

Grand Area Mentoring 2009/2010 Annual Report

Executive Summary

Grand Area Mentoring exceeded all major goals in the 2009/2010 school year. At its maximum capacity, Grand Area Mentoring served fifty-four at-risk students (or 4% of the student population) with more than fifty volunteers.

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%	53%	39%	46%

For the first time in GrandAM's five-year history, more than 40% of matches have lasted longer than one and a half years. Ongoing mentor orientations brought new volunteers into the schools to work with students in one-on-one and group settings. These orientations focused on providing a framework for new volunteers to understand effective mentoring practices, namely engaging students in developmental relationships.

IMPORTANT: 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.

QUESTION: WHAT DO YOU USUALLY DO WITH YOUR MENTOR?

ANSWER:

48% Play games

60% Go to parks, play sports and on the playgrounds

32% Art, homework, puzzles, and reading

QUESTION: DO YOU LIKE TALKING TO YOUR MENTOR? IF SO, WHAT DO YOU TALK ABOUT?

"I talk with her because I feel like everything is safe with her." (3rd grade boy)

"Yes. Sometimes we talk about what I do at school, how my dad has been, how everybody in my family has been." (4th grade girl)

"We talk about how our week was, what we did, what we're going through, how it was a rough week and how it was not." (4th grade boy)

"We talk about my dad. I told my mentor about him because I trust her, like she's my grandma." (4th grade girl)

"We talk about what we're going to do next mentoring time, what we like to do, stuff like that." (5th grade boy)

"We talk about sports and if I'm doing okay since my grandma passed away." (7th grade boy)

Off-Campus Outings

Grand County School District's off-campus mentoring policy continued to allow mentors and students to leave campus in groups with at least two volunteer adults. Records show that mentors and students engaged in activities such as:

- Restaurant and ice cream shop visits
- Desert hiking, biking, & nature explorations
- Library outings
- Rock Shop visits
- Bee hives tour
- Animal shelter dog walking
- HMK new facility tour
- Go-carts and pizza at the Family Fun Center

The Effects of Long-Term Mentoring

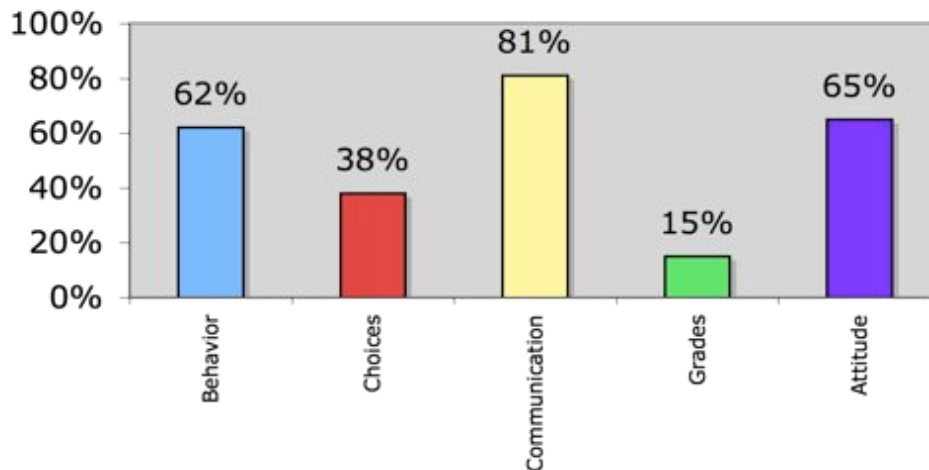
Research shows that mentoring relationships that last less than six months can have detrimental effects on student performance. Studies have found that matches that last longer have more positive impacts on the mentee; match length correlates positively with beneficial impact. Therefore, Grand Area Mentoring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

Mentors' Perceived Impact on Students

Surveys show that Grand Area Mentoring volunteers believe their mentoring time positively impacts students.

Percentage of Mentors that Noticed Changes in Mentees (by category)



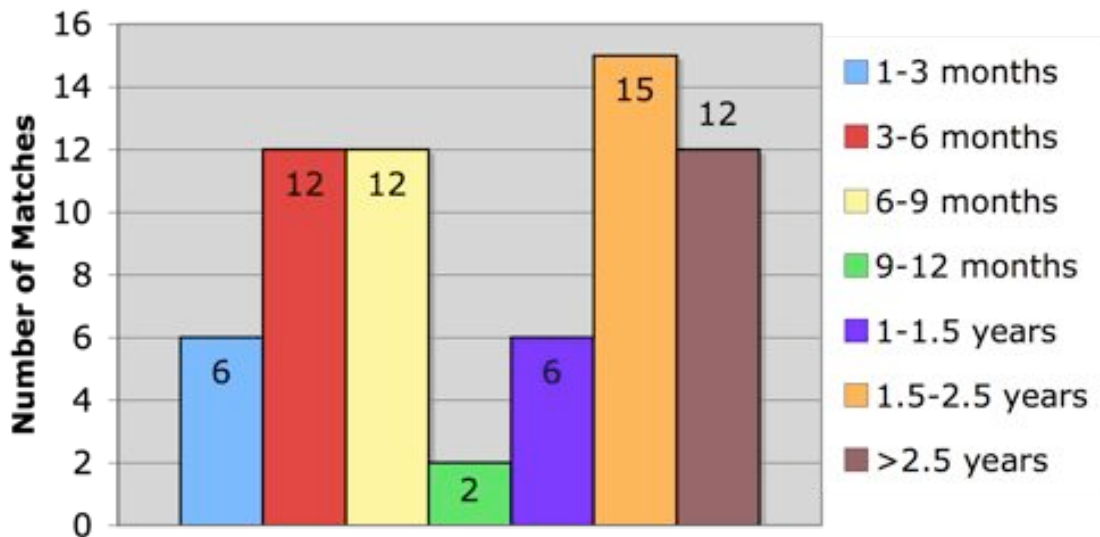
For example, sixty-two percent of volunteers believe mentoring improved the behavior of mentored students. Our finding backs this belief, showing 39% of students reduced their number of discipline problems, and 94% of teachers agree that mentoring improved student relations with peers and adults.

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, not including 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 65 matches in the 2009/2010 school year (including those closed and those expected to continue), 35 or **55% of Grand Area Mentoring matches were sustained for more than 12 months**. 15 or 23% were sustained between 18 months and 2.5 years, and 12 or 18% were sustained for more than 2.5 years.

Sustained Matches by Duration, 2008/2009



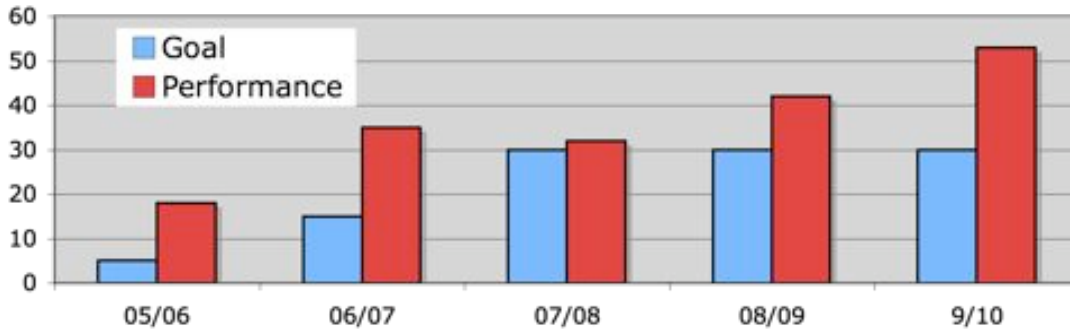
18 or 28% of GrandAM matches were closed during the 2009/2010 school year. Of these, 14 lasted more than 12 months, which means that these students met the program goal of 12 months participation. 4 matches lasted less than 12 months.

Of the 18 closed matches, 9 were closed due to emigration from Grand County School District. 7 students and 2 mentors moved away, terminating their matches. The remaining nine matches were closed due to relationship challenges or other factors.

Student Academic Performance

Improvements in student grade academic performance are based on report card scores from this year compared to last year (or the trimester prior to being matched with a mentor). Grand Area Mentoring met the goal of 30% of mentored students improving their academic score over the 2009/2010 school year. Of the 47 students for which baseline academic data was available, 25 or **53% improved their overall academic score.**

Percentage of Students with Improved Academic Performance (Goals vs. Performance) 2005-2010

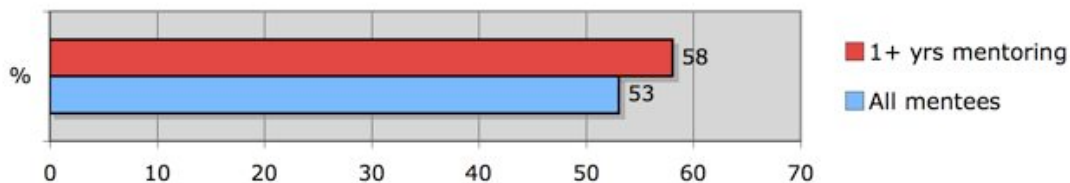


Unlike other measures (absences and discipline problems), where a consistent zero score is considered a positive outcome, flat academic performance is not counted as improvement. If a student's academic score was 75% last year and remained at 75% this year, the student is not tallied as a mentee with 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. **58% of mentees matched for more than one year improved their GPA**, eclipsing all other previous academic results.

Percentage of Students with Improved GPA in 2009/2010 (12-month mentees vs. overall mentee improvement)



Some students independently link mentoring with their own feelings of academic success, as illustrated by the following interview response.

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

ANSWER:

“Yes. Sometimes when I’m at school, I don’t get something. I feel like all the other kids are getting it and I’m not. But she makes me feel like if I just try, it’s okay, and then I feel like I can go back to school.” (4th grade girl)

Teacher Survey – Academics:

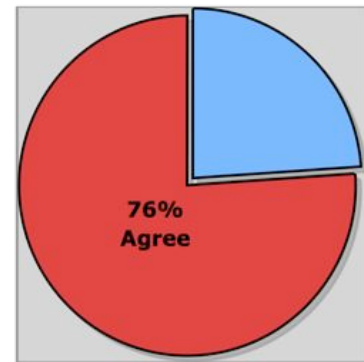
Many teachers also felt that mentoring had a significant impact on student academic performance. In an end-of-year survey of educators in kindergarten through eighth grade, **more than three quarters of teachers felt that mentoring had improved the grade point average of students in their classes.**

Furthermore, 94% of teachers believed that mentoring improved these students’ relationships with teachers and adults, and 76% agreed that mentored students complete more classwork on time.

Finally, **100% of surveyed teachers believed that mentored students in their classes had higher self-confidence.** Numerous studies have found a positive correlation between student efficacy (belief in one’s own ability) and academic performance. Mentoring supports the growth and performance of its student participants by bolstering self-confidence.

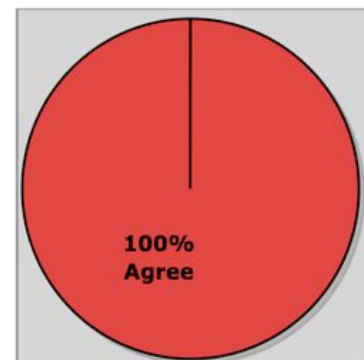
TEACHER SURVEY

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



TEACHER SURVEY

“Since being matched with a mentor, the **mentored students in my class have greater self confidence.**”



From Educational Psychology

“Students who feel confident in their ability... are likely to be high in self-efficacy – the belief that one’s own efforts (rather than luck or other people or other external or uncontrollable factors) determine one’s success or failure. Self-efficacy beliefs are perhaps the most important in determining students’ success in school.”

Slavin, Robert (2006). *Educational Psychology Theory and Practice, Eighth Edition.* Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

Student Unexcused Absences

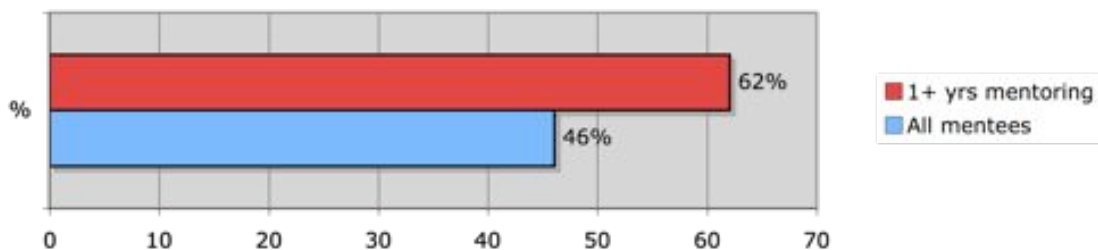
The 2009/2010 goal for the percentage of students that reduced their unexcused absences was 30%. Grand Area Mentoring student data shows that **46% of mentored students had fewer unexcused absences this year compared with student attendance in 2008/2009.**

Percentage of Students with Improved Attendance (Goals vs. Performance) 2005-2010



Like GrandAM's previous annual report, this one found a strong relationship between match longevity and improved attendance. Mentees enrolled in the program for more than one year show a significant improvement in attendance over the general mentee population, which suggests a higher school attachment for students matched for the optimum duration of more than one year. Grand Area Mentoring found that **62% of students matched for a year or longer improved their attendance in the past year.**

Percentage of Students with Improved Attendance in 2009/2010 (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 student responses:

"Yeah. It gives you a reason to get up and go to school, and it makes you feel better at the end of the day." (6th grade boy)

"It makes me want to start coming a lot more." (5th grade boy)

"It makes me feel good on Thursdays at least, because I know I have mentoring after school." (5th grade boy)

"It made coming to school more happy." (5th grade girl)

"I want to come to school more." (4th grade girl)

"Yes, because I get to do whatever I want at mentoring, not just things where you play by the rules. And I get to go to the park." (3rd grade boy)

"I like going to school and I'm excited on Wednesdays because I get to be with my mentor. She's awesome." (4th grade girl)

"Now school is feeling fun." (5th grade boy)

"Sometimes, on Wednesdays, we don't do any fun stuff at school. It makes me feel happy that I get to do mentoring." (3rd grade girl)

"Yes. Sometimes we talk about what I do at school." (4th grade girl)

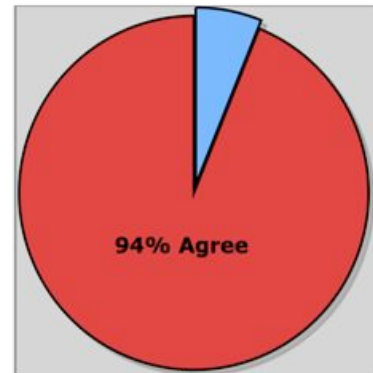
"Mentoring made me want to be in school more." (6th grade boy)

Teacher Survey – Attachment to School:

94% of teachers surveyed believe that mentoring helps students like school more. Higher school attachment has been shown to yield better attendance records, especially for at-risk children. Surpassing GrandAM's goal for 2009/2010 by 16% proves the teachers correct, and doubly so for students mentored for longer than one year.

TEACHER SURVEY

*"Since being matched with a mentor, the **mentored students in my class have seemed to like school better.**"*



Volunteer Survey – Mentoring Value:

On their own survey, 100% of mentors believe that mentoring is "worthwhile." Volunteers and teachers are in agreement about mentoring's powerful impact.

Mentor Quote

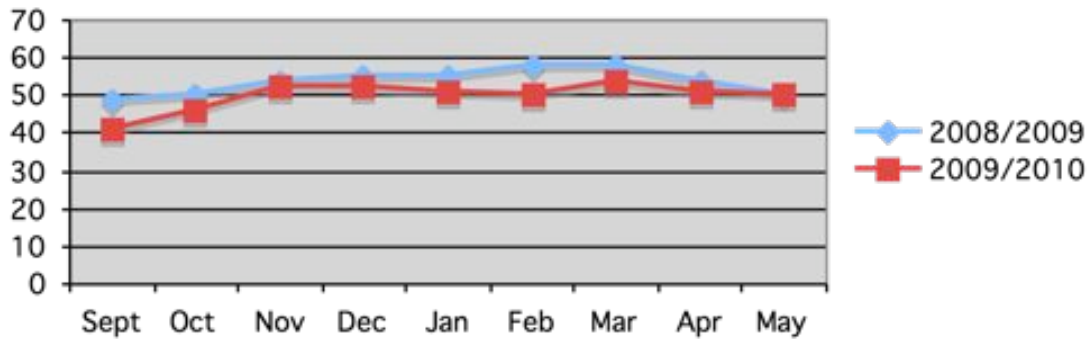
“ ” I can't think of a more worthwhile activity for kids than mentoring. The program is one of the neatest opportunities available for Moab kids and adults. Mentoring brings together different generations and types of people.

–Three-Year GrandAM Volunteer

Number of Matches

Grand Area Mentoring's 2009/2010 school year saw the program size remain stable at approximately 52 matches. Over the course of the year, GrandAM supported 65 matches in total. Maintaining this size gives the program optimal support for its mentors while serving a significant portion of the district's at-risk students. Keeping fewer than sixty matches allows closer contact with each mentor and student, which assists in relationship oversight and troubleshooting.

Number of Matches, 2008/2009 vs. 2009/2010



During the summer of 2009, GrandAM lost a net total of nine matches. This is slightly higher than the number of matches lost in the summer of 2007, which totaled six, and in 2008, which totaled five.

Teacher Survey – More Mentors:

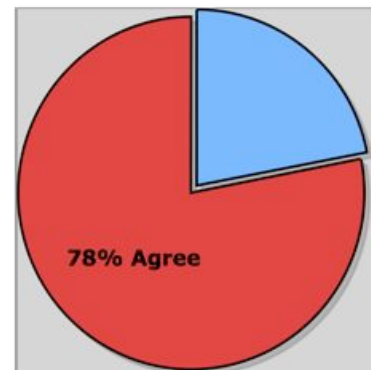
Far and away the most common (write-in) complaint lodged in teacher surveys was the need for more mentors. It was their biggest concern for 78% of the teachers answering the question. This is both testament to the need for mentoring in Grand County and the worth of Grand Area Mentoring's volunteers. Economic contraction has been shown to correspond to lower volunteerism. Therefore, as the economy recovers, Grand Area Mentoring might be able to find new mentors while citizens begin to offer personal time for public good. However, given financial constraints on program infrastructure, the program is near capacity.

Mentor Survey – Mentor Support:

Mentor support is crucial in maintaining relationships over the long term. If too many matches close in a year, Grand Area Mentoring cannot operate at capacity or support the district's at-risk students. Therefore, mentor support is the most important predictor of the number of matches Grand Area Mentoring can sustain. ***On average, surveyed GrandAM volunteers rated match support as a ten on a scale of one to ten, ten being highest.***

TEACHER SURVEY

“The worst thing about Grand Area Mentoring is... **we don't have enough mentors.**”

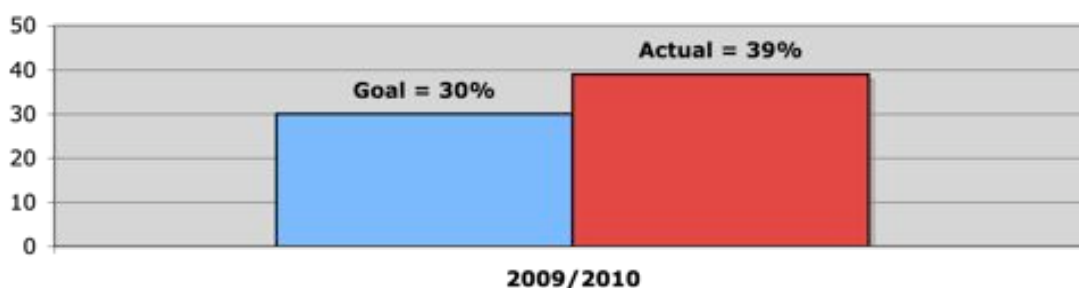


Student Discipline Problems

Grand Area Mentoring aimed to reduce the number of disciplinary actions for 30% of mentored students. This goal was revised down from 40% in the previous year to correspond with grant applications for the Department of Education. 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, **39% decreased their discipline referral rate or maintained it at zero.** This is only 3% off of last year's (2008/2009) reduction of 42%. 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) 2010



Parent surveys also support the link between mentoring and improved behavior. **55% 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 one-on-one attention and 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 student responses:

"Yes, sometimes I feel like a bad person, and when I do mentoring, it makes me feel a lot better." (3rd grade girl)

"Yes, it helps me express myself." (7th grade boy)

"Yeah, because I used to feel like everybody hated me, I had no friends, no one to talk to, but then my mentor tells me my mom cares about me..." (5th grade girl)

"Yes, I think so. I'm not down all the time." (6th grade boy)

"Yes, since my mom's been apart from me, it's hard without my mom, so my mentor is kind of like my mom in a way." (3rd grade girl)

“Yes, she makes me happy.” (5th grade boy)

“Yeah, I guess when I’m feeling down on days I don’t approve of what I do, she kind of lifts me up and makes me feel better.” (4th grade girl)

“Yup, it made me more happy” (5th grade girl)

“Yeah, when you have a mentor, you feel happy.” (3rd grade girl)

“Yeah, I’m starting to get nicer with my brother and my sister.” (5th grade boy)

“Well yeah actually – I feel kind of – it feels like every time you come to mentoring, you have a lot of fun. You get lost in time and it’s over so fast.” (4th grade boy)

“Yes. When I didn’t have a mentor, I felt kind of lonely...but when I have mentoring on Wednesdays, I don’t feel lonely and have lots of fun.” (2nd grade girl)

“Yeah, people used to tease me, but now I feel better about myself. I don’t get teased because people think mentoring is fun and cool. I’m more outgoing too.” (4th grade girl)

“Yes, I’ve had more connections with other people, more friend connections.” (5th grade boy)

Teacher Survey – Social Competency:

94% of Grand County School District teachers surveyed agreed that mentored students have improved social competency. Additionally, 81% believe that mentored students get fewer behavioral referrals since meeting with a mentor.

Parent Survey – Behavior & Communication:

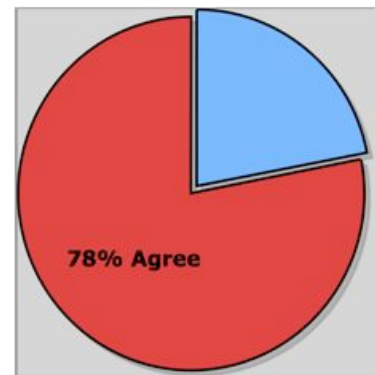
From a list of six domains, parents principally checked three categories as “areas of positive change” in their sons or daughters:

- **67%** of parents believed their son or daughter’s **communication skills improved**;
- **56%** of parents believed their son or daughter’s **behavior improved**;
- **56%** of parents believed their son or daughter **made better choices**.

These findings – an improvement in communication, behavior, and choices – suggest mentoring has a measurable effect on the social skills of Grand Area Mentoring’s student participants.

TEACHER SURVEY

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



Administrative Performance

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

PROGRAM SURVEYS (2009/2010)	AVERAGE SCORE on a scale of one to ten (ten being highest):
Communication with parents :	9
Response to parent questions or concerns:	10
Mentor support:	10
Response to mentor calls and concerns:	10
Teachers and administration believes that staff are easy to reach and knowledgeable:	10
Teachers and administration supportive of the program:	10
Teachers and administrators believe that mentors are well trained and effective:	9
Teachers and administrators feel comfortable referring students to the program:	10

92% of mentors said they read the monthly newsletter. Regarding usefulness, they rated it on a scale of one to ten as 9, and as a representation of GrandAM, they rated it as 9.

Successes

Social Skills – Mentor, teacher, parent surveys, and data on discipline rates all confirmed a marked improvement in student social skills this year. 81% of mentors believe that their mentees showed improved communication since starting mentoring. 62% of mentors felt that their students had better behavior, and 65% felt that their mentees had better attitudes. Parents and teachers agreed, and our discipline data this year showed nearly 40% of mentees decreasing office referrals.

Academic Performance – Having adjusted our measure for academic performance this year, we have gotten a more accurate picture of student achievement. Rather than using GPA, which is based on a four-point scale, we used the average of student percentile scores. This allows us to measure student scores more finely and this year revealed over 50% of our students achieving some measure of academic improvement.

Mentor Support – 100% of mentors agreed that GrandAM provided excellent mentor support in the end-of-year mentor survey. Furthermore, 100% approved of the program's response to calls and concerns, and 100% agreed mentees were prepared to be mentored.

Opportunities

Recruitment – This year’s recruitment strategies provided adequate supplemental volunteers to combat the natural effects of attrition. However, this is an area where GrandAM can improve. Next year the program will focus heavily on setting up booths at the local farmer’s market, running ads in the Times Independent and Ad-Vertiser, and making presentations to venues like the Alpha Rho Sorority, the Lions Club, the Grand Senior Center, and any other appropriate meeting. The recruitment drive will begin with a summer ad campaign while school is out of session, and this will crescendo as the school year begins in early September.

Space – Mentor surveys indicated that space during after-school mentoring was in short supply. It is expected that the new HMK facility, which opens in September 2010, will provide more mentoring venues and more easily accessed supplies. The GrandAM office will also be moved to the new facility, which will enable program staff to respond immediately to match concerns and assist in facility problems. Principal Buckingham has expressed resolve to help GrandAM fit into the physical and cultural space at the district’s newest facility.

Newsletters – Mentor surveys indicated the need for somewhat more diverse offerings in the monthly newsletter. Though the 2009/2010 newsletters were rated well on surveys and beefed up with additional ideas for mentoring activities this year, some volunteers suggested the newsletter could provide a calendar of non-mentoring upcoming school and community events (such as the science fair or art competitions) that mentors and students could engage in. It was suggested that new games, equipment, and supplies could be included as a side note in the newsletter so that volunteers could be aware of novel opportunities within the mentoring room. Finally, there may be an opportunity to incorporate more information on school policies and other district information in future newsletters.

Website and Internet Resources – Grand Area Mentoring has been maintaining a website since 2006. This website offers mentoring idea for volunteers, links for students, a calendar, parent/teacher/student FAQs, electronic newsletter archive, and other assets. Though the site offers a rich array of resources, the “mentor toolbox” tab was updated infrequently over the course of 2009/2010. In 2010/2011, GrandAM will provide the same functions it always has along with a regularly updated “mentor toolbox,” including a hotlink from the monthly newsletter email. When available, other online resources will be included in the same monthly email or on the website as copyright allows.