Chronic Absenteeism: Success Mentors and the Impact of Relationships on Student Success

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AGENDA

- Who is Mentor Kansas?
- Who mentored you?
- What is mentoring?
- Why mentoring?
- What does mentoring look like in schools?
- What is chronic absenteeism?
- Why does attendance matter?
- What is Success Mentors?
- Who is a Success Mentor?
- Why does Success Mentors work?
- Next steps…
SURVEYING THE ROOM

? Who here is a...
  teacher?
  administrator?

? Does your school currently have a mentoring program?

? Is anyone involved in mentoring at their school?
Who in your youth had a lasting positive impact on the person you are today?
Who in your youth had a lasting positive impact on the person you are today?
WHAT IS MENTORING?

- Mentoring Defined: A consistent and stable relationship between youth and a caring role model(s) that involves regular, ideally face-to-face contact and is focused on building the character, capabilities, and confidence of the mentee(s).

- Various formal models:
  - One-to-one
  - Group
  - Peer
  - Community
  - School
  - Faith

- Informal mentoring happens every day.
WHY MENTORING?

WITH A MENTOR, AT-RISK YOUTH ARE:

- **52%** less likely than their peers to skip a day of school
- **55%** more likely be enrolled in college
- **46%** less likely than their peers to start using drugs
- **81%** more likely to report participating regularly in sports or extracurricular activities
- **78%** more likely to volunteer regularly in their communities
- **130%** more than twice as likely to say that they held a leadership position in a club or sports team
- **90%** Respondents who had a mentor said they are now interested in becoming mentors
WHAT DOES MENTORING LOOK LIKE IN SCHOOLS?

- Cost effective strategy for increasing positive relationships for students
- Meeting the students where they are
- Focuses on factors that lead to educational success
  - Connectedness to school environment
  - Improved relationships with staff
  - Greater access to supports
- School-based mentoring vs. School-integrated mentoring
  - Creating a culture of relationships
  - Increasing access to caring adults
  - Mentoring is championed by school leadership
Basehor-Linwood Mentors & CareCat Mentors
Tammy Potts
LEAD BY EXAMPLE...
ADMINISTRATOR BUY-IN

Mentor Me
You never know what potential you can unlock in someone

Hunter Fotovich,
BLHS 1st Prize 2014-2015 Poster Contest
Buy-in from key staff (ie: teachers, administration, district level)
Adequate staffing for program implementation
Procedures in place to lessen participation stigma
PEER MENTORS

“Anti-Bullying”
Role Models
CareCats Class – Elective .5

- Application with recommendations
- Admin/School Board Approval
- Pass/Fail, Letter Grade
- Semester Long/Initial Training
- Expectations
- Teacher evaluation of CareCat matched with classroom
- CareCat evaluation of classroom/mentee match
“This has been such a rewarding experience. It changed my senior year into something much more valuable… I know I want to work with kids as an adult now.” – Senior CareCat Mentor

“She made me feel important because she took time out for me.” – Freshman CareCat Mentee
STARTUP PROCEDURES

Selection Process

- Application
- Individual & Group Interviews
- Recs & References
- Screening
- Consent Forms
- Code of Conduct (mentor & mentee)
Training should include:

- Mentor roles
- Relationship life cycle
  - Tips for interacting with mentee at different states in relationship
- Active listening and effective communication
  - Conversation blockers (i.e., criticism and sarcasm)
MATCHING

Matching

- Similar Experience
- Availability
- Know Each Other
- Live in Same Neighborhood
- Interest Survey
MONITORING & SUPPORT

- Match support is key to program success!
- Matches should be monitored for signs of “deviancy training”
RISK MANAGEMENT

Holistic Approach

- Match Supervision
- Standards of Conduct
- Planning for Unexpected Issues
- Evaluation
- Screening & Training
Mentors required to participate in formal termination process
IN CONCLUSION…

- Match support is key to success!
- Youth who participate in the peer mentoring relationship are more likely to:
  - Engage in volunteerism
  - Donate to non-profits
  - Explore careers in the “helping” profession
- Great Checklist for Practitioners in the Handbook of Youth Mentoring, Second Edition
WHAT IS CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM?

ADA vs. Chronic Absenteeism

2016-17 Attendance Rate and Chronic Absenteeism

Average Daily Attendance
Chronically Absent
WHY DOES ATTENDANCE MATTER?

- It is the ‘A’ in the ABC’s of Dropping out…
  - Attendance, Behavior, and Coursework
- #1 reason students dropout
- #1 predictor for future dropouts
- 2 days/month starting in Kindergarten = 1 full year of instruction missed by 12th grade!
- Tracking attendance data and immediate intervention to assist students at risk
WHAT IS SUCCESS MENTORS?

- An evidence-based, school, integrated approach to combat chronic absence in schools by pairing at risk students with mentors, Success Mentors.
- 2012 piloted programs in New York gained nearly two additional weeks of school (9 days)
SUCCESS MENTORS MBK INITIATIVE
WHO IS A SUCCESS MENTOR?

- Success Mentors are…
  - Local community members
  - Families
  - Corporate volunteers
  - Teachers and other faculty
  - Peers (i.e. matching a high school student with a nearby middle school student)
  - Even national service like AmeriCorps
WHY DOES SUCCESS MENTORS WORK?

Whole School Relationship-Building Strategies

Targeted Mentoring Intervention for Students Most in Need of Support

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

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

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.

Weekly Data Meetings

Mentors
Principal/School Administration
Social Services/CBOs

Strengths-based messaging
IF YOU MENTOR ME...
THANK YOU!

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