key benchmarks to gauge student and program performance: 1) academic achievement, 2) social skills, 3) attendance, and 4) match duration. Grand Area Mentoring has met or exceeded objectives in all four categories nearly every year since inception. This chart illustrates Grand Area Mentoring’s major outcomes for 2016/2017 vs. objectives set by experts:



Capacity: Grand Area Mentoring has grown by 67% since 2010.



Demographics

Of the 90 children served by Grand Area Mentoring in 2016/2017:

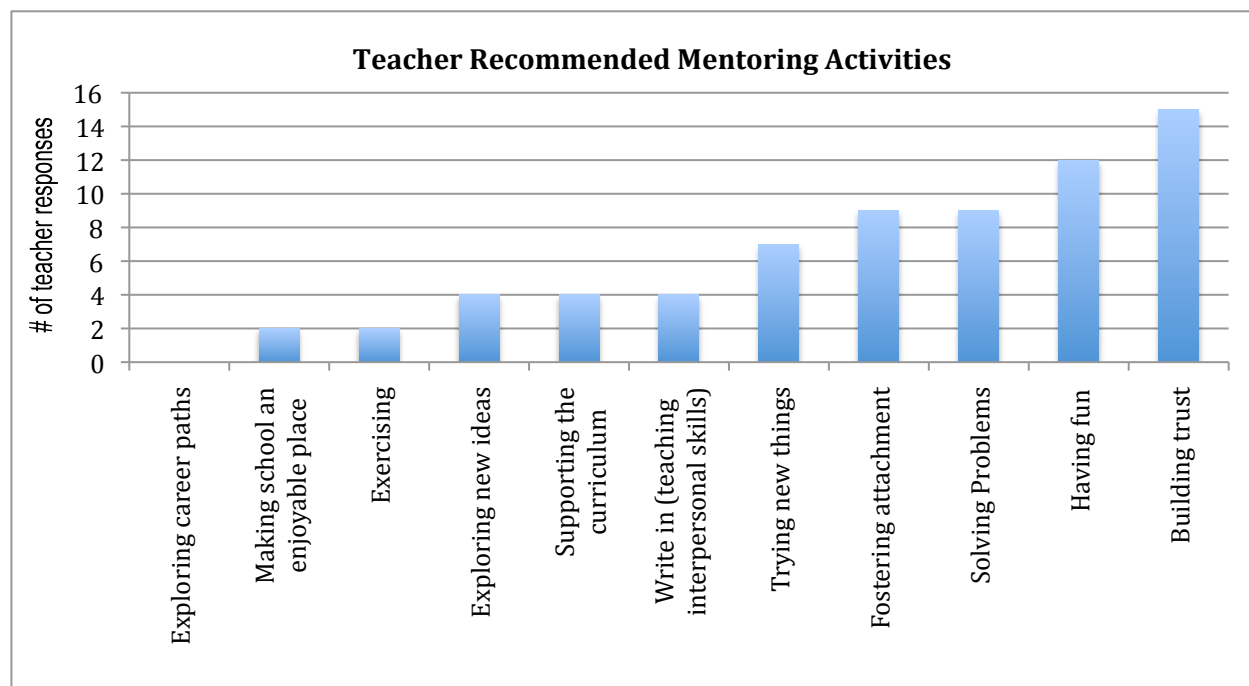
- 92% qualified for free or reduced lunch, the federal indicator of poverty.
- 47% were female, 53% male.
- 25% were of minority (Hispanic or Native American) ethnicity.

Faculty and Staff Feedback

Teachers are well placed to observe and assess student performance on a wide variety of measures. Surveys at the close of 2016/2017 showed favorable opinions among teachers, administrators, and staff about the effectiveness of school-based mentoring in GCSD.

- **100%** of teachers, staff, and administrators surveyed agree that mentored students demonstrate improved social skills;
- **100%** agree mentored students get in less trouble;
- **100%** agree mentored students seem happier;
- **96%** agree mentored students demonstrate better listening and communication skills;
- **95%** agree mentored students seem to care more about schoolwork or grades;
- **87%** agree mentored youth show improved self-control;
- **100%** agree mentored youth like school more, especially on mentoring days;
- **100%** agree mentored youth miss less school due to unexcused absences;
- **95%** agree mentored youth seem to have greater understanding of others' feelings;
- **100%** agree mentored youth look forward to seeing their mentors each week.

When asked which areas mentors and mentees should focus on, teachers responded with the following frequency:



The Importance of Relationships

The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child looked at broad research and wrote a report stating:

The quality and stability of a child's human relationships lay the foundation for a wide range of later developmental outcomes that really matter – self-confidence and sound mental health, motivation to learn, achievement in school and later in life, the ability to control aggressive impulses and resolve conflicts in non-violent ways, knowing the difference between right and wrong, having the capacity to develop and sustain casual friendships and intimate relationships, and ultimately to be a successful parent oneself. (p 1)

Based on the council's findings and other research, Search Institute drafted a framework that includes five key relationship elements that an adult can put into practice to help a child thrive.

The Five Elements	Actions	Definitions
1) Express care. <i>Show me that I matter to you.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be dependable. • Listen. • Believe in me. • Be warm. • Encourage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be someone I can trust. • Really pay attention when we are together. • Make me feel known and valued. • Show me you enjoy being with me. • Praise me for my efforts and achievements.
2) Challenge growth. <i>Push me to keep getting better.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect my best. • Stretch. • Hold me accountable. • Reflect on failures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect me to live up to my potential. • Push me to go farther. • Insist I take responsibility for my actions. • Help me learn from mistakes and setbacks.
3) Provide support. <i>Help me complete tasks and achieve goals.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigate. • Empower. • Advocate. • Set boundaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide me through hard situations and systems. • Build my confidence to take charge of my life. • Defend me when I need it. • Put in place limits that keep me on track.
4) Share power. <i>Treat me with respect and give me a say.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect me. • Include me. • Collaborate. • Let me lead. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take me seriously and treat me fairly. • Involve me in decisions that affect me. • Work with me to solve problems & reach goals. • Create opportunities to take action & lead.
5) Expand possibilities. <i>Connect me with people, places, and ideas that broaden my world.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspire. • Broaden horizons. • Connect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspire me to see possibilities for my future. • Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places. • Introduce me to people and opportunities to help me grow.

Grand Area Mentoring asks its adult mentors to use this framework as a guide in their role. The following sections look at student quotes addressing each domain.

>> How do our mentors EXPRESS CARE?

“He always asks how my day is going. He asked if I wanted to show him my volcano because I wasn't there when my class did the eruptions.” (5th grade student with low attachment to school)

“My mentor got me an Outward Bound scholarship. On my birthday this year, she got me chocolate cupcakes.” (7th grade student who lives with single father)

“She cares about me. She's always happy to see me and that shows she cares. Sometimes she promises we will do something like make the Valentine's box, then she got all the stuff, and we made it together.” (4th grade student with extremely low home support, low attachment to school)

“She cares about me. I feel she really cares about me. She's scared when I fall too. I feel she's going to always be there for me and be a good person.” (4th grade student who lives with single mother and has little brother with special needs)

“She hugs me, she sings this one song, she tells me how much she loves to hang out with me.” (8th grade student that lives with grandmother, very low school attachment/home support)

“She gives me stuff from her adventures and she listens to stuff I say like what happens over the weekends if I want to tell her.” (3rd grade student who struggles with parents’ divorce)

>> How do our mentors CHALLENGE GROWTH?

“She’s taught me things about life and how I can help change the world with one little thing. She talks about the news with me.” (5th grade student who has lived in a shelter for victims of domestic violence)

“I’m not the best social person. I say things that are mean. I think I’m joking but other people don’t. She’s helped me understand that.” (6th grade student who struggles with depression)

“He helped me be able to get along better with other people. He showed me to use a nice attitude and say, ‘Hey, you need help? I’m here.’ That’s how he is with me.” (4th grade student who struggles with anger management, lives with single father)

“My mentor helped me stop lying.” (7th grade student who has suffered physical and mental abuse)

“She’s nice with me, and that makes me be nice to other people – treat them the way I’ve been treated.” (3rd grade student who struggles with anxiety disorder)

“She inspires me to understand school a lot better since she is actually going to school herself right now.” (8th grade student on the autistic spectrum)

>> How do our mentors PROVIDE SUPPORT?

“I feel better because I can open up to her. I tell her everything.” (8th grade student whose little brother was killed in an accident)

“He tells me what not to do and what I can do – that allows me to know that he doesn’t want me getting in trouble. And if I really want friends, I have to be kind to them. Mentoring has taught me a lot.” (5th grade student who struggles with social skills and respecting boundaries)

“She talks to me, she says she cares about my school and my grades, she reminds me of stuff I need to do.” (8th grade student with low school attachment, struggles with attendance and academics)

“You can talk about stuff with your mentor. You sometimes realize how to do stuff differently, like when someone is being a total jerk to you, you know how to fix it.” (2nd grade student who struggles with behavioral issues)

“She walked with me to the eye doctor to get my glasses fixed.” (8th grade student living with single mom who struggles with substance abuse)

“Usually I take things out on other people, but having a mentor helps so I don’t hurt anybody else.” (3rd grade student abandoned by his mom)

>> How do our mentors SHARE POWER?

“We play games and talk. We decide activities together, sometimes I have a game and I’ll ask if he wants to play, sometimes he’ll ask me.” (5th grade student with very low attachment to school, single mom struggles with depression)

“We play chess, basketball, tennis, and build paper airplanes. We do this thing where one person decides what we will do one week, the other person chooses the next week.” (5th grade student who has no contact with mother)

“We build bracelets, make necklaces, play Spot It, and have snacks. We think about it, talk about it, and decide what to do together.” (2nd grade student with low home support)

“We agree on something to do like play catch or monkey bars or chess.” (4th grade student whose father was incarcerated)

“One of us makes a suggestion about what to do, if one of us picked last, the other person will pick the next one. I get to do things I wouldn’t normally get to do, like throw a Frisbee, because my dad doesn’t visit often.” (6th grade student who struggles with depression, lives with single mom)

>> How do our mentors **EXPAND POSSIBILITIES?**

“She’s helped me figure out strategies for learning – like when I was learning my states, she would say this is Mega Montana and Utah has a top hat.” (5th grade student whose mom was incarcerated for substance abuse)

“She showed me a book when we went to the bookstore and now I’m hooked on the series. I’m on book 7! That helped me do my reading homework a lot better too because I had a good book to read.” (3rd grade student who struggles to make friends, bullied for his weight)

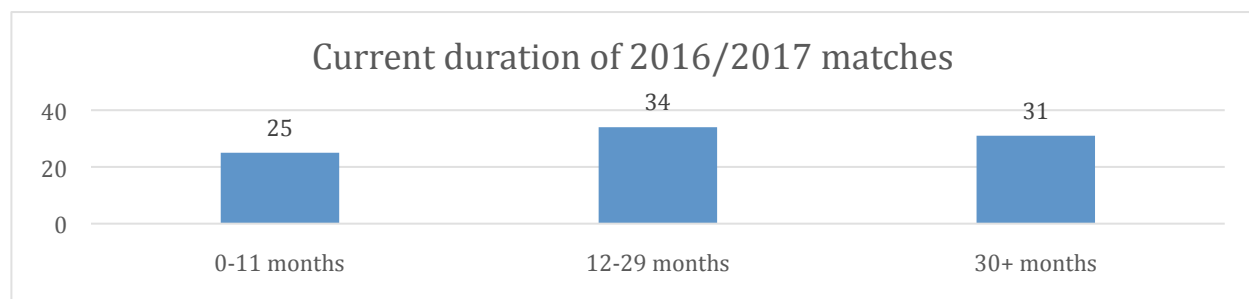
“She introduced me to basketball. I usually don’t like sports, but now I’m getting more into them. We also played golf.” (5th grade student with low home support)

“We went to the Moab Boulder Park and learned to climb on the rocks there.” (5th grade student whose dad died in an accident)

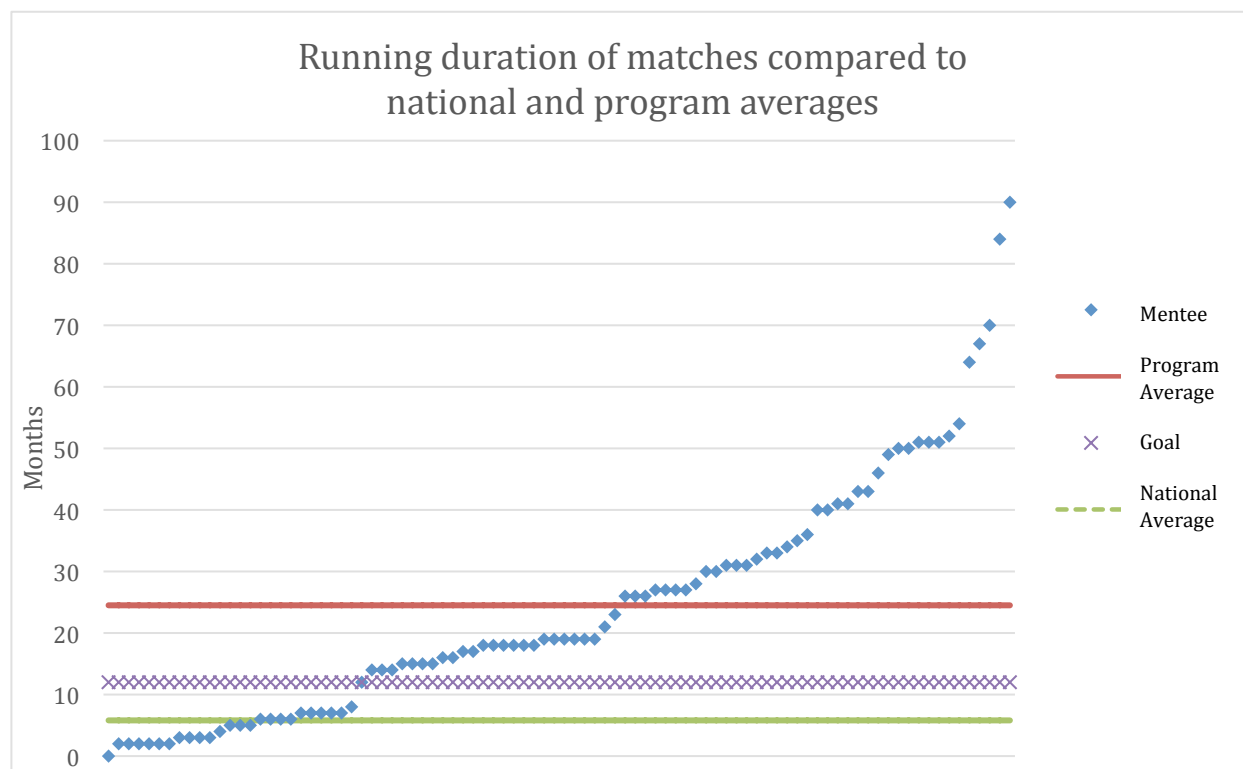
“We went on the river rafting trip together. It was awesome!” (8th grade student who struggles to make friends)

Sustained Relationships

Students who have been mentored for more than one year often performed better than their peers mentored for fewer months. Grand Area Mentoring’s average match length at close is two years, or about 300% better than the national average documented in a Dept of Ed study.



Program and mentor quality help predict relationship length. 73% of presently enrolled matches have been sustained for 12 months or more. For all Grand Area Mentoring matches closed in 2016/2017, **94% were sustained for more than 12 months.**



Mentor Feedback

- **100%** of mentors agree mentored youth show improved social skills;
- **100%** agree mentored youth demonstrate better listening and communication skills;
- **100%** agree mentored youth are more cooperative;
- **100%** agree mentored youth make better decisions;
- **100%** agree mentored youth are happier;
- **100%** agree mentored youth show improved self-control;
- **100%** agree mentored youth seem more motivated;
- **88%** agree mentored youth demonstrate greater understanding of others' feelings.

“I had a mentee that described himself as ‘not good at math,’ and after playing Backgammon several times, talking in detail about numbers, probability, risk/reward, etc., and having him beat me up pretty badly on occasion in the game, based on his strategy and use of math, he realized, ‘Maybe I’m not so bad a math.’ Even though his test score was below grade level, he saw something positive there and made a connection.”

“My mentee continues to grow in her ability to use her communication skills.”

“I love it when my mentee breaks into a big smile when we see each other on mentoring day.”

“One of mentees has made great strides in social skills and has developed empathy and the ability to reason things through. The other one has made new friends and is happy at this school.”

“The sad, traumatized girl I’d been struggling to engage with because interested in earning rewards by working at a new job. Her job was straightening up the mentor room and organizing the shelves. She stated smiling, talking, and interacting. Her hard work paid off; she bought a toy and gained self-esteem.”

“I plan on mentoring anywhere I go, it’s so rewarding and the research can’t be denied. Great, simple way to help kids succeed.”

“Can’t wait for next year!”



- **100%** of mentors agree that the school where they mentor is a welcoming place to volunteer.

“HMK staff is REALLY friendly.”

“Great school, great kids, great program.”

“Everyone on staff I’ve come into contact with has been remarkably friendly and helpful.”

Parent Feedback

- **100%** of parents agree their mentored children get along better with others;
- **100%** agree their mentored children demonstrate better listening and communication skills;
- **85%** agree their mentored children like school more;
- **100%** agree their mentored children make better decisions;
- **100%** agree their mentored children are happier;
- **92%** agree their mentored children get in less trouble;
- **100%** agree their mentored children seem more motivated;
- **70%** agree their mentored children care more about schoolwork and grades.

“My son’s mentor was amazing with him. Helped with a few issues he had, and he was always looking forward to spending time with her.”

“Very encouraging! My son’s mentor rocks!!! We love her!”

“My son’s mentor is awesome!”

“I love it! My kids love it too!”

“I really like the time that she dedicates to my daughter. Thank you.”

“My child seems happier and more motivated at school and at home. He seems more caring as well.”

“I think mentoring was great for my son.”

“Best decision I ever made for my daughter.” –Grand Area Mentoring parent

Administrative Performance

Grand Area Mentoring surveyed teachers, administrators, parents, and mentors about staff performance to provide guidance for program improvement and professional development. A mean response of 8 is the goal for the first two, and 90% agreement is the goal for the others.

<u>PARENT SURVEYS</u> (2016/2017)	AVERAGE SCORE on a scale of 1 to 10 (10=excellent)
Communication with parents :	8
Response to parent questions or concerns:	8.5
<u>FACULTY/STAFF SURVEYS</u> (2016/2017)	PERCENTAGE IN AGREEMENT
Grand County School District faculty and staff agree that Grand Area Mentoring provides excellent support to its volunteer corps:	100% agree

GCSD faculty and staff agree that the program director and mentor coordinator are knowledgeable and easy to reach:	100% agree
GCSD faculty agree that mentors are well trained and effective:	100% agree
GCSD faculty and staff agree that mentoring is a good strategy to prevent anti-social behavior, unexcused absences, and academic decline among at-risk youth:	100% agree

Successes & Opportunities

Volunteer Support – In a new survey section, Grand Area Mentoring asked volunteers to rank mentor support (on 4-point scale including: 1=not at all, 2=a little, 3=mostly, and 4=very much) bearing in mind the following criteria. On the whole, mentors rated their support 3.7, which suggests a high perceived level of preparation, assistance, and troubleshooting.

CATEGORY OF MENTOR SUPPORT (When thinking about program support, I feel that Grand Area Mentoring staff...)	AVERAGE SCORE
Understood the situations I faced with my mentee.	3.7
Taught me how to handle difficult situations that arise in mentoring.	3.7
Physically went with me during challenging mentoring situation(s).	3.7
Provided information to help me think about my relationship.	3.6
Helped me feel better when I experienced difficulty with my mentee.	3.6
Suggested activities to do with my mentee.	3.8
Noticed when I was working hard at being a good mentor.	3.7
Helped me evaluate my feelings and attitudes about my mentee.	3.6
Taught me skills that I could use in mentoring.	3.6
Provided opportunities for me to reflect on my mentoring experience.	3.6

Trainings – Grand Area Mentoring offered several opportunities for mentor development throughout the year. In a survey, one faculty member commented: “Continue your great trainings!” and another wrote, “I think [Grand Area Mentoring] does a fabulous job of preparing their volunteers.” During the 2016/2017 school year, Grand Area Mentoring sponsored these introductory and advanced mentor trainings:

- Six new mentor orientations for over twenty mentor candidates (by program staff)
- Trauma-Informed Mentoring (by Kelly Vagts)
- Working with ADHD Youth Part I (by Nan Marquardt)
- Self-Care (by Christina Myers)
- Working with ADHD Youth Part II (by Nan Marquardt)

Several training events have already been scheduled for the 2017/2018 school year, including fostering attachment by Nan Marquardt, positivity and respect by Percy Hill, and more.

New Mentor Handbook – After two experienced practitioners favorably reviewed the original draft, Grand Area Mentoring published a new mentor handbook covering mentoring theory, best practices, program policies, recommended activities, relationship building suggestions, youth development information, and much more.

Capacity Building – Due to capacity limitations, Grand Area Mentoring turned away two mentor candidates in 2016/2017. However, the student wait list never dipped below 10 youth. To expand the number of mentoring matches fostered in a school year, which 95% of faculty and staff support, Grand Area Mentoring needs to expand staff hours. Ideally, the professional mentor role would be boosted to take on additional students who languish on our wait list because they exceed the risk profile and age range for most new mentees. These hard-to-match students predominate on our wait list, and a 15-20% increase in funding could dramatically reduce the number of students waiting to be matched.