



TAIS MENTORSHIP ANALYSIS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mentorship is an important component of relationship and community building, especially within independent schools. Independent schools are often sought-after educational spaces because of the sense of community deeply entrenched in these schools. Mentorship in independent schools is not tightly defined, and outcomes are inconsistent if not unclear. The Tennessee Association of Independent Schools (TAIS) seeks information about the current state of mentorship in their member schools, intending to provide tailored resources to these schools. This capstone study examines the landscape of mentorship in TAIS-member schools today, as well as how independent schools can improve or begin implementation to better support their students.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How is mentorship defined across TAIS schools?
2. To what extent do TAIS schools utilize adult-student mentorship programs in Grades 5-12?
3. What are the perceived outcomes of adult-student mentorship programs in TAIS schools?

Mentorship, broadly, is a relationship between a less experienced individual and a more experienced individual. Within the context of school-based mentorship in TAIS schools, we sought to answer these questions by using a mixed methods approach with both qualitative and quantitative data collection. We surveyed current leaders and teachers to assess their perceptions of mentorship, how they implement mentorship, and what challenges they face. We then used the TAIS database to cross-tabulate school demographics with our survey findings. Finally, we interviewed teachers and leaders from three schools across the three main regions of Tennessee to learn more about implementation and outcomes in each environment.

KEY FINDINGS

- School characteristics influence mentorship participation and program type. Among TAIS schools that participated in the survey, Middle Tennessee teachers participate in mentorship at a higher rate in their schools. Boarding schools and non-sectarian schools also participate at a higher rate than day schools and religious schools respectively. Among survey respondents, group mentorship is the most frequently utilized type of mentorship.
- Relationships are the definition and the outcome. Teachers largely feel that the purpose of mentorship is to form relationships between adults and students.

- Multiple goals influence implementation challenges. Many teachers state a benefit of mentorship is becoming a student expert and therefore a touchpoint for parents and other educators. Many teachers value mentorship because of the ability to hold students accountable academically, behaviorally, socially, and aspirationally. However, these large numbers of goals appear to be connected to implementation challenges including lack of training and insufficient time. All teachers at the three case study schools reported no training is provided for mentorship. Several teachers debated whether structured mentorship was beneficial, which led to further debates about whether curriculum should be implemented and the extent of fidelity that should be expected.
- With supports lacking, opportunity costs are high. Many teachers in our case study schools report low bandwidth and personal capacity due to the competing demands on their time and energy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Identify clear goals in partnership with administrators, teachers, parents, and students before developing a mentorship program or when revamping a mentorship program.** Schools must establish clear goals for mentorship programs with input from teachers, parents, and students to determine the primary goals for their mentorship programs. Based on this feedback, schools should define one or two clear goals for their mentorship programs and ensure alignment with these goals throughout the implementation process.
2. **Implement unstructured mentorship to achieve the goal of forming relationships.** Teachers recognize the importance of unstructured time with students, acknowledging that students benefit from simply having time and attention from adults. If schools determine that the goal is to build relationships, teachers should empower students to lead in building relationships, whether among their peers or with adults.
3. **Implement formal, structured mentorship programming if the goal is more specific than simply forming adult-student relationships.** If schools determine that the goal is more than building relationships, school leadership should invite community input when selecting programs aligned to their identified goals. To implement effectively, leaders should plan for training, sufficient time allotment, monitoring for fidelity, and measuring outcomes.
4. **TAIS should provide differentiated supports based on regional differences.** Given the higher participation in mentorship, the diversity of programs, and the relative supply of resources, schools in Middle Tennessee may be used as leaders in mentorship. Considering the landscape of West and Southeast Tennessee, schools in these regions may require more structural supports than those in Middle Tennessee.



INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

Introduction

The Tennessee Association of Independent Schools (TAIS) sought to gather data to assess adult-student mentorship programs. The rationale for this inquiry rests with the organization's belief that the sense of connection students and families feel to the school is a major reason families choose independent schools.

Organizational Context

The Tennessee Association of Independent Schools (TAIS) is a non-profit organization that advocates for and supports independent schools in Tennessee. Currently, TAIS has a membership of 61 schools situated in major cities like Nashville, Memphis, Chattanooga, and Knoxville, as well as smaller communities across the state.

TAIS supports member schools through various functions and activities, including accreditation, professional development, advocacy, collaboration, networking, resource provision, and technical support. These services are available to elementary and secondary institutions.

TAIS extends professional development opportunities for administrators, teachers, and staff members of its member schools. These programs enhance teaching methods, leadership skills, and other pertinent topics. The association facilitates collaboration among member schools by organizing conferences, workshops, and forums, fostering an environment where educators and administrators can share best practices and build professional networks.

Member schools benefit from TAIS by gaining access to valuable resources, research, and expertise in areas such as curriculum development, school management, strategic planning, and governance. Moreover, TAIS actively engages with policymakers and legislators at the state level to represent and safeguard the autonomy, diversity, and unique qualities of independent education.

As of 2023, TAIS comprises 61 member schools with varying enrollment sizes ranging from 41 to 1700 students. Of these, 36 schools are religiously affiliated, representing diverse faiths, including Presbyterian, Episcopal, Catholic, Christian, Islamic, Jewish, Methodist, and more. Additionally, 11 member schools specialize in single-sex education, with five catering exclusively to boys and six to girls. Five schools focus on students with disabilities or students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. There is a large diversity of grade levels with options such as Pre-K-12, K-6, 6-12, 7-12, and 9-12.

According to Sarah Wilson, TAIS's executive director, three schools are highly engaged, and eighteen are moderately involved with the organization. The association's website emphasizes its role as an:

active voice and connective resource for member schools, overseeing and responding to state educational laws and policies, representing their interests to the state athletic association, and providing professional development opportunities. TAIS is also affiliated with the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) and the Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS) (Wilson, n.d.).

Table 1 details TAIS member school demographics. Small schools are defined by a range of 1-399 students, medium schools range from 300-599 students, and large schools range from 600-1200+ students (Collins & Varney, 2022). However, no demographics are available for TAIS school leaders, teachers, students, or families. Additionally, Table 1a utilizes language such as non-sectarian and sectarian. In TAIS schools, the terms sectarian and non-sectarian are often used to describe the religious affiliation or orientation of the institution. A sectarian school is affiliated with a specific religious denomination or sect, such as a Catholic school or a Lutheran school.

These schools typically integrate religious teachings, practices, and values into their curriculum and activities, and they may require students to adhere to specific religious beliefs or participate in religious ceremonies. On the other hand, a non-sectarian school is not affiliated with any religious group or denomination. TAIS schools often use the terms non-sectarian or non-religious and religious or sectarian interchangeably.

Region	36% of TAIS Schools are in West TN (22 Schools)			41% of TAIS Schools are in Middle TN (25 Schools)			5% of TAIS schools are in Northeast TN (3 Schools)			18% of TAIS Schools are in Southeast TN (11 Schools)		
Boarding / Day	0 0%	22 100%		2 8%	23 92%		0 0%	3 100%		3 27.3%	8 73%	
Co-Ed / Single Sex	16 73%	6 27.3%		22 88%	3 12%		3 100%	0 0%		9 82%	2 18.2%	
Non-Sectarian / Sectarian	7 32%	15 68.2%		11 18%	14 56%		2 3.3%	1 33.3%		4 6.5%	7 64%	
School Size: S, M, & L	3 5%	8 13.1%	11 18%	8 13.1%	6 24%	11 44%	0 0%	2 67%	1 33.3%	5 8.2%	3 27.3%	3 27.3%

As of the 2023-2024 school year, TAIS’s average day school tuition is \$26,129, and the average seven-day boarding school tuition is \$61,810 (National Association of Independent Schools, 2023). The median percentage of students who receive financial aid is 23.8%, and the median grant per student is \$15,768 (National Association of Independent Schools, 2023). Given the cost of tuition for TAIS schools, it was key to note census data findings by region. Table 1b highlights median household income, education levels, employment rates, and poverty rates of West, Middle, and East Tennessee.

Region	West TN	Middle TN	Northeast TN	Southeast TN
Median Household Income	\$50,622	\$71,767	\$64,340	\$52,826
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	30.5%	48.7%	39.8%	32.7%
Employment Rate	59.7%	70.1%	64.0%	63.4%
Persons in Poverty	21.4%	14.5%	15.3%	17.5%

In Table 2, the regional differences among West TN, Middle TN, Northeast TN, and Southeast TN are notable (United States Census Bureau, 2024a; United States Census Bureau, 2024b; United States Census Bureau, 2024c; United States Census Bureau, 2024d). West TN exhibits a lower median household income, a relatively lower percentage of individuals with bachelor's degrees, a lower employment rate, and a higher poverty rate compared to the other regions (United States Census Bureau, 2024a). Middle TN stands out with its significantly higher median household income, a larger proportion of individuals with bachelor's degrees, a higher employment rate, and a lower poverty rate, indicating a stronger economic and educational landscape (United States Census Bureau, 2024b).

Northeast TN falls between West and Middle TN in terms of income, education, and employment, with slightly higher median household income and educational attainment but lower than Middle TN (United States Census Bureau, 2024c). Southeast TN mirrors Middle TN in many aspects, with a higher median household income, a substantial portion of individuals with bachelor's degrees, a relatively high employment rate, and a lower poverty rate (United States Census Bureau, 2024d). These regional variations have implications for low and middle-class families' access to private schools across the state of Tennessee.

Project Questions and Purpose

TAIS leadership sought an analysis of qualitative and quantitative data to help them understand the state of mentorship in independent schools. The goal of this work was to ultimately provide specific recommendations for how TAIS can support mentorship programming in member schools.

Prior to this study, TAIS did not have data regarding which of the 61 TAIS member schools have mentorship programs and what kind of mentorship program models the schools use. To address this problem, we have gathered information from member schools to determine which kind of mentorship programs are being utilized, how the programs are being implemented, and the perceived impact of mentorship on students, families, and teachers. Based on the data collected, we sought to capture the level of variation of mentorship implementation in these schools and develop a framework that succinctly describes the various dimensions utilized. Based on this framework, we selected three schools for in-depth analysis to illustrate three distinct models through case studies.

Our capstone seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How is mentorship defined across TAIS schools?
2. To what extent do TAIS independent schools utilize adult-student mentoring programs in middle and high school?
3. What are the perceived outcomes of adult-student mentorship programs in TAIS schools?



LITERATURE REVIEW

Mentorship is a frequently utilized area of teaching and learning that has the potential to improve student outcomes, teacher and mentor satisfaction, and overall school culture. To explore the literature available on mentorship programs, we first frame mentorship through its theoretical underpinnings to form a rationale for its study and implementation. Next, we define mentorship by reviewing the types of mentorship currently in practice. We review the literature on overall programmatic implementation and then identify the key elements of mentorship programs, specifically. Next, we review the outcomes of mentorship, including impacts on student behavior and attendance, academics, social-emotional growth, and career aspirations. We review the impacts of mentorship on individual student groups, including students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged and at-risk students, and students of color. Finally, we review the literature on teacher and mentor satisfaction and the impact of mentorship on school culture. Given the research we have reviewed, we then set forth a research agenda to guide future study of mentorship.

Mentorship: Definitions, Purposes, and Typologies

At its most basic level, mentorship institutes a relationship between a less experienced individual, the mentee, and a more experienced individual, the mentor (Gordon et al., 2010; Karcher et al., 2005; Packard, 2004). To better understand what mentorship is, more specifically, we look to theory to explain how mentorship can potentially support the mentee.

Theories Undergirding Mentorship

Social capital theory posits that a mentoring relationship is critical to human development because it enables students to develop the behaviors necessary to succeed in school and as adults (Thompson et al., 2016). Social learning theory has postulated that humans tend to emulate the behavior they see in others they care for and admire; thus, mentees may mirror the positive behavior the mentor demonstrates (Bandura, 1977; Coleman, 1987; 1991). Attribution theory addresses how people interpret the cause of others' behavior and how that affects the perceiver's behavior, affect, and cognition (Mac Iver, et al, 2017; Weiner, 1974; 1980; 1986; 1994). Expectancy-value theory explains a person's motivation to accomplish a task in relation to their belief in their ability to accomplish the task (Mac Iver et al, 2017; Wigfield, 1994). Goal theory explains the connection between the goals one sets and the individual's performance in achieving the goal (Ames, 1992; Dowson & McInerney, 2003; Mac Iver et al., 2017). Self-determination theory explains how one's motivation to act hinges upon their ability to connect their action and the outcome (Reeve et al., 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Mac Iver et al., 2017). Self-efficacy is the belief in one's capacity to achieve a particular task or outcome (Anderman & Maehr, 1994; Bandura, 1997; Mac Iver et al., 2017; Schunk & Miller, 2002). Self-worth motivation theory explains the connection between one's worth and achievement and often relates to one's fear of failure (Covington, 1992; Mac Iver et al., 2017; Martin, 2002). Given these theories, mentors have the potential to improve students' perceptions of others' behavior and their relationships to that behavior, to improve students' motivation and perceptions of their performance on tasks, to set goals and achieve them, to believe in their abilities to complete tasks and achieve particular outcomes, and to feel a sense of worth because of and despite their achievement. We now look at the multiple forms of mentorship.

Types of Mentorship

Relationship-Based

The traditional model of mentorship involves a dyadic, face-to-face, long-term connection or relationship (Packard, 2004). However, it is now widely accepted that mentoring can also be found in various forms and contexts, including those at the opposite end of the spectrum, such as short-term mentorships, exclusively electronic mentorship, and programs involving multiple individuals in a “single” mentorship (Packard, 2004). Each of these types maintains a relationship or relationships between mentees and a mentor using various groupings, time frames, and technologies.

Context-Based

The three major contexts in which mentorship takes place are the school, the community, or natural acquisition through a student’s social network (Emdin, 2011; Hiles et al., 2013; Packard, 2004; Thompson et al., 2016; Thompson & Kelly-Vance, 2001). For this study, we will focus on school-based mentoring programs that do not include natural mentors.

School-Based Mentoring Programs. In school-based mentoring programs, as opposed to community-based programs, often teachers and other school staff identify academically and/or behaviorally at-risk students whom they feel would benefit from mentoring (Portwood & Ayers, 2005). These programs then pair these at-risk students with mentors who meet with them regularly at school, either during or after the school day (Portwood & Ayers, 2005). Other variations include mentorship for all students rather than identifying subsets of students in need of intervention (Portwood & Ayers, 2005). Theoretically, school-based programs also allow mentors and students to focus on academic-related activities such as homework help, tutoring, and reading (Portwood & Ayers, 2005). However, based on prior research findings, programs have been shown to vary widely concerning the amount of time spent on academics versus social activities (Bernstein et al., 2009; Herrera et al., 2000; Herrera et al., 2007). School-based programs tend to cost less to run per student than community-based mentoring programs (Rhodes, 2002; Portwood & Ayers, 2005); however, school-based mentoring tends to be less intensive than community-based mentoring (Bernstein et al., 2009). While school-based mentoring is often constrained by the academic year calendar, it may offer a tighter connection between students’ school records and the mentoring efforts, which could be important in influencing academic outcomes (Bernstein et al., 2009). Beyond relationship structures and general contexts, many more typologies of mentorship are documented in the research.

Typologies

Mentoring research has developed taxonomies or typologies to understand the diversity of mentoring (Dawson, 2014). Most of this literature is situated within the discipline of education, particularly teacher, adult, higher, and vocational education (Dawson, 2014). One attempt at developing an overarching taxonomy of mentorship in practice is Mullen and Klimaitis’ (2021) nine mentoring types based on the current educational mentoring literature. The mentoring types include (1) formal mentoring, (2) informal mentoring, (3) diverse mentoring, (4) electronic mentoring, (5) co-mentoring/collaborative mentoring, (6) group mentoring, (7) peer mentoring, (8) multilevel mentoring, and (9) cultural mentoring (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021).

Formal mentoring is “planned, structured, and intentional,” which targets gaps and resolves problems in programs and organizations (Chao, 2009; Clutterbuck et al., 2017; Desimone, 2014; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021, p. 26). Conversely, informal mentoring occurs when mentors and their mentees meet naturally (Allen & Eby, 2007; Desimone, 2014; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021; Mullen, 2007). Diverse mentoring is defined as “cross-gender and cross-race” formations that join mentors and mentees who differ demographically (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021; Schunk & Mullen, 2013). Electronic mentoring, or e-mentoring, mediates learning and communication remotely through online interactions (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021).

Co-mentoring, or collaborative mentoring, situates individuals in a mutually beneficial relationship where the mentor and mentee might start as peers or have complementary differences in knowledge, expertise, status, and rank (Bona et al., 1995; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021). In group mentoring, three or more people work together on growth and support and may mentor across differences (Kroll, 2016; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021). Mentoring groups can be informal or formal, and some advantages of this are “flexibility, inclusiveness, shared knowledge, inter-dependence, broader vision of the organization, widened external networks, a safe place, team spirit, personal growth, and friendships” (Limbert, 1995, pp. 94-97; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021). Peer mentoring can also be informal or formal; it attracts those new to a particular experience and those who have lived through it (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021; Ulanovsky & Pérez, 2017). Multilevel mentoring is formal and is aligned with institutional missions and policies to achieve specific goals (Mullen, 2017). In this mentoring style, the entire social-cultural system of a school or school district is vertically and horizontally targeted for change so that all students can succeed (Mullen, 2017). Cultural mentoring aims to be culturally responsive by developing social consciousness, increasing interpersonal trust, exposing hidden norms, capitalizing on growth opportunities, and resolving problems (Li et al., 2018; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021). Given the nine mentoring types, mentoring represents a diversity of relationships across various contexts and can be categorized as more than one type. Certain types of mentorship may be selected based on the context of the school and student needs. Regardless of the type of mentorship selected, the program must be well-designed and implemented.

Implementation

Social scientists recognize that improving the health and well-being of communities begins with effective interventions and programs that must be implemented in real-world settings. Success rests upon how the programs are disseminated in the community, whether they are supplied with resources, whether the program is adopted into the community, the implementation, how well the program is conducted, and the consistent evaluation of the program's sustainability (Durlak & DuPre, 2008).

Researchers have agreed that implementation affects project outcomes and have described eight different aspects of effective implementation (1) fidelity, or faithful replication and adherence to the original program; (2) dosage, or how much of the program is utilized; (3) quality, or how accurately and clearly the program components are conducted; (4) participant responsiveness, interest, and buy-in; (5) differentiation, or uniqueness of programs theories and practices (Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Dane & Schneider, 1998; Hogue, et al., 2005; Hansen & McNeal, 1999); (6) monitoring of control and comparison conditions; (7) program reach and scope of participation; and (8) program modifications made during implementation (Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Dane & Schneider, 1998).

While fidelity is often listed as a priority of program implementation, it is unrealistic to expect perfect or near-perfect implementation (Durlak & Dupre, 2008). Positive outcomes are found with levels of fidelity of approximately 60% (Durlak & Dupre, 2008). Modifying programs to specific communities maximizes effectiveness (Durlak & Dupre, 2008). Paul LeMahieu (2011), Senior Advisor to the President of the Carnegie Foundation, explains that education researchers need to focus less on the fidelity of implementation and more on the integrity of implementation. LeMahieu (2011) states, "The real challenge of implementation, then, is to figure out how to thoughtfully accommodate local contexts while remaining true to the core ideas to ensure improvements in practice that carry the warrant of effectiveness." Thus, the emphasis needs to be on what works within the local context and the resources available to achieve what matters most. Given these principles of implementation, we look to key elements of mentorship programming associated with effective implementation.

Key Elements of Mentorship

Dawson (2014) identifies sixteen key elements to assist in the concise and accurate specification of mentoring models. Beyond theoretical specification, these elements support effective design and implementation. The sixteen elements of mentorship models are (1) mentorship objectives (Dawson, 2014; Miller, 2002), (2) personnel involved (Dawson, 2014; Hawkey, 1997), (3) number of personnel in each role (Darwin & Palmer, 2009; Dawson, 2014; de Janasz & Sullivan, 2004; Pololi & Knight, 2005), (4) strength of relationships (Dawson, 2014; Higgins & Kram, 2001; Marsden & Campbell, 1984), (5) seniority or comparative experience (Dawson, 2014; Ensher et al., 2001), (6) length of mentoring relationships (Lee & Cramond, 1999; Noe, 1988), (7) selection (Ganser, 1995; Rose, 2003), (8) matching, (9) mentoring activities (Dawson, 2014; O'Neill et al., 2005; Raabe & Beehr, 2003; Rickard, 2004), (10) resources (Dawson, 2014; Gilbreath et al., 2008; Kajs, 2002; O'Neill et al., 2005), (11) technology (Dawson, 2014; Ensher et al., 2003), (12) training (Dawson, 2014; Kane & Campbell, 1993; Kasprisin, Single, Single, Ferrier, & Muller, 2008; Pomeroy, 1993; Wang & MacMillan, 2008), (13) rewards (Dawson, 2014; Ehrich & Hansford, 1999; Schulz, 1995), (14) policies (Ensher et al., 2001), (15) monitoring (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Packard, 2004; Stumbo et al., 2008), and (16) termination (Ehrich & Hansford, 1999; Jorgenson, 1992; Riebschleger & Cross, 2011). Of these 16 key elements, the following elements deserve particular attention in the context of school-based mentorship, as they will be addressed below in our analysis.

Objectives. Element one addresses any mentoring model's objectives or what the model has been designed to achieve (Dawson, 2014; Miller, 2002). These objectives often include the development of knowledge and academic skills, social skills, self-efficacy as a learner, and motivation (Miller, 2002).

Strength of Relationships. Element four highlights tie strength or the intended closeness of the mentoring relationship (Dawson, 2014; Higgins & Kram, 2001; Marsden & Campbell, 1984). The degree of closeness in a mentoring relationship can impact the outcomes related to the intended goals (Ensher et al., 2001).

Activities. Element nine addresses activities or actions mentors and mentees can perform during their relationship (Dawson, 2014; O'Neill et al., 2005; Raabe & Beehr, 2003; Rickard, 2004). While schools focus much of their efforts on academics, spending time engaging in social activities is valuable (Herrera, Sipe, & McClanahan, 2000). Students can benefit academically simply from having an adult spend time with them (Herrera, Sipe, & McClanahan, 2000). Activities shown to make an impact are often contextual. For example, rapport-building activities, providing a safe space, extending mutual support, developing a group identity, and using trust-building activities were found to be essential activities in supporting students of color specifically (Sanchez et al., 2018).

Time. Element ten includes the resources, tools, or artifacts available to assist mentors and mentees (Dawson, 2014; Gilbreath et al., 2008; Kajs, 2002; O'Neill et al., 2005). Sufficient resources (e.g., time, budget, and staff) should be allocated to ensure successful operation of the experience (Rhodes et al., 2002). In schools especially, mentorship programs often compete for limited time and space with other school-based programming, and a lack of space or support may negatively impact mentoring relationships and outcomes (Herrera et al., 2007; Herrera & Karcher, 2013).

Training. Element twelve is training, and it focuses on how necessary understandings and skills for mentoring will be developed in the participants (Dawson, 2014; Kane & Campbell, 1993; Kasprisin, Single, Single, Ferrier, & Muller, 2008; Pomeroy, 1993; Wang & MacMillan, 2008). Training and support of mentors and matches are critical (Herrera, Sipe, & McClanahan, 2000). The amount of training mentors receive is positively correlated with the strength of mentor-mentee relationships (Herrera, Sipe, & McClanahan, 2000). Orientation and training specifically around mentor and mentee roles and expectations and the structure of the program are essential (Rhodes et al., 2002).

Monitoring. Element fifteen is monitoring, which highlights the oversight to be performed, the actions to be taken, and by whom (Gaskill, 1993; Long, 1997). These key elements can be used to design, implement, and evaluate mentorship programs to maximize student outcomes (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Packard, 2004; Stumbo et al., 2008).

Student Outcomes

Typical outcomes of mentorship include improved academic attendance and performance, improved self-worth and self-determination, and access to a positive adult role model (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2002; Karcher et al., 2005; Loads et al., 2006; Rhodes et al., 2000; Rhodes et al., 2002; Rhodes et al., 2005; Rhodes et al., 2006). Mentorship is also associated with larger differences in high school graduation rates and self-esteem (Bernstein et al., 2009).

Research findings on the impacts of school-based mentoring on student outcomes have been limited by weak research designs, small sample sizes, and non-objective measures (Aseltine et al., 2000; Bernstein et al., 2009; Taylor et al., 1999). However, there is a growing body of more rigorous research that has produced a range of impact findings, generally not sustainable over time (Aseltine et al., 2000; Bernstein et al., 2009; Taylor et al., 1999). School-based programs have been shown to improve students' academic performance, behavior in school, and school attendance (Herrera et al., 2007). However, these results did not endure into the following school year, except for attendance (Herrera et al., 2007). In contrast, some positive effects were found on students' self-esteem, sense of connection to peers, and social skills, but not on academic achievement (Karcher, 2008). Finally, two experimental studies found that the program led to lower levels of student substance use and problem behaviors and stronger attachment of students to school and their families (Bernstein et al., 2009). However, these results were not sustained beyond the end of the school year (Bernstein et al., 2009).

Recent research on mentoring has included a focus on student academic performance as one of a group of outcome variables. Studies differentiate between school-based and community-based mentoring. Although a recent meta-analysis (Dubois et al., 2011) reported generally positive effects of mentoring programs on academic outcomes, findings from large-scale randomized studies have not been as encouraging. The large-scale national evaluation of school-based mentoring programs funded by the U.S. Department of Education found significant effects of school-based mentoring on absenteeism and truancy, but none of the effects were statistically significant after accounting for multiple comparisons (Bernstein et al., 2009). Despite these findings, more promising results can be found in examining the impact of mentorship on specific student groups, including students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged and at-risk students, and students of color.

Outcomes for Student Groups

Students with Disabilities. Mentorship is widely promoted for individuals with disabilities for the same reasons they are promoted for other individuals; however, mentorship also addresses additional needs of individuals with disabilities, such as guidance in navigating the lived experience of disability (Coombs-Richardson, 2002; Knight, 2000; Loads et al., 2006; Marsh, 2002; Powers et al., 1995; Snowden, 2003; Sword & Hill, 2003; Whelley et al., 2003; Wilson, 2003).

Mentored youth with learning disabilities are more likely to graduate from high school, report a higher level of self-esteem, and report a higher overall number of positive outcomes than non-mentored youth with learning disabilities (Herrera et al., 2007). Mentorships for individuals with disabilities are also considered especially important during times of transition, such as those from high school to college as well as from postsecondary education to graduate school and professional or vocational employment (Powers et al., 2001; Snowden; U.S. Department of Labor, 2006; Weir, 2004; Whelley et al.; Wilson). Mentorship opportunities that enhance students' chances of success in higher education are crucial. This is especially true for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education and careers, in which challenges are even greater for many individuals with disabilities (Burgstahler, 2002, 2003, 2006, 2007; Coombs-Richardson, 2002; Whelley et al., 2003).

Economically Disadvantaged and At-Risk Students. Positive outcomes of mentoring are most significant for students living in high-poverty environments (Park et al., 2016). Overall, by participating in formal mentoring programs, economically disadvantaged students can obtain academic, psychosocial, and career benefits (Blum & Jones, 1993; Bush, 1994; McPartland & Nettles, 1991; Moseley & Todd, 1983; Russ, 1993; Slicker & Palmer, 1993). Specific career benefits include student aspiration, future career awareness, and increasing years of education (Lee & Cramond, 1999; Moseley & Todd, 1983). Economically disadvantaged students with increased aspirations have been shown to demonstrate greater academic achievement (Blum & Jones, 1993; Bush, 1994; McPartland & Nettles, 1991; Russ, 1993; Slicker & Palmer, 1993). Economically disadvantaged students mentored for more than a year show significantly higher aspiration than students not mentored (Lee & Cramond, 1999). Economically disadvantaged students with extended mentoring engagement also demonstrate gains in self-confidence, efficacy, perceptions of peer acceptance, school behavior, cognitive insight, academic aptitude, and school attendance (Herrera et al., 2007; Rhodes et al., 2006).

Mentorship outcomes for at-risk students can also vary based on gender. Mentorship has been shown to improve academic outcomes for girls and produces mixed academic outcomes for boys (Bernstein et al., 2009). For boys, mentorship has been shown to negatively affect self-reported prosocial behavior while leading to a decrease in truancy for girls (Bernstein et al., 2009).

Students of Color. Much of the research available on mentoring students of color reveals outcomes from natural mentoring and emphasizes the program processes of formal mentoring to counteract school-based discrimination. Perceived school-based discrimination poses a considerable risk to academic engagement and subsequently lowers academic achievement among Black youth (Wittrup et al., 2019). Natural mentors may help offset the noxious effects of discrimination by reinforcing Black students' sense of racial pride and countering messages of inferiority communicated through discriminatory experiences in the school (Wittrup et al., 2019). An important finding is that only relationships characterized by heightened relational closeness were associated with greater academic engagement in the face of discriminatory experiences (Wittrup et al., 2019).

Teacher and Mentor Satisfaction and School Culture

Mentor satisfaction is often correlated with the elements of the larger social system in which they occur (Bronfenbrenner, 1970; Keller, 2005; Keller & Blakeslee, 2013). Most prominently, mentor satisfaction is highly correlated to each individual's fulfillment with their mentoring relationships (Suffrin et al., 2016). School-based mentor programs' staff, training, and other programmatic features and processes may directly affect the quality of the mentoring relationship (Suffrin et al., 2016). Mentors' sense of preparedness before the mentee match, as well as their feelings of ongoing support, result in stronger connections with mentees (Aresi, 2020; Herrera et al., 2011; Spencer, 2007). Mentorship programming plays a key role in helping mentors navigate the complex relational system with their mentees (Keller & Blakeslee, 2013). The assistance provided by organizational staff members to mentors is vital for maintaining their involvement in the mentoring program (DuBois et al., 2002).

Within school-based mentorship programs, teachers consider mentoring to be of great value in fostering a more positive environment at the school and classroom levels (Valdés-Cuervo et al., 2018). School-based mentoring can therefore improve the school climate by making it more positive, stable, and enriching (Serrano, 2009). Positive school climates create a cooperative peer environment, foster students' attachment to their schools, and provide a space where students believe their teachers are supportive and protective of them (Smith, 2012).

Gap in Research

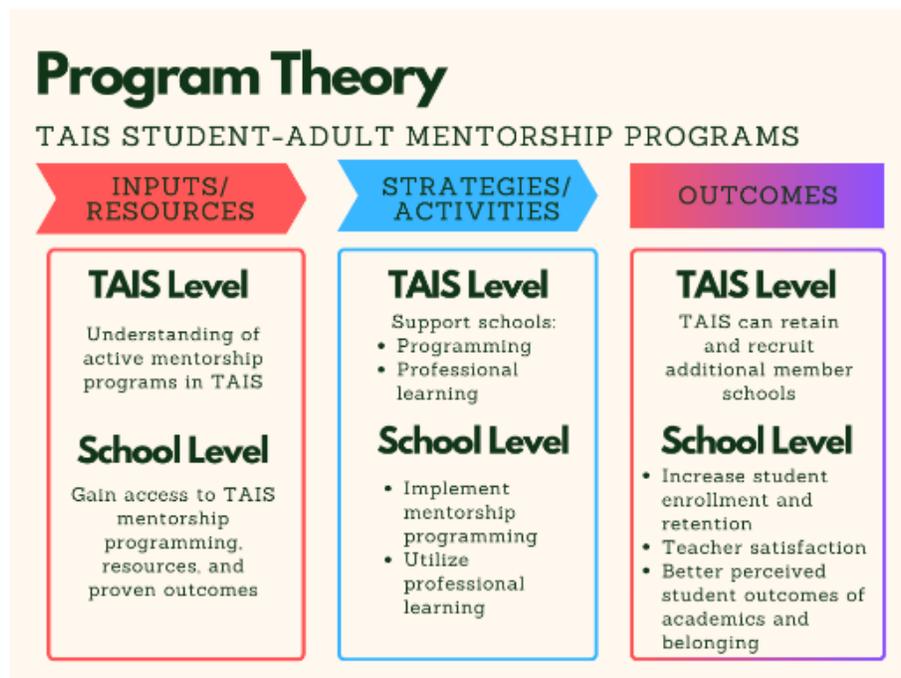
Additional research is needed around elementary-level mentorship, the long-term effects of mentorship, mentorship in private schools, implementation of school-based mentorship specifically, and mentor sensemaking. Because participants in most of the available literature were middle and high school students in grades six through ten, further research about the effectiveness of mentoring with younger children would be beneficial (Lee & Cramond, 1999). Research is also needed to determine whether individuals who are in a mentoring relationship for a longer time accrue more benefits than those who have been mentored for a short time (Lee & Cramond, 1999). Research around mentorship programs in independent, private schools is lacking, especially in boarding schools and single-sex schools. While research on mentorship implementation is plentiful, research on implementation factors of school-based mentorship is less robust (Briesch et al., 2013). Future research could examine the processes contributing to mentor satisfaction, especially mentor expectations, indicators mentors use to evaluate their effectiveness, mentor sensemaking, and how these factors can be sustained over time (Herrera et al., 2007; Herrera & Karcher, 2013). A deeper understanding of which of these factors best predicts the mentor's satisfaction with the relationship could prove beneficial. This understanding would enable mentoring programs to allocate their time and resources more effectively (Suffrin et al., 2016).



CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

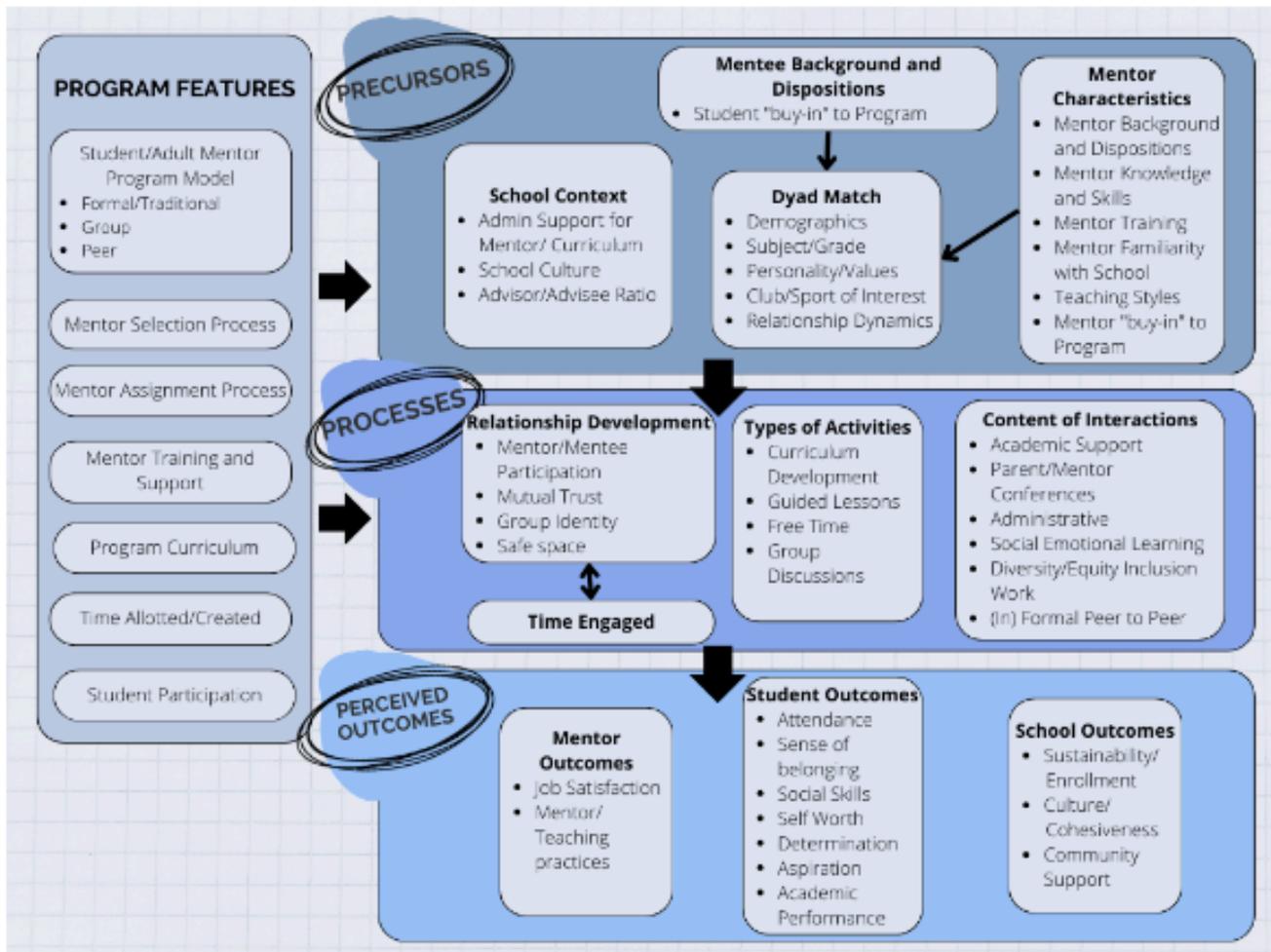
Program Theory

If TAIS gains a firm understanding of the mentorship programming occurring with member schools, as well as educators' and parents' perceived outcomes, TAIS can better support schools with mentorship programming support and professional learning. By better-supporting schools, TAIS can potentially retain and recruit additional member schools. If TAIS member schools gain access to resources and professional learning, they can implement mentorship programs. If schools implement mentorship programs, they may achieve greater enrollment and retention of students, retain more teachers, and achieve better-perceived student outcomes regarding academics and belonging.



Logic Model

Based on our review of the extant literature, we define mentorship models utilizing formal (Chao, 2009; Clutterbuck et al., 2017; Desimone, 2014; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021) and informal mentorship (Allen & Eby, 2007; Desimone, 2014; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021; Mullen, 2007). Some formal programs utilize an advisory model (Ayres, 1994). Some informal programs may use a faculty-run model with less structure. Informal programs may utilize student-initiated mentorship programming. Using these definitions we conducted a landscape analysis of the type of programming TAIS member schools are currently implementing. As shown in the model below, we have gathered information on program features, precursor information, mentorship processes, and perceived outcomes.



Adapted from Cannata, Neergaard, & Hawkinson, 2010.

Program Features

Within this analysis, we have gathered information on program features, including the mentor selection process, the mentor assignment process, mentor training and support, program curriculum, time allotted, funding provided, staffing allocated, and levels of student participation.

Precursors

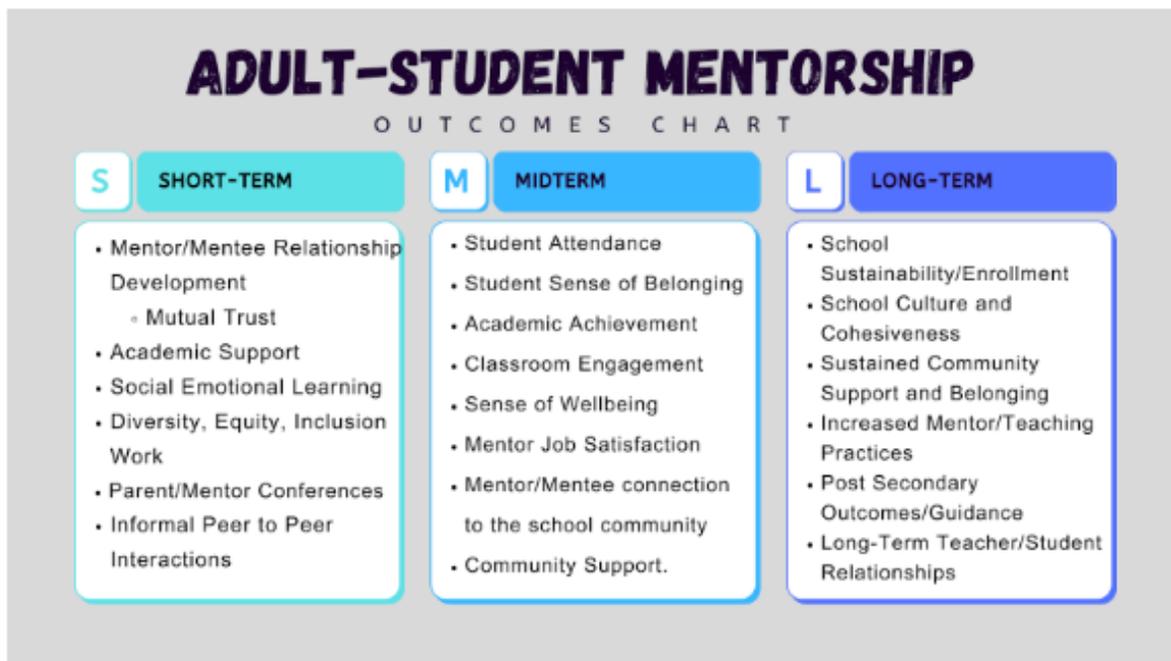
We have gathered information regarding each school context, including administrative support for the mentorship program, the overall school culture, and advisor/advisee ratios. We have collected data on mentor characteristics such as background and dispositions, knowledge and skills, familiarity with the school, teaching style, and level of buy-in with the mentorship program. We have gathered information on the mentee's background and dispositions, particularly using teachers' and mentors' perceived student buy-in to the program. We then reviewed dyad matches between mentors and mentees, including demographics, subject and grade levels, personality and values, interests in school activities and sports, and relationship dynamics.

Processes

We have collected data on the relationship-building process, including participation levels, perceived senses of trust, and time engaged in mentorship activities. We have gathered the types of activities, including curriculum development, guided lessons, free time spent together, and group discussions. We have also gathered information on the content of these interactions, such as academic support, parent-mentor conferences, administrative discussions, social-emotional learning, diversity/equity/inclusion work, and peer-to-peer interactions.

Perceived Outcomes

Finally, we have gathered adults' perceptions of student outcomes, mentor outcomes, and school outcomes. Short-term outcomes considered include mentor/mentee relationship development and mutual trust, academic support, social-emotional learning, diversity, equity, inclusion work, parent/mentor conferences, and informal peer-to-peer interactions outside typical friend groups. Midterm outcomes considered include increased student attendance and classroom engagement, student sense of well-being, mentor and mentee connection to the school community, mentor job satisfaction, and community support. Long-term outcomes considered include school sustainability and enrollment, school culture and cohesiveness, sustained community support and belonging, increased mentor/teaching practices, long-term teacher/ student relationships, and student post-secondary outcomes.





DESIGN, METHODS, & SAMPLE

We adopted a mixed methods strategy to ensure a well-rounded exploration of mentorship that guided our findings, discussion, and recommendations. Our data collection strategy utilized an explanatory sequential design. The mixed-methods explanatory sequential design consists of two distinct phases: quantitative study, followed by qualitative study (Creswell et al., 2003; Greene et al., 1989; Morse, 1991). The quantitative phase first addressed the following research questions via surveys:

1. How is mentorship defined across TAIS schools?
2. To what extent do TAIS Independent Schools utilize adult-student mentoring programs in Middle and High Schools?
3. What are the perceived outcomes of adult-student mentorship programs in TAIS schools?

The quantitative data from our two surveys offered a broad overview, allowing us to analyze responses to specific questions and draw meaningful statistical findings. On the other hand, qualitative data from interviews delved deeply into a select group of schools, providing rich and nuanced information that enhanced our understanding, albeit with a more focused scope. Our landscape analysis and description of mentoring programs within TAIS independent schools draw on insights from the survey results and interviews.

These findings play a crucial role in shaping our recommendations concerning the current state of mentoring programs and strategies for optimizing key components. It is important to note that the specific qualitative data we gathered may not be universally applicable to all independent schools. Nevertheless, the interviews yielded valuable perspectives on the cultural nuances influencing philosophies and practices within TAIS member schools.

Sample

We shared our surveys with teachers and leaders from the 61 TAIS member schools in Tennessee. From the schools that completed the survey, we then selected schools to conduct interviews for our case study sites.

Surveys

In partnership with TAIS, we conducted two confidential surveys using a combination of open and closed questions. The team developed each survey (Appendix A & B) based on various sources that elicited information for each component of the logic model. We adapted most of our questions from a national United States Department of Education survey about mentoring programs in K-12 schools (Bernstein et al., 2009). Additional questions that utilized teacher-to-student relationship scales were adapted from Tripod's 7Cs Framework (2016). We aligned these survey questions to our research question in our Survey Matrix (Appendix C).

We utilized convenience sampling by administering voluntary surveys to two specific groups. One group included heads of schools, division heads, and program coordinators. The other group comprised the teachers at each school. School leaders and teachers were given a month to respond to the survey and received four reminders via the monthly newsletter and TAIS email notifications. While schools vary widely in demographics and characteristics, we identified buckets to categorize the various mentoring program types. We analyzed each school’s geographic area, characteristics (i.e., single sex, religious, boarding, etc.), grade levels (K-8, 9-12, etc.), and mentorship program components.

We could establish the participants' demographics by region, type of school, and school size scale from NAIS from the two surveys in combination with TAIS data. These are delineated in Table 2 and Table 3 below:

Table 3: Leader Survey Demographics (N = 25)									
Demographics	West TN (44%)			Middle TN (40%)			Southeast TN (16%)		
Boarding / Day	0%	100%		30%	70%		75%	25%	
Non-Sectarian/ Sectarian	45.5%	55%		60%	40%		0%	100%	
Co-Ed / Single Sex	82%	18.2%		100%	0%		50%	50%	
School Size: S, M, & L	Small 37.3%	Med. 36.4%	Large 36.4%	Small 10%	Med. 30%	Large 60%	Small 25%	Med. 25%	Large 50%

Table 4: Teacher Survey Demographics (N = 300)									
Demographics	West TN (43%)			Middle TN (42.3%)			Southeast TN (15%)		
Boarding / Day	0%	100%		10%	90%		78%	22%	
Non-Sectarian/ Sectarian	21%	79.3%		76%	24.3%		12.2%	88%	
Co-Ed / Single Sex	49%	51.2%		86%	14.3%		44%	56%	
School Size: S, M, & L	Small 4.1%	Med. 42.1%	Large 54%	Small 27%	Med. 32%	Large 53.8%	Small 27%	Med. 12.2%	Large 61%

The TAIS data (Table 1) comprises 61 member schools and highlights the significant regional representation of West (36%) and Middle Tennessee schools (41%), accounting for 77% of the overall membership. This regional representation is present in both the leader and teacher survey demographics. In survey one, of the 25 school leadership teams surveyed, 44% of the respondents represent West Tennessee schools, and 40% of the respondents represent Middle Tennessee. In survey two, of the 300 teachers surveyed, 43% of the respondents represent West Tennessee schools, and 42.3% of the respondents represent Middle Tennessee. In comparison to the TAIS data, these percentages, especially from Survey Two, indicate that there is a consistent and generalizable regional presence of TAIS schools within the sample.

In addition to Middle and West Tennessee, the TAIS data highlights the small regional representation of Southeast schools, which accounts for 18% of the overall membership. This regional representation extends into the survey demographics. Of the 25 school leadership teams who participated in survey one, 16% of the respondents represent Southeast Tennessee schools, indicating a consistent regional presence. Survey Two, involving 300 teacher respondents, also reflects a notable concentration of Southeast Tennessee representation, with 15% of teachers hailing from this region. In comparison to the TAIS data, these percentages, especially from Survey Two, indicate that there is a consistent and generalizable regional presence of TAIS schools within the sample.

It is important to note the absence of the Northeast region in the sample, as no TAIS member schools from this area participated in the study. It is also notable that both surveys conducted in West, Middle, and Southeast Tennessee show survey-specific variations regarding the type of school (single-sex/co-ed, sectarian/non-sectarian, and boarding/day school). Upon closer examination of the regional sample data, it emerged that in West Tennessee, 64% of leaders and teachers from the same school participated in both surveys, while 36.4% of participants in this region engaged with only one of the surveys. Similarly, in Middle Tennessee, 70% of school leaders and teachers participated in both surveys, with the remaining 30% engaging in just one. Southeast Tennessee exhibited complete overlap, with 100% of participants engaging in both surveys. Thus, there is consistency between the surveys as a larger portion of the sample's participants engaged with both surveys.

Interviews

In addition to conducting surveys, we interviewed leaders (Appendix D) and teachers (Appendix E) at three schools aligned with our research questions (Appendix F). Quotes in the findings section of this document were taken from teachers and administrators at these three schools in the spring semester of 2024. In addition to interviewing the three case study schools, we interviewed Sarah Wilson, the Executive Director of TAIS, to understand the level of participation among schools in each region of state.

To determine who to interview, we created a stakeholder map (Appendix G) and selected schools based on survey participation data. The three schools represent diverse characteristics, including coeducational, single-sex, sectarian, non-sectarian, day schools, and boarding schools. Initially, two schools identified through quantitative data withdrew from the study due to limited time and other constraints. However, we were still able to gather qualitative data from three distinct regions in Tennessee: West, Middle, and Southeast. We interviewed a total of 28 teachers and administrators, with 7 in West, 10 in Middle, and 11 in Southeast Tennessee. The teachers and administrators interviewed volunteered to participate in our study. Each of the case study schools is detailed below using pseudonyms for anonymity.

West: Divine Lamb Christian School (DLCS). Divine Lamb Christian School serves students from Junior Kindergarten (JK) to 6th grade. Each grade level has four classes, and class sizes vary from 11 students per class to 20 students per class. Upper school refers to grades 3 through 6. DLCS has been open for over 60 years, and many former students have taught or currently teach at the school. In addition, several current teachers send their children to the school. DLCS' published vision emphasizes embracing the love of God, striving to grow in spiritual maturity, taking responsibility for excellence in each student's learning, ability to think critically and creatively, valuing and respecting diversity, and conducting themselves with honesty and integrity.

DLCS is a religious school closely connected to Divine Lamb Christian Church in mission, history, and proximity. All students attend Bible class weekly. In their attendance at DLCS, each student completes their study of the Bible twice. They study the Bible once from Kindergarten through 3rd grade and a second time from 4th grade through 6th grade.

Middle: Whitfield Academy. Whitfield Academy is a K-12, coeducational independent school, serving 1,220 students. The school's mission is to promote academic excellence and inspire students to be intellectually curious, to use their talents and act with integrity, and to contribute to society. Whitfield Academy states an elaborate vision, which includes a deep commitment to community, belonging, love, moral integrity, discipline, and compassion, to name a few. The school maintains a 9:1 student-teacher ratio. Attending students represent 45 zip codes with new students representing 89 sending schools.

Southeast: Keller Hall School. Keller Hall School is an all-boys boarding and day school located in the Southeast region of Tennessee. The school has been open for a century. Students range from grades 6-12 plus postgraduates, and boarding is available for grades 9-12 and postgraduates. The school currently serves about 1,000 students from across 23 states and 19 countries. About one-third of students board at the school, and about 20% of those students are international. The school employs about 125 full-time faculty members and about half live on campus.

Keller Hall School's mission is grounded in Christian principles and seeks to prepare young men for life. Including academic excellence, character, and leadership, the school's mission also emphasizes brotherhood and profound relationships. Keller Hall School espouses commitments to Christianity and Judeo-Christian heritage while welcoming and respecting boys of different faith traditions. In addition, Keller Hall School cites commitment to the ideals of Honor, Truth, and Duty. Keller Hall School utilizes an advisory model of mentorship as well as informal, natural mentorship.

Qualitative Methods

After collecting the interview transcripts, we analyzed the data individually, refining our notes. We each wrote an analytic memo to determine concept-related themes from each unique group interviewed—mentor teachers, mentee students, administrators, and schools using multiple types of mentorship programs. We engaged in debriefing discussions by reviewing each other's memos, noting similarities and variations, and then using those ideas to guide the development of our individual matrices. We conducted listening tours of each member's audio files and listened multiple times to identify themes and patterns. We individually used a concept-clustered matrix to analyze themes and extract evidence from each specific group of participants. Through this axial coding, we then consolidated the specific matrices into one master matrix (Appendix H) to solidify the overall themes and evidence (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Strengths

We employed a mixed methods approach in this project to contribute to the depth and reliability of our findings. The integration of a mixed methods design enhances the comprehensiveness of our sample assessment, allowing us to capture both quantitative metrics and qualitative insights. By incorporating the US Department of Education Mentoring survey (Bernstein et al., 2009), due to its high validity and reliability, into our methodology, we establish a strong foundation for evaluating the effectiveness of TAIS mentoring programs. Notably, strategically using the survey's questions to assess critical mentoring components ensures a targeted and standardized approach to our sample analysis. The inclusion of robust qualitative data through case studies provides a nuanced understanding of individual experiences within the sample, highly enriching our findings. Furthermore, the achievement of a relatively large response rate from 300 teachers across the state strengthens the representativeness and statistical reliability of our sample, bolstering the overall credibility of our landscape analysis.

Limitations

Indeed, every study is bound by its limitations, which can influence its findings. This study is limited in both quantitative and qualitative data collection.

Quantitative Limitations

The survey data in this study are limited by small sample sizes. TAIS membership is limited to 61 schools across Tennessee, which results in a small sample size. Most of the survey responses were completed by attendees at the TAIS Conference. Attendees included leaders, faculty, and staff interested in attending or were selected by leaders to attend, which further contributes to the sampling bias.

A primary concern regarding our quantitative data lies in the relatively low response rate and engagement from school leaders, which threatens our findings' internal validity. Survey one had a low response rate due to only receiving responses from 25 leadership teams out of the 61 sent. This low response rate and a notable non-response rate post-question eight necessitated using descriptive statistics to explore the available data comprehensively. As we transitioned to the teacher survey, this survey garnered a more substantial response rate of 300 teachers. These 300 teachers represented 42 schools or 68% of schools in the TAIS network. However, a substantial drop-off in responses occurred after question five. After question five, only 32% of the 300 teacher participants completed the survey. Given this pattern and the frequency of responses, we found it imperative to employ contingency tables and chi-squared tests to assess the significance of observed patterns and derive p-values. These statistical methods were chosen to effectively handle the categorical nature of the data and account for non-responses, ensuring a rigorous analysis of the teacher survey results and enhancing the validity of our findings. Survey One delves into fundamental program components typically overseen by administrators.

The focus on teacher responses in Survey Two introduces another layer of limitations. Survey two is limited by sampling bias, as leaders sent it to their staff as they felt appropriate. Although Survey Two garnered a higher participation rate from teachers, the lack of engagement in Survey One is notable. We received 300 responses to the teacher survey representing 41 out of 61 member schools. Unlike administrators and leaders, teachers may lack direct involvement in designing and executing school-wide programs. Consequently, their perspectives on mentoring program components might not fully align with the administrators in their schools and may lead to inaccuracies in the identified themes from the qualitative data. The imbalance between teacher-to-leader data could skew our results.

Moreover, survey questions were developed from existing surveys primarily utilized in public schools, given the dearth of research in independent school settings. This presents a challenge as differences in terminology between independent and public schools necessitated modifications to ensure survey comprehensibility for independent school administrators.

Qualitative Limitations

Our sample group of interviewed teachers and administrators presents additional limitations. Supervisors' preselection of teachers as high-quality mentors may have influenced responses to reflect favorable school practices. Moreover, some administrators had only recently joined their schools, limiting their ability to provide comprehensive answers. Conversely, those with extensive tenure and responsibility for school practices may have been inclined to respond more positively. Reliability issues emerged concerning interviewees' recollection of practices, particularly concerning programming, content, and interactions with mentees.



Additionally, the data collected through qualitative interviews is constrained by convenience sampling and selection bias. Independent schools encompass a broad spectrum in mission, demographics, and geographic location, and our chosen case study schools may not fully represent the diversity within TAIS or their respective regions. The selection of case study schools was primarily based on regional diversity and willingness to participate, further introducing potential biases. Moreover, time constraints imposed by client schedules, conflicting events, and weather delays across the state impacted the qualitative data collection process.



KEY FINDINGS

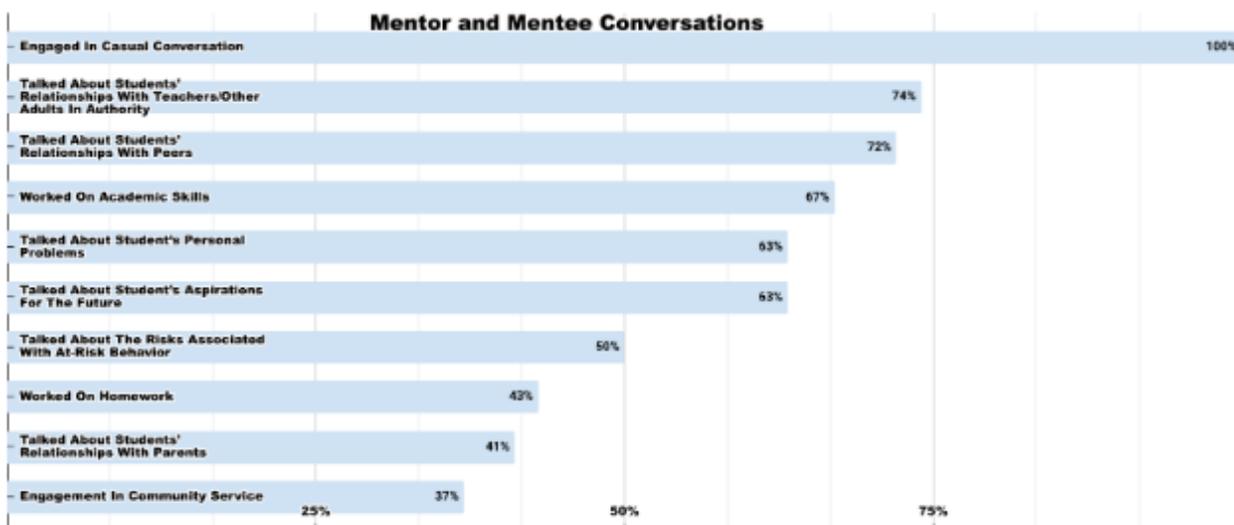
Research Question 1: How is mentorship defined across TAIS schools?

Relationships

The foundational aspect of mentorship revolving around robust relationships is widely acknowledged and serves as a key finding in our study. Insights gleaned from teacher surveys and interviews strongly indicate that relationships are the cornerstone of mentorship. In fact, 85% of surveyed teachers expressed that they share a nurturing and affectionate bond with their mentees (see Appendix I). Moreover, a matching 85% of teachers believe that their mentees highly value the relationships they have built with them (see Appendix J). Every faculty and administration member interviewed emphasized the centrality of relationships in adult-student mentorship.

Many interviewees had positive feelings about their relationships with mentees regardless of their schools' mentorship program design and objectives. One teacher articulated his feelings about the importance of relationships, "I think mentorship is an opportunity to be authentic, to be human, to relate in a way that you can't necessarily always do from the class...we're all looking for that."

As seen in Figure 5, teachers who participated in the survey reported a range of mentor and mentee conversations. These topics of conversation illuminate that a positive relationship would likely have to be present for this to be achieved in a mentoring session. Teachers who were surveyed frequently selected: casual conversations (100%), focusing on students' relationships with teachers or other adults in authority (74%), addressing relationships with peers (72%), and working on academic skills (67%). Teachers also identified objectives as discussions of students' problems (63.20%), aspirations for the future (63.20%), risks associated with at-risk behavior (50%), homework (43%), relationships with parents (41.10%), and conversations related to students' involvement in community service (37%).



(Figure 5)

Relationships are widely perceived as essential to the types of interactions reported in Figure 5, regardless of the school type, program design, and objectives. While relationships are a point of agreement, variances begin to emerge with mentorship program design, objectives, implementation, and how the relationships are established by teachers.

Terminology and Program Variance

The survey and interviews highlight that TAIS schools have similarities, differences, and nuances to their mentorship programs. For instance, the terminology used in program design, such as "advisory," has led to multiple interpretations and a wide array of program elements. Many TAIS educational institutions view an advisory program as a formal mentorship initiative. Formal mentoring, as defined earlier, is characterized by being planned, structured, and intentional, with a focus on addressing gaps and resolving issues within programs and organizations (Chao, 2009; Clutterbuck et al., 2017; Desimone, 2014; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021, p. 26). A teacher from the study articulated their experience with the advisory program and the relationships it fosters:

It's a community, and it's a smaller community within a larger community. I think there's something about that, that they get that feeling of security of being heard of knowing that they're a valued member of the community, and... being heard by someone who's been through it before, being authentic and open about it in a healthy way, who can let them kind of form their own opinions and ideas.

However, among the three case study schools, two have advisory programs that are implemented differently, a topic we will explore in the implementation section of the second research question. The third school employs alternative forms of mentorship in small group settings. Notably, all three case study sites feature mentor groups structured with a mentor or advisor, who could be a teacher, administrator, or staff member. Many of these mentors lead a cohort of five to fifteen students.

Touchpoint

One of the major themes defining adult-student mentorship arose from the survey data and qualitative interviews of school leaders, faculty, and staff. Both school leaders and administrators acknowledge that the student-adult mentorship relationship involves the mentor being a "touchpoint." This concept is noted in a myriad of ways. As Figure 5 demonstrates, being a touchpoint for a student can include conversations about relationships with other teachers, peers, and parents. "The point is to give them another outlet for somebody they could go to. If that relationship is close enough and [the students] feel comfortable talking about something they might not with a parent or...a teacher...or coach...It adds one more touchpoint for a kid and adult to connect."

Teachers engaged in mentorship express the meaningfulness of adult relationships on school campuses. These faculty want students to have meaningful relationships across campus with adults, even those they may not have the chance to interact with often. One teacher believes the role of mentorships in her school is "to create other relationships and touchpoints...that they can expand the community for kids." Having multiple trusted adults on campus for students to contact for different problems and situations is important to mentors who participated in interviews.

Teachers from all schools interviewed view their advisory programs or lunch groups as a way to ensure that every student is in front of an adult. Teachers want students to develop as many adult-student relationships as possible. As one teacher put it, "I feel like zero mentors is really, really bad. Lots of mentors are really, really good. One mentor is actually kind of dangerous." Moreover, teachers want to demonstrate to the students "how readily we are available to them" and to develop "an authentic connection."

Student Expert

Our findings highlight that the role of the advisor is about “having that person who does become your expert” about the students they mentor, one administrator explained. This finding is also inclusive of the finding that a mentor is a touchpoint for a student for parents, administrators, and other faculty members to support the student. Many viewed the role of the mentor in two of the schools interviewed as being the expert on that student. When a parent has a question or concern, or a student is struggling academically, emotionally, or behaviorally, the mentor is the point of contact for all parties. That administrator continued:

I have to look up their advisor. It's the very first thing I do. And then every email I send about that kid has their advisor. They are your touchpoint. And they're the ones that should know the most about that kid. I might know a lot about their learning style, but they know all about everything...the information is being facilitated through that advisor.

Data from interviews suggest that being an expert on the student included more than just grades and learning styles, it also includes being genuinely interested in the student. For some teachers, that means going to activities the students participate in outside of the standard school day. One teacher described this as a causal form of support:

You know, I'm always wanting to see how his day is going, or how his weekend, or how his break was...help champion their success. You know if they've been on a sports team, or in a show that they did a great job in, and whatever it was, try to be present for them and cheer them on whatever that is... as well as [how] they're feeling. They do feel that support outside of the role of advisor time.

Seeing the whole student standing in front of you for who they are and engaging in open communication and conversation leads mentors to feel a closer connection with students.

Accountability

Another area that defines the role of mentorship in TAIS schools includes accountability. Many of the teachers interviewed view their role as a mentor/advisor as someone who can help students hold themselves accountable academically, behaviorally, socially, and aspirationally. As shown in Figure 5, accountability can occur in the form of mentorship content objectives that aim to tackle academics, help with homework, discussions of risks associated with at-risk behaviors, and student aspirations. Ensuring accountability among students often requires providing constructive criticism. Based on responses from the teacher survey, teachers generally note that mentees do not hold onto feelings of anger or resistance after receiving critical feedback. To further investigate this observation and consider school size, we compared this perception of critical feedback with data on school size.

Notably, educators across different school sizes generally agree on the positive impact of constructive feedback, as the majority in smaller (92.3%), medium-sized (76.9%), and large (76.4%) schools reported no lingering anger or resistance from mentees after critical feedback (Appendix K). Teachers interviewed from schools of varying sizes commonly believe that the effectiveness of feedback, tied to accountability, hinges on the quality of relationships they have with their respective mentees. One teacher describes many of these facets as he explains:

I view mentorship as wanting to be someone where these [students] can feel comfortable to discuss what their struggles and challenges are, but also to be able to push back and challenge...[If] I think their behaviors and the way that they are caring about the people around them are not in line with how we and [our school] believed these guys, and what we hoped they would develop to be...someone who can also kind of hold that line with them and push them to grow in that aspect.

Defining Mentorship: A Summary

In summary, mentorship is defined in a multitude of ways across TAIS member schools. Schools generally agreed that relationships are key to mentorship. Terminology varies regarding the types of mentorship used; however, the use of advisory is common among the schools surveyed. While schools hold many goals for mentorship, case study schools brought about themes of mentors as touchpoints, student experts, and accountability partners for students mentored. With these defining characteristics in mind, next we explore mentorship implementation.

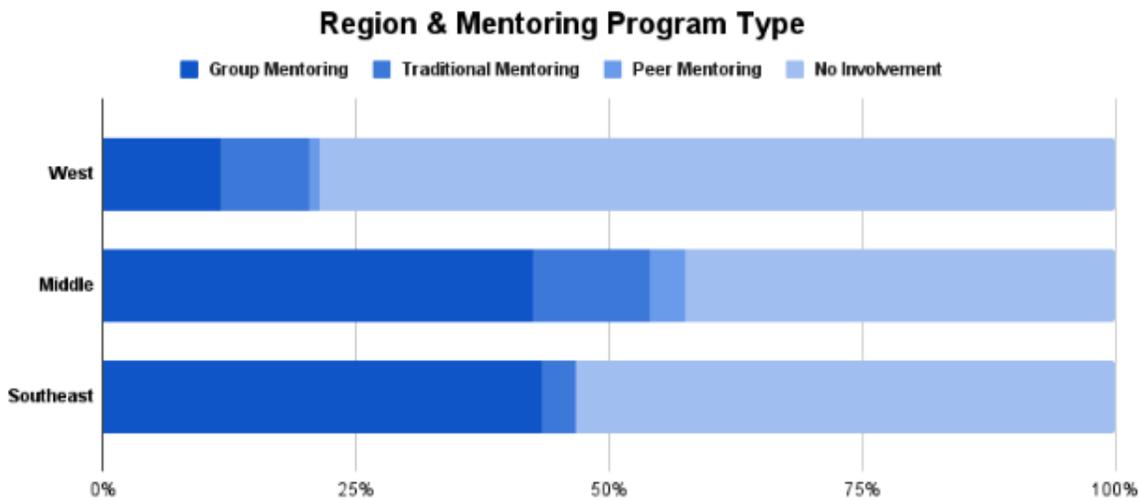
Research Question 2: To what extent do TAIS independent schools utilize adult-student mentoring programs in middle and high school?

TAIS Adult-Student Mentorship Participation

TAIS schools surveyed report participation in varying types of mentorship with 68% implementing a formal mentoring program. When comparing leader survey data to teacher survey responses, a notable difference emerged. Some teachers reported participation in multiple types of mentoring programs, demonstrating the complexity of program options. According to the teacher survey data collected, participation trends in adult-student mentoring programs emerge by various school features, including school size, region, boarding option, and religious affiliation.

School Features

Region. This finding reveals a statistically significant ($p < 0.002$ value) relationship between teacher participation, mentoring program type, and region. Middle Tennessee stands out prominently, indicating the highest percentage of teacher engagement in formal mentoring initiatives of the teachers surveyed (Appendix M). Notably, a geographical trend emerges, with group mentoring being the program type that the majority of respondents reported among Middle (42.5%) and Southeast schools (43.3%). In West Tennessee, group (11.75%) and traditional mentoring programs (8.7%) are almost evenly split. However, it is notable that many teachers in all three regions opt out of participating in mentoring programs at their school—West (78.6%), Middle (42.5%), and Southeast (53.3%).



(Figure 6)

When asked about higher participation rates in Middle Tennessee, TAIS' Executive Director, Sarah Wilson shared her thoughts as to why this could be the case. Wilson cited the larger number of school aged children in Middle Tennessee compared to West and Southeast (Statistical Atlas, n.d). Wilson (2024) explains that due to the larger numbers of school aged children and the relative wealth (Table 2) in Middle Tennessee, "...the market is saturated, so school [in Middle Tennessee] don't have to do anything glitzy or unique." Because informal and unstructured mentoring can be inexpensive and seemingly easy to implement, mentoring is a low stakes way to maintain similar programming to other schools. Wilson (2024) explained,

"If other schools have mentoring, you don't want to be the one school in Middle Tennessee that doesn't have it. Middle TN schools don't want to miss a bell or whistle. They want parents to see that they all offer the same things."

In comparison, Wilson explained that West and East TN have more competitive markets saying, "Their programs are more bespoke and mission oriented." This understanding of regional markets could explain the variation or lack of mentoring programs in these regions.

Boarding Option. A notable statistical significance emerges regarding mentoring participation in boarding schools. The calculated p-value of 0.012 underscores the significance of this association. The data reveals that a little over two-thirds of boarding schools within the TAIS system have implemented formal mentoring programs. In contrast, day schools exhibit a slightly lower prevalence, with just under half of these institutions having mentoring programs (Appendix N).

Religious Affiliation. This finding highlights a statistically significant (p-value of 0.031) relationship between mentoring participation and non-sectarian schools. However, it is essential to note that the significance level, while present, may not be as substantial as other factors, particularly the regional distribution of schools. Despite the statistical significance, the proportions of mentoring participation are not overwhelmingly distinct, with a relatively even distribution across the board. Notably, there is a discernible skew towards non-sectarian schools, indicating a somewhat higher prevalence of mentoring participation in these institutions (Appendix O).

Implementation

Beyond understanding the level of participation in mentorship programming, we also sought to understand how it is implemented across TAIS schools. Relevant findings related to implementation include budget, program duration, the presence of program coordinators, mentorship training, and the overall goals of mentorship programming.

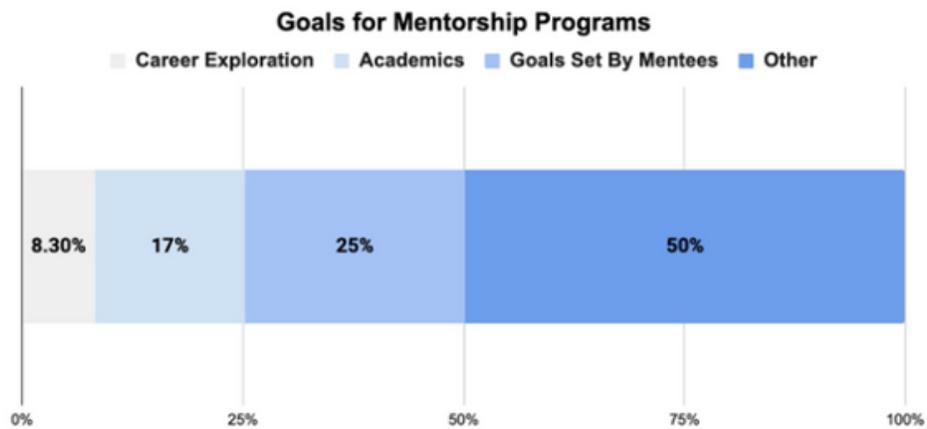
Budget. The majority of schools surveyed operate within a budget range of \$0 to \$70,000. A few outliers fell into higher budget categories, such as the \$200,000 to \$300,000 range (Appendix P).

Duration. Findings reveal that 56% of the programs surveyed have existed for six years or more, with a mere 4% being four years old. The remaining 40% of responding schools do not report current programming in place. Thus, all reported programs have been in place for four to six years (Appendix Q). These descriptive statistics indicate a varied landscape in the adoption and duration of adult-student mentoring programs within TAIS schools (Appendix Q).

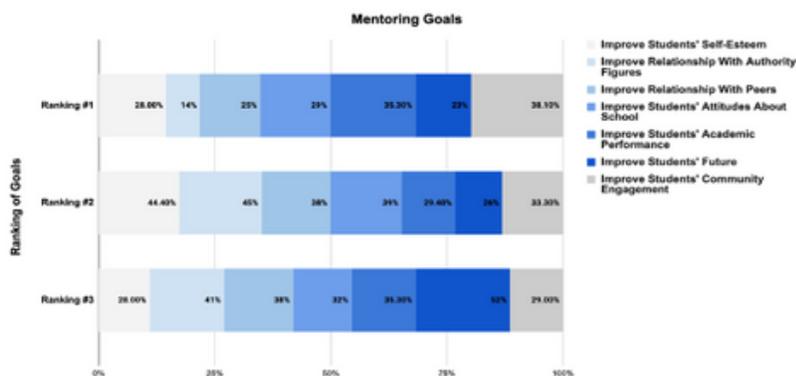
Program Coordinator. The survey indicates a balanced distribution among administrators and leaders regarding the employment of a program coordinator, with 50% reporting having a mentorship program coordinator and an equal 50% reporting no program coordinator in their respective institutions (Appendix R).

Required Training. The survey reveals a relatively equitable distribution among administrators and leaders in terms of mandating teacher training for mentoring programs. Specifically, 45.4% reported that mentorship training was required, while 55% indicated the absence of a training requirement in their respective institutions (Appendix S). Of the interviews conducted, none of the teacher mentors experienced any sort of formal mentor training.

Goals. Administrators and leaders report a diverse range of priorities for their school-based mentoring programs (Figure 7). About 25% of administrators and school leaders identified the establishment of goals by mentees as a crucial aspect of successful mentorship programming. Surprisingly, 50% of respondents fall under the "Other" category, suggesting a broad spectrum of additional priorities or objectives that administrators and leaders deem significant for their mentoring programs. A much smaller proportion of administrators and leaders prioritized academic-related objectives (17%) and career exploration (8.30%).



TAIS schools utilize adult-student mentoring programs, often focusing on goals set by school leaders. The rankings of specific goals in Figure 8 reveal a diverse array of priorities reported in the Teacher Survey. For instance, 44.40% of schools rank the goal of improving students' self-esteem as the second priority, but 28% also rank it as the third priority. This pattern of dual or triple prioritization is consistent across various goals, such as improving relationships with authority figures and peers, attitudes about school, academic performance, students' future, and community engagement.



(Figure 8)

Case Study Schools

Each case study school implements mentorship differently (Figure 9). The regional location of schools serves as somewhat of a proxy for certain school features, such as religious affiliation and the incidence of day/boarding options. For example, West Tennessee has more religious schools than other regions, and Middle Tennessee has more non-religious schools than other regions. In addition to these school features, mentorship program characteristics—grades served, group size, gender grouping, time and frequency, curriculum, staffing, training, and matching—impact the success and challenges of mentorship implementation. Each school's features and mentorship program characteristics are described below. See Figure 9 for comparison across schools.

Divine Lamb Christian School

Divine Lamb Christian School (DLCS) is a religious day school in West Tennessee that serves junior kindergarten through sixth grade. DLCS uses two different types of mentoring programs at its school—Lunch Bunch and Bible Study. As of 2023-2024, Lunch Bunch is in its second year of implementation. Lunch Bunch is solely for 5th-grade students, who meet twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Faculty and staff from all grade levels and roles lead Lunch Bunch, including office workers and non-student-facing staff at the school and church. Lunch Bunch currently serves fifth graders. Lunch Bunch was created to encourage the intermingling of social groups and to form deeper relationships with more faculty and staff on campus. The staff does not implement a specific curriculum or structured activities for Lunch Bunch; however, certain structures enable students to participate meaningfully, including the student who says the blessing, leads the discussion, wipes down the tables, etc.

Divine Lamb Christian School also has Bible study, a group of 5-10 fifth and sixth-grade students divided by grade and gender. While there is no formal curriculum for this program, the boys' Bible Study does have prompt questions developed by an administrator, and the girls' Bible Study follows the framework of an assigned book the group is reading. The discussions prompted in Bible Study have a social-emotional learning lens.

Whitfield Academy

Whitfield Academy, a non-sectarian middle day school in Middle Tennessee, has a formal advisory program serving sixth through eighth-grade students. Each advisory consists of approximately ten students who are matched to a new advisor and group of students each year over the summer. Before advisory teachers leave at the end of the year, they complete a write-up on each student, including opportunities for student growth and recommended or discouraged student social groupings. The Learning Specialist and Advisory Program administrator review the feedback and spend the summer thoughtfully matching students with an advisory that will help students work on certain competencies, such as organization, social skills, and academic accountability, while also addressing group dynamics.

Whitfield Academy Advisors meet every morning for homeroom with a partner advisory. In addition, the school has Supplemental Instructional Programming (SIP) periods daily, during which students meet with their advisory group for individual reading time, followed by study hall and opportunities to meet with other teachers. Once a week, this SIP period is used for Monday Meetings, in which they sit with their advisors for a fifteen-minute information period. During this time the Middle School Division Head makes announcements for upcoming events and addresses topics, such as growth mindset, goal making, and study skills. They then go back to the advisory classrooms for a more formal #WinAtSocial curriculum that is social-emotional learning centered on varied topics. On Mondays, the students also eat lunch with their advisory groups and can talk further about issues addressed throughout the week or spend time together bonding as a group. Parents are given the opportunity to continue the #WinAtSocial conversations at home by accessing the website.

Keller Hall School

Keller Hall is an all-male boarding and day school in Southeast Tennessee grounded in Judeo-Christian principles. The school features two different types of advisory—one for day students and one for boarding students. Faculty reported being unaware of the assignment process for the day school advisory program. However, the boarding school assignment process is based on dorm assignments. Each advisory group consists of a faculty member and approximately ten to fifteen students. Students are assigned an advisor during their first year and stay in those same groups through junior year. Seniors can join senior advisory groups or assist a teacher of their choice with their advisory as student leaders.

Both day and dorm advisory groups meet thirty minutes on Friday after chapel, though this time allotment can vary due to holiday scheduling and other events on campus. Many groups utilize #WinAtSocial, although not all advisory groups participate. Dorm advisories are smaller groups of five to eight students and are dependent on the dorm in which the boys reside. All dorms have about eight advisors, and all freshmen share the same dorm. After their freshman year, they can choose the dorm they live in, providing the potential to have the same advisor and group for multiple years. Dorm advisors do a weeknight check-in to observe all students and ensure they are in study hall during the designated time. Notably, day advisors are paid a stipend to be advisors, and discretionary funds are provided for advisory-related purchases.

School	Divine Lamb Christian School		Whitfield Academy	Keller Hall School	
Region	West		Middle	Southeast	
Day/Boarding	Day		Day	Day & Boarding	
Religious Affiliation	Religious		Non-sectarian	Non-sectarian with religious foundations	
Mentorship Program Type	Lunch Bunch	Bible Study	Advisory Plus	Advisory	Boarding Advisory
Grades Served	5th	5th and 6th	6th-8th	9th-12th	
Group Size	5-7 students	5-10 students	10 students	10 students plus up to 5 seniors	5-8 students
Gender	Co-ed school, Groups are separated by gender	Co-ed school, Groups are separated by gender	Co-ed	Single-sex Male	Single-sex Male
Time and Frequency	Tuesdays and Thursday, 45 minutes each	Once a week on varying days, 45 minutes	Morning homeroom, one lunch weekly, one SIP weekly	After chapel on Fridays, 30 minutes	After chapel on Fridays, 30 minutes. One night a week dorm duty for advisors to check in with every student for 7:30-9:30 study hall
Curriculum	None	Guiding questions using resources varying by gendered group	#WinAtSocial	Some #WinAtSocial	Some #WinAtSocial along with weekend check-in time
Staff Involved	Church Staff, School Faculty, and School Staff		School Faculty	School Faculty	Dorm Staff Faculty Rotations based on dormitory
Mentor Training	None		None	None	

Implementation Challenges

While the implementation of mentoring programs differs among the three case study schools, certain themes shed valuable light on teachers' perceptions of these programs. These themes include time and bandwidth, structure and fidelity, and teachers' perceptions regarding advisory.

Time and Bandwidth

Finite amounts of time and bandwidth, or teacher energy, were an inescapable theme that arose across all three schools. Multiple teachers report insufficient time for meaningful implementation of mentorship at each school interviewed. However, time is portrayed somewhat differently across the three case study schools. Middle school teachers at Divine Lamb Christian School and Whitfield Academy expressed more positive perception of time and bandwidth spent with students than the high school teachers at Keller Hall School. One teacher spoke positively of the time spent with their ten students in the advisory group: "I think it allows us to spend a lot of unstructured time with students, which is important because it allows them to really be themselves, and you get to know them." Echoing this notion, another teacher stated that Lunch Bunch "feels more like an authentic connection versus just being in class. And I think that's what they appreciate."

Another positive aspect of time mentioned was the ability to hold students accountable academically. Teachers shared that while they may not have the time and capacity to closely monitor all of their students' grades, having time in the day carved out for their advisory students helps teachers focus on those ten students. Furthermore, a teacher from the middle school program emphasized: "There might be other students that I just see one time a day, who I don't have that opportunity to reach out to, as I do for my advisory students." Still, some mentors at the middle school level would like to see their students have "some consistent group time with adults" as they continue to expand their programs.

One high school teacher reported believing students' and teachers' energy levels improve because of the advisory program. He believes that the competitive and busy nature of his students' schedules benefits from "carved out 'reservoirs' for "a little more decompression." Others at the high school find time and bandwidth a significant challenge. Most feedback concerning time, or lack thereof, includes teacher bandwidth. One teacher explained:

Mentorship primarily happens in a faculty member's discretionary time and anything that operates out of a budget of discretionary resources is going to get whatever is left after everything else has been withdrawn.

Many teachers interviewed stated that despite being drawn to independent schools for the adult-student relationships, they are struggling because they are asked to do so much.

It's exhausting work. You're pouring out a lot, and it's hard to find ways to get refilled so that you can give it away. It's hard to do that. We're so busy and have so many demands...Sometimes we try to do it all.

Many teachers interviewed shared stories of personal mentorship victories and challenges. They highlighted the work they see their colleagues doing to develop relationships with students. Still, these teachers also recognize the challenges and difficulties that arise when trying to make those connections happen in a twenty-minute group setting.

Curriculum

Teachers in the three case study schools vary on whether mentorship should be curriculum-driven. One teacher explained that while there are structures in place, ideally, he wants to avoid the constraints of a formal curriculum to ensure that the students don't feel "micromanaged." Similarly, another teacher warned against too much structure during advisory time:

Sometimes I think we try and develop mentor programs that are very formulaic, and I don't think they should be formulated, necessarily, because you lose half the students...And so I think you have to be authentic.

Another teacher described how he uses skills like reading the room and gauging body language to determine students' behavior that day. He continued, "There's more improv that happens at the moment. So where are they today?" Along these lines, many teachers explained the desire for autonomy to determine the course of action that is best for their group of students in the moment.

Alternatively, some faculty and staff appreciate a curriculum that provides guidance and clear goals. One teacher stated, "I love having the program that we're currently using...to set the framework for [SEL conversations]." An administrator at the same school described how teachers appreciate a formal curriculum because of the transparency and uniformity. However, some teachers are unsure of their commitment to the curriculum. As one teacher said, "I don't know how much I subscribe to it." Due to varying levels of commitment to curricular programs utilized, the impact of those programs may not be a clear indicator of its effectiveness overall.

Fidelity

Across these diverse mentorship structures, all three schools similarly report varying levels of fidelity of implementation. Teachers in the three schools acknowledged this internal variability directly. A teacher from DLCS stated: "I think we don't have any teachers who would not do something if we were asked. [But] they would do it with varying emphasis." A teacher from Keller Hall School said: "We've always been told that we can kind of make it our own. We don't have to stick with it strictly. I don't think there's any way there's anybody that does that...still sticks with it verbatim." Similarly, a teacher from Whitfield Academy shared, "We have prompts, but usually the kids just kind of take it however they want to go." Teachers do not always implement the curriculum with fidelity; instead, they adjust based on their students' insights and interests. Expectations for fidelity are unclear. Some teachers interpret that when given curricular materials, they should implement as intended by the authors. Other teachers expressed disinterest and even disdain for the curricular materials provided and, as a result, chose to implement fluidly.

Structured vs Unstructured: Do Teachers Perceive Advisory as Mentorship?

Particularly at the high school level, the major theme that arose was the underlying question: Is advisory mentorship? Many teachers interviewed felt a disconnect between mentorship and their role as an advisor. Teachers described many instances of mentorship happening across campus, but they don't always perceive advisory as part of their mentorship role. One teacher described the disconnect between what he thinks is good mentoring versus what is happening in an advisory.

When a [student] knocks on your door that night and lets you in on something or one just wants to sit at your table at dinner...there is good happening here... that's mentorship. That's not advisory.

Advisory is another like box to check.

One teacher recognized that mentorship is present within advisory sessions, yet he perceives advisory as being more about fostering relationships than following a structured program. He elaborated, "Students crave connections with adults." He believes meaningful relationships will naturally develop by providing students with ample opportunities to interact with caring adults. On the other hand, another teacher views the advisory program as a contrived form of mentorship and suggested that "mentorship is most effective when it arises organically." Yet another teacher shared experiences of mentoring students both informally and through the advisory program. He shared:

There's just going to be people you naturally jive with and there's going to be people you don't. So I think the more little things that you can do to put adults and students together, the greater the chance you find, like, 'Oh, you like jazz music, I like jazz music'...I think one of the things that [advisory] does best is it just gives another opportunity for a random interaction between somebody that could use mentoring and somebody that's willing to do mentoring.

Another teacher described the tradeoff between having a formal advisory structure and forming more authentic relationships with students.

So for me when I feel like I'm doing a really good job as an advisor is when I am having conversations outside of that time...making meaningful connections and real conversations with [students] but it's coming at the cost of like we're not getting this done at the advisory period.

This tension between perceptions of being a mentor extends beyond the formal and natural typologies of mentorship. While a sense of mentorship is inherent at the school, teachers' identities as mentors do not always stem from the advisory program. Instead, they arise from a preconceived notion of true mentorship, which is more of a natural mentoring relationship. One teacher said he doesn't feel like a mentor to his advisees and is more "herding them in the right direction. But a mentor is a more one-on-one thing to me, and this is a group scenario." Another teacher saw the title of mentor as only what someone else should call you: "Like I'm mentoring these guys, and I was always like, whew, no one should ever describe themselves as a mentor. That's what someone else gets to choose whether or not they call you."

While teachers acknowledge that mentorship is everywhere, the tension of whether it derives from advisory was questioned by many of these teachers. One teacher acknowledged how the profession of education can inherently open the door to mentoring more easily. He talked about classroom teaching and coaching as forms of mentorship. He further explained that mentorship can happen in spaces that create opportunities for vulnerability and honest and open sharing.

Participation and Implementation: A Summary

In summary, mentorship participation and implementation vary widely with some notable patterns. The greatest level of participation in mentorship programming occurs within small and large schools, while medium-sized schools participate less frequently. Middle Tennessee schools have the largest incidences of mentorship, while West Tennessee has the least. Boarding schools implement mentorship programming at a higher rate than day schools. Finally, non-religious schools implement mentorship programming at a higher rate than religious schools.

Some implementation patterns were visible from the surveys. Most programs utilize a budget from \$0 to \$70,000. Of the schools that implement mentorship, all reported having a program ranging from four to six years. Exactly half of all schools have a program coordinator, while more than half of all schools reported providing no training for mentorship. Schools reported a wide array of goals driving mentorship programs with no clear pattern. When delving into the three case study schools, a few notable patterns emerged. Teacher bandwidth and time to accomplish mentorship are limited. Teachers have mixed feelings about the effectiveness of mentorship curriculum, and fidelity of curriculum implementation varies across and within schools. Teachers question whether students need more unstructured, informal time to build relationships or whether the structure of curriculum better supports student needs. Along these lines, while many schools utilize advisory, teachers in the case study schools grapple with whether advisory is truly mentorship. These implementation factors naturally lead to an exploration of outcomes.

Research Question 3: What are the perceived outcomes of adult-student mentorship programs in TAIS schools?

Educators interviewed reported perceived outcomes for students, faculty, and overall school culture. The teacher survey enriched our findings, especially regarding faculty satisfaction.

Student Outcomes

The three main themes that arose in response to student outcomes were close relationships with adult role models, academic and social-emotional accountability, and peer connections. These findings parallel the multiple definitions of mentorship teachers articulated.

Close Relationships with Adult Role Models. Teachers and administrators see students' creating and fostering close relationships with adults as valuable assets. Teachers often emphasized the importance of students getting in front of as many adults as possible. They want students to gain multiple worldviews and perspectives to learn about the world, community, and themselves. One teacher and advisor expressed the value of these adult relationships and how they go beyond the standard academic component of education.

We do an excellent job of trying to educate a [student] outside of just the college preparatory piece. And so as a student here, I felt very prepared when I went to college. But on top of that, I had incredible relationships with both my peers and more importantly with the adults that I got to work with.

Advisory programs, teachers explained, help to facilitate this desire for students to develop adult relationships. These relationships, in turn, help students trust that they have someone at school who knows them well and can serve as a touchpoint to help champion them. Undoubtedly, building relationships can be challenging for some students. "I think that is the greatest benefit," one teacher explained, "There are students who wouldn't have a teacher that they would feel close with because of how they behave and their grades...It's designed for them not to fall through the cracks."

Accountability for Academic Support and Socioemotional Learning. Across the three case study schools, variability of goals and focus emerged; some mentor programs are set up to lean heavily toward academic navigation and support and others are more focused on social-emotional learning. Within each school, there were varying degrees to which teachers focus on different areas. When asked what they thought the purpose of mentoring in their school was, one teacher emphatically replied, "I think equipping them with their interpersonal skills for sure...emotional maturity." An administrator at another school supports this thinking despite having a vastly different mentoring program.

I think that in middle school, specifically, kids have to start learning how to have conversations with adults...I think it also helps prepare kids for real-life people skills in the workplace as well. Interacting with others and advocating for yourself being able to communicate some of your more [socioemotional learning] needs versus...what you're learning about or what a job may have you assigned to do.

At the same school as this administrator, a teacher answered this question by explaining the questions he asks his students to help them stay organized academically. These questions probe his students' academic assignments for the week, class schedule, and extracurricular activities. He stated his hopes for his students:

Just to kind of help students take ownership of their learning and be more active participants in their schooling...take more ownership of their mental, social, emotional, all of those sorts of things, which is really awesome because middle school is just kind of primed to start doing that.

Many teachers shared stories of specific students they had mentored in the past, both advisees and in other cases, students who sought them out as mentors. These stories suggest that students gain academic support and social-emotional accountability from mentorship. One teacher spoke of a student who wanted to take an AP class that would not only be a challenge for him but that he was realistically unprepared to take according to the teacher. The student and teacher both created time to address this aspiration. The teacher empowered the student to take charge of his learning and figure out steps to reach his goal and consequently, the student took a summer class and later navigated his enrollment in the Advanced Placement course. An administrator at another school described a particularly challenging group of girls and how their social dynamic affected the entire class. These stories illustrate academic and socioemotional outcomes for students that were facilitated by school mentors.

Peer Connections. Peer connections arose as a perceived benefit of mentorship, especially in group mentorship settings like advisory. One teacher noted, "I think the case for a lot of the kids is that they're not best friends at the beginning of the year, but you start seeing how they start to really enjoy each other's time." This notion was shared by many teachers who saw connections made and openness of students develop across different friend groups.

Conversely, teachers also acknowledged that group dynamics can create challenges for some students to feel comfortable among their advisory peers. When asked if certain student groups benefited from mentorship programs, one teacher responded:

In theory, the answer should be yes...This is not a class. Like this is a place where [a student] should be accepted. I think depending on the population, if you have five football players out of 10, they're going to sort of dominate that advisory. So it's all sort of on the makeup...I think the makeup of that advisory can dictate a lot about how a student feels in there.

The teachers interviewed shared that meaningful connections have formed between unlikely students and the group dynamic can either positively or negatively affect how students feel in the advisory group.

Faculty Outcomes

Educators surveyed shared their feelings of satisfaction with mentorship programs at their schools. The data, condensed into two categories of satisfied and dissatisfied, reveals that a substantial majority of teachers (88.3%) expressed satisfaction with their experience and the overall quality of the mentoring program. Conversely, a smaller number of teachers (11.7%) reported dissatisfaction with their experience and the quality of the mentoring program. Overall, the data indicates a predominantly positive perception among teachers regarding their experience and the quality of adult-student mentorship programs in TAIS schools. Qualitative data support these findings. Faculty pointed to positive outcomes, including a feeling of fulfillment and purpose and the value of these student relationships.

Sense of Purpose. Interviewed faculty shared the sense of fulfillment that comes from mentorship. “I think it makes us feel like we're making a difference too and that's important. Not in making us feel good, but in knowing that those threads will hopefully go through and to adulthood.” This feeling of fulfillment is recognized by many teachers. One teacher acknowledged the altruistic component of mentoring relationships, while wondering if perhaps needing to feel like you've done something good may not only diminish the work but also affect how a mentor may interact with a student. Another teacher told a story about former students he's had and the joy of seeing them back on campus, saying, “To see them be good dads and good members of that community...There's this like, deep, deep sense of fulfillment.”

For certain educators, mentoring offers more than personal satisfaction; it provides a profound sense of purpose. Acting as a mentor, particularly when informal mentoring opportunities exist outside of structured programs, empowers teachers to believe they are truly adding value to their students' lives. It allows them to fulfill a role that originally drew them to the field of education.

The experience of being a mentor, walking alongside those students, pushes back against the lie or the idea that my life is meaningless and purposeless...And so there is this kind of voice or the idea at times that [says] does your life contribute anything? And through getting new invested students, it is a reminder that my life does not look like I thought it would look like, but it does contribute value in the lives of the students and benefits communally.

Further, this finding of benefiting the community was echoed by other teachers recognizing the reach one has beyond a single student. Many teachers recognize the value of helping students as an investment in the student's future and their lives beyond the walls of their middle and high school campuses. Teachers want these students to leave prepared for the next phase of their lives. A teacher summarized this notion of preparing students to move society forward when he said:

One of the benefits of mentoring is in theory that you could potentially affect the community because you've affected one of the members in the community. And that's good to say if we are improving the life of an individual then [we're] moving forward.

Value of Relationships. Teachers are aware of the value students place on relationships cultivated through mentorship programs and similarly hold these relationships in high regard. Moreover, teachers often work hard to build these relationships and go the extra mile for students. For many teachers, these relationships are a driving force behind their choice to work in independent schools and serve as a critical factor in their continued commitment to these institutions. One teacher shared:

I think [mentoring is] a really unique aspect of independent schools. And to be honest, it was a huge draw when I decided to kind of go down this route. And working in schools, the main hook for me was to be able to have those relationships with [students], feeling like I can actually make a difference, not just in a classroom setting... to realize that, you know, these guys can be impacted beyond the classroom and their development as young [adults].

At times, in structured advisory and classroom environments, there exists an anticipation that one teacher described as a "kind of forced interaction." However, this teacher noted that a valuable outcome of mentoring is when that connection remains beyond those spaces and they still want to include you in your life. "So when they come up to tell you about what's still going on in their life, it shows how deep that connection got. And there's something genuinely pleasing about that." This teacher values when students still choose to share their victories and struggles and ask for advice. Another teacher contrasted the ways in which current students communicate affection with adults compared with the environment he experienced. He does not remember ever communicating this way with his teachers when he was young: "He will say [Teacher's name], I love you. I cannot believe it. That still just blows me away. It's just mind-blowing to me...And it's very casually said but meaningful. It's very sweet. It's very heartwarming. So it's pretty nice."

These relationships bring value to the job. For some teachers, relationships with their advisees are the highlight of their day. One teacher spoke about Saturday morning breakfasts with his students. Another described trips away from campus and another about trips abroad. Some teachers noted how advisory time could be time to play kickball and let loose with the students. These are just a few ways teachers reported enjoying time spent with their students to foster these relationships. One teacher described her lunch time with her advisees:

We have one day a week where we eat lunch with them and that is my favorite day of the week...Like I genuinely look forward to it. I look forward to seeing them. Look forward to getting to talk to them. I think about them more than my other students.

Many teachers admit it may be years later if at all before they know if the time and effort they put into a student was effective. Investing in adult-student mentorship relationships, as one teacher put it, is not bestowing advice from a top-down authority perspective. He pointed out the discipleship component of a mentorship relationship and "walking alongside someone on the way to where they are going." And the road in middle and high school can be a challenging one for many students. Many teachers gave examples of students they had mentored who all struggled in a myriad of ways including academically, behaviorally, or socially. Yet, these teachers still invested their time and energy into them. Watching them overcome their struggles brings teachers a sense of purpose and value in those relationships.

The best part is, you know, you go through the struggles with them throughout their whole career, and then the moment when you see them graduate it makes it all worth it.

Faculty interviews illustrated that faculty value adult-student relationships, which bring an immense sense of purpose to teachers' work and lives.

School Culture and Sustainability

When questioned about school culture and sustainability, most teachers highlighted the importance of strong relationships, emphasizing that students know they are cared for by at least one adult on campus. Across all three schools, educators considered this in terms of alumni engagement, which could involve returning to speak with a beloved teacher, pursuing a teaching career at the school, or contributing financially to support its ongoing success. A teacher at a school that has many alumni on staff described her experience mentoring:

So I want to have those relationships where they want to come back, and they see those teachers that maybe mentored them. But also...when they go to a new place and they're trying to get to know people, [they'll have] somebody that they can always go back to.

She is one of the many teachers interviewed that recognize the strength and consistency of these adult-student relationships. These relationships, along with the faculty outcomes of purpose and value of relationships, keep teachers at these schools. One teacher said, "people don't really leave here that often." When students have those teachers who made a big impact on them, and they remain at that school, it fosters a culture in which former students feel welcome to come back to campus.

[Alumni] feel welcome here. They feel like it's family. They feel like they are connected...and wanting to come back...[the school] gets back a lot of money because they feel like they got something from this place and they want to give back. So they want other people to have that experience.

Taking it further, one teacher reflected on his advisory program becoming a part of school culture that can remain present and permanent as former students continue to enroll their children at the school. He meshed the school's culture of tradition with the sustainability of the school within generational families.

I think it's important to the school culture...We're starting to get like third-generation families coming through. So if we can offer things that parents remember fondly from their education, we update them and make sure that they're relevant, but they're still good. That's a good part of traditional education.

In essence, the relationships between adults and students catalyze a culture of care and support within the campus community. These strong bonds are instrumental in retaining faculty members and encourage alums to revisit, contribute financially, and even enroll their children in these schools.

Mentorship Outcomes: A Summary

In summary, educators reported notable outcomes students, faculty, and overall school culture. Students are perceived to benefit from close relationships with adults, are held accountable for academics and socioemotional growth, and form closer peer connections. Faculty report a sense of purpose from participating in mentorship and share their value of the relationships built. Finally, mentorship is perceived to add to school culture, which contributes to sustainability of the school community.



DISCUSSION

Mentorship plays a crucial role in fostering meaningful relationships between educators and students across K-12 institutions. Despite its universally acknowledged benefits, challenges in implementing effective mentorship programs persist, as highlighted by discussions among the surveyed institutions. These challenges stem from the variability in purposes behind mentorship initiatives, regional differences, and difficulties in implementation and capacity. Still, the significance of relationships within school communities cannot be overstated, which prompts frequent discussions among school leaders regarding how to best implement mentorship. These discussions encompass various dimensions, ranging from financial capacity considerations to broader demographic, environmental, and programmatic factors. While schools grapple with consistent challenges, educators still recognize that mentoring programs can cater to the diverse needs of students and private school circumstances, underscoring the importance of aligning initiatives with the school's mission and values to ensure long-term sustainability and effectiveness in nurturing meaningful mentorship relationships.

Variability of Purpose

Educators interviewed described a variety of purposes for mentorship, with those most frequently mentioned including the development of relationships, acting as a touchpoint for families and other educators, and providing accountability for the students being mentored. The multitude of goals for mentoring indicates the lack of clarity and agreement among TAIS educators regarding the purpose of mentorship programming within their individual contexts.

The consensus among leaders, teachers, and students is clear—mentorship hinges on establishing a solid relationship. Fundamentally, mentorship entails forging a connection between a less experienced individual, the mentee, and a more seasoned counterpart, the mentor (Gordon et al., 2010; Karcher et al., 2005; Packard, 2004). Most teachers interviewed feel that the purpose of mentorship is to form relationships, either between students or between adults and students. Most teachers do not cite academics, behavioral improvement, or other goals as the primary purpose of mentorship, but some believe these could be secondary benefits. In other words, teachers see the relationship as the goal, not the vehicle. Notably, administrators tend to cite the reverse, i.e., academics and behavioral growth are the goal of mentorship, and the relationship is the vehicle for such outcomes.

Teachers see the mentor role as a touchpoint for students and a student expert for parents and other educators. This expert role is somewhat analogous to a caseworker. Multiple educators will serve the student in various ways, possibly including academics, social-emotional support, and extracurriculars; however, the case worker, or mentor, serves as the primary point of contact to communicate about student problems, needs, and services all in one place. Similarly, mentoring is described as a mechanism to resolve problems and target gaps (Chao, 2009; Clutterbuck et al., 2017; Desimone, 2014; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021, p. 26). As a mentor and touchpoint, educators see the goal of having a good relationship with students to collaborate with their families and other educators to then provide the most informed guidance to the student. As the main touchpoint, the mentor can then hold students accountable for academics, homework, behaviors, and aspirations.

Several theories support the roles these educators report taking on. Social capital theory posits that a mentoring relationship is critical to human development because it enables students to develop the behaviors necessary to succeed in school and as adults (Thompson et al., 2016). Social learning theory has postulated that humans tend to emulate the behavior they see in others they care for and admire; thus, mentees may mirror the positive behavior the mentor demonstrates (Bandura, 1977; Coleman, 1987; 1991). Goal theory explains the connection between the goals one sets and the individual's performance in achieving the goal (Ames, 1992; Dowson & McInerney, 2003; Mac Iver et al., 2017). Self-determination theory explains how one's motivation to act hinges upon their ability to connect their action and the outcome (Reeve et al., 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Mac Iver et al., 2017). Given these theories, mentors have the potential to improve students' perceptions of others' behavior and their relationships to that behavior, to improve students' motivation and perceptions of their performance on tasks, to set goals and achieve them, to believe in their abilities to complete tasks and achieve particular outcomes, and to feel a sense of worth because of and despite their achievement. With the vast potential of mentorship, it is easy to see how teachers might espouse multiple goals. However, to achieve more specific outcomes, educators may need to refine their goals.

Regional Differences in Mentorship Program Participation

Regional disparities in mentorship program participation reflect a combination of cultural, economic, and demographic factors. Middle Tennessee emerges as a hub for formal mentoring initiatives, with a notable concentration in non-sectarian schools, suggesting a nuanced relationship between religious affiliation and mentorship engagement. Here, the prevalence of mentorship programs could be attributed to both cultural norms emphasizing character building and the relatively higher median household income, which facilitates the implementation and sustenance of such initiatives through higher tuition contributions. Conversely, in West Tennessee, religious schools dominate the region, and formal mentoring programs are less prevalent. This poses questions as to whether the influence of religion in schools is perceived to replace the need for mentorship.

Another factor to consider is family income level and school resources. West Tennessee has a lower median household income than Middle Tennessee. When coupled with demographic differences, particularly a higher representation of Black or African American communities, these factors underscore the importance of considering socioeconomic dynamics in understanding the accessibility of mentorship opportunities. This poses an additional question as to whether schools in West Tennessee experience financial constraints causing barriers to mentorship participation.

Examining tuition ranges in Tennessee Association of Independent Schools (TAIS) institutions unveils income-based stratification in access to mentoring programs. With tuition costs ranging from \$12,000 to \$26,000 per school year, affordability becomes a crucial determinant of enrollment, potentially widening the gap between schools with the resources to afford mentorship experiences and schools that may not. Given these ideas, schools in West Tennessee may be affected by a combination of budgetary restraints and cultural factors. Religious schools may perceive themselves as less in need of formal mentoring programs due to the integration of religious values and character development within their curriculum or community influences. This suggests that beyond or in addition to financial considerations, differing educational philosophies and perceptions of the role of mentorship within religious contexts may contribute to regional variations in program participation.

While grade level and school size could contribute to observed regional differences, we observed no discernible impact, potentially due to the limitations of our sample. Additional study with a focus on these factors would be a valuable addition to the available body of research. In addition, given that much of the research on the effects of mentoring focuses on public schools, there is scant extant research on the potential contributing factors that could be relevant to understanding the observed regional differences in this study.

Implementation Challenges

The major themes around implementation challenges include capacity, time, and structural components. Teachers often stated they had an insufficient amount of time and energy to make mentorship meaningful. Teachers who engaged in advisory often stated it was just a box to check, and it was difficult to engage students in conversation either due to lack of time or student buy-in. As opposed to structured time using a scripted curriculum, many educators cited a need for unstructured time to build more authentic relationships. The literature agrees that spending time engaging in social activities in addition to academic activities is valuable and youth can benefit academically simply from having an adult pay attention to and spend time with them; “time together is not wasted if every minute is not spent on making sure youth complete their homework” (Herrera, Sipe, & McClanahan, 2000, p.4). In addition to students’ need for free time, many teachers cited their burnout due to “programming everything,” while for the same reason, some teachers appreciate the structured curriculum to prevent necessitating further planning. The use of curriculum simultaneously presents challenges and opportunities that should be considered thoughtfully.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, we offer the following recommendations for TAIS member schools.

1. Identify clear goals in partnership with administrators, teachers, parents, and students when developing a mentorship program.

Schools need clear goals for mentorship programming. Based on our findings, mentorship goals vary widely among and especially within schools, and many schools espouse a vast multitude of goals, even conflicting goals, for one mentorship program. There is no widely agreed-upon consensus for mentorship goals. Most educators define mentorship as the formation of relationships, yet they struggle to agree as to whether the goal is to improve academics, behavior, peer-to-peer interactions, develop career goals, or more. Schools should endeavor to gather input from teachers, parents, and students to determine the major goals for implementing a mentorship program at their schools. Students, in particular, should have a voice in determining what they need. From this input, schools should establish one to two goals for having a mentorship program and should align implementation to these goals at every step of the process. Schools should pay particular attention to whether the goal is simply to form relationships or to directly impact certain aspects of a student's experience, such as academics or behavior. If the goal is to form relationships, schools should consider informal mentorship, such as natural mentoring. If the goal is to directly impact a particular portion of the student's experience, more formal, structured mentoring may be a more appropriate route. Schools may also choose to implement more than one type of mentorship based on student needs and community input.

2. Implement informal, unstructured mentorship to achieve the goal of forming relationships.

Many teachers cite the need to spend unstructured time with students due to students' need to have unstructured time at school. Students can benefit simply from time and attention with an adult (Herrera, Sipe, & McClanahan, 2000). If schools select unstructured time as the vehicle for relationship-building, teachers and students should drive the decisions regarding activities. Teachers should allow students to drive the relationships built, either among their peers or with adults.

3. Implement a formal, structured mentorship programming if the goal is more specific than simply forming adult-student relationships.

Formal mentoring programs designed to address specific gaps or resolve school-related issues can offer significant advantages for K-12 schools compared to informal mentoring initiatives. These structured programs provide a systematic approach to identifying and targeting areas of need, offering tailored interventions and support mechanisms to address them effectively. With clearly defined goals, formal mentoring programs can align more closely with the school's strategic objectives, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently to achieve desired outcomes. Moreover, formal programs often involve comprehensive training for mentors, ensuring they possess the skills and knowledge necessary to address the identified challenges competently. By implementing formal mentoring initiatives, K-12 schools can strategically address gaps and challenges, ultimately enhancing student outcomes and promoting a positive learning environment.

After gaining consensus on the goal(s) of mentorship, leadership should continue to gain buy-in from the community, faculty, staff, and students by identifying programs aligned to the selected goal(s) and allowing community input into its selection. School communities should consider school context when determining which structure(s) and programs may be most appropriate. Contextual factors may include whether the school provides day-schooling or boarding, whether the school is religious or non-religious, and student age. Upon selection of the mentorship program, schools should provide training to all mentors who will be implementing the program. Leadership should allocate an appropriate amount of time as guided by the program. Teachers will be more effective mentors if they buy into the program; thus, teachers should be allowed to opt into or out of mentoring. If an insufficient number of teachers volunteer, leadership may consider community volunteers to meet the needs on campus. As many teachers have stated, they manage multiple programs, take on many roles, and have little time for transitions. Thus, scheduling should be planned thoughtfully to ensure fidelity of implementation is possible. Teachers should implement the program with fidelity while allowing for adjustment to their specific contexts. Leadership should monitor the fidelity of implementation and formally measure outcomes aligned with the goals in an ongoing fashion. While schools can benefit from implementing the 16 key elements, these larger structural components should be addressed first. Engage with the community and plan well. There can be high monetary and opportunity costs and low value if not well-planned.

4. TAIS should provide differentiated supports based on regional characteristics.

When considering the implementation of mentoring programs in private schools, it is essential to contextualize and customize to the type of school, whether it is day school, boarding school, sectarian, non-sectarian, single-sex, or co-ed, and weigh the actual needs of the community against perceived needs determined by school leadership. Particularly within the Tennessee Association of Independent Schools (TAIS), where the complexity and variability of mentoring programs vary significantly among schools and regions, careful strategic planning is crucial for new program establishment.

Considering school contextual factors and the potentially high financial costs and resource tradeoffs associated with formal mentoring programs, institutions might consider informal mentorship avenues initially. Informal mentoring is relationship-based and utilizes community members, volunteers, and existing school resources, which can offer a more sustainable and cost-effective alternative. If informal mentoring programs are unable to address specific goals, then schools should look to formal mentoring programs. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that many formal mentoring programs cost up to \$70,000, with outlier programs reaching \$300,000. Thus, schools should readily consider context, cost, and community needs before implementing a mentoring program.

Middle Tennessee emerged as a leader in mentorship. Due to its diverse population, relative wealth of resources, and variety of mentorship programming implemented, TAIS could use schools in Middle Tennessee as models or guides for schools in other regions. Considering the landscape of West and Southeast Tennessee, schools in these regions may require more structural supports than those in Middle Tennessee. TAIS could provide suggestions for these supports using models from comparable schools in Middle Tennessee based on characteristics like size, budget, religious affiliation, boarding or day, and specialty focus. TAIS might also connect schools with other “mentor schools” to provide guidance and camaraderie with their shared mentorship goals.



CONCLUSION

We define mentorship broadly as a relationship between a less experienced individual and a more experienced individual. The educators we surveyed and interviewed identified a multitude of goals that illustrate the potential that mentorship holds in supporting students. These educators shared challenges that other schools may be able to identify with and plan for to improve mentorship programming at their schools.

The need for mentorship is ever-present in a fast-changing world. While we cannot anticipate how the world might change in the next few years or decades, we can say that students will always want and need guidance from mentors to support them emotionally, academically, socially, and behaviorally. Educators are uniquely positioned to guide our youth through effective school-based mentorship programming that can change the status quo and make independent schools an even more sought-after experience within the education market.



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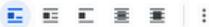
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APPENDIX A-TEACHER SURVEY

Welcome! Thank you for taking this survey about mentoring programs in private schools. We value your feedback, and we'll keep all of your answers anonymous.

Q1. What school do you currently work for?



Q2. Are you currently participating in your school's formal, school-based mentoring program?

*Formal Mentoring is "planned, structured, and intentional." Some examples of mentoring programs are traditional one-on-one mentoring, group mentoring like an advisory, and peer mentoring.

Yes

No

Q5. How much contact had you had before participating in the school-based mentoring program with students in grades 5-12?

None at all

Very little

Some

A lot

Q6. From the list below, please rank in order (1-3, with 1 being the most important) the three most important things you hope to accomplish with your student through the Student Mentoring Program.

Items	Top 3 Goals
Increase the student's self-esteem	
Provide student with general guidance	
Improve the student's relationships with his/her parents or caregivers	
Improve the student's relationships with other adults in authority (teachers, principals, probation officers, etc.)	
Improve the student's relationships with peers	
Improve the student's attitudes towards school	
Improve the student's academic performance in school	
Improve student's attendance	
Improve student's ability to plan for the future (to think about graduating from school, going to college, planning for jobs, etc.)	
Increase the likelihood that the student will be engaged in his/her community (participating in community service activities, etc.)	

Q3. Which school-based mentoring programs are you a part of? (Check all that apply)

Traditional Mentoring: usually, the mentors and mentees meet one-on-one, and mentors can be assigned to more than one mentee

Group Mentoring: usually, there is one mentor/advisor and three or more students who help to challenge and support one another's growth

Peer Mentoring: student-to-student support that is facilitated by a coordinator or school leader

Other

Q4. Have you been a mentor before participating in your school's Student Mentoring Program?

Yes

No

Q7. When you meet with your student(s), which elements do you discuss? (Check all that apply)

Engaged in casual conversation

Talked about student's personal problems

Talked about student's aspirations for the future (career plans, college plans, etc.)

Talked about students' relationships with parents

Talked about students' relationships with teachers/other adults in authority

Talked about students' relationships with peers

Worked on academic skills

Worked on homework

Engagement in community service

Talked about the importance of completing high school

Talked about the risks associated with at-risk behavior

Q8. Please reflect on the degree to which each of the following statements currently applies to a relationship with one of your current mentees.

	Definitely Does Not Apply	Not Really	Neutral, Not Sure	Applies somewhat	Definitely Applies
1. I share an affectionate, warm relationship with this mentee.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. This mentee and I always seem to be struggling with each other.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. If upset, this mentee will seek comfort from me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. This mentee is uncomfortable with physical affection or touch from me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. This mentee values his/her relationship with me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. When I praise this mentee, he/she beams with pride.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. This mentee spontaneously shares information about himself/herself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. This mentee easily becomes angry at me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. It is easy to be in tune with what this mentee is feeling.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. This mentee remains angry or resistant after being given critical feedback.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Dealing with this mentee drains my energy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. When this mentee arrives in a bad mood, I know we're in for a long and difficult session.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. This mentee's feelings toward me can be unpredictable or can change suddenly.	<input type="radio"/>				
14. This mentee is sneaky or manipulative with me.	<input type="radio"/>				
15. This mentee openly shares his/her feelings and experiences with me.	<input type="radio"/>				

Q9. Please rate the quality of each of the following components of the school-based mentoring program you are involved in.

	Extremely Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Not Applicable
Pre-match Training/Orientation	<input type="radio"/>					
Process of Matching Students and Mentors/Advisor to Advisees	<input type="radio"/>					
Ongoing Support from School Staff	<input type="radio"/>					
Special Group Events for Mentors and Students	<input type="radio"/>					
Mentoring Program Curriculum	<input type="radio"/>					

Q10. How satisfied are you with your experience in the Student Mentoring Program?

Very Satisfied

Satisfied

Somewhat Satisfied

Somewhat Dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Very Dissatisfied



Q11. What are the biggest challenges in participating in the Student Mentoring Program?

To answer this question, in group 1, please drag and rank your top 3 challenges, with 1 being the biggest challenge. In group 2, drag and list all other challenges that apply.

- Items**
- It was hard for me to make the time to meet regularly.
 - Our advisory periods were too short to make a meaningful impact.
 - Pre-training was ineffective/insufficient.
 - It took too long/was too labor intensive to undergo orientation and training.
 - I needed more training than I received.
 - I didn't get enough support from the program staff/leadership.
 - My student(s) didn't get enough support from the program staff.
 - I didn't know what to do with my student(s). We needed more structured activities.
 - It was difficult to establish a relationship with my student(s).
 - My student(s) often didn't show up for our meetings.
 - My students often missed their advisory periods.
 - My student(s) pressured me to get more involved in his or her life than I felt comfortable doing.
 - My student(s) and I were supposed to work on particular skills and behaviors. Working on those things wasn't fun/interesting.
 - My student(s) seemed embarrassed that he or she had to participate in this program.
 - My student(s) had problems that were too big for me to handle. I felt overwhelmed.

Top 3 Challenges

All Other Applicable Challenges

Q12. What could have made your experience in the mentoring program better?

To answer this question, in group 1, please drag and rank the top 3 items that could have made your experience in the mentoring program better, with 1 being the most important.

- Items**
- More/better training before being matched with your mentee or advisory group
 - More frequent meetings with student(s)
 - More frequent contact with program staff/leadership
 - More support for my student outside of the program
 - More/better group activities
 - More opportunities to meet with other mentors
 - More opportunities to meet with other mentors
 - More opportunities to meet with student(s) teachers
 - More opportunities to meet with student(s) parents
 - More support or supervision for mentors
 - Other (Please describe):

Mentoring Program Experiences

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13. This mentee's feelings toward me can be unpredictable or can change suddenly.	<input type="radio"/>				
14. This mentee is sneaky or manipulative with me.	<input type="radio"/>				
15. This mentee openly shares his/her feelings and experiences with me.	<input type="radio"/>				



APPENDIX B-LEADER SURVEY

Welcome! Thank you for taking this survey about mentoring programs in private schools.

There are 32 questions on this survey. We recommend that you take this survey as a team that could include the head of school, division leads, deans of curriculum or discipline, advisory/mentor program coordinators, or any other leadership personnel of your choosing.

Q1. What school do you currently work for?

Q2. What is your current role?

*You may select more than one option as we recommend that you take this survey as a team.

Head of School	<input type="checkbox"/>
Upper School Division Head	<input type="checkbox"/>
Middle School Division Head	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dean of Curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>
Upper School Mentorship/Advisory Program Coordinator	<input type="checkbox"/>
Middle School Mentorship/Advisory Program Coordinator	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q5. How long has your organization run a school-based mentoring program?

1 year	<input type="radio"/>
2 years	<input type="radio"/>
3 years	<input type="radio"/>
4 years	<input type="radio"/>
5 years	<input type="radio"/>
6 years or more	<input type="radio"/>

Q3. Does your school run a formal, school-based mentoring program?

*Formal Mentoring is "planned, structured, and intentional." Some examples of mentoring programs are traditional one-on-one mentoring, group mentoring like an advisory, and peer mentoring.

Yes	<input type="radio"/>
No	<input type="radio"/>

Formal Mentoring Program Survey

Q3a. If your answer to question three was no, what programs does your school utilize to foster adult-student relationships? Please explain in a few sentences.

*Formal Mentoring is "planned, structured, and intentional."

Q4. Which of the following best describes your formal, school-based mentoring efforts? (Check which applies)

Traditional Mentoring: usually, the mentors and mentees meet one-on-one, and mentors can be assigned to more than one mentee	<input type="checkbox"/>
Group Mentoring often known as "advisory": usually, there is one mentor/advisor and three or more students who help to challenge and support one another's growth	<input type="checkbox"/>
Peer Mentoring: student-to-student support that is facilitated by a coordinator or school leader	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q6. What is the entire annual operating budget for your school-based mentoring program?

Annual Operating Mentoring Budget \$

Q7. How many paid staff people work on your organization's school-based mentoring program?

Number of full-time staff utilized in your school-based mentoring program

Number of part-time or full-time staff who dedicate less than full-time to your school-based mentoring efforts

Q8. Does your program specifically employ a program coordinator or similar role for your school-based mentoring program?

Yes

No

Q9. Please describe the relevant training and experience the program coordinator or program lead has completed. (Check all that apply. If there is more than one person in this role, please answer for the most senior staff person in this position.)

High school degree or GED

Vocational degree or certification

2-year college degree

4-year college degree

Advanced (master's or higher) degree in education

Advanced degree in social work

Q11. Which of the following statements most accurately describes mentorship at your school? (Check one response.)

Mentors and mentees are encouraged to spend time together, but the organization does not encourage mentors and mentees to focus on particular issues.

Program leaders encourage mentors and mentees to engage in particular activities and work on specific behaviors, but there is no formal written curriculum for mentors.

Program leaders encourage mentors and mentees to engage in particular activities and to work on specific behaviors, and there is a formal written curriculum for mentors (developed either commercially or by the program).

Prior experience teaching

Prior experience as a social worker

Prior experience working with volunteers

Prior experience working at a community-based organization

Prior experience working at a faith-based organization

Q10. To what extent is your school-based mentoring program focused on addressing each of the following goals? (Check one response per row.)

	Our program is not focused on this at all	Our program is a little focused on this	Our program is moderately focused on this	Our program is extremely focused on this
1. Improving mentees' self-esteem	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Providing mentees with general guidance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Improving mentees' relationships with their parents/other caregivers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Improving mentees' relationships with other adults in authority (teachers, principals, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Improving mentees' relationships with peers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Improving mentees' attitudes towards school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Improving mentees' academic performance in school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Improving mentees' ability to plan for the future (graduating from school, going to college, planning for jobs, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q12. Which of these behaviors is the most important focus of your school-based mentoring program? (Check one response.)

Academics (working with mentees on homework, basic skills, etc.)

Career exploration (educating mentees about the world of work, discussing career opportunities that mentees may wish to pursue, etc.)

Goals that mentees establish for themselves

Other

Q13. How does your school-based mentoring program select mentors? (Check all that apply.)

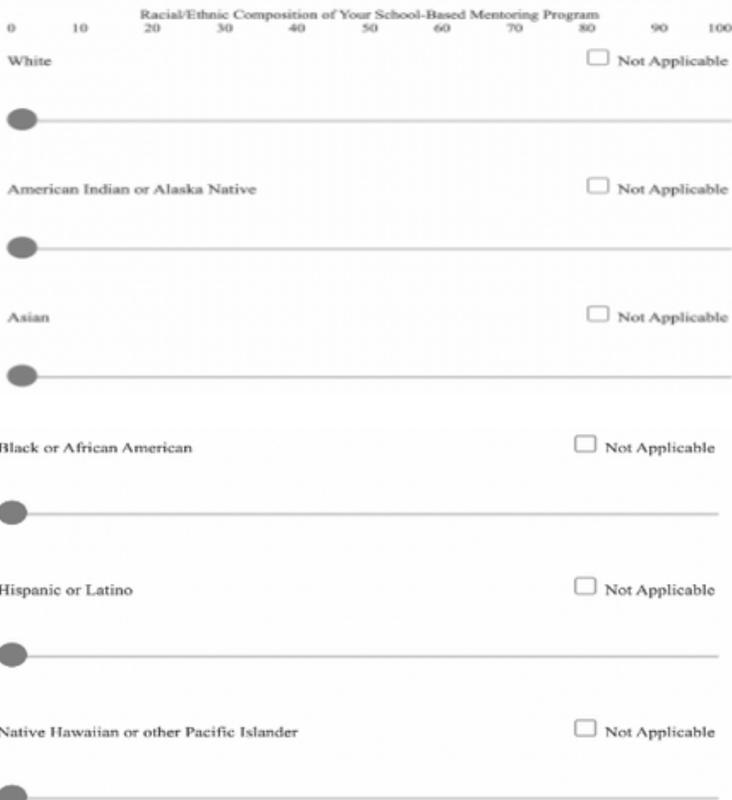
Volunteers within the school (ie. teachers, school staff, school leaders, etc)

Volunteers from outside of the school (ie. parents, grandparents, alumnis, local community members, etc)

Mandatory Selection (teachers, school staff, school leaders, etc)

Q16. What's the racial/ethnic composition of mentees in your school-based mentoring program?

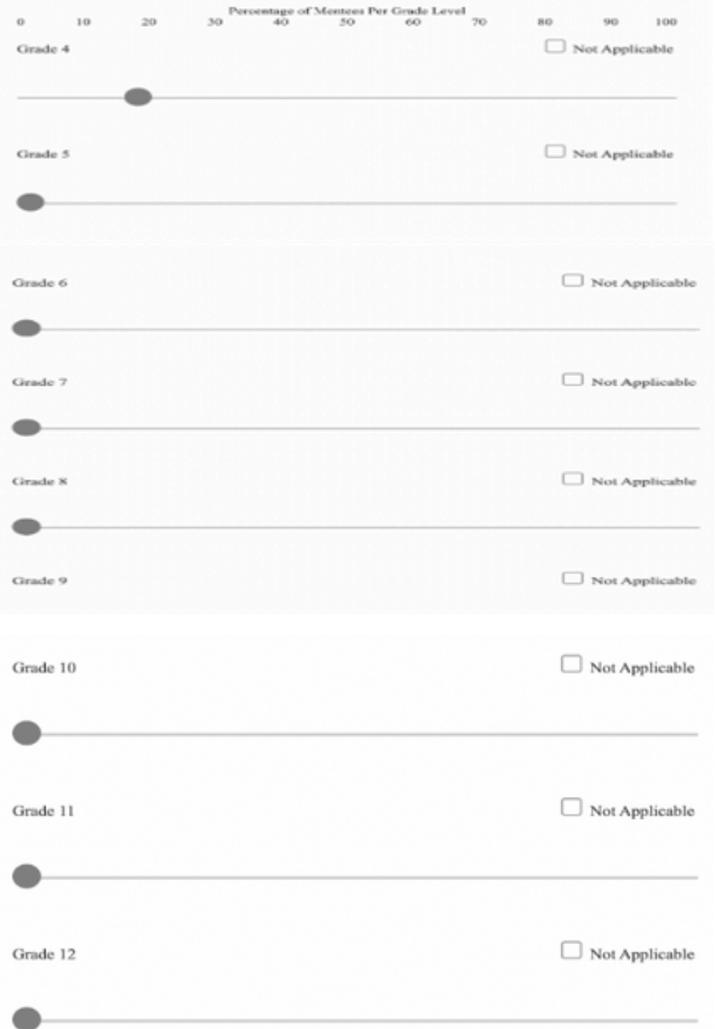
*Please answer the question in terms of percentage.



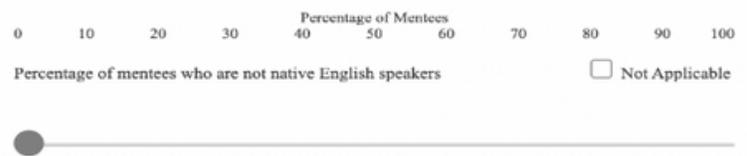
Q14. What is the total number of mentees participating in your organization's school-based mentoring program?

Number of mentees

Q15. What percentage of mentees in your organization's school-based mentoring program were in the following grades in the past school year?



Q17. What percent of mentees in your school-based mentoring program that your organization runs are not native English speakers?



Q18. What percent of mentees in your school-based mentoring program that your organization runs is female?

Q19. What percent of mentees in your school-based mentoring program that your organization runs is male?

Q20. What are the most common risk factors experienced by mentees in your school-based mentoring program?

*In group 1, drag your response to the box and rank your top 3 risk factors. In group 2, drag your and list all other applicable risk factors.

Items	Rank the Top 3 Risk Factors
Parents abuse drugs/alcohol.	
Child uses drugs/alcohol.	
Child lives in poverty.	
Child has been neglected/abused.	
Child has a learning disability/is developmentally delayed.	
Child gets into frequent fights with peers.	
Child has few/no positive adult role models.	
Child has self-esteem problems.	
Child is failing in school.	
Child is experiencing mental health concerns.	
Child has other behavioral problems.	
Other	

Q22. In your school-based mentoring program, is there a required number of training or orientation hours that each mentor must receive?

 Yes

 No

Q22a. If yes, how many required training or orientation hours must each mentor have?

Number of Required Hours

Q21. Are mentors in your school-based mentoring program required to participate in training/orientation before the mentor program begins?

 Yes

 No

Q21a. If yes, what does that training/orientation for mentors include? (Check all that apply.)

 Opportunity to meet with mentees interested in having a mentor

 Introduction to the program (discussion of requirements for participation and program logistics)

 Cross-cultural sensitivity training

 Training in how to identify and address situations in which the mentee has been neglected or abused

 Training in encouraging mentees to plan for the future and to set long-term goals

 Training in working with mentees on academic achievement

 Training in working with mentees on refraining from using drugs or alcohol

 Training in working with mentees on refraining from engaging in other criminal behaviors

 Training in working with mentees on career preparation

 Training in working with mentees on reducing absenteeism

Q23. How does your organization match mentees and mentors for your school-based mentoring program? (Check all that apply.)

 Match mentees with mentors as soon as a mentor becomes available

 Match "highest risk" mentees first

 Aim to make same-race matches

 Aim to make same-gender matches

 Make matches based on a personality-based assessment of what would constitute a good fit (survey of interests, etc.)

 Mentees meet a pool of eligible mentors and can choose

 Mentors meet a pool of eligible mentees and can choose

 Other

Q24. How does your program work with the parents/guardians of mentees in the school-based mentoring program? (Check all that apply.)

Our program does not work with parents.

Parents/guardians meet with potential mentors before matches are made.

Parents/guardians play an active role in selecting particular mentors for their children.

Parents/guardians meet regularly with their children's mentors.

Parents/guardians participate in group activities with mentors, other youth in the program, and other parents.

Other

Q25. Who are the mentors in the school-based mentoring program? That is, what types of people have been recruited? (Check all that apply.)

Teachers

Clergy

Employees of specific businesses or agencies

Retirees

General adult community members

College students

High-school students

Other

Q28. What kinds of ongoing support for mentors in your school-based mentoring program does your organization provide? (Check all that apply.)

Mentor/mentee meetings are supervised by program staff.

Mentors have access to social workers who are involved in the program and who can answer questions/address concerns.

The organization hosts get-togethers where mentors can meet and discuss strategies for working effectively with mentees.

The organization sponsors listservs, mentoring chat rooms, or other online forums for mentors to support each other.

Mentors are required to participate in ongoing training on a variety of issues.

Mentors have the opportunity to participate in ongoing training on a variety of issues.

There is limited to no ongoing support for mentors in the program.

Other

Q26. What minimum commitment is required for mentees and mentors in your school-based mentoring program during the school year? (Please answer all three of the following unless no specific minimum contact is required.)

1 2 3 4 5 7 8 9 10 11 1

There is no specific requirement and my own goal for contact with my mentee per month is _____ Not Applicable

Required number of contacts per month Not Applicable

Required number of hours per contact Not Applicable

Required number of months Not Applicable

Q27. What is the most common ratio for mentees and mentors in your school-based mentoring programs? (Check one response.)

One mentor to one mentee

One mentor to several mentees

One mentee to several mentors

Several mentors to several mentees

Q29. What activities do most mentors and mentees in your school-based mentoring program engage in? (Check all that apply.)

Mentors and mentees spend time talking and "hanging out" together.

Mentors and mentees work on mentees' homework.

Mentors and mentees work on mentees' academic skills.

Mentors and mentees engage in community service activities.

Mentors and mentees visit the mentors' workplaces.

Mentors and mentees participate in group activities sponsored by your organization (trips to local museums, libraries, ballgames, colleges, etc.)

Mentors meet with mentees' families.

Other

Q30. Are mentors in your school-based mentoring program required to report to program staff about their interactions with their mentees?

Yes

No

Q31. Does your organization provide any training opportunities for mentors in your school-based mentoring program over the course of the program year (in addition to training provided as part of orientation)?

Yes

No

If yes, what kinds of training are offered over the program year? (Check all that apply.)

Cross-cultural Sensitivity Training

Cultural Competency Training

Social Emotional Learning Training

Training in working with mentees on career preparation

Training in how to identify and address situations in which the mentee has been neglected or abused

Training in working with mentees on academic achievement

Other

How difficult is it for you to implement each of the following aspects of mentoring program operation in your school-based mentoring program? (Check one response per row.)

	Very Difficult	Somewhat Difficult	Not Very Difficult	Not at all Difficult
Engaging mentors in the program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engaging mentees in the program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training mentors before they are matched with a student(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing ongoing support and training for mentors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hiring and retaining quality staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fundraising	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Documenting program outcomes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other Challenges (Specify: <input type="text"/>) <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



APPENDIX C-SURVEY MATRIX

Research Questions	Sub Questions	Indicators	Data Sources	Analysis Procedures
How is mentorship defined across TAIS schools? Program Features Heads of School Division Leaders	Formal Group Peer Multilevel What program features do schools use to create and implement adult-student mentorship programs?	-Landscape Analysis -Number of Schools with active adult-student mentorship programs -Survey responses from heads of school	Administrative Data -School size -Enrollment -Demographics -TAIS Engagement -Head of Schools -Mentors -Teachers -Select Staff -Parents	-Binary/Continuous Data Grouping -Likert Scale Grouping -Bar Graph -T-Test -Case study qualitative analysis (include alumni?)
To what extent are adult-student mentorship programs implemented in TAIS' middle and high schools? Program Processes	-What methods and resources are used to create the adult-student mentorship programs in TAIS schools? -What is the basic function and operation of adult-student mentorship programs in TAIS schools? What precursors are established in developing adult-student mentorship programs in TAIS schools? -What processes of adult-student mentorship programs in TAIS	-Survey results revealing resources of program operation and function -Survey results, including routine practices and curriculums -Survey results revealing maintenance and support structures for programs	-Heads of schools -Mentors -Teachers	-Likert Scale Grouping -Bar Graph -T-Test -Case study qualitative analysis (include alumni?)

Research Questions	Sub Questions	Indicators	Data Sources	Analysis Procedures
	schools are implemented and maintained? How are different types of schools using adult-student mentorship programs differently?			
Teachers Students	What are the perceived outcomes of adult-student mentorship programs in TAIS schools?	Survey results focused on student impact: -academic achievement -class participation -social-emotional skills -belonging -student culture	-Head of Schools -Mentors -Teachers -Select Staff -Counselors -DEI/ODCL -Admin	-Likert Scale Grouping -Bar Graph -T-Test -Case study qualitative analysis
	To what extent do adult-student mentorship programs in TAIS schools impact faculty?	Survey results focused on faculty impact: -job satisfaction -belonging -connection to students -connection to parents -connection to other faculty -faculty culture	-Head of Schools -Mentors -Teachers -Select Staff -Counselors -DEI/ODCL -Admin	-Likert Scale Grouping -Bar Graph -T-Test -Case study qualitative analysis
	To what extent do adult-student mentorship programs in TAIS schools impact parent satisfaction with schools?	Survey results focused on parent impact: -connection to the school community -connection to teachers -retention -student support satisfaction -appeal/marketing -selling point	-Head of Schools -Mentors -Teachers -Select Staff -Counselors -DEI/ODCL -Admin	-Likert Scale Grouping -Bar Graph -T-Test -Case study qualitative analysis

APPENDIX D-INTERVIEW PROTOCOL HEAD OF SCHOOL

TAIS Interview Probe and Protocol- Principal/ Head of School

Adapted from personal communication with Dr. Cannata (2023).

Research Questions:

1. How is mentorship defined across TAIS schools?
2. How are TAIS schools utilizing adult-student mentor programs?
3. What are the perceived outcomes of adult-student mentorship programs in TAIS schools?

Conceptual Bins: Defining Mentorship, Mentorship Models, Implementation, Impacts
Mentorship: Student Impact by Mentorship, Teacher Benefits of Mentoring, School Sus
and Culture

Interview Protocol - Principal/Head of School

Background (Biological Sketch)

- Before we begin, please tell me briefly how you define your role at the school as long you have been here.
- What do you find most fun/fulfilling about your role?
- What does the mission of your school mean to you?

Defining Mentorship

I want to learn how adult-student mentorship was introduced to your school.

- What do you understand to be the goals of adult-student mentoring?
- What does effective mentoring look like to you?
- How did you or your school decide to bring this concept to your school?

Mentorship Models

I have some questions about what adult-student mentorship looks like in your school.

- From the survey you completed, I have a basic understanding of mentorship at school. Is there anything you'd like to elaborate on regarding the framework of mentorship model?
- What were the key considerations in choosing this mentorship model? Any add driving factors?
- What faculty and staff participate as mentors in this school?
- How does the mentorship model look within the school day?
- Do you use specific programming or curriculum during a specific mentorship time that is that orchestrated?
- Have you participated in this mentorship model at your school? What was your

Implementation

I want to understand a bit more about how you implemented the mentorship model at your school.

- How would you describe your school's ability to implement new programs?
- Did you come across any roadblocks with implementing mentorship at your school? If so, what did that look like?
- How did you overcome these roadblocks?
- Does your school typically rely on long-existing programs (such as advisory) to build relationships between adults and students?
 - Does your school use your mentorship program as a focal point as new programs are developed?

Impacts of Adult-Student Mentorship

I also want to learn more about why you maintain this model and how you think it impacts your school.

- What do you see as the significant benefits of adult-student mentorship in your school?
- Does the mentorship model pose any challenges? If so, what are they?
- How do you perceive the effects of adult-student mentorship impacting the students?
 - The teachers?
 - School sustainability and culture?
 - (if an area is not answered above)
- Do mentor teachers have access to support and resources to shape their mentor space? Can you tell me a bit more about what that looks like?

Closing

- Are there next steps for your mentorship model?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about your school and the adult-student mentoring here?

APPENDIX E-INTERVIEW PROTOCOL TEACHER

Research Questions:

1. How is mentorship defined across TAIS schools?
2. How are TAIS schools utilizing adult-student mentor programs?
3. What are the perceived outcomes of adult-student mentorship programs in TAIS schools?

Conceptual Bins: Defining Mentorship, Mentorship Models, Implementation, Impacts of Mentorship: Student Impact by Mentorship, Teacher Benefits of Mentoring, School Sustainability and Culture

Interview Protocol - Teacher

Background (Biological Sketch)

- Before we begin, please tell me briefly how you define your role at the school and how long you have been here.
- What do you find most fun/fulfilling about your role?
- How would you describe your relationship with the students at this school?

Defining Mentorship

I want to learn how you view your role as a mentor.

- What do you understand to be the goals of adult-student mentoring?
- What does effective mentoring look like to you?
- How long have you been a mentor?
 - Do you have experience outside of this school?
- Have you ever been mentored?
 - Can you tell me about that experience?
- What do you see as the major benefits of being a mentor?
- What are the drawbacks or challenges of being a mentor?

Mentorship Models

I have some questions about what adult-student mentorship looks like in your school.

- Do you have influence in the mentor or mentee assignment and selection process? How does that work at your school?
- Do you see yourself reflected in your mentees in any way? If so, what do you share in common?
- Do you participate in any mentor training or have any support processes in place? If so, what does that look like?
- Can you describe your duties and responsibilities as a mentor?
- How does the mentorship model look within the school day?
- Do you use specific activities or curricula during a specific mentorship time? How is that orchestrated?

- What is the content of your interactions with your mentees within the mentorship time and outside of that time?
- What do you think this mentorship model does well?
- Are there any ways in which you think it could be improved?

Implementation

I want to understand a bit more about how you implemented the mentorship model at your school.

- How would you describe your school's ability to implement new programs?
- How much time do you spend on mentorship responsibilities? To what extent does the adult-student mentorship program have on your ability to complete other tasks that are important to your work?
- How well do you think mentors at this school are prepared to take on this role?
 - What kind of training, frameworks, or support does the school provide you?
- What do you think other mentors are actually doing with their students?
- To what extent do you think high-quality mentoring is happening in your school?
- How do you create student "buy-in" to the mentorship processes?
- What are your perceptions of the activities and curriculum being used in the mentoring model?
- What do you think this mentorship at your school does well?
- What are some things you would like to see done better?
- How sustainable do you think the mentorship model is at your school?

Impacts of Adult-Student Mentorship

I also want to learn more about why you maintain this model and how you think it impacts you, your students, and your school community.

- Broadly, what do you see as the significant benefits of adult-student mentorship in your school?
 - Are there any student groups at your school that are particularly affected by your adult-student mentorship model?
- How do you perceive adult-student mentorship impacting the students specifically?
 - The teachers?
 - School sustainability and culture?
 - (if an area is not answered above)
- How has mentoring impacted your relationships within the school?
- Do you perceive any other short-term, mid-term, or long-term outcomes of the mentorship model at your school? Can you tell me about the impact that has on how you view school culture?
- Can you describe a good mentoring moment?
- Can you describe a challenging mentoring moment?

Closing

- Are there next steps for your mentorship model?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about your school and the adult-student mentoring here?

APPENDIX F-EVALUATION MATRIX

Evaluation Questions	Sub Questions	Indicators	Data Sources	Collection Methods	Analysis Procedures
To what extent do TAIS Independent Schools utilize adult-student mentoring programs in Middle and High Schools?	-Formal (advisory, organized, mandatory?) -Supported (run by school faculty?) -Informal (student-initiated, no support) What program features do schools use to create and implement adult-student mentorship programs?	-Landscape Analysis -Number of Schools with active adult-student mentorship programs -Survey ratings from heads of schools	Administrative Data -School size -Enrollment -Demographics -TAIS Engagement -Head of Schools -Mentors -Teachers -Select Staff -Parents	-School Websites - Quantitative survey -Qualitative field research at 3 select schools	-Binary/Continuous Data Grouping -Likert Scale Grouping -Bar Graph -T-Test -ANOVA Test -Case study qualitative analysis (Include alumni?)
How are TAIS schools utilizing adult-student mentor programs?	-What methods and resources are used to create the adult-student mentorship programs in TAIS schools? -What is the basic function and operation of adult-student mentorship programs in TAIS schools?	-Survey results revealing resources of program operation and function -Survey results, including routine practices and curriculums -Survey results revealing maintenance and support	-Heads of schools -Mentors -Teachers	-Quantitative survey administered -Qualitative field research at 3 select schools	-Likert Scale Grouping -Bar Graph -T-Test -ANOVA Test -Case study qualitative analysis (Include alumni?)
					What precursors are established in developing adult-student mentorship programs in TAIS schools? -What processes of adult-student mentorship programs in TAIS schools are implemented and maintained? How are different types of schools using adult-student mentorship programs differently?
Evaluation Questions	Sub Questions	Indicators	Data Sources	Collection Methods	Analysis Procedures
What are the perceived outcomes of adult-student mentorship programs in TAIS schools?	To what extent do adult-student mentorship programs in TAIS schools impact students?	Survey results focused on student impact: -academic achievement -class participation -social-emotional skills -belonging -student culture	-Head of Schools -Mentors -Teachers -Select Staff -Counselors -DEI/ODCL -Admin	-Quantitative survey administered -Qualitative field research at 3 select schools	-Likert Scale Grouping -Bar Graph -T-Test -ANOVA Test -Case study qualitative analysis (Include alumni?)

To what extent do adult-student mentorship programs in TAIS schools impact faculty?	Survey results focused on faculty impact: -job satisfaction -belonging -connection to students -connection to parents -connection to other faculty -faculty culture	-Head of Schools -Mentors -Teachers -Select Staff -Counselors -DEI/ODCL -Admin	-Quantitative survey administered -Qualitative field research at 3 select schools	-Likert Scale Grouping -Bar Graph -T-Test -ANOVA Test -Case study qualitative analysis (Include alumni?)
To what extent do adult-student mentorship programs in TAIS schools impact parent satisfaction with schools?	Survey results focused on parent impact: -connection to the school community -connection to teachers -retention -student support satisfaction -appeal/marketing -selling point	-Head of Schools -Mentors -Teachers -Select Staff -Counselors -DEI/ODCL -Admin	-Quantitative survey administered -Qualitative field research at 3 select schools	-Likert Scale Grouping -Bar Graph -T-Test -ANOVA Test -Case study qualitative analysis (Include alumni?)

APPENDIX G-STAKEHOLDER MAP

Stakeholder Name	Stakeholder Category	Influence	Interest or perspective	Role in evaluation
Sarah Wilson, TAIS Executive Director	Primary	High	High	Continuous consultation
Head of School	Primary	High	Mid	survey/interview
Student	Primary	Mid	High	survey/interview
Student focus group ODCL	Primary	High	High	survey/interview
Mentor	Primary	High	High	Survey/interview
Parent	Secondary	Low	Low	Survey
Teacher of record	Secondary	Low	Low	Survey
School Board members	Secondary	High	Mid	Survey/interview
Admin	Secondary	Mid	High	Survey/interview
Office of DEI leadership	Secondary	High	High	Data Interview
Counselor	Secondary	High	High	Interview
Admissions	Tertiary	Low	Mid	Data
Alumni	Tertiary	Low	Low	Survey

APPENDIX H-MASTER QUALITATIVE MATRIX

Types of Mentorship	TM1: Relationship Based	It's a community, and it's a smaller community within a larger community. I think there's something about that, that they get that feeling of security of being heard of knowing that they're a valued member of the community, and that they're also expected to give back at some point... I think they get that sense of security being heard by someone who's been through it before, being authentic and open about it in a healthy way, who can let them kind of form their own opinions and ideas (B. Teacher, 2024).
		The point is to give them another outlet for somebody they could go to. If that relationship is close enough and [the students] feel comfortable talking about something they might not with a parent or... a teacher... or coach... It adds one more touchpoint for a kid and adult to connect (C. Teacher, 2024).
	Relationship Sub Theme 1: touchpoints	...to create other relationships and touchpoints...that they can expand the community for kids (B. Teacher, 2024)
		I feel like zero mentors is really, really bad. Lots of mentors are really, really good. One mentor is actually kind of dangerous (B. Teacher, 2024)
		"how readily we are available to them" "an authentic connection" (C. Teacher, 2024)
	Relationship Sub Theme 2: Student Expert	"having that person who does become your expert" (A. Administrator, 2024)
		I have to look up their advisor. It's the very first thing I do. And then every email I send about that kid has their advisor, they are your touchpoint. And they're the ones that should know the most about that kid. I might know a lot about their learning style, but they know all about everything...the information is being facilitated through that advisor (A. Administrator, 2024).
		You know, I'm always wanting to see how his day is going, or how his weekend, or how his break was...help champion their success. You know if they've been on a sports team, or in a show that
		they did a great job in, and whatever it was, try to be present for them and cheer them on whatever that is... as well as [how] they're feeling. They do feel that support outside of the role of advisor time (B. Teacher, 2024)
	Relationship Sub Theme 3: Accountability	I view mentorship as wanting to be someone where these [students] can feel comfortable to discuss what their struggles and challenges are, but also to be able to push back and challenge...[If] I think their behaviors and the way that they are caring about the people around them are not in line with how we and [School B] believed these guys, and what we hoped they would develop to be...someone who can also kind of hold that line with them and push them to grow in that aspect (B. Teacher, 2024)
Key Elements of Mentorship	KEM 1: Time	There might be other students that I just see one time a day, who I don't have that opportunity to reach out to, as I do for my own advisory students (A. Teacher, 2024).
		some consistent group time with adults (C. Teacher, 2024)
		"carved out 'reservoirs' for "a little more decompression" (B., Teacher, 2024)
		Mentorship primarily happens in a faculty member's discretionary time and anything that operates out of a budget of discretionary resources is going to get whatever is left after everything else has been withdrawn (B. Teacher, 2024)
		It's exhausting work. You're pouring out a lot, and it's hard to find ways to get refilled so that you can give it away. It's hard to do that. We're so busy and have so many demands. And people have really consistent access to so many things. Sometimes we try to do it all (B. Teacher, 2024)
	KEM 2: Structure	I think it allows us to spend a lot of unstructured time with students, which is important because it allows them to really be themselves and you get to know them (A. Teacher, 2024).
		feels more like an authentic connection versus just being in class. And I think that's what they appreciate (C. Teacher, 2024)
Implementation	IMP 1: Curriculum	There's more improv that happens in the moment. So where are they today?" (B. Teacher, 2024)

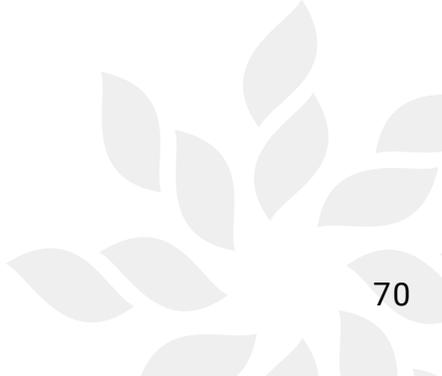
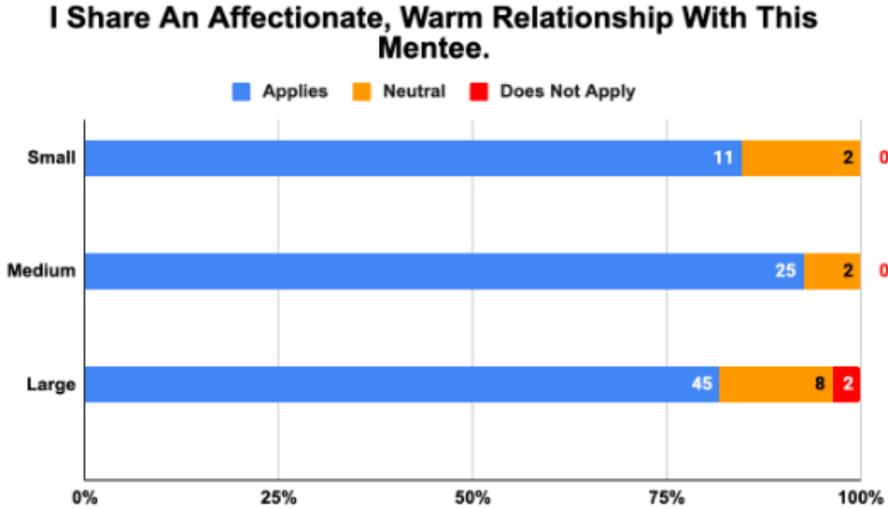
		"micromanaged" (B. Teacher, 2024)
		Sometimes I think we try and develop mentor programs that are very formulaic, and I don't think they should be formulated, necessarily, because you lose half the students...And so I think you have to be authentic (A. Teacher, 2024)
		I love having the program that we're currently using...to set the framework for [SEL conversations] (A. Teacher, 2024)
		I don't know how much I subscribe to it (A. Teacher, 2024)
	IMP 2: Fidelity	I think we don't have any teachers who would not do something if we were asked. [But] they would do it with varying emphasis (C. Teacher, 2024)
		We've always been told that we can kind of make it our own. We don't have to stick with it strictly. I don't think there's any way there's anybody that does that. Still sticks with it verbatim (B. Teacher, 2024)
		We have prompts but usually the kids just kind of take it however they want to go" (A. Teacher, 2024)
	IMP 3: Advisory Mentorship?	When a [student] knocks on your door that night and lets you in on something or one just wants to sit at your table at dinner...there is good happening here. So that's what I mean by career sustaining. But that's mentorship. That's not advisory. Advisory is another like box to check" (B. Teacher, 2024)
		Kids are hungry to know adults," he explains. But he feels like if you are able to surround kids with enough quality adults, these relationships will form naturally (B. Teacher, 2024)
		mentorship probably works best when it's natural (B. Teacher, 2024)
		There's just going to be people you naturally jive with and there's going to be people you don't. So I think the more little things that you can do to put adults and students together, the greater the chance you find, like, 'Oh, you like jazz music, I like jazz music'...I think one of the things that

		[advisory] does best is it just gives another opportunity for a random interaction between somebody that could use mentoring and somebody that's willing to do mentoring. (B. Teacher, 2024)
		So for me when I feel like I'm doing a really good job as an advisor is when I am having conversations outside of that time...No doubt that's when I'm doing my best work and making meaningful connections and real conversations with [students] but it's coming at the cost of like we're not getting this done at the advisory period (B. Teacher, 2024)
		herding them in the right direction. But a mentor is a more one-on-one thing to me and this is a group scenario (B. Teacher, 2024)
		Like I'm mentoring these guys, and I was always like, whew, no one should ever describe themselves as a mentor. That's what someone else gets to choose whether or not they call you (B. Teacher, 2024)
Student Outcomes	SO 1: Close Relationship with Adult Role Models	We do an excellent job of trying to educate a [student] outside of just the college preparatory piece. And so as a student here, I felt very prepared when I went to college. But on top of that, I had incredible relationships with both my peers and more importantly with the adults that I got to work with (B. Teacher, 2024)
		There are students who wouldn't have a teacher that they would feel close with because of how they behave and their grades...It's designed for them not to fall through the cracks" (A. School, 2024)
	SO 2: Accountability for Academic and SEL	I think equipping them with their interpersonal skills for sure... emotional maturity" (C. Teacher, 2024)
		I think that in middle school, specifically, kids have to start learning how to have conversations with adults...I think it also helps prepare kids for real-life people skills in the workplace as well. Interacting with others and advocating for yourself being able to communicate some of your more SEL needs versus...what you're learning about or what a job may have you assigned to do" (A. Administrator, 2024)

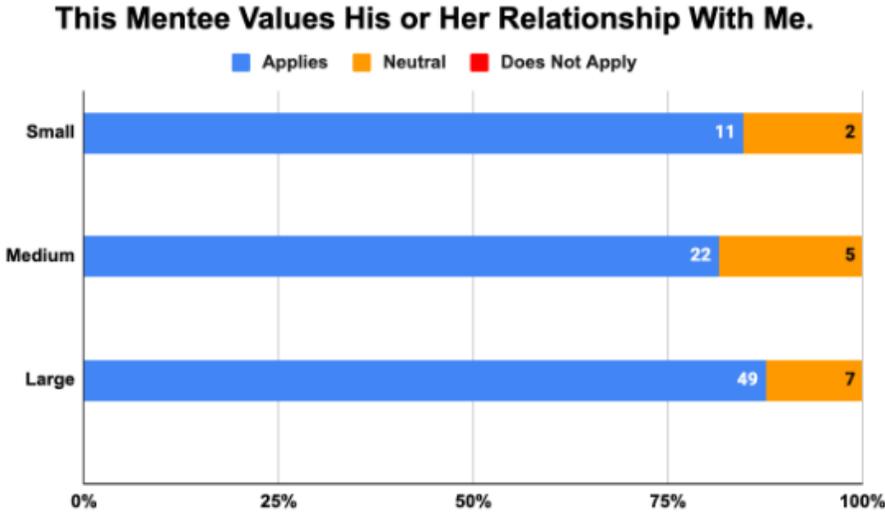
		Just to kind of help students take ownership of their learning and be more active participants in their schooling... take more ownership of their mental, social, emotional, all of those sorts of things, which is really awesome because middle school is just kind of primed to start doing that (A. Teacher, 2024)
	SO 3: Peer Connections	I think the case for a lot of the kids is that they're not best friends at the beginning of the year, but you start seeing how they start to really enjoy each other's time..." (A. Teacher, 2024)
		In theory, the answer should be yes... This is not a class. Like this is a place where [a student] should be accepted. I think depending on the population, if you have five football players out of 10, they're going to sort of dominate that advisory. So it's all sort of on the makeup and I'm sure they'd consider that when they assign advisors. But I think the makeup of that advisory can dictate a lot about how a student feels in there (B. Teacher, 2024)
Faculty Outcomes	FO 1: Purpose	I think it makes us feel like we're making a difference too and that's important. Not in making us feel good, but in knowing that those threads will hopefully go through and to adulthood (A., Teacher, 2024)
		To see them be good dads and good members of that community... There's this like, deep, deep sense of fulfillment (B. Teacher, 2024)
		The experience of being a mentor, walking alongside those students, pushes back against the lie or the idea that my life is meaningless and purposeless... And so there is this kind of voice or the idea at times that [says] does your life contribute anything? And through getting new invested students, it is a reminder that my life does not look like I thought it would look like, but it does contribute value in the lives of the students and benefits communally (B. Teacher, 2024)
		One of the benefits of mentoring is in theory that you could potentially affect the community because you've affected one of the members in the community. And..that's good to say if we are improving the life of an individual then [we're] moving forward (B. Teacher, 2024)
	FO 2: Value Relationships	I think [mentoring is] a really unique aspect of independent schools. And to be honest, it was a huge draw when I decided to kind of go down this route. And working in schools, the main hook for me was to be able to have those relationships with [students], feeling like I can actually make a difference, not just in a classroom setting... to realize that, you know, these guys can be impacted beyond the classroom and their development as young [adults] (B. Teacher, 2024)

		"kind of forced interaction" "So when they come up to tell you about what's still going on in their life, it shows how deep that connection got. And there's something genuinely pleasing about that" (B. Teacher, 2024)
		"He will say [Teacher's name], I love you. I cannot believe it. That still just blows me away. It's just mind-blowing to me... And it's very casually said but meaningful. It's very sweet. It's very heartwarming. So it's pretty nice" (B. Teacher, 2024)
	FO 3: Value Job	We have one day a week where we eat lunch with them and that is my favorite day of the week... Like I genuinely look forward to it. I look forward to seeing them. Look forward to getting to talk to them. I think about them more than my other students (A., Teacher, 2024)
		walking alongside someone on the way to where they are going (B. Teacher, 2024)
		The best part is, you know, you go through the struggles with them throughout their whole career, and then the moment when you see them graduate it makes it all worth it (B. Teacher, 2024)
School Culture Outcomes		So I want to have those relationships where they want to come back, and they see those teachers that maybe mentored them. But also... when they go to a new place and they're trying to get to know people, [they'll have] somebody that they can always go back to (C. Teacher, 2024)
		"people don't really leave here that often" (B. Faculty, 2024)
		[Alumni] feel welcome here. They feel like it's family. They feel like they are connected... and wanting to come back... [the school] gets back a lot of money because they feel like they got something from this place and they want to give back. So they want other people to have that experience (B. Teacher, 2024)
		I think it's important to the school culture... We're starting to get like third-generation families coming through. So if we can offer things that parents remember fondly from their education, we update them and make sure that they're relevant, but they're still good. That's a good part of traditional education (A. Teacher, 2024)

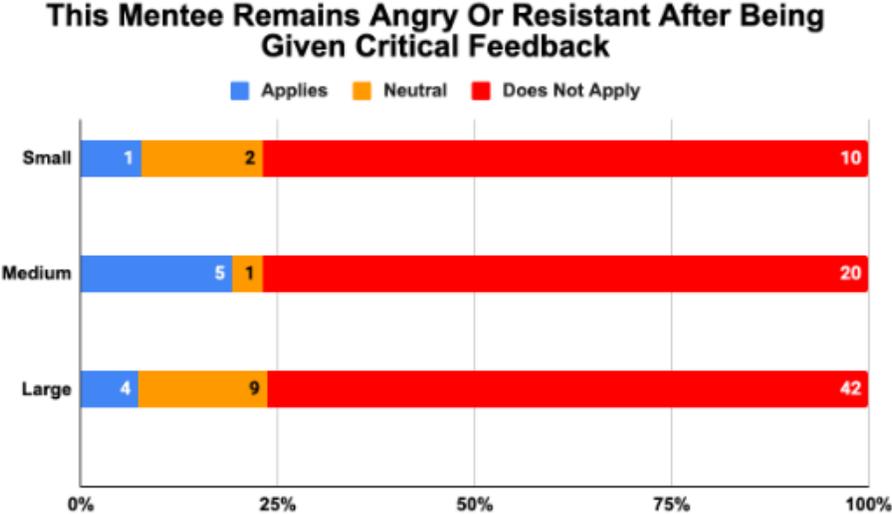
APPENDIX I-SURVEY GRAPH: I SHARE AN AFFECTIONATE, WARM RELATIONSHIP WITH THIS MENTEE



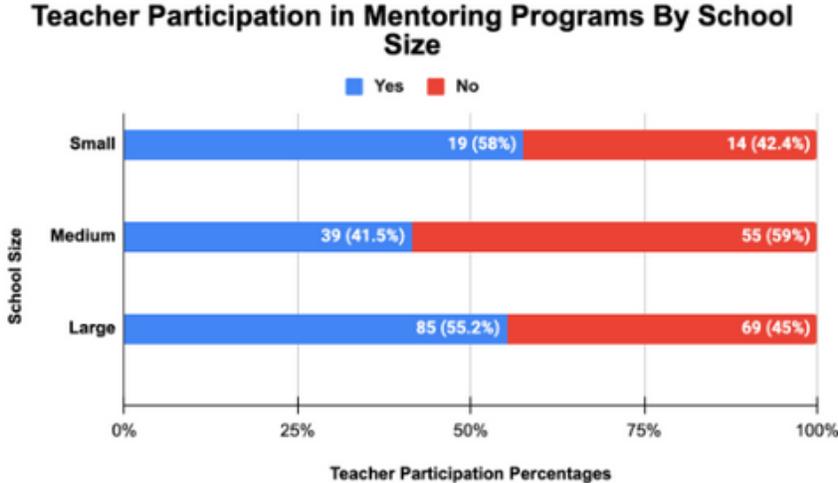
APPENDIX J-SURVEY GRAPH: THIS MENTEE VALUES HIS OR HER RELATIONSHIP WITH ME



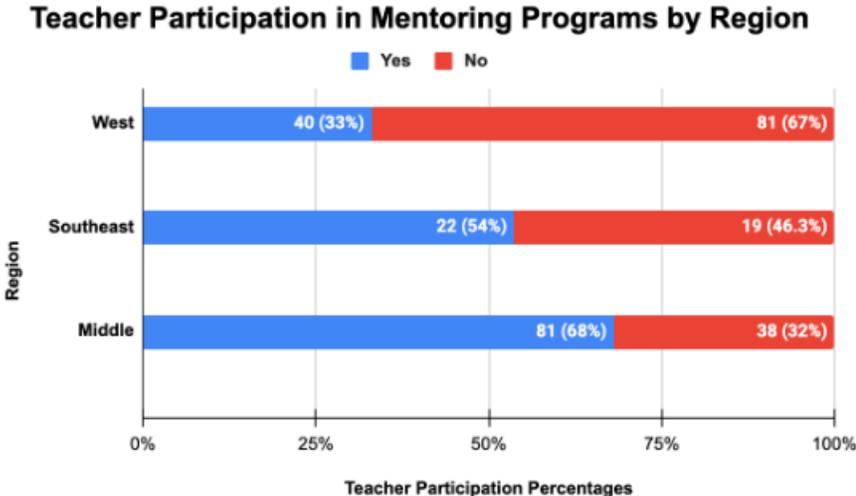
APPENDIX K-SURVEY GRAPH: THIS MENTEE REMAINS ANGRY OR RESISTANT AFTER BEING GIVEN CRITICAL FEEDBACK



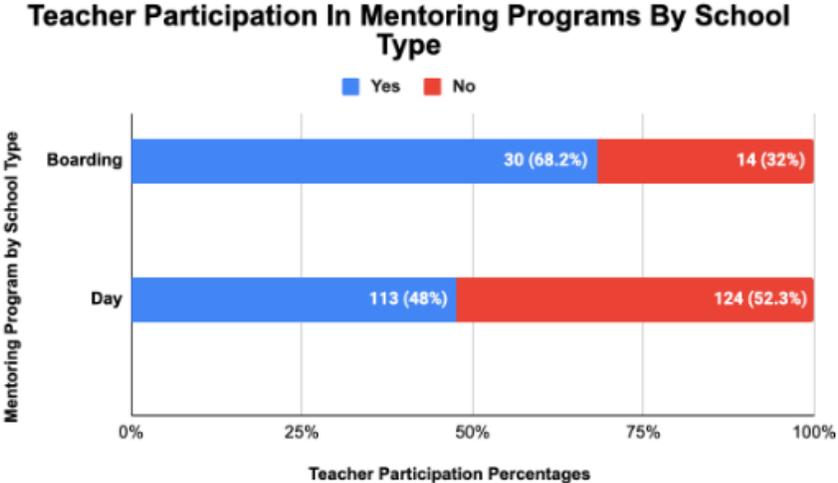
APPENDIX L-SURVEY GRAPH: TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN MENTORING PROGRAMS BY SCHOOL SIZE



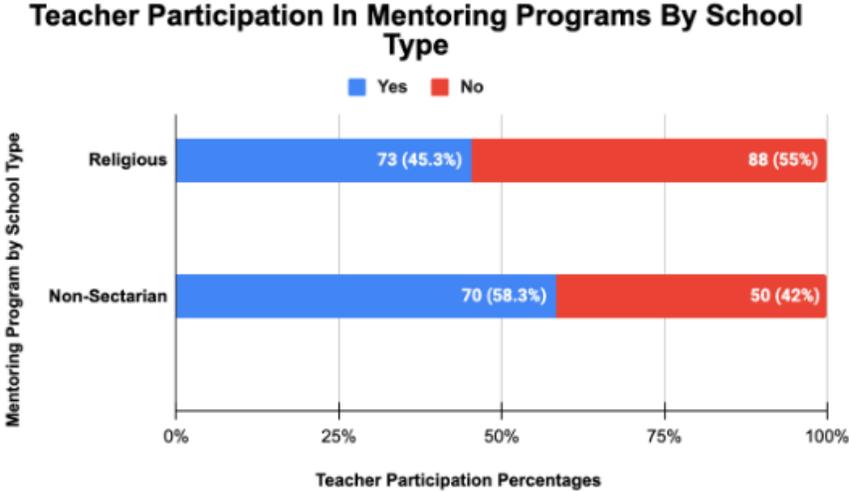
APPENDIX M-SURVEY GRAPH: TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN MENTORING PROGRAMS BY REGION



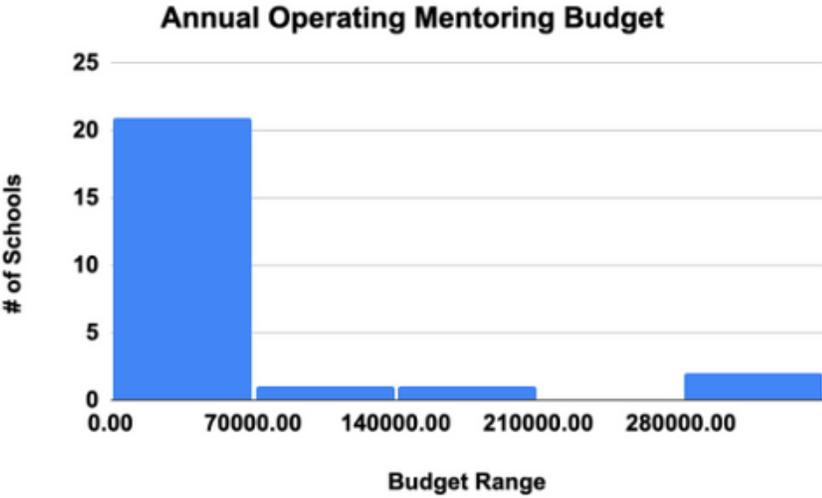
APPENDIX N-SURVEY GRAPH: TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN MENTORING PROGRAMS BY BOARDING OR DAY SCHOOL TYPE



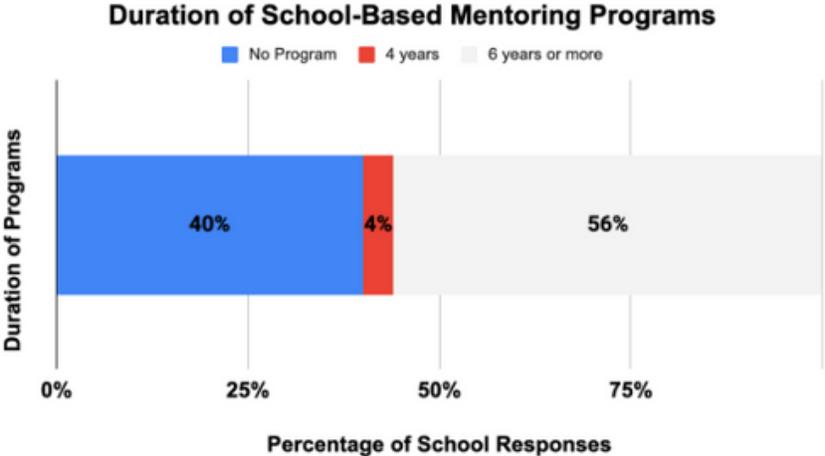
APPENDIX O-SURVEY GRAPH: TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN MENTORING PROGRAMS BY RELIGIOUS SCHOOL TYPE



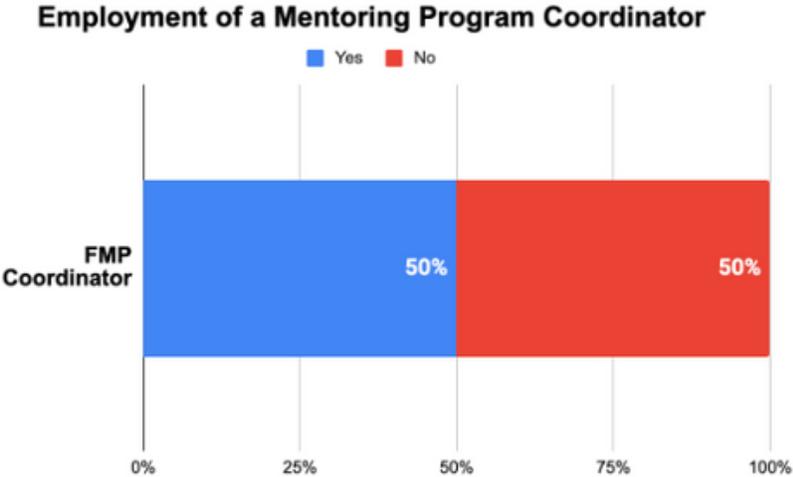
APPENDIX P-SURVEY GRAPH: ANNUAL OPERATING MENTORING BUDGET



APPENDIX Q-SURVEY GRAPH: DURATION OF SCHOOL-BASED MENTORING PROGRAMS



APPENDIX R-SURVEY GRAPH: EMPLOYMENT OF A MENTORING PROGRAM COORDINATOR



APPENDIX S-SURVEY GRAPH: REQUIRED TRAINING FOR MENTORS

