Innovative Strategies for Mentoring High School Students

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Who We Are:
Communities In Schools

- We are a federation of nearly 200 non-profit organizations in 27 States and the District of Columbia
- Our mission is to surround students with a community of support empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life
- Since 1977, we’ve grown from serving 100 students in Atlanta to serving 1.25 million students annually
- We’re in over 2,400 public schools (K-12) and community sites in urban, suburban, and rural communities
- 96% of our students are on free and reduced priced lunch; 81% are students of color
The CIS Model of Integrated Student Supports
Case Management + Mentoring: A Win-Win for Everyone

- Both case management and mentoring alone produce positive outcomes for students
- Adding case management to mentoring offers a value-add to mentors and mentees alike
  - Mentors can mentor while CIS site coordinators ensure students’ needs are being met (e.g., academic assistance, basic needs, counseling)
  - CIS site coordinator coordinates/facilitates on-site (at the school) interaction and activities; helps to maximize match time together

The same way CIS addresses the barriers to learning to allow teachers to focus on teaching and students to focus on learning, by addressing these same barriers, we allow mentors and mentees to focus on their relationship.
An Opportunity for Success: The OJJDP Multi-State Mentoring Initiative and Corporate Partnerships

- Integrate case management with mentoring best practices
- Reach high-need students in high-need schools with focus on high schools
- Address inadequate college/career preparation of high school students through intentional match activities
  - Examples on panel: Career Exploration Projects, School-to-Work Models, STEM learning activities for matches
- Scale best practices to the larger CIS network and other youth serving organizations
Career Exploration: A Strategy for Mentoring High School Students
Common Challenges to Mentoring High School Students

- Busy schedules
- More likely to get bored or disinterested
- More time needed to build trust
- More likely to test boundaries of the mentoring relationship
- Mentors question if they can relate to their mentees
- Others?
Career Exploration with Corporate Partners

- Recruitment strategy for mentors and volunteers
- Encourages students to stay in school & plan for the future
- Non-threatening, neutral content to start the conversation & begin the relationship
- Connects youth & professionals to their local communities
- Pathway to sustained mentoring relationships
Career Exploration with Corporate Partners

• Partnered with the AT&T Aspire Mentoring Academy
• Concept: 3-4 hour site visit at an AT&T workplace site to expose students to careers, while also fostering personal connection to professional adults

• Over 3000 students have participated in over 30 communities across the country
Recommended Program Components:

- Partnership with a community business or industry partner
- Coordination at the employer level
- Preparation of students before their workplace site visit

- Overview of program so employees know what to expect
- Complete consent forms and additional requirements from employer
Recommended Program Components:

- Small groups - 1:5 is ideal
- Facility tour or other hands-on learning experience for the students
- Curriculum or activities to guide the day
- Personal interaction between students and employees
- Pre- and post- work learning activities
- Provide the foundation for further connection and long-lasting mentoring relationships
Career Exploration Activities

• Pre-Work Activities
  – Practice professional communication skills
  – Research job titles & company profile

• Onsite Activities
  – Based upon the 4 C’s
  – Informational Interview
  – Group problem solving & decision making
  – Workplace readiness skills

• Post-Work Activities
  – Thank you notes
  – Reflection & next steps
  – Invitation to visit the school site & get involved as a mentor or volunteer
Results

• Improved abilities in the 4 C’s
  – communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity

• Students felt they were more likely to graduate high school

• Students felt more positive about the future

• Students felt more certain about their ability to succeed in school
School to Work Mentoring

CIS of Miami’s CHAMP

(Communities Helping Adolescents Mentor Program)
School to Work Program Overview

• 5 School Sites
• 10 Partners
• 120 Students Served
• Students go on field trips once a month to meet with mentors at their job site.
• Personal, academic, and career mentoring
Mentor Video Clip

Insert Video Clip
Sample Outcomes

• 88% Improved GPA
• 93% Seniors Graduated
• 92% learned about workplace skills.
• 93.5% reported receiving personal, academic, and/or career guidance from their mentors.
• 81% felt better about themselves
• 88% learned how to get along better with others
• 93% felt they had more hope for the future
Recruitment & Matching

**Students**
- Application with survey
- Referrals (teachers, counselors, Admin., self-refer)

**Mentors**
- Application with survey
- Lead Mentor, word of mouth

**Matching**
- Pair based on similarities
- Monitor
Replication Tips

• Target # per site: 20 Mentors
• Cost Consideration and Cost Sharing
• Selection of Students (testing, grades, maturity)
• Commitment from school, student, mentors
• Staffing Consideration
• Student: Mentor Ratio
STEM Strategies for Mentoring High School Students

Communities In Schools of Greater New Orleans
What is the Communities In Schools Mentoring Program?

• The CIS Mentoring Program gives adult volunteers and youth the opportunity to engage in a mentoring relationship in a structured and safe school based environment.

• Our equation is a simple one:

  one adult + one child + one lunch a week =

  2 Lives Changed
Why is The Communities In School Model Vital?

“The Greatest Proximate Cause [for why a school becomes a dropout factory] is that…

there is a fundamental Miss-Match between the Number of Students in Need of Academic and Social Supports in a High School and the Human Resources and Know How Available to Help”

(Source: Balfanz & Legters, 2007)
Disconnection Between Services and Students’ Needs

Most Communities Have Fragmented Resources

- Mentors/Tutors
- Enrichment Opportunities
- Business Partners
- Employment Services
- Human Services
- Recreation
- Health Services
What We Do

CIS Strategically connects and aligns resources

Health Services
Enrichment Opportunities
Recreation

Mentors/Tutors
Human Services
Employment Services
Business Partners

Student Outcomes

Improved Attendance
Improved Behavior
 Improved Academic Performance

= Higher Stay-In-School/Graduation Rates
Communities In School Organizational Chart

CIS Organizational Chart
Local Affiliate

- Board of Directors
- Executive Director
- Agency Coordinator
- Site Coordinator (reassigned/repositioned/hired)
- Administrative Assistant

- Mentors/Tutors
- Employment Services
- Human Services
- Business Partners
- Student/Family Needs
- Enrichment Opportunities
- Health Services
- Recreation
CIS Greater New Orleans Organizational Chart

Board of Directors

Executive Director

Director of Student Services K-8

Director of Student Services High School

K-8 Site Coordinators

Mentor Coordinator

High School Site Coordinators

Students

Mentors

Students
CIS Greater New Orleans Site Coordinators’ Role

- Site Coordinators are Master’s Level Social Workers and Counselors
- Each Site Coordinator works full time at a school site
- They manage the program at their assigned site
- Site Coordinators identify & coordinate services & resources
- This may include basic needs services, individual, group, and/or family counseling, making referrals to social services and other providers, and crisis interventions
- They develop, implement and monitor Individual Service Plans for case-managed students
Process of Making a Match for Students

- Teacher or Site Coordinator recommends student for the mentoring program by filling out mentoring referral form.
- A mentoring information packet is sent home to family that includes information on the mentoring program, a student questionnaire, and a parental consent for student to be in program.
- Once parental consent is received by Site Coordinator, they inform the Mentor Coordinator.
- Mentoring Coordinator goes to the student’s school to conduct an interview with potential mentee and to review interest.
- Once a mentor match is found for mentee, Mentor Coordinator calls parents to inform them of the mentors name and date of the first proposed meeting.
Finding the Right Match

- Each student and mentor are interviewed by Mentor Coordinator about their interests
- Mentor Coordinator works with Site Coordinator to find needs and issues of concern with each mentee
- Mentor Coordinator compiles information and matches student with a mentor based on all information gathered
Who Are Our Mentors?

• CIS mentors are responsible adults willing to commit at least four hours a month toward fostering a positive relationship with a young person. Mentors must:

• • Be at least 21 years of age
• Complete a mentor application and interview
• Pass a background check and reference check
• Submit a copy of their driver's license
• Complete 3 hour mentor training
• Commit to a match for a minimum of one year
  – Which includes attending one outing, one service learning project, and meeting with student at least one hour per week
Photos of Our Mentors
How Do We Find Our Mentors

- Google search CIS and Mentoring
- Word of mouth from Mentoring Coordinator, CIS Staff, and school personnel
- CIS AmeriCorps program
- Posters in local coffee shops, churches, community centers, restaurants
- Radio shows to promote (WTUL radio station and the United Way Radio Show)
- College students (Tulane University, Loyola University, Xavier University, Dillard University)
- Community and business fairs
CIS Greater New Orleans

Matches

- To date we have made 51 matches that have been sustained mentoring relationships for at least six months
- We have conducted 10 field trips and service learning projects
- The CIS Mentoring program has made community partnerships with 9 different organizations
- The CIS Mentoring program has led us to relationships with Juvenile Court Judges, a contracted employee at the Truancy Office, and a member of the mayor’s NOLA FOR LIFE campaign.
STEM

• STEM is the field of study in the category of science, technology, engineering, and/or mathematics.

• The United States is falling behind internationally, ranking 25th in mathematics and 17th in science among industrialized nations.

• By 2014, two million U.S. jobs are expected to be created in STEM-related fields Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

• African Americans received just 7% of all STEM bachelor's degrees, 4% of master's degrees, and 2% of PhDs in 2009, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.
National STEM Initiative

• “One of the things that I’ve been focused on as President is how we create an all-hands-on-deck approach to science, technology, engineering, and math… We need to make this a priority to train an army of new teachers in these subject areas, and to make sure that all of us as a country are lifting up these subjects for the respect that they deserve.”

• President Barack Obama

• In November 2009, the President launched the Educate to Innovate initiative to move American students from the middle to the top of the pack in science and math achievement over the next decade.

• Educate to Innovate plans to:
  – Build a CEO-Led Coalition to Leverage the Unique Capacities of the Private Sector
  – Prepare 100,000 new and effective STEM teachers over the next decade
  – Showcase and bolster federal investment in STEM
  – Broadening participation to inspire a more diverse STEM talent pool
Mentoring and STEM

• Disenfranchising stereotypes have a negative impact on students’ learning and participation in science and mathematics classes. High achieving students struggled to distinguish themselves from negative stereotypes and struggled to prevent these images from affecting their self-esteem. (Brand et al., 2006).
Tulane University Neuroscience Mentoring

• Three High Schools have participated in our partnership with the Tulane Neuroscience Department

• 4 graduate students in the Neuroscience department committed to mentor students from the high schools for four hours a day once a month

• 12 students were enrolled in the program with referrals from the school staff and the CIS site coordinator
• Once a month the mentees traveled to Tulane and met with their mentor

• They would conduct experiments, eat lunch together, and the mentee would write a literary review of their experiment

• Tulane University funded the experiments and equipment used for each visit

• Some of the experiments included:
  – How drugs affect mice
  – DNA extraction
  – Crime scene investigation
Tulane Frog Dissection
U.S. Department Of Agriculture Mentoring

- 10-12 students were matched with mentors from New Orleans local USDA office
- Once a month for 4 hours, the students met with their mentors at the USDA facility
- Upon the first meeting they toured the private and secure facility.
- The mentees followed a routine similar to the Tulane relationship- they conducted an experiment, ate lunch, and wrote a literary review
U.S. Department Of Agriculture Mentoring

• Each USDA employee worked with two students and they conducted an experiment together

• Some of the experiments included
  – Allergy taste testing
  – How cotton becomes a thread
  – How to extract sugar from sugarcane

• They also took field trips together to a horse farm, and the New Orleans Museum of Art
USDA Tour
How Cotton Becomes Thread
Taste Testing
Funding For Special Mentoring Initiatives

- The *Educate to Innovate* initiative has grant funding available, through the state and federal grants.

- Universities have multiple grants to help students of color in STEM programs.

- Contact STEM industry corporations to find if they have any grant opportunities.

- CIS of Greater New Orleans also receives mentor funding from OJJDP, United Way, and Capital One.
Outcomes of STEM Mentoring

- Students became exposed to careers in the STEM fields other than doctor and nurse
- Some of the Tulane mentees registered for the Tulane summer camp STEM program
- Students were invited to work part-time at the USDA over the summer
- Students gained self-esteem about working in a STEM field, and helped extinguish negative stereotypes about the field.
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Thank you!

Q&A