Mentoring

At A Glance

Mentoring is a structured one-on-one relationship between an adult and youth that focuses on the needs of the youth, providing him or her with support, guidance, and assistance. This information capsule summarizes research findings on the impact of mentoring on factors such as academic achievement, social behaviors, attitudes, drug and alcohol use, and self-perceptions. Characteristics of effective mentoring relationships are reviewed and a summary of mentoring programs operating within Miami-Dade County Public Schools is also included.

All children need caring adults in their lives. In today's society, young people's access to adults is often limited by high rates of divorce and single parenting and, in some communities, a lack of institutions and activities that support youth and their families. Although positive relationships with parents represent a critical resource for children, other adults can provide similar types of support by acting as mentors (Jekielek et al., 2002).

Mentoring is defined as a structured one-on-one relationship between an adult and youth that focuses on the needs of the youth, providing him or her with support, guidance, and assistance. Although mentoring programs encompass a broad range of strategies, all programs promote positive adolescent development. Common program themes include improving student achievement, career mentoring to develop work skills, and strengthening social, emotional, and behavioral competencies (Center for Prevention Research and Development, 2005; Brown, 2003; Catalano et al., 1998).

Research Findings

As summarized below, participation in a mentoring program appears to have a positive impact on reducing absenteeism and substance use, increasing levels of educational attainment, and improving attitudes, social behaviors, and relations with parents and peers. Although early research on mentoring dating back to 1975 concluded such programs have a positive impact on at-risk youth, more research is needed to determine if participation in a mentoring program has an impact on students' grade point averages, achievement test scores, dropout rates, and self-perceptions. The time frame over which benefits from mentoring continue to accrue has not been well-established.

Grade Point Averages

Studies on the impact of mentoring programs on students' grade point averages have produced mixed results.

- Tierney, Grossman, and Resch (1995) reported that Big Brothers/Big Sisters experienced modest gains in their grade point averages, compared with non-participants. Gains were strongest among minority females.

- Linnehan (2001) evaluated a work-based mentoring program, designed to facilitate Black students' school-to-work transitions, in the School District of Philadelphia. Evaluation results found that students' participation in the program for more than half of the academic year was positively associated with grade point averages.

- McPartland and Nettles (1991) evaluated the academic outcomes of at-risk middle school students participating in Project RAISE, compared to non-participants from the same school. Project RAISE was implemented to improve students' academic performance, attendance, and self-esteem and reduce high-risk behaviors. Program components included mentoring, academic support, and recreational activities. Students involved in the program received better grades on their report cards than non-participating students, although these grades were still below the district average.

- Project BELONG was designed to teach academic and personal skills, as well as improve the school functioning of 5th and 8th grade students. The program provided mentoring, tutoring, and life skills instruction. When compared to non-participants, students in Project BELONG were less likely to fail math, but not English, reading, or social studies (Blakely et al., 1995).

- Across Ages was designed to reduce substance abuse among high-risk sixth grade youth. Program components included mentoring, life skills curriculum, community service learning, and parent workshops. Program participants did not have better grades at the end of the school year, compared to a group of non-participants (Aseltine et al., 2000).

- Slicker and Palmer (1993) evaluated the impact of a school-based mentoring program on at-risk tenth grade students. No differences in grade point averages were found among treatment and control groups.

Achievement Test Scores

It is not clear if participation in a mentoring program has a positive impact on students' achievement test scores.

- Thompson and Kelly-Vance (2001) conducted a study to evaluate the impact of mentoring on the academic achievement of at-risk youth, as measured by the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, Brief Form, in reading, mathematics, and spelling. Mentored students performed significantly better in reading and math than the control group, but no differences were found between the two group's spelling scores.

- In their evaluation of Project RAISE, McPartland & Nettles (1991) found that participation in the program had no impact on student achievement, as measured by scores on the reading and mathematics sections of the California Achievement Test.

Dropout and Promotion Rates

In addition to equivocal findings pertaining to grade point averages and achievement test scores, more research is needed to determine if participation in a mentoring program has a positive impact on dropout and promotion rates.

- In Slicker and Palmer's (1993) evaluation of a school-based mentoring program for at-risk tenth grade students, initial results indicated no differences in the dropout rates between treatment and control groups. When the differences between those students who were effectively mentored versus those who were ineffectively mentored (as defined by self-reports from participants) were considered, the researchers found that effectively mentored students had a lower dropout rate than ineffectively mentored students.

- McPartland and Nettles' (1991) evaluation of Project RAISE found that students' participation in the program had no impact on promotion rates.

Educational Attainment

Participation in a mentoring program may have a positive impact on students' educational attainment.

- An evaluation of Career Beginnings, an academically oriented program for at-risk students that included mentoring, academic workshops, workforce training, and summer job placements, found that participants were somewhat more likely to attend college during the first year after high school graduation than were non-participants (Cave & Quint, 1990).

- Torrance (1984) conducted a longitudinal study of 220 students and found that those with mentors completed more years of education. Men with mentors completed two more years of education, on average, than men without mentors. Women with mentors completed over three more years of education, on average, than women without mentors. It should be noted that the majority of mentored participants were from middle class backgrounds and were not considered to be academically at-risk.

Absences

Program evaluations consistently show that youth participating in mentoring programs have fewer unexcused absences from school than do similar youth not participating in mentoring programs.

- Tierney et al.'s (1995) evaluation of eight Big Brothers/Big Sisters programs found that participants were significantly less likely to skip classes or days of school. Students with mentors skipped 52 percent fewer days and 37 percent fewer classes. The program's impact was greatest for girls, who skipped 84 percent fewer days of school than girls in the control group.

- LoSciuto, Rajala, Townsend, and Taylor (1996) reported that participation in the Across Ages program resulted in significantly improved school attendance.

- McPartland and Nettles (1991) found a reduction of nearly 3 percent in the school absence rate of youth involved in Project RAISE, compared to students in the same school who did not have a mentor. The absence rate of program participants, however, was still higher than the overall district average.

- Linnehan's (2001) evaluation of the School District of Philadelphia's work-based mentoring program found that Black students' participation in the program for more than half of the academic year was positively associated with students' attendance rates.

Adaptive Behaviors

Studies on the effect of mentoring programs on children's adaptive behaviors have produced mixed results. Although some studies have found that participation in mentoring programs leads to improvements in students' behavior at school and a decrease in general problem behaviors, results regarding incidents of criminal behavior have been less definitive.

- Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, and Hawkins (1998) reviewed and analyzed 25 mentoring programs that were evaluated using rigorous standards. They found positive behavior outcomes in 19 (or 76 percent) of the programs, including significant improvements in interpersonal skills, self-control, and problem solving. The authors' review also found significant reductions in problem behaviors, including school misbehavior, aggressive behavior, violence, and high-risk sexual behavior, in 24 of the 25 programs.

- Tierney et al.'s (1995) evaluation of eight Big Brothers/Big Sisters programs investigated school-related behaviors, such as hours spent each week reading and doing homework, number of times youth visited a college and went to a library, and number of books read, but found no overall statistically significant differences between treatment and control group members.

- Tierney et al. (1995) also found that youth participating in Big Brothers/Big Sisters were less likely to hit someone when compared to

control group youth. However, no significant differences were found between participants and the control group on behaviors such as how often the youth stole or damaged property, was sent to the office at school, engaged in risky behavior, fought, cheated, or used tobacco.

- The evaluation of Project BELONG concluded that youth participating in the program displayed better behavior at school than control group members. Teachers were less likely to report problem behaviors for mentored youth and school administrators were less likely to have mentored youth referred to them for severe discipline problems. Compared to the control group, mentored youth committed fewer misdemeanors or felonies. The seriousness of these offenses was less for mentored youth than for the control group (Blakely et al., 1995).

- In outcome evaluations, groups of youth receiving the full range of Across Ages program services were compared with those receiving limited intervention and those with no intervention. Baseline and exit surveys revealed an increase in positive school-related behaviors. While all groups of youth showed improvement, results were greatest for the group receiving the full range of services, especially the mentoring component (Cohen, 2006).

- Jackson (2002) evaluated a mentoring program for children engaging in delinquent behavior. Based on results from the Behavioral Assessment System for Children (BASC), the BASC Teacher Report, and the BASC Parent Report, no significant gains were made in program participants' adaptive behaviors (such as social skills, leadership, and study skills). The evaluation did find, however, that mentoring experiences had a positive effect on reducing maladaptive behaviors (such as aggression, hyperactivity, and conduct problems). Parents reported seeing a decrease in behavioral problems during the course of the program. While teachers did not report positive behavioral changes, the incidence of school behavior problems did decrease.

Drug and Alcohol Use

Participation in a mentoring program appears to reduce substance abuse among youth.

- Catalano et al.'s (1998) review and analysis of mentoring programs found that participants in 24 of 25 programs showed significant decreases in drug and alcohol use and smoking.

- Big Brothers/Big Sisters were 46 percent less likely than peers in the control group to initiate drug use during the study period. An even stronger effect was found for minority participants, who were 70 percent less likely to initiate drug use than were minority youth in the control group. Big Brothers/Big Sisters were 27 percent less likely than youth in the control group to initiate alcohol use during the study period and minority Little Sisters were about half as likely (Tierney et al., 1995).

- Youth participating in the Across Ages program had significantly lower levels of alcohol use, compared to the control group, following participation in the program, and were less likely to initiate marijuana use six months after the program ended. However, participants' drug use during the study period did not differ significantly from that of the control group. The authors noted that this finding may have been due to the overall low levels of drug use by youth in both the treatment and control groups (Aseltine et al., 2000). In LoSciuto et al.'s (1996) evaluation of Across Ages, mentored youth showed improved reactions to situations involving drug use.

Attitudes

Participating in a mentoring program appears to have a positive influence on youth's attitudes.

- Consecutive evaluations of the Across Ages program showed that participants who received mentoring had significantly more positive attitudes toward school, the future, adults in general, and older adults in particular (Aseltine et al., 2000; LoSciuto et al., 1996).

- An evaluation of Project BELONG concluded that teachers viewed mentored students as having better attitudes toward school than control group students. Mentored youth were rated by their teachers as placing a greater value on school than control group youth (Blakely et al., 1995).

- Linnehan's (2001) evaluation of the School District of Philadelphia's work-based mentoring program indicated that participation in the program for more than half of the academic year was positively related to Black students' belief that school was more relevant to work.

Relations with Parents and Peers

Mentored youth appear to have improved relationships with their parents and peers.

- In their review and analysis of mentoring programs, Catalano et al. (1998) found that youth in 19 of the 25 programs studied showed positive changes in the quality of their peer and adult relations.

- The quality of Big Brothers/Big Sisters' relationships with their parents was found to be higher, compared to the control group, at the end of the study period. Big Brothers/ Big Sisters reported higher levels of trust in their parents and said they lied to their parents less often. The effect was strongest for white males. Big Brothers/Big Sisters, especially minority males, also reported receiving increased emotional support from peers (Grossman & Garry, 1997; Tierney et al., 1995).

Self-Perceptions

Participation in mentoring programs has not consistently been found to improve self-perceptions.

- Tierney et al. (1995) found no significant differences in levels of self-esteem between Big Brothers/Big Sisters and similar youth who remained on the waiting list for a mentor. However, subsequent analysis of the Big Brothers/Big Sisters evaluation results suggested that mentoring may indirectly improve children's self-esteem by improving their parent-child relationships (Rhodes et al., 2000).

Tierney et al. (1995) also reported that Big Brothers/Big Sisters felt more confidence in their ability to complete their school work than members of the control group. Minority girls were most positively impacted.

- Students participating in the Across Ages program had better outcomes on some measures of self-perception than others. Their scores on a standardized assessment of overall well-being were slightly, but significantly, higher than the scores of the control group; however, their scores on a more specific measure of self-perception were not significantly higher than those of the control group (Aseltine et al., 2000; LoSciuto et al., 1996).

- Linnehan's (2001) evaluation of the School District of Philadelphia's work-based mentoring program indicated that participation in the program for more than half of the academic year was positively related to improved student self-esteem.

- In a review of research on mentoring programs, Grossman and Rhodes (2002) reported that mentoring relationships lasting 12 months or longer were associated with significant improvements in adolescent's self worth, but relationships of shorter duration tended to have only mild or even negative effects on participants' self-esteem.

At-Risk Youth

Researchers agree that mentoring programs have a positive impact on at-risk youth.

- DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, and Harris (2002) conducted a meta-analysis of the evaluations of 55 mentoring programs. They concluded that the more successful mentoring programs were those that were directed toward youth who were experiencing conditions of environmental risk or disadvantage (such as low levels of family support or low socioeconomic status) either alone or in combination with individual risk factors. The authors did not find the same positive impact on youth who were identified

as at-risk solely on the basis of individual characteristics (such as academic failure or behavioral or emotional problems). Contrary to expectations, the authors found evidence that youth who were already demonstrating significant personal problems and were potentially in need of extensive amounts of specialized assistance appeared to benefit from participation in mentoring programs.

- The Sponsor-A-Scholar program was designed to help public high school students stay in school and enroll in college by providing mentors and academic and financial assistance. Jekielek, Moore, and Hair (2002) reported that those who benefitted most from the program were those who had fewer resources at their disposal (for example, students who came from families who offered the least amount of support, attended some of the poorest-performing schools, had the lowest initial grade point averages, and the greatest number of school absences).

- An evaluation of the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program yielded similar findings. Among those with initially lower achievement levels, mentored youth were less likely to skip school and start using drugs. No significant impact was reported for the mentored youth with initially higher achievement levels (Jekielek et al., 2002).

Long-Lasting Effects

The time frame over which benefits from mentoring continue to accrue has not been well-established. Only a few evaluations have looked at the duration of mentoring impacts.

- Six month follow-up data from the evaluation of Across Ages found that most program impacts disappeared when the intervention ended, although analysis indicated that participation in the program reduced future initiation of marijuana use (Aseltine et al., 2000).

- DuBois and Silverthorn (2005) conducted an investigation with data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, involving a nationally representative sample of adolescents. Those who reported having

had a mentor since the age of 14 exhibited better outcomes within the areas of education and work (high school completion, college attendance, and employment), mental health (self-esteem and life satisfaction), problem behavior (gang membership, physical fighting, and risk-taking) and health (exercise and nutrition).

- DuBois et al. (2002) concluded, based on the small number of studies that examined the long-lasting effects of mentoring programs, that there is a limited basis for inferring benefits of mentoring that extend beyond the end of program participation.

Research Limitations

The following limitations to research conducted on mentoring programs should be noted (Brown, 2003; DuBois et al., 2002; Jackson, 2002; Jekielek et al., 2002):

- Conclusions regarding the effectiveness of mentoring programs often rely on observational data or retrospective, one-time reports. These reports ask youth to rate a program they chose to join and indicate any resulting benefits. When programs depend on self-selection, it is difficult to determine if the effects of the program were due to the intervention or to the possible motivational differences between youth who did and did not choose to participate in the program.

- Mentoring programs have a wide variety of goals (improving academic achievement, reducing substance use, career preparation, reducing at-risk behaviors, for example). A consensus on effectiveness is difficult when so many different programs are trying to accomplish so many varied outcomes.

- Since mentoring is often only one component of a program that offers a range of services, it is difficult to differentiate the impact of mentoring by itself, even when the program is found to be successful.

- Most evaluations have not considered the possibility that significant numbers of youth within control groups may have been involved in mentoring relationships through participation in other programs or services.

6

- Evaluations that are based on programs with small sample sizes limit the generalizability of conclusions to larger populations.

Characteristics of Effective Mentoring Relationships

Research points to a set of factors that distinguish more effective mentoring relationships from those that contribute only marginally to improvements or that potentially even harm youth. Evidence from research and a review of the literature indicate that the following mentor and program characteristics may promote higher quality mentoring relationships.

Long-Lasting Mentoring Relationships

Students in longer-lasting mentoring relationships tend to have better outcomes. Generally, positive effects increase as mentoring relationships endure (Jekielek et al., 2002). Garringer, Fulop, and Rennick (2003) reported that it takes approximately 6 to 12 months to begin to see desired outcomes from mentoring. Relationships that last one year or longer have been shown to have the biggest impact on academic and behavioral outcomes (Rhodes & DuBois, 2006; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Jekielek et al., 2002).

There is some evidence that mentoring relationships may do more harm than good if the mentor relationship terminates prematurely (Garringer et al., 2003; DuBois et al., 2002). Grossman and Rhodes (2002) reported that mentoring relationships lasting less than three months resulted in decreases in self-worth and perceived social competence.

Frequent Contact Between Mentors and Youth

Studies have found that youth whose mentors contacted them the most frequently had significantly better outcomes than comparison groups on a wide range of academic and behavioral indicators (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Jekielek et al., 2002; Thompson & Kelly-Vance, 2001). Sipe's (1999) synthesis of the literature confirmed that successful mentors tended to be a steady and involved presence in youths' lives.

Researchers have concluded that mentor pairs should spend a minimum of one to two hours together per week for at least one school year (Cohen, 2006; Garringer et al., 2003; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Thompson & Kelly-Vance, 2001). However, DuBois et al. (2002) found that the frequency of contact with a mentor was a less important factor than the youth's expectations of the frequency of that contact.

Familiarity With the Youth's Family

There is evidence that youth benefit from mentors who are familiar with their families. Research indicates that programs are enhanced when mentors develop linkages with key people in the youth's social network, such as parents or peers (Hirsch, 2005; DuBois et al., 2002). Jekielek et al. (2002) reported that when students perceived their mentors knew their parents well, they had higher grade point averages and higher levels of college attendance. Based on these findings, researchers recommend that mentoring programs provide sufficient opportunities for parent/guardian involvement to support the mentoring relationship (Rhodes, 2006; Sipe, 2002).

Mentors' Skills and Attributes

Studies show that effective mentoring relationships are facilitated when adults possess certain skills and attributes. These include prior experience in helping roles or professions, such as education or direct-service work with youth, and sensitivity to the youth's cultural and socioeconomic background (Cohen, 2006; Hirsch, 2005). Mentors' therapeutic qualities, such as empathy, authenticity, trust, and collaboration, have also been shown to result in more successful relationships (Cohen, 2006; Rhodes & DuBois, 2006; Spencer, 2006). Research indicates that the mentor's ability to model relevant behaviors (such as skills required for job performance) and to refrain from actions (such as substance use) that may encourage youth to adopt unhealthy behaviors benefits the mentoring relationship (Beam et al., 2002).

Youth-Centered Approach

Research has demonstrated that a youth-centered approach to mentoring, focusing on the developmental needs of the youth, contributes to relationships of higher quality and longer duration than a prescriptive approach, influenced primarily by the interests or expectations of the mentor (Cohen, 2006; Jekielek et al., 2002; Herrera et al., 2000).

Helping youth to set and work toward goals that are important to their development also appears to be beneficial, especially if the goals are agreed upon by the mentor and youth in accordance with a youth-centered approach (Rhodes & DuBois, 2006; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2005). Studies have shown that outcomes were more favorable when youth reported experiencing both structure and support from their mentors. Benefits were less evident when mentors offered only unconditional support, suggesting a need for mentors to act as more than just good friends (Rhodes & DuBois, 2006).

Matching Mentors and Youth

Research suggests that cross-race matches are just as successful as same-race matches. Matching youth and adults by gender and race does not appear to have a significant measurable effect on the success of the relationship (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). Jekielek et al. (2002) reported that cross-race and same-race matches were equally successful in improving a variety of academic indicators.

DuBois et al. (2002) found that the gender or ethnicity of a mentor correlated less with a successful mentoring relationship than did having a mentor with a helping background. This was especially true in the case of youth who were at risk for poor academic or behavioral outcomes. The age, gender, ethnicity, and family structure of the youth were also found to be less important to the match than the approach taken by the mentor to build a successful relationship (DuBois et al., 2002; Sipe, 1996).

Provision of Agency Training, Support, and Supervision

DuBois et al. (2002) reported programs that included monitoring and ongoing training for mentors and provided structured activities for mentor pairs produced more positive results than programs that did not adhere to these practices. Studies have shown that mentors who received more hours of training had longer-lasting mentoring relationships (Jekielek et al., 2002; Sipe, 1999). Researchers suggest that mentor training include communication and limit-setting skills, tips on relationship building, and recommendations on the best way to interact with a young person, as well as assistance in developing realistic expectations of what can be accomplished (Grossman & Garry, 1997; Tierney et al., 1995).

In addition to pre-match training, mentors should also be provided with ongoing support and supervision. Grossman and Garry (1997) found that intensive supervision and support by a case manager were critical for ensuring that mentors and youth met regularly over a significant period of time and developed positive relationships. Studies have shown that programs in which staff members provided regular support to mentors were more likely to succeed, while programs in which mentors were not contacted regularly by staff reported the most failed mentoring relationships (Sipe, 1999).

An evaluation of eight Big Brothers/Big Sisters agencies showed that supervision of the mentoring relationship was the program practice most associated with a high rate of interaction. Therefore, matches at agencies providing regular supervision tended to meet more frequently (Tierney et al., 1995).

On A Local Note

Miami-Dade County Schools (M-DCPS) offers a variety of mentoring programs, including:

- **eMentoring Dade County Bar Young Lawyers.** The eMentoring program serves M-DCPS students who are interested in careers in law and public affairs. Approximately 35 young attorneys who are members of the Florida Bar Association mentor students on a one-on-one basis. Lawyers spend 15-45 minutes per week communicating via e-mail with students who attend Miami Carol City Senior and Miami Senior High Schools. The program's goal is to help students achieve academic excellence, improve their communications skills, and explore career goals.

- **Women of Tomorrow (WOT) Mentoring Scholarship Program.** The WOT program is designed to inspire, motivate, and empower at-risk young women to live up to their full potential by providing mentoring and scholarship opportunities. The program currently serves 1,028 Miami-Dade County girls and has awarded $751,450 to date in scholarships to 264 Miami-Dade County program participants. Accomplished

professional women (such as judges, doctors, lawyers, newscasters, executives, and entrepreneurs) are paired with small groups of at-risk teenage girls for a four-year mentoring program. Mentors and girls meet on a monthly basis to discuss ambitions, hopes, positive attitudes necessary for success, and practical solutions to life's problems.

- **Take Stock in Children (TSIC).** TSIC is a not-for-profit organization, serving at-risk youth from low income families by providing scholarships and mentors. Students meet one hour a week with a mentor recruited and trained by TSIC staff. TSIC also provides professional student advocates who monitor student academic records and progress to promote student success. Students who successfully complete the program are awarded a two-year or four-year tuition scholarship to college through the Florida Prepaid Tuition Scholarship Program. In Miami-Dade, over 400 students are served. The program is sponsored by local agencies, including M-DCPS, and supported by corporate sponsors, the Florida Legislature, and individual community members.

- **Big Brothers/Big Sisters (BB/BS).** BB/BS programs operating in M-DCPS include "Bigs in School" School-Based Mentoring (pairing a mentor with a student from a local elementary school to visit for one hour every week during the school year); Community Partners (employees are offered paid leave by their employers to mentor local school children on a regular basis); High School Volunteers (high school students earn community service hours and gain valuable experience serving as mentors to children in nearby elementary schools); and School to Work (employee mentors are paired with high school students at their worksites for four hours a month during the school year). During the 2005-06 school year, BB/BS served over 800 M-DCPS students. BB/BS are currently mentoring students in 32 M-DCPS elementary schools and 10 M-DCPS senior high schools.

- **Teen Trendsetter Reading Mentoring Program.** The Teen Trendsetter Program provides training and support to teen leaders who mentor third grade students in reading. Teen leaders recruit their classmates to become mentors. A summit is held annually to give lead Trendsetters the opportunity to get to know each other and support each other throughout the school year as they recruit other teens to serve as mentors. Approximately 11 senior high school students (from four M-DCPS senior high schools and one private school) mentor approximately 55 M-DCPS elementary students. The Trendsetter Program is part of the Florida Mentoring Partnership and is operated in cooperation with the Florida Department of Education's Just Read, Florida program. All books and materials used in the program are provided by the Teen Trendsetter Program.

- **Cruise Industry Charitable Foundation (CICF).** In partnership with the Florida Prepaid Tuition Scholarship Program, CICF recently made a charitable donation to benefit M-DCPS by providing full-paid, four-year college tuition scholarships for 10 qualified students attending Campbell Drive Middle School and Miami Edison Middle School. The Foundation has supported a total of 35 student scholarship awards in Miami-Dade County over the past several years. To be eligible for the scholarship award, students must participate in the CICF program. Participants agree to maintain good grades, stay out of trouble, attend school, stay drug and alcohol free, and meet weekly with an adult volunteer mentor.

- **Developing and Directing Students to Succeed (DADS) Club.** Pending authorization by The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, the district will begin implementation of the Developing and Directing Students to Succeed (DADS) Club during the 2006-07 school year. The goal of the DADS Club is to lower dropout rates, reduce unemployment, lessen student involvement in the criminal justice system, and better prepare students for post secondary education and the world of work. The DADS Club will target approximately 300 at-risk students in grades 9 and 10 from 15 high-need senior high schools across the district. The program will emphasize four components: Personal Growth and Responsibility; Academics and Enrichment; Mentoring and Character Building; and Project-Based Job Skills Development. All components will be delivered through in-

school, extended day, and Saturday school programs, provided by teachers, school and district staff, and trained mentors. The Mentoring and Character Building component of the DADS Club is an essential part of the program, designed to infuse advice, guidance, leadership, and direction into students' lives and provide program participants with a variety of life experiences. Mentors from a diverse array of backgrounds will be recruited from all segments of Miami-Dade County, including professional organizations, fraternal and civic organizations, and national and local trade unions.

Summary

Mentoring is a structured one-on-one relationship between an adult and youth that focuses on the needs of the youth, providing him or her with support, guidance, and assistance. Participation in a mentoring program appears to have a positive impact on reducing absenteeism and substance abuse, increasing levels of educational attainment, and improving attitudes, social behaviors, and relations with parents and peers. Although researchers agree that mentoring programs have a positive impact on at-risk youth, more research is needed to determine if mentoring programs have an impact on students' grade point averages, achievement test scores, dropout rates, and self-perceptions. The time frame over which benefits from mentoring continue to accrue has not been well-established. Characteristics of effective mentoring relationships include long-lasting relationships, frequent contact between mentors and youth, and the provision of ongoing training, support, and supervision to mentors. A summary of mentoring programs operating in M-DCPS has also been provided.

References

Aseltine, R., Dupre, M., & Lamlein, P. (2000). Mentoring as a Drug Prevention Strategy: An Evaluation of Across Ages. *Adolescent and Family Health, 1*, 11-20.

Beam, M.R., Gil-Rivas, V., Greenberger, E., & Chen. C. (2002). Adolescent Problem Behavior and Depressed Mood: Risk and Protection Within and Across Social Contexts. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 31*, 343-357.

Blakely, C.H., Menon, R., & Jones, D.J. (1995). *Project BELONG: Final Report.* College Station, TX: Texas A&M University, Public Policy Research Institute.

Brown, R.S. (2003). Mentoring Programs for At-Risk Students. *The Informed Educator Series*. Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.

Catalano, R.F., Berglund, M.L., Ryan, J.A.M., Lonczak, H.S., & Hawkins, J.D. (1998). *Positive Youth Development in the United States: Research Findings on Evaluations of Positive Youth Development Programs.* Seattle, WA: University of Washington, School of Social Work, Social Development Research Group.

Cave, G., & Quint, J. (1990). *Career Beginnings Impact Evaluation: Findings from a Program for Disadvantaged High School Students.* New York, NY: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.

Center for Prevention Research and Development. (2005). *Background Research: Mentoring Programs*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois, Institute of Government and Public Affairs.

Cohen, J. (2006). Youth Mentoring: Programs and Practices That Work. *American Youth Policy Forum Brief*, September 15, 2006. Retrieved from http://www.aypf.org/forumbriefs/2006/fb091506.htm.

DuBois, D.L., & Silverthorn, N. (2005). Natural Mentoring Relationships and Adolescent Health: Evidence from a National Study. *American Journal of Public Health, 95*, 518-524.

DuBois, D.L., Holloway, B.E., Valentine, J.C., & Harris, C. (2002). Effectiveness of Mentoring Programs for Youth: A Meta-Analytic Review. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 30* (2), 157-197.

Garringer, M., Fulop, M., & Rennick, V. (2005). *Foundations of Successful Youth Mentoring: A Guidebook for Program Development.* Portland, OR: National Mentoring Center.

Grossman, J.B., & Garry, E.M. (1997). Mentoring - A Proven Delinquency Prevention Strategy. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Grossman, J.B., & Rhodes, J.E. (2002). The Test of Time: Predictors and Effects of Duration in Youth Mentoring Relationships. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 30* (2), 199-219.

Hamilton, M.A., & Hamilton, S.F. (2005). Work and Service-Learning. In D.L. DuBois & M.J. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Herrera, C., Sipe, C.L., & McClanahan, W.S. (2000). *Mentoring School-Age Children: Relationship Development in Community-Based and School-Based Programs.* Philadelphia, PA: Public/ Private Ventures (Published in collaboration with MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, Alexandria, VA).

Hirsch, B.J. (2005). *A Place to Call Home: After-School Programs for Urban Youth.* Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association and New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Jackson, Y. (2002). Mentoring for Delinquent Children: An Outcome Study with Young Adolescent Children. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 31* (2), 115-126.

Jekielek, S., Moore, K.A., & Hair, E.C. (2002). *Mentoring Programs and Youth Development: A Synthesis.* Washington, D.C.: Child Trends, Edna McConnell Clark Foundation.

Linnehan, F. (2001). The Relation of a Work-Based Mentoring Program to the Academic Performance and Behavior of African American Students. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 59* (3), 310-325.

LoSciuto, L., Rajala, A., Townsend, T.N., & Taylor, A.S. (1996). An Outcome Evaluation of Across Ages: An Intergenerational Mentoring Approach to Drug Prevention. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 11* (1), 116-129.

McPartland, J.M., & Nettles, S.M. (1991). Using Community Adults as Advocates or Mentors for At-Risk Middle School Students: A Two-Year Evaluation of Project RAISE. *American Journal of Education, 99* (4), 568-586.

Rhodes, J.E. (2006). Research Roundup. *Mentor.* Retrieved from http://www.mentoring.org/program_staff/research_corner/research_roundup.php.

Rhodes, J.E., & DuBois, D.L. (2006). Understanding and Facilitating the Youth Mentoring Movement. *Social Policy Report, A Publication of the Society for Research in Child Development, 20* (3), 3-19.

Rhodes, J., Grossman, J., & Resch, N. (2000). Agents of Change: Pathways Through Which Mentored Relationships Influence Adolescents' Academic Adjustment. *Child Development, 71*, 1662-1671.

Sipe, C.L. (1996). *Mentoring: A Synthesis of P/PV's Research: 1988-1995.* Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.

Sipe, C.L. (1999). Mentoring Adolescents: What Have We Learned? In J.B. Grossman (Ed.),*Contemporary Issues in Mentoring*. Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.

Sipe, C.L. (2002). Mentoring Programs for Adolescents: A Research Summary. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 31* (6), Supplement 1, 251-260.

Slicker, E.K., & Palmer, D.J. (1993). Mentoring At-Risk High School Students: Evaluation of a School-Based Program. *School Counselor, 40*, 327-334.

Spencer, R. (2006). Understanding the Mentoring Process Between Adolescents and Adults. *Youth and Society, 37* (3), 287-315.

Thompson, L.A., & Kelly-Vance, L. (2001). The Impact of Mentoring on Academic Achievement of at-Risk Youth. *Children and Youth Services Review, 23* (3), 227-242.

Tierney, J.P., Grossman, J.B., & Resch, N.L. (1995). *Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters.* Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.

Torrance, E.P. (1984). *Mentor Relationships: How They Aid Creative Achievement, Endure, Change and Die.* Buffalo, NY: Bearly Limited.