

Grand Area Mentoring 2008/2009 Annual Report

Executive Summary

Grand Area Mentoring exceeded all major goals for the 2008/2009 school year.

Measure >>	Sustain relationships >12 months	Increase core academic performance	Reduce number of disciplinary actions	Decrease student absences
Goal	50%	30%	30%	30%
Actual Performance	55%	43%	42%	58%

Despite a small decrease in program size, the 2008/2009 school year garnered some of the best mentoring results since GrandAM's establishment in 2005. At its maximum capacity in 2007/2008, Grand Area Mentoring served fifty-eight at-risk students (or 4% of the student population) with more than fifty volunteers. Ongoing mentor orientations brought new volunteers into the schools to work with students in one-on-one and group settings. Orientations focused on providing a framework for new volunteers to understand effective mentoring practices, namely engaging students in developmental relationships.

Developmental Mentoring

Developmental relationships and activities lead to increased student confidence, higher attachment to school, better grades, and longer lasting matches. Developmental relationships focus on: trust, fun and reciprocity, understanding, and slowly building toward setting goals or pursuing projects.

Examples of developmental mentoring activities

- Games
- Sports and outdoor stuff
- Talking and learning about each other
- Engaging in activities that both the mentor and mentee enjoy.

According to student interviews, GrandAM mentors and students engage in developmentally appropriate activities.

QUESTION: WHAT DO YOU USUALLY DO WITH YOUR MENTOR?

ANSWER:

- 20%** Hang out with other mentors and mentees, talk, have fun;
- 30%** Go to parks, play sports and on the playgrounds, go hiking;
- 73%** Play games, do arts and crafts together, read.

In 2008/2009, service was expanded to include three types of mentoring: 1) conventional

school-based one-on-one mentoring, 2) off-campus “double-buddy” mentoring, and 2) group field trips. Grand County School District’s new *Double-Buddy mentoring* policy allows mentors and students to leave campus in groups with at least two screened volunteer adults. Initial results show that mentors and students engaged in activities new to the program, such as:

- Restaurant visits
- Desert and nature explorations
- Library visits
- Museum outings, and more.

The Effects of Long-Term Mentoring

Research shows that mentoring relationships that last less than six months can have detrimental effects on student performance. Studies have found that matches that last longer have more positive impacts on the mentee; match length correlates positively with beneficial impact. Therefore, Grand Area Mentoring asks volunteers to commit to relationships that last at least 12 months.

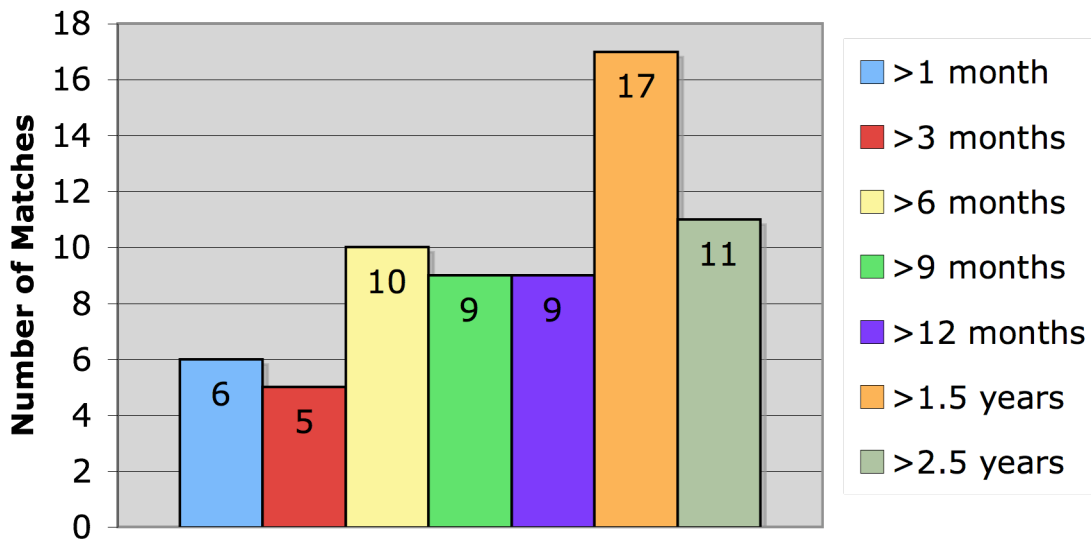
As illustrated in the following sections, students that have been mentored for more than one year have often performed better than their peers mentored for fewer months.

Sustained Relationships

Grand Area Mentoring surpassed the key goal of 50% 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, excepting June, July, and August. Students that are immediately re-matched after a match closure or switch to another mentor are counted as sustained because their service was uninterrupted.

Of all 67 matches in the 2008/2009 school year (including those closed and those that are expected to continue), 37 or **55% of Grand Area Mentoring matches were sustained for more than 12 months**. 17 or 25% were sustained between 18 months and 2.5 years, and 9 or 13% were sustained for more than 2.5 years. Two matches, or 3%, have been meeting for 42 months, or 3.5 years – since program inception.

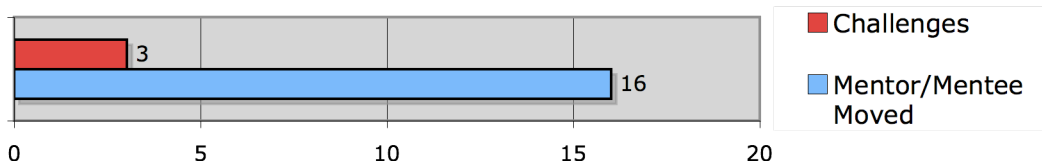
Sustained Matches by Duration, 2008/2009



19 or 28% of GrandAM matches were closed during the 2008/2009 school year. Of these, 7 lasted more than 12 months, which means that these students met the program goal of 12 months participation. 12 matches lasted less than 12 months. However, closed matches that lasted less than one year represent only 18% of total matches closed and sustained during the 2008/2009 school year.

Of the 19 closed matches, 16 or 84% were closed due to emigration from Grand County School District. 13 students and 3 mentors moved away, terminating their matches. Only three relationships, or 16%, were closed due to relationship challenges or other factors.

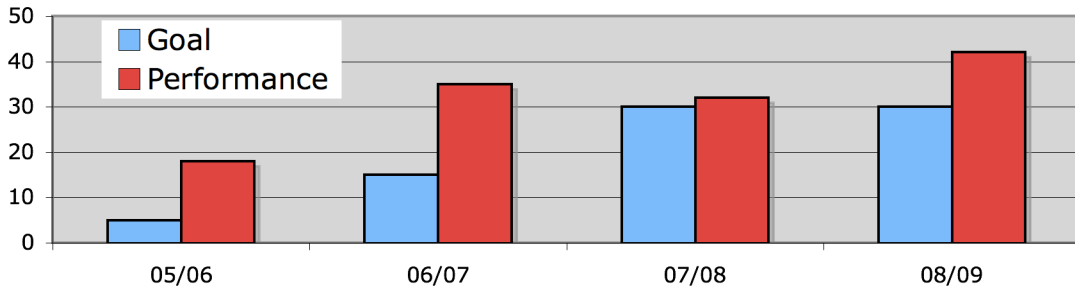
Matches Closed, 2008/2009



Student GPA

Improvements in student grade point averages are based on report card scores from this year compared to last. Grand Area Mentoring met the goal of 30% of mentored students improving their GPA over the 2008/2009 school year. Of the 47 students for which baseline academic data was available, 23 or **43% improved their overall grade point average from 2007/2008.**

**Percentage of Students with Improved Grade Point Averages
(Goals vs. Performance) 2005-2009**



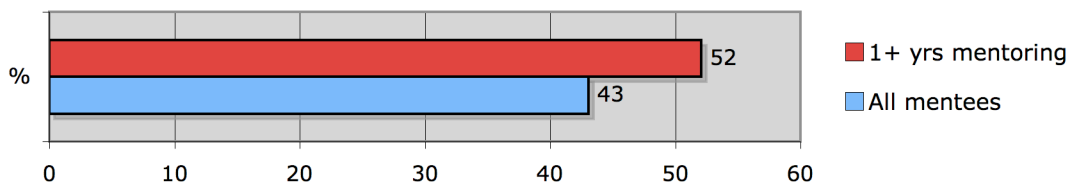
The whole group of mentees improved their average grade from a C+ in Trimester 1 to a B- in Trimester 3. The average GPA of 2.52 in 2007/2008 for all mentees improved to 2.67 in Trimester 3 of this school year.

Unlike other measures, such as absences and discipline problems, where a consistent zero score is considered a positive outcome, flat academic performance is not counted as improvement. If a student's GPA was 3.5 last year and remained at 3.5 this year, the student is not tallied as a mentee with improved performance.

Longevity and GPA

The percentage of students with improved GPAs that were matched for more than one year is significant. This correlation buttresses the notion that long-term matches can have beneficial results. **52% of mentees matched for more than one year improved their GPA**, eclipsing all other previous academic results.

**Percentage of Students with Improved GPA in 2008/2009
(12-month mentees vs. overall mentee improvement)**



Many students independently link grade improvement with mentoring, as illustrated by the following interview responses:

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

ANSWER: A selection of unprompted student responses:

"I get better grades now." (5th grade girl)

"Yes. My mentor taught me learning can be fun even though it is sometimes difficult." (7th grade girl)

"My mentor encourages me to do a good job at school. He makes me want to do better. He also encourages me not to smoke." (6th grade boy)

"It makes me keep up with my grades." (7th grade boy)

"I like to learn more now." (3rd grade girl)

Grand Area Mentoring volunteers did not list improved GPAs among the perceived impacts on their mentees. Instead, they listed the following student impacts:

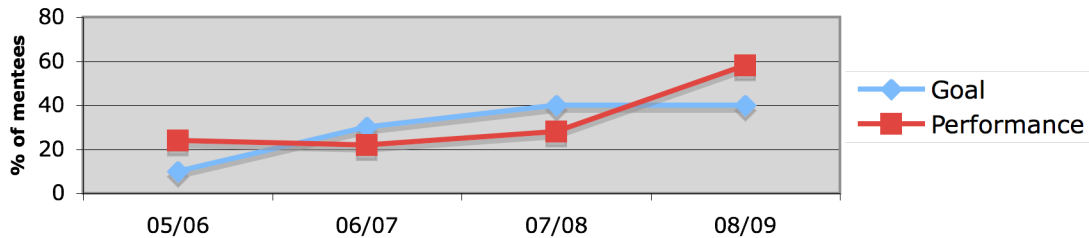
- Increased student friendships
- Improved navigation of school setting
- Positive community-adults interaction
- Discovery of new interests and goals, broader understanding of world
- Increased self-esteem, attendance, and communication
- Improved cooperation and social skills

Mentors have little exposure to report cards and are pointedly instructed to focus on developmental relationships, not tutoring. Nevertheless, the statistics above, particularly the academic findings for relationships that last more than one year, illustrate the indirect positive impact that mentoring can have on student academic performance.

Student Unexcused Absences

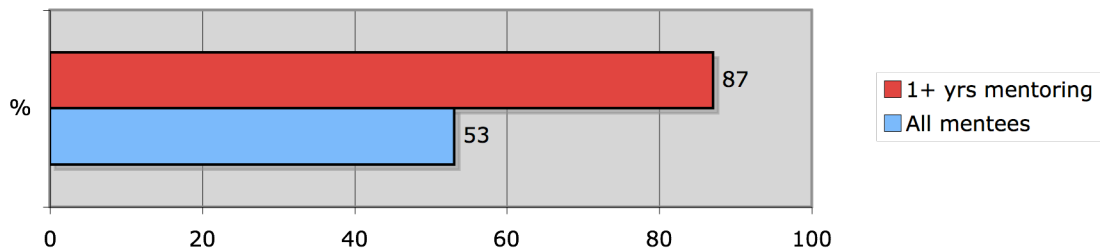
The 2008/2009 goal for the percentage of students that reduced their unexcused absences was 30%. Grand Area Mentoring student data shows that **58% of mentored students had fewer unexcused absences this year compared with 2007/2008.**

Percentage of Students with Improved Attendance (Goals vs. Performance) 2005-2009



This report found a striking relationship between match longevity and improved attendance. Mentees enrolled in the mentoring program for more than one year show a dramatic improvement in attendance. Based again on the same students and cross referenced for match length, Grand Area Mentoring found that **87% of students matched for a year or longer improved their attendance in the past year.**

Percentage of Students with Improved Attendance in 2008/2009 (12-month mentees vs. overall mentee improvement)



A measure related to school attendance comes from the student interviews conducted at year's end. On an open-ended question aimed at school attachment (how much the student likes school), many students said that mentoring improved their perception of the academic environment; they "liked school better."

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

ANSWER: A selection of unprompted student responses:

"Yes, I'm more excited about school on mentoring days." (3rd grade girl)

"Yes, it gives me a little activity at the end of every Friday." (1st grade boy)

"I look forward to having mentoring on Wednesdays. I'm waiting all day for it." (4th grade boy)

"Yes, it makes me work harder in class so I get to do fun stuff at mentoring." (5th grade boy)

"Yes, a big difference. School is a lot more fun now." (2nd grade boy)

"Yes, school is better now." (3rd grade boy)

“Yes, because I get to stay at school longer on mentoring days.” (1st grade girl)

“Yes, it makes me more into school and learning.” (5th grade boy)

“Yes, school is more fun.” (2nd grade girl)

“It makes me want to go to school on mentoring days.” (7th grade girl)

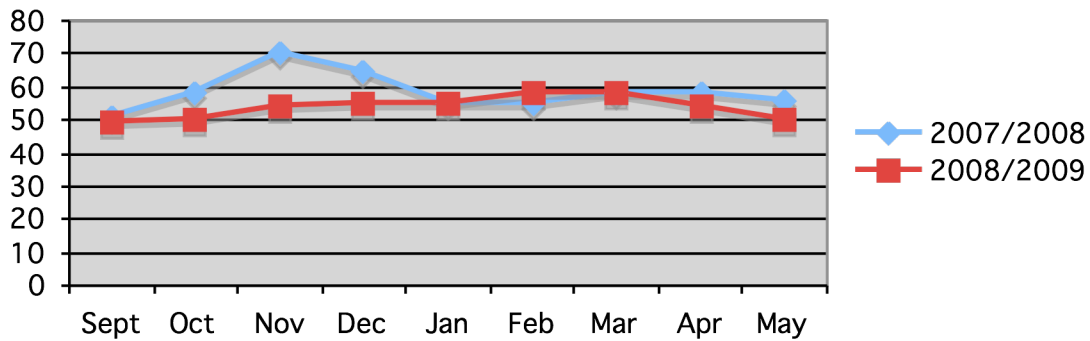
“I’m excited on Tuesdays; the day always went by so fast because I knew [my mentor] was going to be there at the end of the day.”

Additionally, 100% of teachers and administrators surveyed agreed that mentored students seem to like school better.

Number of Matches

Grand Area Mentoring's 2008/2009 school year saw the program size contract from a maximum of 70 matches in the 2007/2008 school year to a maximum size of 58 matches in March of 2009. This represented a 17% decrease in program size. Reducing the number of mentors and mentees was necessary as a measure that would improve program quality as less dedicated mentors were allowed to exit the program. The smaller size also allowed closer contact with each mentor and student, supporting opportunities for assisting volunteers and students.

Number of Matches, 2007/2008 & 2008/2009



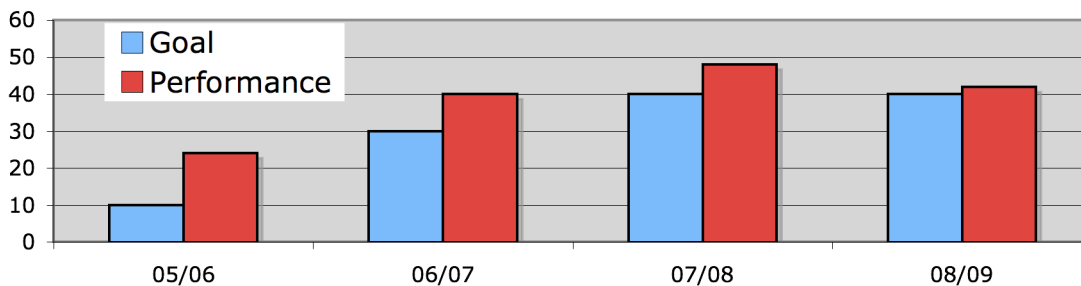
Program contraction occurred during the summer of 2008. During the summer of 2008, GrandAM lost a net total of five matches. This is comparable to the number of matches lost in the summer of 2007, which totaled six.

Student Discipline Problems

Grand Area Mentoring aimed to reduce the number of disciplinary actions for 30% of mentored students. Students that maintain a zero balance of office referrals or other corrective actions since the previous year are counted in this number.

Of Grand Area Mentoring's 48 student participants for which GrandAM had baseline discipline data, 20 or **42% decreased their discipline referral rate or maintained it at zero**. This is only 6% off of last year's (2007/2008) reduction of 48%, but exceeds the previous two years of 24% (in 2005/2006) and 40% (in 2006/2007). The chart below illustrates the success GrandAM has achieved in reducing discipline problems for mentored students:

**Percentage of Students with Reduced Discipline Referrals
(Goals vs. Performance) 2005-2009**



Additionally, 86% of Grand County School District teachers surveyed agreed that mentored students get fewer behavior referrals, while 89% of teachers agreed that mentored students were more likely to get along with their peers and 100% agreed that these same students have improved relations with teachers and adults.

Parent surveys also support the link between mentoring and improved behavior. **57% of surveyed parents selected behavior as a positive change seen in their son or daughter** since beginning with mentoring. As a possible explanation of this opinion, 63% of surveyed parents believed that mentoring was worthwhile because their son or daughter was provided a positive role model.

Student surveys give some insight into how mentoring impacts feelings of positive change, levels of self-confidence, and use of social skills. Studies suggest that there is a link between improved social skills and a reduction in discipline problems at school and in the community. Here is a selection of direct quotes:

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

ANSWER: A selection of unprompted student responses:

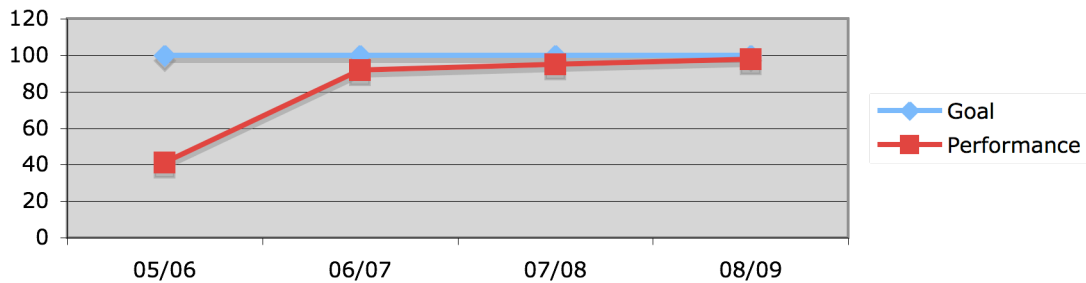
1. *Yes, I don't fight with my mentor, and I'm always fighting with my brother and sister. (4th grade boy)*
2. *Yes, it makes me feel happier. (6th grade girl)*
3. *Yes, I've become more active since I started mentoring. (5th grade boy)*
4. *Yes, I thought no one liked me before I started mentoring (7th grade girl)*

5. *Kind of, it makes me feel better.* (3rd grade boy)
6. *Yes, I used to feel bad because barely anyone used to be my friend and then I met my mentor and I feel good.* (1st grade girl)
7. *Yes, my mom moved away and I don't have any time with her and mentoring makes me feel better about that.* (2nd grade girl)
8. *Yes, it changes my personality to do more active stuff.* (7th grade boy)
9. *Yes, it feels good.* (4th grade boy)
10. *Yes, I can talk about what makes me uncomfortable.* (7th grade boy)
11. *It makes me feel like I have more friends.* (7th grade girl)
12. *Yes, I used to feel lonely and only had one friend and then [my mentor] came along.* (4th grade girl)
13. *Yeah, I forget about stuff like arguing with my mom.* (4th grade boy)
14. *A little, I get to have a best friend.* (3rd grade girl)
15. *It makes me feel good.* (3rd grade girl)
16. *Kind of, I've started being nicer to people. Like in kindergarten, I would be really mean to kids and then when I started mentoring in first grade, I stopped doing that. And now I'm nice to other kids.* (3rd grade girl)

Educational, Prosocial, and Cultural Activities

Grand Area Mentoring strives to provide all three types of activities to 100% of mentored students. GrandAM staff study mentor logs to chart types and duration of activities chosen by mentors and students. These logs provide ongoing evidence of best mentoring practice and also help the program gauge which types of activities are lacking or need to be covered in supplemental trainings. ***In 2008/2009, 98% of GrandAM students were provided with educational, prosocial, and cultural activities.***

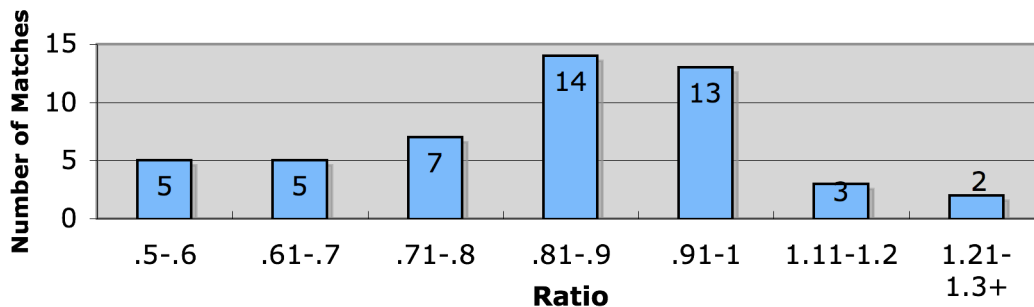
Percentage of Students with All Three Types of Activities (Goals vs. Performance) 2005-2009



Meeting Ratio

As a secondary measure of match quality, GrandAM tracked the meeting ratio of all matches. Meeting ratio measures whether mentors and student met weekly for an hour, as planned. Of the 50 mentor logs available for calculations, the average meeting ratio was 0.87 or 87%, which means that mentors and students met nearly nine out of ten times on average. The highest meeting ratio was 1.39, while the lowest was 0.53. ***The modal ratio was 1, indicating that the greatest number of mentors were meeting exactly as much as planned.*** Suggesting an even distribution across the board, the median ratio was 0.86, very close to the mean of 0.87.

Meeting Ratio Distribution (2008/2009)



These statistics will help GrandAM recognize those mentors with outstanding records and redirect or retrain those mentors or students that are not meeting the threshold of 0.8 or successful one-hour, weekly meetings 80% of the time.

Administrative Performance

Teacher, administration, parent, and mentor surveys each addressed the question of program execution. Questions relating to staff performance were collected from each source in order to provide guidance for program improvement and staff professional development. A mean response of 8 is the goal for each question.

PROGRAM SURVEYS	AVERAGE SCORE on a scale of one to ten (ten being highest):
Communication with parents:	9.2
Response to parent questions or concerns:	9.5
Mentor support:	9.6
Response to mentor calls and concerns:	9.7
Teachers and administration believes that staff are easy to reach and knowledgeable:	9.2
Teachers and administration supportive of the program:	9.4
Teachers and administrators believe that mentors are well trained and effective:	8.9
Teachers and administration feel comfortable referring students to the program:	9.2

Of mentor surveys returned, 100% said that they read the monthly newsletter. Regarding usefulness, they rated it on a scale of one to ten as 8.23, and as a representation of GrandAM, they rated it as 9.4.

Successes

Student Performance – Student GPA and attendance increased significantly in 2008/2009, particularly for those students that met for more than one year. To sustain these benefits, Grand Area Mentoring will strive to maintain matches 12 months or more by recruiting only dedicated volunteers, ensuring that mentors and students are well prepared for their new relationships, and providing ongoing support.

Match Longevity and Regularity – With over 54% of matches sustained for 12 months and meetings occurring nearly 9 out of 10 times, GrandAM consists of a dedicated group of volunteers and students. GrandAM staff will strive to continue providing support to mentors and mentees. This support directly impacts relationship quality, a predictor of match length.

Off-Campus (“Double Buddy”) Mentoring – A significant portion of mentors and mentees utilized the new policy that allowed mentors and students to venture off campus on planned activities in a small group. The procedures and activities met district guidelines and provided a host of new opportunities to mentors and students.