

Grand Area Mentoring 2013/2014 Annual Report

Executive Summary

During the 2013/2014 school year, Grand Area Mentoring served a record number of at-risk students. Mentors met weekly with 76 children to boost performance in three domains – academics, social skills, and attendance. Performance results exceeded federal benchmarks set by experts for school-based mentoring. Results from this year:

Measure >>	Reduce disciplinary actions	Increase core academic performance	Reduce unexcused absences	Sustain relationships >12 months
Goal	40%	35%	35%	55%
ACTUAL PERFORMANCE	74%	73%	63%	65%

Verbatim:

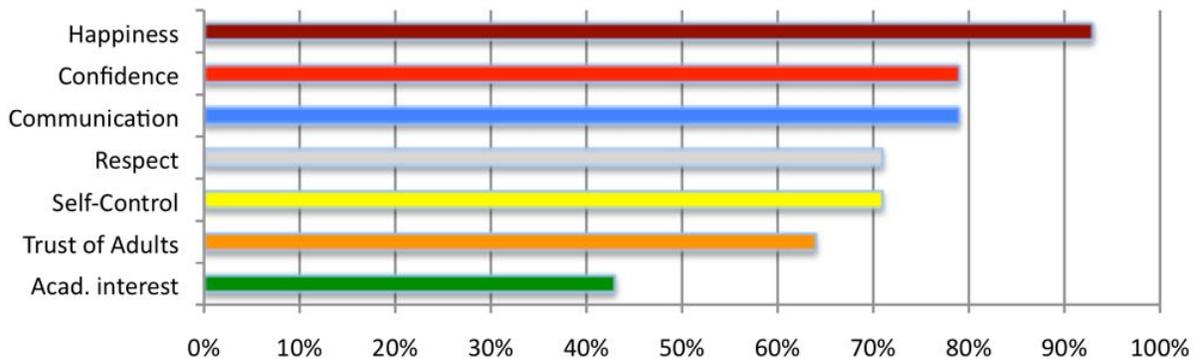
“My name is Sarah. I am 13 years old, and I’m a mentee at Grand Area Mentoring. I have been with my mentor for five years. I know five years is a really long time, and I still want to keep it going! Mentoring has helped me in many ways. It’s given me the encouragement to keep going in school and get good grades. It’s helped me get out there a little more and make new friends. When I first started (at eight years old), I was the type of girl who was anti-social and didn’t care about getting good grades in school. But that all changed when I met my mentor, Mrs. B. She has pushed me really hard over the past five years, and now look at where I am! I’m even a member of the National Junior Honor Society. I don’t know where I would be without my mentor.”



Parent Perception: Impact on Students

Surveys show that 100% of parents believe their sons and daughters benefit from mentoring. Happiness, confidence, communication skills, respecting others, and self-control stand out as highlights:

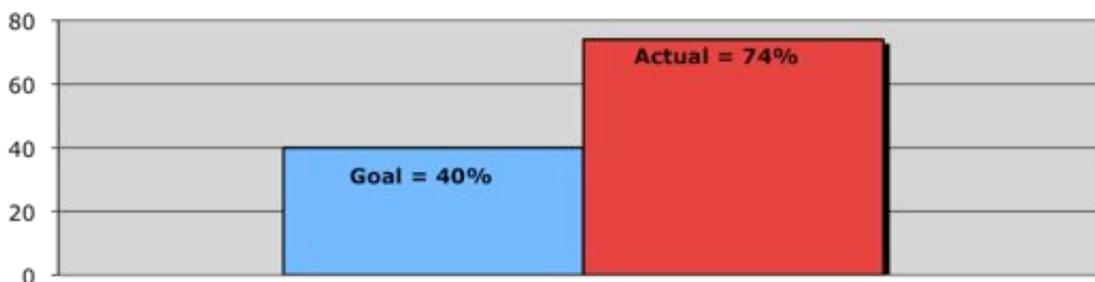
Parent Perception of Mentoring’s Effects
2013/2014



Student Behavior

Of Grand Area Mentoring's student participants for which Grand Area Mentoring had baseline discipline data, **74% reduced their discipline referral rate or maintained it at zero**. The graph below illustrates Grand Area Mentoring performance outcome:

Percentage of Students with Reduced Discipline Referrals
(Goals vs. Performance) 2013/2014



Parent surveys also support the link between mentoring and improved behavior. **100% of parents agree that since being matched with a mentor, their son or daughter has improved social skills**. One parent wrote, "I really appreciate my son having a mentor. He loves coming to school. He has improved a lot. He has not gotten into trouble at all this year. So thank you for making this year amazing."

Studies suggest there is a link between improved social skills and a reduction of behavior problems at school and in the community. Here is a selection of direct quotes from mentees:

QUESTION: DO YOU THINK HAVING A MENTOR HAS CHANGED THE WAY YOU GET ALONG WITH OTHER PEOPLE? IF SO, HOW?

ANSWER: A selection of student quotes:

"Respect. I feel like I should treat people with respect if that's how I want to be treated." (13-year-old who struggled with depression)

"I used to be kind of rude. She teaches me better than that, so now I get to make more friends because I'm not as rude." (12-year-old who struggled with behavior issues and has been removed from parent's custody)

"Mentoring makes me nicer." (9-year-old who lives with grandmother)

"I usually have an attitude with people I don't like, but now I just turn around and walk away." (12-year-old who was in foster care)

"I used to be so mad and stressed out. I laid in my bed and did nothing; but when it's Wednesday, I can be excited for mentoring the next day." (9-year-old with low home support)

"When I didn't have a mentor, I didn't have any friends. Now that I have a mentor I have more friends to play with at recess." (10-year-old who struggles with poor social skills, tumultuous life outside of school)

"Mentoring helped me respect my family members." (High school student matched with mentor for 7 years)

"I'm not as aggressive as I was. I'm a lot nicer." (11-year-old who lost his father in an accident)

"I'm more friendly to people, willing to meet new people, to do new things." (14-year-old who has no contact with biological mother, struggles with physical health issues)

TEACHER SURVEY:

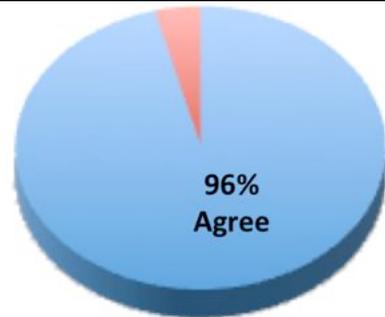
“There is NO DOUBT that mentoring is profoundly impactful.”

Teacher Survey Response:

“Grand Area Mentoring is excellent. It is much needed. Behavior disordered types of kids need to continue on in high school. They really need this support.”

TEACHER SURVEY

“Since being matched with a mentor, the **mentored students in my class have improved social competency.**”



QUESTION: DO YOU FEEL MENTORING HAS CHANGED HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT YOURSELF? IF SO, HOW?

ANSWER: A selection of student quotes:

“Yes, mentoring makes me feel happier.” (9-year-old who has limited contact with biological mother)

“I’m a lot happier.” (student whose father died a year and a half ago)

“Yes, mentoring makes me feel good.” (12-year-old from low-income, single parent home)

“I don’t feel so alone.” (12-year-old special ed. student with health/obesity problems)

“Mentoring makes me feel wanted.” (12-year-old with mental health issues)

“I was bullied when I was young. There was a day I actually tried to commit suicide. But then when I got my mentor it made feel a lot better.” (High school student who struggled with social isolation/bullying)

“Yes, at recess, I just walked around, didn’t really do anything; now though I play with friends.” (9-year-old who struggles with social skills, witnessed domestic violence)

“I’m a really negative person about myself. Every time I say something negative she can help me rethink or reorganize my thoughts.” (High school student who struggles with mental health issues and low school attachment)

“I used to not really be happy after school. But now that I have my mentor, I have something to look forward to. Especially on mentoring days, I’m excited.” (Very bright 10-year-old from low income home with family issues)

“I feel smarter and more motivated to do things.” (13-year-old match with mentor for 6 years)

“Where I live, we don’t really have a backyard or anything. Mentoring makes me have more fun.” (8-year-old with poor social skills, low school attachment)

“It makes me feel better about myself knowing there is someone I can trust.” (9-year-old with post-traumatic stress disorder from physical abuse)

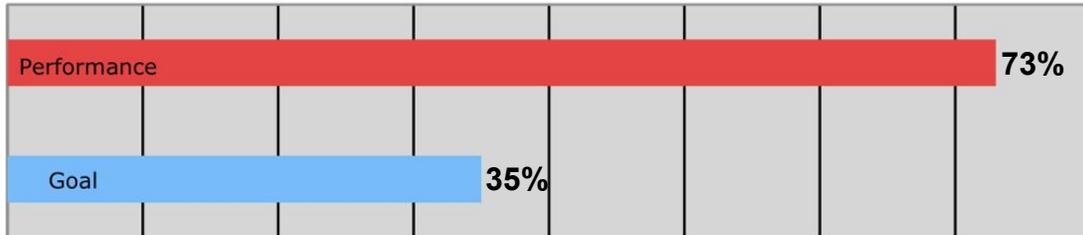
BEST PRACTICE: Developmental Mentoring

Though Grand Area Mentoring aims to improve student performance above all, it does so through developmental mentoring. Developmental mentoring focuses on building a strong relationship first. Studies have shown this approach leads to increased student confidence, higher attachment to school, better grades, and longer lasting matches.

Student Academic Performance

Improvements in student academic performance are based on overall report card scores. Grand Area Mentoring met the goal of 35% of mentored students improving their academic score since last year or since being matched with a mentor. Of the students for whom baseline academic data was available, **73% improved their overall academic score.**

**Percentage of Students with Improved Academic Performance
(Goals vs. Performance) 2013/2014**



(Flat academic performance is not counted as improvement.)

Many teachers agree that mentoring had a significant impact on student academic performance. In a survey of educators in kindergarten through eighth grade, **89% of teachers agree that mentored students earn better grades.**



Verbatim:

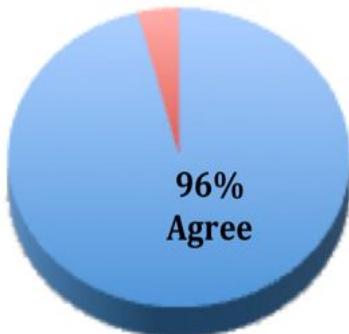
Dear Charlie,

Thank you so much for what you've done for me. Without you, I wouldn't be as motivated to follow my dreams. Also without you, I wouldn't do as well as I do in school. Thank you a lot!

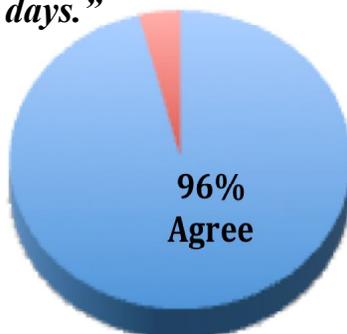
-7th grade student

TEACHER SURVEYS:

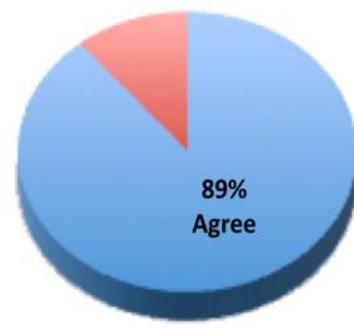
“Since being matched with a mentor, the **mentored students I know get along better with teachers and adults.**”



“Since being matched with a mentor, the **mentored students I know seem to like school more, especially on mentoring days.**”



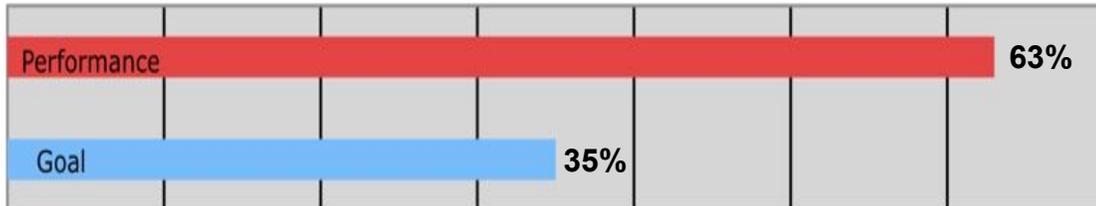
“Since being matched with a mentor, the **mentored students I know seem to care more about schoolwork or grades.**”



Student Unexcused Absences

In 2013/2014, Grand Area Mentoring aimed to reduce unexcused absences for 35% of mentored youth. **63% of mentored students had fewer unexcused absences this year compared with student attendance in 2012/2013.** Students reported greater affinity for school in end-of-year interviews, and both parents and teachers noted the same.

**Percentage of Students with Improved Attendance
(Goals vs. Performance) 2013/2014**



MENTEE INTERVIEW QUESTION: DOES HAVING A MENTOR MAKE YOU FEEL ANY DIFFERENT ABOUT SCHOOL?

ANSWER: A selection of student quotes:

“When I was young I knew school was helpful. But when I met my mentor, I saw what he did with his school. I realized it could really help you achieve your goals.” (High school student matched with his mentor for 7 years)

“Mentoring makes me want to come to school more so I can see everyone and meet my mentor.” (9-year-old living with grandmother)

“Mentoring makes me feel like school is not such a bad thing, and it makes me more excited to come to school on mentoring days.” (10-year-old who has spent time in foster care)

“Yeah, she helps me with my homework. She got my courage up so I could try and get better grades.” (12-year-old student from low-income home)

“Yes, I’ve been wanting to come to school. Before mentoring I was hating to go to school.” (9-year-old with poor attendance and single-parent home where substance abuse was an issue)

“Yeah, it’s really funner because you get to play what you want and you can go on special occasions with your mentor.” (9-year-old special ed. student with low school attachment)

“On mentoring days it makes me want to go to school.” (High school student who struggled with physical violence behavioral issues)

“Yes, because I get to do stuff I’ve never done before like learn how to play golf.” (7-year-old who has very low home support)

Interview with a Young Mentee

How does your mentor make you feel?



How does school make you feel?



How does school make you feel on mentoring days?



How do you feel about yourself?



How do you feel about yourself when you are with your mentor?



Sustained Relationships

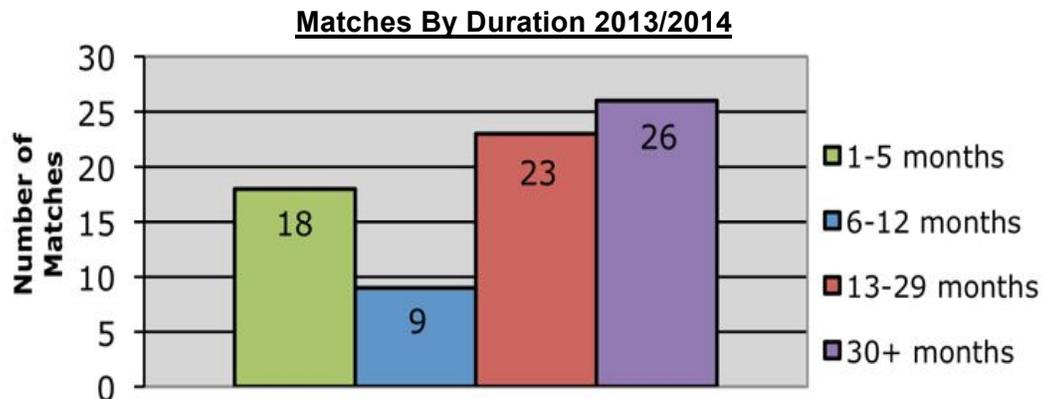
The Effects of Long-Term Mentoring

Matches that last longer have more positive outcomes. Therefore, Grand Area Mentoring asks volunteers to commit to relationships that last at least 12 months. 46% of the program's participants have been matched for more than 18 months. The average duration is two years.

Students who have been mentored for more than one year often performed better than their peers mentored for fewer months. Grand Area Mentoring fosters developmental relationships, which help matches persevere through challenges faced by the student and the mentor.

Grand Area Mentoring surpassed the key goal of 55% of relationships sustained for more than 12 months. A sustained relationship is defined as a match of student and mentor that meets consistently for 12 consecutive months, not including June, July, and August.

Of all 76 matches in the 2013/2014 school year (including those closed and those expected to continue), **65% of Grand Area Mentoring matches were sustained for more than 12 months.** Of those, 31% were sustained between 12 months and 2.5 years, and 34% were sustained for more than 2.5 years. The longest ongoing match has lasted 6.6 years.



MENTEE INTERVIEW QUESTION: WHAT HAVE YOU GAINED OR LERANED THROUGH YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR MENTOR?

ANSWER: A selection of student quotes:

"I learned that you need to care about others and not just yourself." (9-year-old who has no contact with biological mom, lives with grandmother)

"I've learned a lot about life. She's taught me good life lessons, things I'll actually use." (High school student who was a victim of physical abuse, struggles with depression)

"Mentoring has taught me to help other people out." (High school student matched with mentor for 7 years)

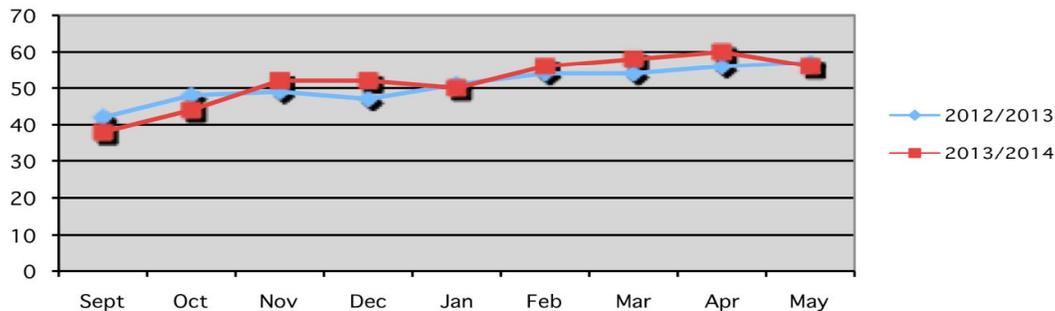
"I've gained self confidence and learned that you have to be nice to others." (12-year-old matched with mentor for 5 years)

"To view things with a positive attitude, be more open to new things, not get so stressed out." (14-year-old who has no contact with biological mother, struggles with physical health issues)

Number of Matches

Grand Area Mentoring served 76 matches during the 2013/2014 school year. Maintaining this size gives the program optimal support for its mentors while supporting a significant portion of the district's highest risk student population.

Number of Matches, 2012/2013 vs. 2013/2014



Mentor Perception: Impact on Students

Surveys reveal volunteer perceptions of mentoring's effects. These results are important because, like parents, mentors have many opportunities for closely observing student behavior. Tellingly, their results are similar. Happiness and confidence top the list. 88% of mentors believe mentoring has improved their student's confidence. 83% believe mentoring has improved their mentee's social skills, and 100% agree that their mentees are motivated to meet each week.

Furthermore, mentors inhabit a strategic place in the personal and academic worlds of at-risk students, where they can assist with problems and hurdles. 87% of mentors agree that their mentee talks with them when facing a problem, and 100% of mentors are confident in their ability to help their mentee academically, behaviorally, or socially.

MENTEE INTERVIEW QUESTION: IS IT IMPORTANT, SORT OF IMPORTANT, OR NOT IMPORTANT TO HAVE A MENTOR IN YOUR LIFE? WHY?

ANSWER: A selection of student quotes:

"It's important being able to talk to someone. There are some students who are mean to me and mentoring gives me a chance to get away from them." (13-year-old student)

"It's important because I don't have friends at school so I really like to have fun with her." (8-year-old Native American student)

"It's pretty important to me. If I'm having a hard day and I have mentoring after school – she takes my mind off of what happened at school." (12-year-old who has no contact with his mom)

"It's important because I don't want to go home early." (10-year-old second language learner with behavioral problems)

"It's important because it lets me have something to do and someone to know." (High school student who has been bullied from a very young age)

"Mentoring has made a big impact on my life. In middle school I felt like I had no friends – she was always there for me. She kept me sane." (High school student who has struggled with depression, victim of physical abuse, spent time in foster care)

"It's important for kids like me. I have problems in my family and I can tell her and she can help or help me try to figure out a way to fix it." (10-year-old student with family issues)

Administrative Performance

Grand Area Mentoring surveyed teachers, administrators, parents, and mentors about staff performance to provide guidance for program improvement and staff professional development. A mean response of 8 is the goal for each question.

PROGRAM SURVEYS (2013/2014)	AVERAGE SCORE on a scale of one to ten (ten being highest):
Communication with parents :	8.4
Response to parent questions or concerns:	9.4
Communication with volunteers :	10
Response to mentor calls and concerns:	10
Teachers and administration believes that staff are easy to reach and knowledgeable:	9.9
Teachers and administration at each school are supportive of mentoring:	9.8
Teachers and administrators believe that mentors are well trained and effective:	9.6
Teachers and administrators understand how mentoring works in Grand County:	8

Mentor Testimonial:

“Grand Area Mentoring is the most rewarding, best-organized volunteer organization I’ve ever had the privilege to serve.”

Successes

Number of Students Served – Grand Area Mentoring served a record 76 students during the 2013/2014 school year. This number represents about 5% of the school district’s student body, and it includes many students who disproportionately affect classroom management and mean academic performance.

Off-Campus Activities – Mentors and students ventured off school grounds in record numbers this year to pursue myriad activities such as rock climbing, restaurant visits, hiking, biking, yoga, and many more. They adhered to a strict policy stipulating more than one mentor must be present at all times, and permission for each activity must be granted by a parent or guardian. This has become a vital part of mentoring in Grand County.

Opportunities

Recruiting – Several teachers noted a need for more mentors. With no fewer than a dozen students on its waiting list throughout the year, Grand Area Mentoring recognizes the validity of this need. The program aims to recruit greater numbers of volunteers next year. Already four people are registered for a mentor orientation in September 2014.