

# Spring Workshop for Mentors

## Examining the Role of the Mentor

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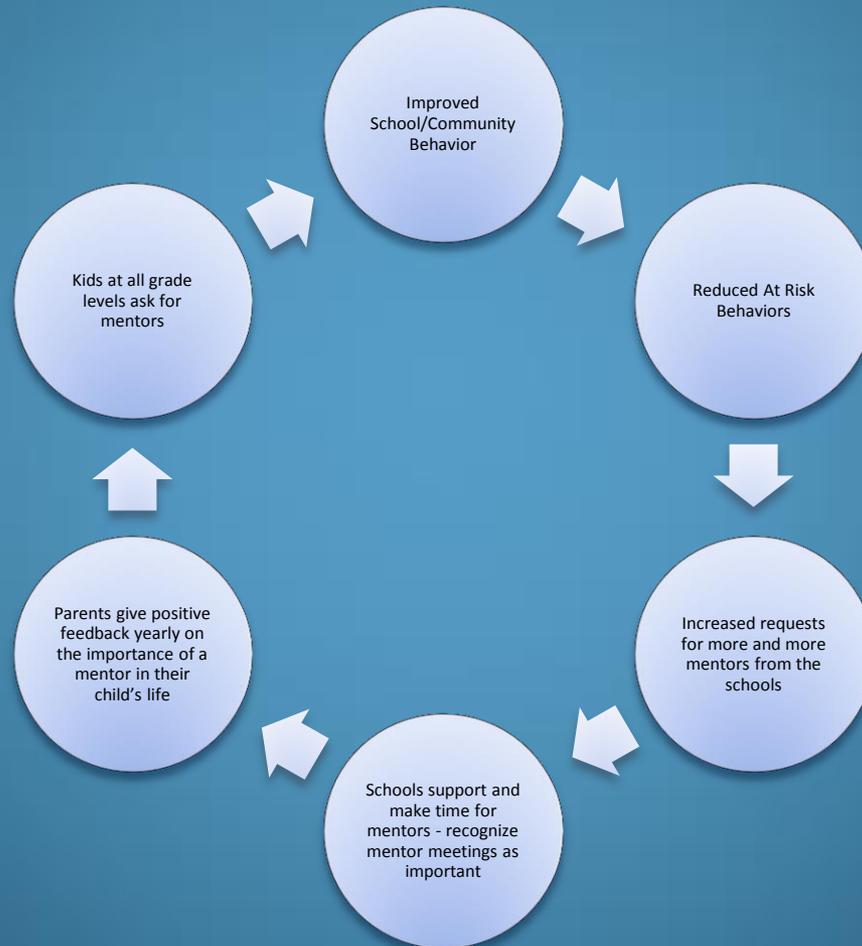
And

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Mentor for 6 years and  
Interim Program Manager  
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# Repeat Questions from Mentors

- Do I Make a Difference?
- Am I doing what I'm supposed to be doing?
- How do I know if I'm doing the right thing?
- I need feedback from my mentee!

# Here's the Research



# And Yet . . .

At the



Of it:

We worry

We fret

We want to be accepted

We want to be useful

We want to make a difference

## Think Back

to when you decided to become a mentor. What words or phrases describe the images you had of yourself in this new role?

# Some mentors say:

- I wanted to make a difference – to do something good – to feel good about myself – to give back
- I like kids – I wanted to be around kids
- I was concerned about the commitment
- My experience might help
- Could I relate? How would do?

As we move away from that initial mentoring experience, we move away from our roots, so it is good to go back today and remember.

- On some level, most of us had the expectation that after a period of time, our mentee would be transformed. But the effects of mentoring are not easily measurable. Many of us don't get that Story from the Heart experience for years – if ever.
- However, we also find that those me centered feelings slide away and that we are transformed and get as much from our meetings as our kids.

# The Reality - *what mentors said*

- Kids will use you as they need you.
- The kids have more problems than I thought.
- I was a *make it better* person – I needed to learn how to be more of a sounding board.
- I felt like I needed to structure our time – now I listen more.
- I don't need to be the director of the band.
- She needs time to be a little girl – so I let her lead.
- I was disappointed, my 1<sup>st</sup> mentee didn't stay with me. I grew gun shy, but I stepped back and became a better listener.
- I've had 5 mentees.

- Separating can be hard for kids, so goodbyes may be abrupt – or nonexistent.
- I look for satisfaction where I can. The signals can be tough to spot.
- I go with the flow now – I don't try to pull things out of him.
- I was shocked by the honesty of a teenager. He isn't really looking for advice, so I am a listener.
- Use the school Social Worker as a resource.
- I didn't have to be scared!
- It snuck up on me how much the relationship means – you can go a long time without knowing it means anything to your mentee.

# Hints

- My child was anxious, so I brought a timer. Now she can see that she won't miss her bus.
- Physical activity got my kid talking. Before we were too focused on finishing our project before our time was up.
- Coming up with a new project each week can be tough. Working on an ongoing project for a little while each week can help.
- Breaking up the time into segments of activities can help little ones with shorter attention spans – playing soccer, reading a chapter and then playing a game can all be done in one session.
- We keep a photo diary of what we do together.
- I eased anxiety about next year by saying, “when I see you in September, I'll teach you how to knit.”

- I let him win, but not every point!