

The Mentoring Collaborative Team

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Funding Sources:

To pay for this project, the district used federal COVID relief grant money also known as ESSER money.

Project Cost and Budget Narrative:

Each mentor, in the teacher e-mentoring program was paid for up to hour per week for each mentee they worked with. They were paid at a rate of \$29.80 per hour. We ended up having close to 100 mentees being mentored in the program, and around 2000 hours of mentoring during the 2020-2021 school year.

Project Description:

This pilot program of e-mentoring had an academic and psychological impact on students from K-12 who were at risk of dropping out. Each student was matched with a volunteer adult mentor recruited from the schools' staff. The pairs never met face-to-face as all communication was through usage of remote learning software technology. Rich dialogue occurred between the students and mentors. Mentoring pairs used academic work while together in e-mentoring. E-mentoring refers to mentoring conducted entirely or in part using electronic communication such as email, text, messaging applications, or computer platforms. In this program, youth were matched with educators/staff from Northmont City School District who served as mentors over a school-year period. We found that youth and mentors both perceived a positive impact as a result of the program.

The Mentoring Collaborative was able to assist Northmont City Schools in developing a district wide e-Mentoring program that has been instrumental in supporting their struggling remote students. MCMC staff continue to support and monitor this mentoring program via regular check-ins with the program's mentors. During the pandemic, 25% of Northmont students and families chose to continue learning remotely during the second half of the school year. MCMC launched this e-Mentoring initiative by providing support and training. It was designed to provide extra support, a connection to their building, and a caring adult (educators/teachers) to of these students learning remotely. Forty mentors (educators) met with over one hundred mentees (students) providing over 1,300 hours and resulted in 33% of mentees/students improving their participation in remote classes, becoming more engaged in academic work and feeling more connected to their building. Northmont's e-Mentoring class has not only had a positive effect on the students' lives, but it has been rewarding for the educators/staff. MCMC is working with Northmont to continue this model with expansion to include teachers, businesses, and other community partners.

Staffing Pattern:

- Initial training (2-3 hours/offered twice) and ongoing support from The Mentoring Collaborative provided by Jane McEwen, Manager, and Jessica Bloomingdale, Resource Coordinator, in a virtual format.
- Mentors (trained educators/staff) of Northmont City School District meeting virtually with their mentees at least one hour per week.
- Regular (weekly and bi-weekly) mentor check-in meeting facilitated by The Mentoring Collaborative staff to provide support and training.

- Susanne Lintz, Assistant Superintendent, Northmont City School District, Jennifer Mills, Family Engagement Coordinator provided additional staffing support for educators/staff to address other issues and/or concerns.

Population Served:

There were close to 100 students in the e-mentoring teacher program in 2020-2021 from kindergarten through 12th grade. Selection criteria and the process differed by building based on the needs each building wanted to address. Initially, students whose families had chosen to learn remotely and were struggling to have the support they needed were a part of this program. The goal was to keep those students engaged in school even though they were not physically present in the buildings. As the program evolved and remote learning was not an option, buildings identified students who struggled with the transition back to face-to-face learning and students they felt would benefit by having an extra caring adult in their lives.

Project Origination:

In March 2020, during the beginning of the country's COVID-19 pandemic, much of the United States including Ohio declared an emergency stay-at-home order in which social distancing was required except for those in the same household. Around 25% of Northmont City School District students and families chose to continue learning remotely during the second quarter of the 2020-2021 school year. e-Mentoring was designed to provide extra support, a connection to their building, and a caring adult to many of these students learning remotely.

One lesson from the pandemic is that with virtual mentoring, physical distance does not have to result in social disconnection. In fact, it improves both the accessibility and types of mentors, and heightens the impact that a web of supportive relationships has on young people, especially in a time of crisis. Young people are particularly at risk for negative mental health outcomes during the pandemic (Guessoum et al., 2020; Oosterhoff et al., 2020). Mentoring has demonstrated the potential to benefit youth in times of crisis.

Issues Addressed:

During the pandemic 25% of Northmont students and families chose to continue learning remotely during the second half of the school year. MCMC launched this e-Mentoring initiative to address the support these students needed; designed to provide extra support, a connection to their building, and a caring adult (educators/teachers) to many of these students learning remotely.

The parents' support and engagement was an important aspect of this initiative's success. Therefore, clear communication was established from the school with usage of the parent engagement coordinator, educators, and information (informational letter) providing an overview of the program.

Here is a message from a letter that went home to families about this program:

“We are excited to be able to offer your child the opportunity to be a part of our e-Mentoring program. This program is designed to provide students with extra support while they are learning remotely during November and December. Your child will be matched with a mentor from their building. The mentor will work to build a positive relationship with your child and you! They

will meet weekly to discuss how they are doing, aid with assignments, answer questions or concerns, and check on grades and assignment completion.”

Here is a document with lots of info that might help-

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1AzkStcYjcJn8KDMBAcoj6UioamqOCQE1mEaapQEqW_4/edit?usp=sharing

Desired Outcomes and Measurable Objectives:

We wanted to reengage students and improve their attendance and academic achievement results. It was designed to provide extra support, a connection to their building, and a caring adult (educators/teachers) to many of these students learning remotely. 40 mentors (educators) met with over 100 mentees (students) providing over 1,300 hours and results in 33% of mentees/students improved their participation in remote classes, more engaged in academic work and felt more connected to their building. Northmont’s e-Mentoring class has not only had a positive effect on the students’ lives, but it has been rewarding for the educators/staff.

Strategies and/or Interventions of the Project:

The mentors worked to build a positive relationship with their mentee. They met weekly to discuss how they were doing, aid with assignments, answer questions or concerns, and check on grades and assignment completion.

The strategy was the usage of mentoring model as an intervention to engage students; this model uses academic work while together in e-mentoring, e-mentoring refers to mentoring conducted entirely or in part using electronic communication, such as email, text, messaging applications, or computer platforms. In this program, youth were matched with educators/staff from Northmont City School District who served as mentors over school-year period. We found that youth and mentors both perceived a positive impact as a result of the program.

Results (Outcomes and Achievements)

Success Stories:

- Mentors indicated that 33% of students improved their participation in academic classes
- 100 mentees and 40 mentors participated in the program
- 1,300 hours in which mentors and mentees meet for school year during the Pandemic.
- Quotes from mentors:
 - The remote learning mentor program has not only had a positive effect on our remote students' lives, but it has been rewarding for me as well. I have loved celebrating the little victories with my students. Working remotely can be extremely challenging, so having someone be there to hold you accountable and encourage you is invaluable. ~HS Teacher
 - For me, we were able to connect two of my mentees to the mental health help that they needed just through the one-on-one discussions with a teacher that they were missing by being remote. They seem happier, and they have been able to raise their grades because of this additional support. ~HS Teacher
 - As a result of the virtual mentor program, I have developed strong relationships with 3 students. They will email me several times a week, they ask questions, they consistently show up to my google meets, and they are very grateful for my help.

I have definitely noticed an impact on these kids and myself through this mentoring program! ~Elementary Counselor

- I had no idea that these four little girls would be what kept me sane all quarter. What mentoring did FOR me was so unexpected. From the mom with cancer that allowed me the pleasure of shopping to fill her little girl's stocking, to the 5th grader that just talked with me for hours each week and amazed me with her resilience while currently watching a custody battle and divorce in her house, to a second grader allowing me the pleasure of pulling out my own kids' favorite books to read to her and her read to me (not to mention the craft time she led expertly)... These girls made me just stop and talk, laugh, cry, read, listen, craft, etc. I looked forward to spending time with each of them and genuinely enjoyed getting to know them so well. Thank you for allowing me to be part of this program, my heart is fuller because of it. ~Elementary Teacher

Project Timeline:

Northmont City School e-Mentoring Timeline
(2020 - 2021)

A strong process can be a powerful tool for systemic change within program and keep program leaders/coordinators focused on improving outcomes for mentoring. Throughout the process, ongoing communication is critical.

Phase 1: Review Meeting – Discussion of e-Mentoring (September, 2020)

Northmont City School contacted The Mentoring Collaborative of Montgomery County (MCMC) regarding e-Mentoring as a method/tool to reengage students and improve their attendance and academic achievement results. MCMC designed the program to provide extra support, a connection to their building, and a caring adult (educators/teachers) to many of these students learning remotely.

Phase 2: MCMC Development/Launching e-Mentoring Model – (October, 2020)

MCMC staff provided technical and training support to staff. All mentors (educators/staff) of Northmont City School District went through an initial training from the Mentoring Collaborative.

Phase 3: Northmont City Schools Identify Educators/Staff Support (October, 2020)

To begin the process of Northmont City School District building principals worked with teacher teams to identify students learning remotely who could benefit from having a mentor and teachers who would be mentors. Mentors meet with each of their mentees at least one hour per week through a virtual meeting.

Phase 4: Begin Matching (Educators/Staff) Sessions Held on Mentorship (November, 2020)

After training and identification of mentees/students the matching process was next. Mentoring sessions begin in which mentors first focused on building positive relationships with their mentees and determining their needs.

Phase 5: Mentor Support and Check-in (November 2020 - May, 2021)

The Mentoring Collaborative provided a support group for the mentees in order to allow them an opportunity to share concerns/challenges on an open platform. MCMC held regular check-in

meetings for Northmont City School District staff/educators which provided support and updates about the program.

Phase 6: Review/Closure (May, 2021)

MCMC held a closure session to bring the program to an end for the school year to provide a celebratory platform in sharing success stories and future program ideas. Data was collected in which mentors indicated that 33% of students improved their participation in academic classes. Also, around 100 mentees and 40 mentors participated in the program

Phase 7: Relaunch Plans (In-Person/Hybrid) May - (June, 2021)

This stage starts the cycle over again, allowing the e-Mentoring program to be continuously updated. This will keep it current and meaningful to the school. The future plans of Northmont City Schools District is to:

- Continue the e-Mentoring with teachers as the mentors and add to it.
- Expand the program to include students learning face-to-face and remotely
- Increase the number of mentees by getting more mentors through community organizations like our Faith Based community and area businesses

**Outcomes Related to School Completion, Dropout Prevention, and/or Graduation Rates:
Success Stories:**

The Mentoring Collaborative of Montgomery County with the oversight of Sinclair College, acts as “mentoring central” for Montgomery County, Ohio. MCMC helps create the most successful experiences for mentors/volunteers and mentees at over 56 certified partner agencies by supplying tips, advice, and the most current best-practice information based on The Elements of Effective Practice of Mentoring. MCMC provides support to our partners and their mentors/volunteers by providing certification training of agencies, mentors, and mentees; background checks of volunteers/members; technical support, marketing of the “mentoring” brand; and continued mentor/member recruitment and support for partner agencies.

These certified partner agencies provide school based, after school and community-based programs offering K-12 youth (one-to-one, e-mentoring, peer-to-peer and group) mentoring and support services. The anticipated outcome is for K-12 youth to achieve success and prevent high school dropout within Dayton, Ohio and Montgomery County.

Pandemic Mentoring Data & Outcomes: MCMC sought to prove the impact of mentoring during the pandemic through data metrics to show the impact of mentoring in Montgomery County and over 17 partners shared 3,089 youth served reported on the following metrics:

- Program and School Attendance
 - Academic Proficiency
 - Behavior
 - Volunteer/Mentoring
 - Mentoring in Pandemic
- 1,494 out of 3,089 students enrolled in mentoring programs showed a 93% or more improvement in attendance.
 - 460 H.S. Seniors enrolled in mentoring programs, 322 seniors graduated (that’s 70%

- indicator) and 241 completed a FAFSA.
- 430 out of 1,230 (36%) African American Males achieved 93% more of attendance at MC mentoring programs.
 - MCMC has served over 20k students since 2001

Special Conditions, Expertise, and/or Skills Required to Carry Out Project:

We were able to jump start this program by having the district and local community donations to help fund it. We also relied on the Mentoring Collaborative and Jane McEwen's expertise to provide training and support to the mentors.

Current Status of Project:

The program has evolved over time. We no longer have funding and all mentors are volunteers. We are also partnering with the Miami Valley Leadership Foundation who provide the training and background checks for mentors. The community partnerships have really grown. Last year we had over 50 mentors in the program.

Role in Project as a NDPS Certification Program Participant:

As Manager, (with over 25 years of expertise in the mentoring field) of Montgomery County Mentoring Collaborative I provided training, expertise and support for the program.

Lessons Learned:

Intentionally providing students with a caring adult in their lives can not only improve engagement and academic outcomes for students but it can also provide a support to the adults involved. Both the mentors and mentees benefited by being a part of the program. (See some of the quotes above)

Advice for Dropout Prevention Practitioners about the Project:

Providing regular check-ins for the mentors was really valuable. They had the opportunity to share their frustrations but also their successes with others and get advice from other mentors and experts like Jane on working with students in a mentoring role.

Mentoring can be a positive experience for both mentors and mentees, but it can also be challenging; often those challenges lead to the early dissolution of mentoring relationships. Providing clear expectations to mentors and describing both the challenges and rewards that are inherent in mentoring relationships can help to sustain involvement.

While it is possible to carefully select mentors, provide support and training, and provide clear expectations, unavoidable situations, and life circumstances may occur which challenge the mentor-mentee relationship. Providing clear information from the start about ending relationships appropriately can help to mitigate negative effects and limit abandonment of relationships when they become difficult.

It is important to note that due to their exceptional e-Mentoring efforts Northmont City Schools were recognized by The Mentoring Collaborative as the winners of our National Mentoring Month Contest in January. Each of their mentors received a thank you note and prize package which was hand delivered by MCMC staff.