THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL-BASED MENTORING ON AT-RISK STUDENTS OF AN URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

by

Brandon B. Richardson

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

It is necessary to consider and implement a strategy to close the academic performance gap, particularly for at-risk adolescents in urban school districts. Mentoring programs have been around for a long time and continue to be successful. This research study's goal was to investigate the influence at-risk adolescents in an urban school district get from a school-based mentorship program. The study had a total of 40 participants (10 mentors, 8 parents, 10 teachers, 10 students, and 2 administrators). The study employed a mixed methods research strategy. Using a quantitative method approach, the researcher investigated whether a mentorship program had significant impacts on at-risk children's attendance, I-Ready scores, and behavior referrals. The student's scores on the pre-and post-tests were computed and ranked using the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. The same test was utilized to compare behavior referrals, and attendance from the fall semester to the spring semester of the current academic year. Focus groups and interviews were used to gather qualitative information and were both recorded using Zoom. The results indicated that school-based mentoring had a statistical significance on student I-Ready test scores, attendance, grade point average, and discipline referrals. The study closed with implications, limits, and suggestions for further research on mentoring initiatives in schools.

Dedication

I want to start by honoring God, who is my creator, sustainer, and Heavenly Father. I also want to thank Jesus Christ for the ultimate sacrifice of dying on the cross to not only wash away my sins, but all sins of mankind. Mom, I appreciate you giving me life, and for all the years you've supported and believed in me. Dad, I appreciate you pushing me and setting a fantastic example. Dr. Bing, I appreciate you being another father figure. Your academic path has always been an inspiration to me. Grandma, thank you for everything, the time you spent grooming me has paid off. Jasmine, I appreciate you recognizing the effort and time it took for me to accomplish my goals and objective. I adore every one of you. I appreciate you being there for me during this amazing adventure. I want to express my appreciation to Dr. Donna Busarow for serving as my dissertation committee Chair. I also would like to thank Dr. Kelly Gorbett for serving as my Committee member. You both pushed me and gave me the opportunity to realize my ambition. I will always be very appreciative. Lastly, I would like to thank all the participants of this study from the Mentors, Teachers, Parents, Administrators, and Students.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

What happens when children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds who often enter school with learning deficits are expected to progress at the same rate as middle-or upper-class pupils? These children typically do not meet the learning objectives, and their learning gaps increase (McQuillin et al., 2018). Students that suffer socially, emotionally, and intellectually are often classified as at-risk. Most schools in the country have at-risk (AR) students. Students with learning disabilities, disciplinary issues, grade retentions, or other learning-related factors that could adversely affect their educational performance may be referred to by this term (McQuillin et al., 2018). The problem is so serious that both state and federal legislation have been created to make sure help is given to the individuals who suffer because of their socioeconomic status or run into challenges that are beyond their control and prevent them from realizing their potential. An increasing number of youths are isolated from adults due to the rise in single-parent families, the breakdown of neighborhood socialization, and the growing need for parents, particularly single parents, to work long hours outside the home (Claro & Perelmiter, 2021). It's possible that there is not a strong support system at home or that adults are not available to help students with assignments or homework.

Although students have little control over their birth environment, there is a method for schools to offer regular, motivating support through adults. Mentoring programs have the ability to minimize or even eliminate the obstacles that frequently prevent students from achieving academic achievement. Every child is valuable and deserves to learn in a way that satisfies their own requirements (Claro & Perelmiter,

2021). It's not always possible for teachers to devote a lot of time to helping pupils. Meeting with every child every day and attending to all of their needs is almost impossible given the number of children the instructors are responsible for. As a result, at-risk children start skipping class to avoid the difficulties they experience in school (Claro & Perelmiter, 2021). Some of these adolescents engage in undesirable and aggressive behavior while they are present at school to attract attention from peers or the instructor (McQuillin et al., 2018). Each of these options has unfavorable outcomes. Students who miss class become further behind and find it more difficult to catch up on the content. Negative conduct prevents other students from learning and may result in the expulsion of the offending adolescent from the classroom (McQuillin et al., 2018).

Currently, a large number of charity and government organizations, including Big Sisters, The Boy's and Girl's Club, and the United Way, are trying to improve outcomes for at-risk adolescents through mentoring programs. The reasoning for youth mentoring is grounded in formative science research, where specialists found that adolescents who have positive associations with grown-ups' fair better compared to those that do not (Lyons et al., 2018). This research examined the effectiveness of a school-based mentorship program as a means of bridging the achievement gap for at-risk children. Mentors offer students supportive encouragement in an effort to boost their self-confidence in their academic achievements. When adults spend time with students, a strong bond that is advantageous to both sides develops. The mentor is driven to assist children in need, and the students receive ongoing assistance that may not be available at home.

Background

The ultimate goal of this research was to contribute to the body of knowledge on at-risk children in compliance with the law. The problem is so serious that both state and federal legislation have been created to provide support. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) into law in 1965 after it was approved by the United States Congress. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which President Barack Obama signed into law in December 2015, oversees K–12 public education in the United States. To make up for the significant deprivation brought on by child poverty, Title I was created under the ESEA (Rodriguez & Guzman, 2019). There are two different categories of aid covered by the funding. The first option is a school wide program that allows schools to allocate resources in a flexible way. A targeted assistance program is the second, and it enables schools to identify children who are struggling academically or at-risk of failing. Students pick up knowledge in many ways. Additionally, each student learns best in a method that is specific to their learning style. Tend the flock of God in your midst, (overseeing) not by constraint but willingly, as God would have it, not for shameful profit but eagerly.

Do not lord it over those assigned to you, but be examples to the flock (*New American Standard Bible*, 1971/1995, 1 Peter 5: 2–3). Similarly, older women should be reverent in their behavior, not slanderers, not addicted to drink, teaching what is good, so that they may train younger women to love their husbands and children (*New American Standard Bible*, 1971/1995, Titus 2: 3-4). Even with the best of intentions, teachers may not be able to devote as much attention to each individual as they would want since they have a limited amount of time to teach (Laco & Johnson, 2019). Students suffer as a result, and some go on to struggle behaviorally. Due to a lack of interest in the material,

attendance can eventually drop, which causes the student to lag in both attendance and academic performance (Lyons & McQuillin, 2019). This makes it difficult to achieve when paired with a lack of support from home. The at-risk children that do go to school can exhibit disruptive behaviors, such as being disrespectful to faculty, fighting, and interrupting student learning.

Some people think that this conduct is an attempt to get the attention they may not be getting at home. The emotional requirements of at-risk adolescents are not being satisfied by the people in their lives if they are not getting the attention they require at home (Claro & Perelmiter, 2021). This results in making bad decisions, which have negative effects that cannot be undone, such as suspension and behavioral episodes. A feasible remedy for this problem is a mentorship program that is implemented in schools. According to a model of youth mentoring developed by Rhodes (2005) and based on attachment theory, close relationships marked by mutability, trust, and empathy improve children's development (Lyons & McQuillin, 2019). The criteria for what constitute an at-risk student may change. For the purposes of this study, at-risk children are defined as those who struggle with frequent behavioral referrals, academic performance, and attendance.

School Context

Within Richmond City Public Schools, Amelia Street School is a distinctive speciality school. Amelia Street School is a one-of-a-kind specialty school for students with significant intellectual disabilities and behavioral and emotional challenges between the ages of 5 and 21. It has 33 children in grades K-12 with an understudy educator proportion of 11 to 1. State test results show that 55% of students are proficient in

reading and 55% in math. The average household income in the Amelia school district is $49,079, and 89% of students receive reduced or free lunch. Amelia Street School teaches on a three-tiered system. Each student's educational program incorporates either comprehensive therapies or school-based mentoring on a daily basis. The school-based mentoring program is based on functional life skills, training in communication, and aligned learning standards. Small group settings and personalized learning sessions are advantageous for students attending Amelia Street School. Integrated assistive technology, in addition to speech, occupational, and physical therapy, are all components of high-quality training delivered there. Amelia Street School aims to maximize each child's potential by promoting an atmosphere that is conducive to active learning and that offers adolescents security, safety, dignity, and respect.

School-Based Mentoring

Mentoring school-aged children has recently gained popularity as a method for fostering protective factors. Youth mentoring programs are structured services that are designed to promote positive relationships between youth and nonparental adults. The number of children served by youth mentoring programs in the United States increased from 300,000 in 1990 to almost 3 million in 2014 (McQuillin et al., 2018). Mentoring programs are based on the idea that the student is the most valuable commodity, and that improving student achievement should be the focus of all education reform efforts. This fits in with the larger aim for school reform to address the socioeconomic issues that are unique to the target group. School-based mentoring is a specific type of youth mentoring that takes place in a school setting either during or after school hours. According to Randolph and Johnson (2018), teachers typically refer students for mentoring when they

have concerns about their behavior or academic difficulties. Typically, the mentor meets with the mentee to provide individual tutoring, individual attention, and a variety of relationship-building activities. In order to close the achievement gap, Amelia Street School has put in place the Brothers and Sisters United Mentoring program.

The Brothers and Sisters United Mentoring program is regarded as a School-Based Mentoring (SBM) intervention that provides instructors with additional assistance in the classroom, therefore supporting in the development of children with significant potential. The mentorship program offered helps at-risk children stay in school, achieve better academic results, and have fewer behavioral and attendance problems. School-based mentorship programs help children build social and emotional skills and aspirations for further education in order to have a sustainable future (Claro & Perelmiter, 2021). The purpose of this study aimed to investigate the impact of school-based mentoring on at-risk students in an urban environment. This study will provide the gap of school-based mentoring on at-risk adolescence post COVID-19. According to a scientific brief released by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021), the global prevalence of anxiety and mental health disorders increased by a staggering 25% in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the findings, young adolescence's mental health has been affected the most by the pandemic, and they are significantly more likely to engage in self-harm and suicidal thoughts and actions.

Problem Statement

Many children change schools often, leaving gaps in their understanding and application of subjects across the K–12 range. Some children still perform below grade level despite a variety of teaching strategies, and changes to the curricular resources.

Numerous low-achieving adolescents lack constant adult role models who promote and support academic growth at home. An increasing number of youths are isolated from adults due to the rise in single-parent families, and the breakdown of neighborhood socialization (Claro & Perelmiter, 2021). Numerous of these pupils fall under the category of being economically challenged in their neighborhood. Every academic year, children are moved up a grade level, yet they still struggle academically and continue to regress as seen by their low-test results (Claro & Perelmiter, 2021). Because school-based mentoring programs have produced mixed results, they are being overlooked as mediation for academic and problematic behaviors for adolescence.

The reason this specific study is relevant to the topic is because we are recently recovering from the devastation of a global pandemic which would make school-based mentoring programs more of a need. According to a scientific brief released by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021), the global prevalence of anxiety and mental health disorders increased by a staggering 25% in just the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. This study will provide the gap of school-based mentoring on at-risk adolescence post COVID-19. At-risk students, are students who are academically performing one or more grade levels below their current grade placement (Claro & Perelmiter, 2021). The purpose of this study aimed to investigate the impact of school-based mentoring on at-risk students in an urban environment. This study means to give help to adolescents who are not stirring up to their true capacity. It will provide teachers with alternative academic support, assisting them in assisting students with significant potential.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this mixed-method study was to track changes in student confidence, academic skills, interaction between students and teachers, and overall performance. The motivation behind this study was to also investigate the impact of school-based mentoring post Covid-19. This study will provide the missing information on the subject. The objective of this program was to assist at-risk students who are not performing to their full potential. The goal was to see how mentoring affects attendance, academic achievement, and the number of behavioral issues and referrals for students.

Research Question(s) and Hypotheses

Quantitative Research

Research Question

RQ1: What is the relationship between school-based mentoring, suspension rates and academic performance, as measured by I-Ready (Math and Reading) scores and GPA?

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1a: There will be an increase in I-Ready test scores for students who participate in the school-based mentoring groups.

Hypothesis $1_{0:}$ There will not be an increase in I-Ready test scores for students who participate in the school-based mentoring groups.

Hypothesis 2: There will be an increase in overall GPA for students who participate in the school-based mentoring groups.

Hypothesis 2_0: There will not be an increase in overall GPA for students who participate in the school-based mentoring groups.

Hypothesis 3a: There will be a decrease in student suspension for students who participate in the school-based mentoring groups.

Hypothesis 3_0: There will not be a decrease in student suspension for students who participate in the school-based mentoring groups.

Qualitative Research

RQ1: What are the overall benefits of participating in a school-based mentoring program for at-risk students?

RQ 2: What factors determine the success of school-based mentoring?

RQ 3: What aspects of a student's life improve or significantly change as a result of participating in a school-based mentoring program?

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

Prior to 2015 and prior to this study, Amelia Street School did not have any specific school-based mentoring programs. Thus, a few presumptions were made. First, it was thought that the vice principal or another designated disciplinarian would be in charge of looking after at-risk children. Given that there was no strategy to enhance the children's 's academic results, only their behavioral concerns, this assumption does not prove helpful. Second, it was also believed that this group of students would not experience any favorable outcomes. Regardless of how meticulously you prepare research, there are always certain restrictions. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), a study's limitations are those aspects of a particular research design that have an influence on how findings should be interpreted and put restrictions on how results may be generalized. Technology will be an important resource in this study. Relying on technology may be difficult and a potential limitation. The accessibility of Wi-Fi may be poor, there may be delays, and there may be other technological issues that affect how well a conversation flows. Another limitation of the study is participants honesty. Since this is a mixed research design participants honesty is crucial in determining the results.

Also, limited generalizability is a limitation of this study. We are looking at one demographic from one school.

Theoretical Foundations of the Study

According to a model of youth mentoring developed by Rhodes (2005) and based on attachment theory, close relationships marked by mutability, trust, and empathy improve children's development (Lyons & McQuillin, 2019). Particularly, Rhodes hypothesized that mentors enhance youths' (a) social-emotional, (b) cognitive, and (c) identity development through the development of a close relationship over time (Lyons & McQuillin, 2019). Attachment theory's fundamental concept (Bowlby, 1982) is that humans are born with an inherent psychobiological system (the attachment behavioral system) that drives them to seek proximity to protective individuals (attachment figures) in times of need. The smooth, normal operation of the attachment system is facilitated by interactions with attachment figures who are perceptive to and receptive to one's proximity bids. These interactions also foster a sense of connectedness and security and contribute to constructive working models of self and others. However, when an individual's attachment figures aren't consistently accessible and encouraging, concerns about one's social value and other people's negative intentions grow stronger, and the person loses interpersonal security and loses confidence in their ability to handle threats and challenges (Bowlby, 1973).

The terms affectional bond and emotional bond are all synonyms for attachment, which is defined as a long-lasting psychological connection between people (McQuillin et al., 2018). During infancy, a person's initial bond is frequently formed with the primary caregiver. However, it must be highlighted that attachment is not just present in

interactions between infants and their caregivers; it may also exist in other social relationships (McQuillin et al., 2018). Tend the flock of God in your midst, (overseeing) not by constraint but willingly, as God would have it, not for shameful profit but eagerly. Do not lord it over those assigned to you, but be examples to the flock (*New American Standard Bible*, 1971/1995, 1 Peter 5: 2–3). Similarly, older women should be reverent in their behavior, not slanderers, not addicted to drink, teaching what is good, so that they may train younger women to love their husbands and children (*New American Standard Bible*, 1971/1995, Titus 2: 3-4).

Definition of Terms

The following is a list of definitions of terms that are used in this study.

Accountability – A duty or readiness to take account for one's conduct or accept responsibility (McQuillin et al., 2018).

Administration – Principals and Assistant Principals of schools.

At-Risk – Students whose academic performance is lower than their current grade placement by at least one grade level. Students who struggle academically and behaviorally and whose foundational skills are assessed to be below grade-level norms (McQuillin et al., 2018).

Collaboration – To work mutually with others or together, particularly in a scholarly undertaking (McDaniel & Yarbrough, 2019).

ELA – English Language Arts

Instructional Assistant – Performs paraprofessional work assisting a classroom teacher.

I-Ready Diagnostic – A test that adapts to each student's needs in order to support teachers in their efforts to tailor learning for each student (McQuillin et al., 2018).

Mentor – A reliable and trusted guide or advisor (Kamenetz, 2018).

Professional Development – Training provided to faculty to support the vision and the initiatives of a school and school district (Smith & Stormont, 2019).

School Partnerships – Local community organizations that work with schools to provide children the best opportunity to learn by offering specialized services, support, and active participation (Smith & Stormont, 2019).

School Relations – Communication between school and the community.

Stakeholders – Anyone participating in the study, whether they are in the school system or not (McQuillin et al., 2018).

Significance of the Study

The results of this study will demonstrate that connections between children and adults are crucial and have a significant influence on the lives of the students we teach, which benefits at-risk students. Students who are at-risk are those who, more often than not, do not have positive interactions with the adults or other important people in their lives. Engaging mentors can demonstrate the power of relationships to boost at-risk students' academic and behavioral performance. This study will assist with recognizing explicit information to support what connections can mean for change in the classroom. Mentoring will address the difficulties that at-risk students face and demonstrate how mentoring affects at-risk students' lives. Because there is a lack of data on at-risk youth academic intervention post-Covid-19, this study will provide new information and contribute to the field.

Summary

Students need strong adult role models more than ever to motivate and inspire them as they traverse the educational system. It is crucial to give children the fundamental academic information and abilities required to promote life-long learning. Professional development is possible for teachers, staff members, at-risk students, and anybody else in a supportive atmosphere. The objectives of this study are straightforward: to determine the general advantages of school-based mentoring programs for at-risk students, to identify the factors that make these programs effective, and to identify the areas of students' lives that benefit from or change significantly as a result of such programs. A school-based mentorship program can offer the help and encouragement required to enable children to overcome a lack of confidence and develop their work ethic and moral character when they are considered and classified as at-risk. When students are surrounded by supportive connections that are crucial to their success, they are more likely to advance academically. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the efficiency of mentoring for at-risk students in terms of enhancing their behavior, attendance, and academic results.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

It is vital to place the methodologies and research questions in the context of the presently accessible body of knowledge in order to legitimize the study. It was crucial to combine the many topics that are pertinent to the research questions and investigate what is already known in regard to the main themes of the current study because the researcher's goal was to add to the body of knowledge. As a result, Chapter II presents the research that is currently available in relation to the central themes of the historical problem of at-risk children, the definition of at-risk children, causes and effects of at-risk children, prior attempts at solutions, school-based mentoring programs, parents' roles in school-based mentoring programs, teachers' roles in school-based mentoring programs, relationships between mentors and mentees, and the Covid-19 pandemic influence. A summary of the results of the literature research and an analysis of knowledge gaps that will serve as rationale for the current investigation will be provided in this chapter's conclusion.

Description of Search Strategy

To find assessments of mentoring programs, an extensive search of the literature published after 2018 was done. For the purpose of the current study, studies were located using both computer-based and manual search techniques. Proquest, ERIC, and PsycINFO were the computerized databases used. The following terms and combinations were used in a thorough search of each computerized database: at-risk students, big brother, big sister, youth mentoring, mentor + program, mentor + intervention, mentor + outcomes, mentor + effects, mentor + comparison, mentor + randomized control trial,

nonparental adult + mentor, mentor-mentee relationship, mentor + experimental, and mentor + RCT. Peer-reviewed publications, unpublished dissertations, and technical reports were found through these searches. To find new publications, qualitative reviews and previous meta-analyses were searched. To find what was said about "mentoring" in the Bible, the researcher manually examined the American Standard Bible online. The following terms and combinations were used in a thorough search of the American Standard Bible online; youth mentoring, mentoring, and positive relationships.

Review of Literature

The phrase "at-risk" is used in a variety of circumstances in both the field of education and other fields of social research. The idea has substantial immediate and long-term effects on the educational system and is firmly ingrained in the social and economic inequalities that these communities face. According to Kamenetz (2018), these students were recognized in 1983, when former President Ronald Reagan learned that American adolescents were lagging behind their counterparts throughout the world. The No Child Left Behind Act was enacted in 2002 as a result of attempts to improve the underwhelming educational system (Kamenetz, 2018). However, these initiatives fell short of fulfilling the particular requirements of at-risk adolescence. According to Pennie et al. (2018), these marginalized groups fail to secure the academic success of adolescents in underprivileged school districts and those who live in neighborhoods with a high concentration of minority residents, which maintains socioeconomic gaps. Although Kamenetz noted that over the past 10 years, these groups have steadily improved their test scores, the improvements are not comparable to those who are not regarded as at-risk. Students of color are the ones who are affected most.

According to Pennie et al., 7% of all students leave high school early, with Students of color accounting for the largest proportion of this statistic. These groups are also more likely to be destitute and homeless, which increases the likelihood that their academic performance would be subpar (Pennie et al., 2018). According to Pennie et al., adolescents who do not have a consistent living situation are more likely to drop out of high school, which can result in a cycle of poverty brought on by a deficiency in education. These children are also more likely to end up in the juvenile justice system, where only 9% of them are predicted to complete high school or obtain a GED, and just 2% are predicted to continue their education (Pennie et al., 2018). Essentially, their living circumstances and demographics significantly increase the chance and possible consequences of not finishing school once these individuals have started to struggle academically. According to Pennie et al., deficient educational opportunities for these adolescents guarantee lifetime disadvantages in all facets of their lives.

Even while it has been claimed that these issues do not exist in contemporary society, Pennie et al., put at-risk children in the context of racial discrimination and the repressive character of social structures. Another concern related to at-risk adolescents' political and social backgrounds is the percentage of illegal immigrant students who rely on the public education system. According to Sulkowski (2019), these individuals are disadvantaged "as a result of prevailing laws, policies, practices, and public perceptions." (p .12). As a result of their immigrant status, the family may face the consequences of poverty as highlighted by Pennie et al. (2018). According to Sulkowski, having an unauthorized status limits parents' engagement and has a major impact on these adolescents' academic attainment levels. Notably, the regulations that assure these

immigrant adolescents receive a free education fail to account for the disproportionate percentage of these individuals who live at or below the poverty line with no social assistance. According to Eastman (2016), dropping out of high school is frequently caused by a lack of academic accomplishment and self-efficacy in the classroom. This decision does not only affect the student but also society.

Another concern with failing these at-risk adolescents is that those without a high school certificate are more likely to have health and social problems (Lansford et al., 2019). In fact, dropouts from high school are four times more likely to experience poor consequences such as jail or using government aid. These figures are significantly higher for at-risk groups. This evidence shows that neglecting to provide educational opportunities for these adolescents would result in increased and long-term economic costs. Whether the students are jailed or on government assistance, the expenses of their care will be borne by society long beyond what would have been their graduation day. Throughout this section, current data has been offered to contextualize the concerns surrounding at-risk adolescents in political and historical contexts. While further specifics about the concept of at-risk children will be discussed in the next section, many noteworthy themes have already emerged. The education system has mostly worked to preserve disparate social structures, putting underprivileged children at a higher risk of dropping out or failing to fulfill academic requirements met by their peers. As a result, these groups are more likely to keep their social standing, regardless of ethnicity, financial background, family composition, or gender. The ramifications of retaining various statuses have been examined in terms of both personal and social repercussions.

At-Risk Students Definition

In the literature, there are several approaches to defining at-risk students. Lansford et al. (2019), for example, emphasized that the word may be different for the composition of the student body. In other words, a child who is considered at-risk in one school district may not be considered at-risk in another. Darensbourg and Blake (2019), adds to this argument by stating that instructors may have varied criteria for defining at-risk adolescents even within the same school district. According to Darensbourg and Blake, the lack of an operational definition for at-risk adolescents may hinder the efficacy of treatments because children are assigned based on these criteria. Some adolescents who would benefit from the intervention may be excluded because of their teacher's classification of at-risk students. Chambers et al. (2019) defined at-risk children as those who had poor socioeconomic status, displayed low self-esteem and behavioral issues, and had a history of low academic accomplishment. At-risk, according to Hlost et al. (2018), are those who are unlikely to meet academic goals. Others, on the other hand, use a different method to include external influences that may impact students' educational habits.

Lansford et al. (2019), stated that children on free or reduced meal programs, students from minority backgrounds, and students who are regularly absent should all be deemed at-risk children. Multiple characteristics may be utilized to characterize and predict at-risk children, according to the existing literature. To start an early evaluation, it is critical that the term be utilized consistently. The following operational definition may be derived from the many definitions found in the literature: an at-risk student is one who encounters challenges that impede their academic attainment, perhaps leading to their inability or reluctance to finish an educational program. These variables can be internal,

external, or institutional, but they must be weighed against the student's present level and tracked throughout their academic career. For the purposes of this study, “at-risk” are students whose academic performance is lower than their current grade placement by at least one grade level. Students who struggle academically and behaviorally and whose foundational skills are assessed to be below grade-level norms (McQuillin et al., 2018).

At-Risk Students' Causes and Effects

In the preceding sections, certain risk factors were provided in order to highlight basic themes related with the causes and effects of children becoming at risk. It was discovered that personal, external, and institutional factors might put a student at risk of low academic accomplishment or failing to finish an academic program. Korhonen and Rautopuro (2019) investigated the link between chronic absenteeism and high school dropout. In order to perform a theme analysis, the researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with 66 principals. The researchers found five key factors connected with absenteeism: family difficulties, educational perspective, disregarding absence, economic impossibilities and family-child interaction. Dropping out was connected with four themes: attitude toward absenteeism, teacher-student connection, teacher conduct, and administrator-student interaction. According to Korhonen and Rautopuro, the school structure and environment were important in both sets of topics. Academic failures, sickness, and relationships were all individual variables. Sahin et al. (2019) did a comprehensive evaluation of the literature to determine the factors of students dropping out before finishing their academic degree. The researchers examined 44 papers published between 2002 and 2018. The principal themes that developed from the literature were familial situations.

Individuals who lived in poverty or in single-parent households, for example, were more likely to drop out of school early in both nations. Academic achievement was also a predictor of whether they will continue their education. Sahin et al. discovered that immigrant status and ethnicity were also important determinants in Asia. This study also discovered that cultural attitudes might influence how parents and students perceive school. When establishing intervention programs to assist at-risk adolescents in a culturally diverse school district, it may be vital to recognize these distinctions. Momo et al. (2019) examined the consequences of poverty on academic success. Students from poor socioeconomic background scored in the 30th percentile in their study. Students from the intermediate socioeconomic status group scored in the 45th percentile, while students from the upper socioeconomic status group scored in the 70th percentile. To compound these difficulties, Momo et al. (2019) stated that children who had parents who did not complete their degrees are at a considerably higher risk of dropping out themselves.

According to Momo et al. (2019) children who live in low-income neighborhoods may be exposed to people who do not value formal education, making it critical to fight these ideas with information and support from the school system and community. Another factor to examine in the reasons for at-risk students and their decision to drop out without finishing their diploma is race. According to Lansford et al. (2019), there are substantial disparities in academic success levels between African American and white children. The researchers examined behavioral engagement and academic value as predictors of academic success. According to Lansford et al., African American students are more likely to live in poverty, which, as Momo et al. point out, may imply they have

less exposure to individuals who place a high value on formal education than their classmates. Because this value influences how children participate in the academic environment, the researchers hypothesized that this association might explain the high incidence of at-risk adolescents in the African American community. Another obstacle that at-risk students face is cultural diversity.

According to Michael (2020), cultural diversity presents several obstacles for educators and leaders because of differences in students' requirements. Bilingual children who attend a school where their original language is not utilized, according to Gregory and Fountaine (2018), are at a higher risk of low academic accomplishment than their classmates, but Michael points out several options to overcome these problems. According to Gregory and Fountaine, children would benefit from additional language acquisition since they can easily fall behind their peers if they do not comprehend the core content. Vanderhaar et al. (2020) emphasized, from a more personal standpoint, that the association between emotional intelligence and problematic behaviors should be viewed as a key cause of dropping out of school and failing to meet academic requirements. The researchers allude that students with low emotional intelligence display greater behavioral concerns, which eventually lead to dropping out of high school, according to research. As a result, bad social behaviors such as drug use, criminality, and unhealthy or dangerous health practices can emerge. The researchers regarded emotional intelligence to be a useful metric to incorporate in intervention programs focused at ensuring that at-risk abolements meet academic objectives and finish the educational program.

According to Kamissa (2020), children who are recognized as at-risk may experience unfavorable results since mentoring programs are regarded as a punishment rather than a solution. Students with the kinds of behavioral issues highlighted by Vanderhaar et al. (2020) are moved to alternative schools where their emotional intelligence is neither cultivated or nurtured. According to Kamissa (2020), these children are part of what is known as the school-to-prison pipeline, with a larger proportion of African American students being allocated to these schools. As a result, race and school structure exacerbate the conditions and consequences for children who are at risk because of low emotional intelligence (Kamissa, 2020). Chong et al. (2019) investigated the intricacies of individual, educational, familial, and social effects on students' attrition decisions and academic outcomes. The study discovered that children who have a strong support structure in the community, at home, and at school perform better academically than those who feel alienated or alone.

Chong et al. (2019) stated that dropping out has far-reaching consequences in all of these areas of influence. For example, if the student does not have support, he or she is likely to drop out. Because of the financial and social skills required, they will have a more difficult time starting their own family. When a student does not have community support, they will be less active in the community when they drop out. Chong et al. (2019) highlighted that other implications include, but are not limited to, increased criminal activity, poorer earnings, and worldwide economic constraints. Throughout this section, several causes and impacts of at-risk children have been investigated. Individual, external, and institutional factors, as well as consequences, have been the dominant topics. While race and diversity are risk factors, individual factors such as emotional

intelligence were also considered. Poverty was one of the most common causes, but other factors should be addressed as well. The negative consequences ranged from bad economic outcomes to a poverty cycle.

Previous Attempts at Solutions

Students at risk have attracted a great deal of attention in the literature, discipline, and administration. The current section discusses laws and measures targeted at improving the situation of these children. Each attempt will be evaluated based on its achievements and failures, as well as possibilities to contribute to a more favorable conclusion. The first of these to be mentioned was briefly presented before. Former President Bill Clinton signed the No Child Left Behind Act into law in 2002 with the purpose of ensuring that educators had all of the tools they needed to ensure student achievement (Kamenetz, 2018). Teachers and schools were also held accountable for student results under the Act. In general, the Act said that schools and instructors had a direct obligation to guarantee that all pupils meet academic objectives independent of other influences. According to Kamenetz (2018), these results have not improved, with fourth graders showing only minor increases in arithmetic and fourth and eighth-grade children showing no improvement in reading achievements. Not only did the No Child Left Behind Act fail to accomplish its objectives, but Krieg (2018) discovered that it may have exacerbated gaps for already at-risk children.

Furthermore, Kreig claimed that changes in resource allocation and emphasis on achievement tests may have reduced racial disparities not by uplifting racial minorities, but rather by lowering performance among populations who were previously not considered at risk. The flipped classroom is another technique for addressing at-risk

children that has been found in the research. The idea, according to Dee and Jacob (2019), is to turn lecture time into chances to engage students on a deeper level. The classroom is similar to an online setting, with learning taking place using technology, which allows the teacher to recognize any barriers that the student may be encountering. This method varies from the online classroom in that students continue to get in-person assistance from their peers and instructors. Furthermore, students may work at their own speed to ensure they complete their assignments on time. Dee and Jacob (2019) discovered that students raised their assignment completion from 75% to 100% in the trial. Furthermore, in the experiment group, student achievement increased by 11%. Some issues about the flipped classroom may be related to the digital divide or having enough devices to satisfy the demands of different learners.

According to the research offered by Dee and Jacob, this method may be effective for at-risk children. Alternative schools, according to Flumerfelt and Green (2018), are another strategy to improve results for at-risk children. This technique will be examined in greater length in relation to school segregation, but it is necessary to mention in this section for comparison. According to Flumerfelt and Green, these schools are behaviorally focused with the purpose of building social competencies that will assist students' capacity to be resilient and complete their degree effectively. Perzigian (2019) researched how children perceive these alternative school settings in comparison to typical school settings. Three-hundred seventy-four students participated in the quasi-experimental mixed methods study. The children stated that they had stronger teacher interactions at the alternative schools, which they attributed to reduced class sizes. Furthermore, participants said that they felt safer in alternative schools and had stronger

interactions with their classmates. Students felt appreciated and empowered to take greater responsibility and accountability for their behavior. According to Perzigian (2019), the majority of children were relieved to be referred to an alternative school.

Perzigian discovered discrepancies in delivering a strengths-based strategy for communicating with students based on this research. The findings from alternative schools may be used to develop initiatives that will be adopted in standard educational settings. While there are several techniques and programs that may be evaluated, the current section has focused on one piece of legislation, one reform in a typical classroom, and one alternative school. Each of these may be used to determine what has succeeded and what has failed. The flipped classroom emphasizes personalized learning and more communication with educators. Alternative schools feature smaller class sizes and a greater emphasis on the students' abilities. A more tailored strategy than the one provided by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 is required. Sending all at-risk children to an alternate school, on the other hand, raises serious societal concerns. As a result, a balance must be established within the typical classroom.

School-Based Mentor Programs

School-based mentoring is a specific type of youth mentoring that takes place in a school setting either during or after school hours. According to Claro and Perelmiter (2021), the school is the optimal place for mentoring programs, with more volunteers serving these programs than religious groups. Furthermore, community-based mentoring programs rely on parental referrals, but parents of at-risk children may be uninformed of existing programs or fail to take the effort to recommend their child (Claro & Perelmiter, 2021). Furthermore, Claro and Perelmiter suggested that a school atmosphere may be

more ideal for training and supporting volunteers than a community-based mentorship program with limited resources. Of course, the problems of time and effort that come with any volunteer-based organization remain. However, Claro and Perelmiter pointed out that these issues may be more easily addressed in the classroom setting. Furthermore, school-based mentoring allows children to practice their social and communication skills, which may later be applied in various situations (Claro & Perelmiter, 2021). Herrera and Karcher (2018) discussed how to effectively establish a school-based mentoring program.

The researchers highlighted that there is no one-size-fits-all strategy to mentoring and that the program must be tailored to the unique community. The program's objectives and communication channels must be clearly established and communicated to all participants. Funding must also be considered, as a program cannot be sustained without resources (Herrera and Karcher, 2018). The termination of such a program due to a lack of financing may have significant consequences for children who have learned to rely on these connections. Herrera and Karcher (2018) noted that school-based mentoring programs are complicated, but the benefits clearly exceed the expenditures. However, it is critical that these expenditures be factored into the program's planning phase. Smith and Stormont (2019) noted that the parent must be included in this interaction as a stakeholder in the student's outcomes. According to the study, many at-risk children may have problematic connections with their parents or may struggle with spending time due to the demands of a lower socioeconomic position. Improved ties between the instructor and the parents, on the other hand, will serve to develop the mentor and mentee relationship (Smith & Stormont, 2019). Furthermore, Smith and Stormont discovered that a better mentoring connection will aid in the development of a healthy parent-child bond.

Relationship building and offering examples of these partnerships, according to Smith and Stormont (2019), is the greatest strategy to meet the objective of increasing the student's overall quality of life. The researchers emphasized that these programs differ from community-based mentoring programs in that school-based mentors spend less time with children and sessions are place in an academic setting. However, Chen et al., stressed that these interactions are crucial because they assist students to improve their other relationships in school, such as with instructors and administrators. Furthermore, when the student has a favorable relationship with the mentor, the student may have a more positive perspective of the school environment and academic activities (Chen et al., 2020). In other words, if a child creates a positive relationship and has favorable experiences in school, they may have a more positive attitude about school and relationships in general. McDaniel and Yarbrough (2019) stated that educators frequently serve as mentors in the educational setting. This is not, however, a replacement for school-based mentorship programs. Instead, the researchers discovered that educators could fill the gaps and alleviate most of the stress felt by mentors in the classroom context.

According to McDaniel and Yarbrough, the overlap of mentoring and being the educator, while beneficial in many circumstances, can generate challenges when arranging meaningful activities. However, when mentorship is conducted collaboratively and communicatively, the advantages of these connections are seen in the classroom (McDaniel & Yarbrough, 2019). In particular, the researchers said that the educator plays an active part in the process while also recognizing the many tasks that must be performed in order to satisfy the requirements of at-risk children. Simoes and Alarcao

(2020) published a study in which they randomly assigned 1,139 children to be mentored by the Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring program or to be in the control group with ordinary interactions within the school. The students who were mentored demonstrated academic improvements at the conclusion of the first year, but they were not sustained into the second year.

Furthermore, they found no significant changes in measures such as global self-worth or classroom efforts. It was highlighted that school-based mentoring meetings are shorter than those seen in community-based programs, which may have influenced the study's findings. Furthermore, Simoes and Alarcao remarked that the matching of these children may not have been as good as it could have been due to the age range represented. Herrera et al. (2019) provided a theoretical framework for the implementation of school-based mentoring. First, the researchers introduced the social cognitive theory and highlighted how mentorship promotes the four sources of self-efficacy: goal planning, social persuasion, vicarious experience, and positive emotional state. The cognitive dissonance hypothesis was also brought up in the conversation. Mentorship, according to Herrera et al. (2018), evokes change through the assigning of value. They employed an improved Kirkpatrick training model, which had considerable positive effects on academic success in mathematics and language, as well as life satisfaction and attendance.

According to McQuillin and Lyons (2018), the connection between the student and the mentor must be properly matched and nurtured in order to provide the results via the program. The difficulties of developing a solid connection through mentor attunement. According to McQuillin and Lyons, it is critical to acknowledge that both

parties engage with one another through their own worldviews and personal traits such as age and gender. McQuillin and Lyons remarked that when comparing the mentoring connection to the therapeutic relationship between a therapist and client, the relationship must go beyond empathy and extend to a more in-depth awareness of the other party's experiences and perspectives. This is accomplished through a collaborative partnership in which the mentee feels appreciated in the same way that their mentor values their time and knowledge (McQuillin and Lyons, 2018). McQuillin and Lyons suggested observing interactions between mentor and mentee to assess whether attunement is being established or whether the match might be adjusted.

Weiler et al. (2020) investigated factors that strengthen the impact of mentoring on academic-related outcomes. This within-group study looked at the relationship between youth's academic performance and mentor attunement on two-hundred and four participants who were a part of a mentoring program that was limited in time (Weiler et al., 2020). The sample consisted of adolescents and their mentors who had participated in a previously published evaluation of Campus Connections (CC), a preventive intervention for high-risk youth (Weiler et al., 2015). The Institutional Review Board at a university in the Western United States approved the study. All adult mentors, youth participants, and at least one youth guardian gave their informed consent and assent to participate. A baseline survey (T1) was completed up to one month prior to the start of the program, and a second survey (T2) was completed during the program's final week. (Weiler et al., 2020). It took between 30 and 45 minutes to complete each survey.

Through self-report items, participants' age, gender, and race/ethnicity were gathered. The guide report Match Qualities Questionnaire and integral youth report was

utilized to survey level of attunement toward the end of the program. Through two subscales with six items each, the School Value Scale was used to assess youths' perception of the value of school: perceived importance of school and usefulness of school. The results indicated post intervention scores on perceptions of school usefulness and importance, academic self-efficacy, truancy, but not grade point average, were higher for youth with attuned mentors than for youth with misattuned mentors (Weiler et al., 2020). Pryce (2020) investigated the nature of these connections in mentorship programs as well. The researchers interviewed nine professional mentors, who stated that their opinion of the mentee influences how they approach them and perceive their requirements. The participants might better grasp what the mentee required if they took the time to get to know the child and evaluate the surroundings of their circumstances. Pryce on the other hand, discovered a consistent difficulty in the relationships: mentors frequently felt unsupported by other adults who were significant stakeholders in the youth's life, such as parents and educators.

He also mentioned the need for stronger coordination and assistance for mentors as they endeavor to meet the needs of the youth. When mentors don't feel like they're taking on too many tasks and their responsibilities are clear, they may focus more on their connection with the mentee. After examining the mentors' perspectives, it was also necessary to evaluate the mentees' perspectives. According to Lakind et al. (2019), students appreciate solid relationships with their mentors and see these possibilities as paths to academic achievement and further education. According to Lakind et al. students cherish solid relationships with their mentors and see these opportunities as stepping stones to academic achievement and higher education. Lakind and colleagues performed

14 distinct focus groups with Avenue Scholars Foundation program participants. A Talent Advisor was appointed to each student, who assisted them in developing a feeling of optimism for their futures by recognizing their abilities and potential. According to Weiss et al. (2019), constant support is necessary for mentors to sustain their enthusiasm and purpose in the mentoring relationship. While mentors strive to remain energetic and focused on the present, this might be difficult to achieve when they are overburdened by taking on too many duties (Weiss et al., 2019).

Many of these initiatives, according to Weiss and colleagues, have failed because of a lack of emotional support supplied to mentors. Additional issues were raised about the lack of training and development opportunities, as well as the lack of a clear channel of contact when a query or complaint arose. Weiss et al. discovered that school-based mentoring programs efficiently meet the needs of at-risk kids when mentors get the necessary support and communication. Frels et al. (2021) provided longitudinal research to demonstrate the usefulness of a middle school-based mentorship program. The study included 94 seventh-grade students from four different classrooms. The children were evaluated at the start of the school year and every three months thereafter. The intervention was implemented in two classrooms, while the other two got standard instruction and assistance. The intervention was implemented in two classrooms, while the other two got standard instruction and assistance. Across all data collection sites, the researchers discovered that self-regulated learning was considerably better in the experiment group.

While academic success increases were far smaller than improvements in self-regulated learning abilities, they were there. The researchers were optimistic that

continuing this approach would result in further substantial gains in both areas of measurement. However, the researchers cautioned that the study was restricted to an urban middle school in Portugal, implying that more research is needed to generalize the findings. Nunez et al. (2019) examined a school-based mentoring program called Check and Connect, which was established in a high school with a high concentration of at-risk adolescents. Nunez et al. said that while this approach had previously had great effects on children with impairments, it had not been applied to at-risk students. The study included 533 students from a metropolitan school district who had the lowest chance of graduating on time. Students were in the eighth and ninth grades when this program began, and it followed them for three years. For the length of the research, each student was given a mentor at random. Nunez et al., on the other hand, found no significant changes in the student outcomes examined.

This research, however, neglected several of the topics covered in this section, such as the significance of effective matching and connection development in order to produce favorable results through a school-based mentoring program. Heppen et al. (2018) also did a comprehensive review of the literature to assess the impacts of school-based mentoring on academic achievement, self-esteem, attendance, attitudes, and behaviors in teenagers. Heppen et al. included eight trials with a total of 6,072 children. They observed that the mentorship programs were not as beneficial as anticipated, with self-esteem being the biggest favorable impact. The researchers did admit, however, that the programs may not have been successfully developed or fit for the target demographics. Wood and Mayo-Wilson (2019) performed a study utilizing a Youth Empowerment Program in Los Angeles to mentor at-risk Latino children. Sixty-one

fourth and fifth-grade children were connected with a mentor. The major metric was the length of the connection, which gives important information about how to effectively match students with mentors. These partnerships lasted an average of one and a half years, with some lasting more than two years.

According to the researchers, the program is an excellent strategy to assist at-risk and disadvantaged adolescents in developing meaningful relationships with people in their community. These ties, according to the researchers, may assist to prevent dangerous behaviors when children enter puberty. More studies are needed to evaluate the veracity of these claims. However, the study provides a solid framework for developing a matching technique for building connection. Coller and Kuo (2019) did a systematic evaluation to establish the long-term effects of these mentoring programs, with an emphasis on delinquency. The researchers examined 46 research studies and discovered statistically significant favorable findings. The researchers showed statistical gains in academic success (d=.11) and aggressiveness (d=.29). Furthermore, the researchers gave information to policymakers who may utilize this data to justify financing for school-based mentoring programs. Coller and Kuo contrast the implementation of a school-based mentoring program with students. Parental assent was received for fifty 6th-grade children at a state-funded school in southeast Texas. At the beginning of the year, consent forms were distributed to all parents of sixth-grade students.

Ninety-six percent of participants identified as Hispanic, two percent as Caucasian, and two percent as Native American, according to school records (Strait et al., 2022). Additionally, 70.83% of the participants were on free or reduced lunch, 54% were

males, and 12% received special education services (Strait et al., 2022). Twenty of the fifty students were selected at random to receive eight Group-AMPED sessions during the fall semester, fifteen were selected at random to receive Group-AMPED during the spring semester, and the remaining fifteen served as a comparison group. As a result, mentoring was provided to 35 students in all. This study measured process, treatment acceptability, and academic outcomes of Group-AMPED. Process measures were completed for each coach's execution of the eight AMPED meetings. A Self-Report Fidelity test was administered to mentors at the conclusion of each session to gauge how well they had completed the tasks assigned to them (Strait et al., 2022). There were activities and sub steps for each session. On a scale of three, mentors rated how well they had done with each step. The Supervisor Confidence Scale (SCS) comprises of pre-and post-meeting evaluations.

It was completed by site supervisors to gauge their confidence in each mentor's preparation and comprehension of the upcoming session. On a 5-point Likert scale, supervisors evaluated each mentor's accuracy, familiarity with mentoring material, and amount of coaching required prior to the mentoring session (Strait et al., 2022). A Children's Usage Rating Profile was requested from participants following the previous session. The modified Usage Rating Profile—Intervention Revised (URP-IR) was completed by mentors. The URP-IR is a self-report instrument with six primary subscales and 29 items; however, they only report on Acceptability in order to respond to the research questions (Strait et al., 2022). Language Arts, Science, Math, and Social Studies grades were provided by the school to all participants in the first quarter and second semester. When groups were led by school psychology graduate students or

paraprofessionals, there were no significant differences in middle school students' engagement. In a similar vein, graduate students' and paraprofessionals' implementation of Group-AMPED was unaffected by the supervisor's post-session implementation confidence and self-reports of fidelity (Strait et al., 2022).

As a result, this research will provide light on how support and matching play a part in how children do in a school-based mentoring program. In the article, "Investigating the Effects of Relationship Closeness and Instrumental Activities in School-based Mentoring," authors examine the relationship quality reported by mentees and the use of goal-setting and feedback-oriented activities reported by mentors on academic, behavioral, and social-emotional outcomes (Lyons et al., 2018). Educators and other school faculty alluded youth who they considered as needing mentoring. Approximately 2670 children were recruited for the study, and 1360 were selected at random to take part in the Student Mentoring Program. Under 1% of participants were not arbitrarily allotted, however naturally positioned in the treatment bunch since school faculty distinguished them as the need for services (Lyons et al., 2018). The average age of the participants was 11 years and 47% of them were boys. The mentors were, on average, 32 years old and mostly women (72 percent).

White mentors made up 66% of the group, African Americans made up 29%, and Asian, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander mentors made up less than 10% (Lyons et al., 2018). In the study, the authors used a composite score of four items reflecting youth perceptions of the bond between the mentor and mentee. Evaluators of the Student Mentoring Program developed this measure. Youth-reported relationship quality was found to have a small to medium impact on outcomes, according to the findings. Several

aspects of school-based mentoring programs have been discussed in this section. The major components have been provided with an emphasis on the relationships between all stakeholders in the results of the students. The importance of adequate matching has been emphasized throughout the process. Variations in the outcomes of related research have also been provided to demonstrate the importance of considering these components when creating and implementing a school-based mentoring program.

Parents' Roles in School-Based Mentor Programs

Active parents who serve on panels or find ways to be active in their children's education meet a critical demand in schools (Littky & Grabelle, 2018). According to Devine (2019), parents empower their children to continue their education and achieve academic and professional success. Dorn et al. (2020) believe that school should be a place where all stakeholders have the same goal. Parents who merely advocate and support the importance of education have a substantial effect on their children's ability to establish goals, face problems, and pursue lifelong learning (Sheldon & Epstein, 2021). Parental participation is frequently the decisive element in academic attainment and optimal success. Each type of engagement has a different impact on accomplishment. No single method of parental participation will result in the ultimate answer. However, it is critical to identify this idea and investigate strategies to help in future interactions with parents (Sheldon & Epstein, 2021). Students will display a greater awareness of their involvement throughout the learning process when parents realize the impact of their effect on the learning process (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2021). According to Coleman and McNeese (2019), parental participation is something that all parents can undertake regardless of race, wealth, career, or culture.

Parents are seen as instructors and facilitators of the school atmosphere. Children consider their parents as the learning standard, demonstrating the power of parental impact on a child's beliefs and acceptance of learning (Konzal & Dodd, 2020). Some families may require professional instruction and direction on how to become more active, assist with schoolwork, and inspire children to pursue higher education (Bailey, 2019). Copland and Knapp (2018) make further recommendations for serving the needs of families, not just children. Parents and other members of the community are given educational opportunities and courses that match with the focus on children's possibilities for better accomplishment. By establishing a system that prioritizes education and surviving hard situations or subjects, family participation enhances and sustains children's accomplishments (Littky & Grabelle, 2018). The more connected a family is with the school, the more learning and greater accomplishment rates there will be (Machen et al., 2019).

Teachers' Roles in School-Based Mentor Programs

Teachers have a significant impact on the success or failure of school-based mentoring programs. A teacher may be a key catalyst in developing solid working relationships between schools and individuals in the community/mentors (Moore et al., 2018). Teachers must differentiate communication in the same way that they differentiate teaching (Tomlinson & Allan, 2020). For teachers and instructional leaders, developing relationships to create a strong community requires two characteristics: personal and political. This duty is both personal and political in nature, since it involves creating coalitions that are open to varied thinking and decision-making (Copland & Knapp, 2019). Reed (2019) states that teachers must give possibilities for students' growth and

accomplishment. When parents and other stakeholders observe students' activities and attend achievement ceremonies, pride in the local educational institution is expressed, and parent perspectives are shared with other public stakeholders (Moore et al., 2018). As more members of the general public become active in student activities, opportunities, financing, and success emerge that would not have been available otherwise.

According to Jones (2019), teachers may require district-wide training on parent participation and how to best include parents into the learning community. Teachers have a distinct advantage since they understand how children learn and which requirements of particular students should be addressed (Wiggins & McTighe, 2018). Members of a community/mentors develop and share a sense of pride as a result of community participation and teacher leadership, believing that their effort has a positive influence on children (Moore et al., 2018). When school and district officials cooperate with the mentor and seek support from outside stakeholders, they are likely to achieve greater educational outcomes (Copland & Knapp, 2019). Teachers have the potential to be a useful resource for learners due to their willingness to take chances. Many instructors are eager to push their own learning and, as a result, are willing to attempt new teaching strategies to push their students' thinking. Lehman et al. (2018) observed excellent outcomes among instructors who were willing to add a new engineering curriculum to the existing STEM program.

Teachers first struggled with the topic's underlying data, but with the guidance and mentorship of university academics, they were able to introduce a novel approach to STEM instruction. Due to instructors' readiness to embrace this new piece of curriculum, students were introduced to new difficulties, new frameworks, and new approaches to

problem-solving (Lehman et al., 2018). Students require teachers at all educational levels and throughout their lives (Schoper, 2018). Many adolescents go through each stage thanks to the help of their families, mentors, and instructors. Students frequently progress to further education and understand how important a teacher is in encouraging avenues to success. Educators frequently act as mentors, particularly when dealing with diverse communities and children away from home. Many college graduates returned to serve as mentors or professors at the same higher education institution. They shared the assistance that had been showered upon them as students. For students who did not have a mentor at any point of their education, many of them elected to act as mentors, giving current students with assistance that they once needed in their own educational endeavors (Schoper, 2017).

Relationships between Mentors and Mentees

Students require connections in order to participate in a topic of study or in social relationships. Through meaningful interactions with mentors, some students are motivated to learn about a variety of themes, specific skill sets, various types of literature, and social skills (Moore, 2018). Mentors interact with mentees through learning about their academic, extracurricular, social, and personal interests. Sondergeld et al. (2019) performed a study that found mentors and students had comparable perceptions of success as a result of the connections created via the mentor/mentee relationship. It takes time to build a successful connection. There is no set length of time necessary to develop solid connections, but the key is to prioritize the relationships. Whether mentors and mentees meet once a week, once a month, or during or after school, consistency is essential to success. A research study was done with elementary students in grades K-5

who were struggling with their reading skills. The local university partnered pre-service teachers with at-risk children to allow university students in training to use their talents. The students were anticipated to progress significantly in all areas of reading development.

Having a mentor who was familiar with the relevant abilities enabled the students to obtain additional help after school in order to close the reading gaps identified in the elementary school data. The mentors met for one hour per week for ten weeks to assist children with reading skills deficiencies. The quantitative findings were not statistically significant. However, the qualitative results indicated an increase in relationships and social maturity, which was related to one of the program's aims. King et al. (2018) conducted an analysis in which they identified fourth-grade children in one demographic who required help with social and academic abilities as well as indications of depression and poor self-esteem. Community mentors ranging in age from high school to elderly adults met with children one-on-one for an hour and a half once a week for four months. Throughout the program, mentors and mentees kept a diary.

One week, the mentor would ask the mentee a question, and the mentee would respond with a response and a question for the mentor. This happened every time the two met. Twenty of the twenty-eight children improved by at least one letter grade from pre-to-post-testing. Positive improvements in social and emotional domains were also revealed by the pre and post-test questionnaires. Over a two-year period, Frels and Onwuegbuzie (2018) performed research with 11 mentors and students. Students in grades one through five were chosen for participation based on risk factors. For two years of the mentorship program, each student had the same mentor and met once a week.

Thematic similarities between the interviews highlighted comparable topics in the mentoring relationships. The study's findings indicated that persistent mentoring between at-risk children and dedicated mentors was successful.

Covid-19 influence in the classroom

According to a scientific brief released by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021), the global prevalence of anxiety and mental health disorders increased by a staggering 25% in just the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. As we approach the four-year anniversary of the first wave of pandemic-induced school closures, academic normality remains elusive for many teachers, children, and parents (Yates et al., 2023). Schools have encountered staff shortages, high rates of absenteeism and quarantines, and continuous school closures in addition to rising COVID-19 cases by the end of 2021. Furthermore, children and educators continue to face mental health issues, increased levels of aggression and disobedience, and missed instructional time (Yates et al., 2023). According to Yates et al. (2023), the COVID-19 epidemic has had a significant influence on children's academic progress. In their study, Yates et al. used data from 5.4 million US children in grades 3-8 to examine changes in arithmetic and reading test results throughout the first two years of the epidemic. Yates et al. concentrated on test results from before the pandemic (Fall 2019), after the initial commencement (Fall 2020), and more than a year into pandemic disruptions (Fall 2021).

Unfortunately, test-score disparities between children in low- and high-poverty schools increased by nearly 20% in math and 15% in reading, mostly during the 2020-21 school year (Yates et al., 2023). Furthermore, achievement dropped more between fall 2020 and 2021 than between fall 2019 and 2020 (both overall and by school

poverty), indicating that disruptions to learning continued to negatively impact students long after the initial hits from the spring 2020 school closures. This reduction in test scores does not imply that these children constitute a "lost era" or that we should give up hope. Most of them have never experienced a pandemic, and there is so much we do not know about students' resilience in these situations and what a recovery timetable will look like. Also, teachers are not to blame for the decline that happened between 2020 and 2021; rather, educators had challenging jobs before the epidemic, and now face enormous additional problems, many of which are beyond their control. Clearly, there is still work to be done. School districts and governments are presently making critical decisions about the treatments and methods to deploy to reduce the learning reductions that have occurred over the previous four years.

Biblical Foundations of the Study

Being a Christian is truly about being a band together with God in seeing his creation expanded, his recovery applied, and his triumph guaranteed. It is his work, not our own, yet he calls us to band together with him in this entire brilliant cycle of creation, reclamation, and re-creation. On account of the fall, all humankind lost fellowship with God, are under his fierceness and revile, thus made us at risk to all agonies in this life, to death itself, and to the torments of damnation until the end of time (Wolters, 2005). Despite the fact that creation itself is innately acceptable, humanity's fall into transgression had certain results. To make sense of the connection between the inherently great creation and the impacts of transgression, Wolters presents the thought of "direction" and "structure." Structure alludes to the request for creation, the normal

production of God. Direction is a relationship toward or away from God (Wolters, 2005). Anything in creation can be coordinated either toward or away from God either in compliance or defiance of his law (Wolters, 2005). While structure is the creational constitution of a thing, direction alludes to how that thing is influenced by either the fall or the reclamation (Wolters, 2005).

Since the fall, everything in creation has a direction characteristic in it. For example, farming is important for God's creation, and is administered by his law. Weeds and dry seasons are twists and depravities of the design of farming moving ceaselessly from God. Both intelligently and sequentially, the fall interferes with the creation and reclamation. Without a creation there could be no fallen creation; without a fallen creation there could be no reclaimed creation. Salvation surmises sin; rebuilding assumes a fall. Accordingly, it's sensible to induce that God's primary purpose in permitting the fall was to exhibit his brilliance both in the original creation and furthermore in his forgiveness from insubordination and defilement. We first need to see God's creation structure surrounding us, his great aim at the core of the entirety of creation. However, we additionally need to deliberately recognize direction, to decide whether something is pushing toward or away from God.

Now how does this fit into my research area? The Scriptures instruct us to search for God's standards and furthermore serve to significantly improve our vision. Scripture resembles a pitman's light, which illuminates the world any place. While working in an unlighted underground shaft they can't manage their jobs without the light fitted to their protective caps; they are powerless without it. The light serves to enlighten the climate in which they are called to work, to empower them to observe the idea of what lies before

them: earth and rock, metal and gangue. The Scriptures are the light (Evans, 2012). Tend the flock of God in your midst, (overseeing) not by constraint but willingly, as God would have it, not for shameful profit but eagerly. Do not lord it over those assigned to you, but be examples to the flock (*New American Standard Bible*, 1971/1995, 1 Peter 5: 2–3). Similarly, older women should be reverent in their behavior, not slanderers, not addicted to drink, teaching what is good, so that they may train younger women to love their husbands and children (*New American Standard Bible*, 1971/1995, Titus 2: 3-4).

Summary

Chapter II addressed the available information on the important issues of the historical issue of at-risk children, including identifying at-risk students, causes and consequences of at-risk students, prior remedies attempted, school-based mentoring programs, parents and teacher's role in school-based interventions, and Covid-19 influence on education. The researcher addressed the challenges related to at-risk children in historical and political contexts for the historical issue of at-risk students. The education system has mostly worked to preserve disparate social structures, putting underprivileged kids at a higher risk of dropping out or failing to fulfill academic requirements met by their peers. As a result, these groups are more likely to keep their social standing, regardless of ethnicity, financial background, family composition, or gender. The ramifications of retaining various statuses have been examined in terms of both personal and social repercussions. Finally, the emphasis on STEM education as a

result of societal changes has been expanded to encompass the social purpose of public education.

To define the term "at-risk," students, the researcher used the literature to show that: an at-risk student is a student who encounters obstacles that restrict their academic accomplishment, perhaps leading to their incapacity or reluctance to finish the educational program. These variables can be internal, external, or institutional, but they must be weighed against the student's present level of accomplishment and tracked throughout their academic career. Individual, external, and institutional variables, as well as results, were the dominant topics connected to the causes and impacts of at-risk children. While race and diversity are risk factors, individual factors such as emotional intelligence were also considered. Poverty was one of the most common causes, but other factors should be addressed as well. The negative consequences ranged from bad economic outcomes to a poverty cycle. In summary, it was discovered that there are areas of intersectionality that considerably enhance the causes and effects of being a high-risk student. An examination of the literature revealed one piece of legislation, one reform in a typical classroom, and one alternative school as prior answers to these situations. Each of these may be used to determine what has succeeded and what has failed.

Creating legislation requiring schools to guarantee that all children are on the same level lowered the accomplishment of children who were not in danger rather than raising the achievement of students who were at risk. The flipped classroom emphasizes personalized learning and more communication with educators. Alternative schools feature smaller class sizes and a greater emphasis on the student's abilities. A more tailored strategy than that provided by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 is required.

Sending all at-risk children to an alternate school, on the other hand, raises serious societal concerns. As a result, a balance must be established within the typical classroom. As we approach the four-year anniversary of the first wave of pandemic-induced school closures, academic normality remains elusive for many teachers, children, and parents (Yates et al., 2023). Schools have encountered staff shortages, high rates of absenteeism and quarantines, and continuous school closures in addition to rising COVID-19 cases by the end of 2021. Furthermore, children and educators continue to face mental health issues, increased levels of aggression and disobedience, and missed instructional time (Yates et al., 2023).

Many of these school-based mentoring programs, according to the literature, have been effective, while others have failed. According to the research, the explanation for these variances is due to the correct matching of the mentor and mentee, as well as giving enough assistance to all stakeholders in the students' results. Despite the abundance of literature on the various themes identified as relevant to this study, few studies have considered the impact of a school-based mentorship program with appropriate support and matching on student outcomes associated with the working definition of at-risk students. As a result, this study will provide light on how the function of support and matching influences student results in a school-based mentoring program.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD

Overview

Within Richmond City Public Schools, Amelia Street School is a distinctive speciality school. Amelia Street School is a one-of-a-kind specialty school for students with significant intellectual disabilities and behavioral and emotional challenges between the ages of 5 and 21. It has 33 children in grades K-12 with an understudy educator proportion of 11 to 1. State test results show that 55% of students are proficient in reading and 55% in math. The average household income in the Amelia school district is $49,079, and 89% of students receive reduced or free lunch. Amelia Street School teaches on a three-tiered system. Every student's educational program incorporates either comprehensive therapies or mentoring through the Brothers and Sisters United mentoring program. The researcher used action research to investigate if the school-based mentorship program was associated to student success for at-risk children. The goal of the Brothers and Sisters United mentoring program is to use strategic interventions to optimize beneficial youth outcomes. This is accomplished through a series of core curricula centered on: creating personal objectives, recognizing your learning style, knowing what G.P.A signifies, and understanding the keys to academic success.

The engagement of numerous distinct variable measures was employed for this investigation. This study, for example, used a variety of approaches such as focus groups, interviews, and surveys. These strategies were used to gain a better understanding of the curriculum's impact on instructors and parents of children enrolled in the program. This chapter will provide a description of the research methodology used in this study as well as: a) the research questions; b) an overview of the design of the study; c) the participants

of the study; d) the study procedures; e) the instrumentation and measurement; f) the operationalization of variables; g) data analysis; h) the study's limitations; and g) a summary of the methodology utilized for the chapter.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Quantitative Research

Research Question

RQ1: What is the relationship between school-based mentoring, suspension rates and academic performance, as measured by I-Ready (Math and Reading) scores and GPA?

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1a: There will be an increase in I-Ready test scores for students who participate in the school-based mentoring groups.

Hypothesis $1_{0:}$ There will not be an increase in I-Ready test scores for students who participate in the school-based mentoring groups.

Hypothesis 2: There will be an increase in overall GPA for students who participate in the school-based mentoring groups.

Hypothesis 2_0: There will not be an increase in overall GPA for students who participate in the school-based mentoring groups.

Hypothesis 3a: There will be a decrease in student suspension for students who participate in the school-based mentoring groups.

Hypothesis 3_0: There will not be a decrease in student suspension for students who participate in the school-based mentoring groups.

Qualitative Research

RQ1: What are the overall benefits of participating in a school-based mentoring program for at-risk students?

RQ 2: What factors determine the success of school-based mentoring?

RQ 3: What aspects of a student's life improve or significantly change as a result of participating in a school-based mentoring program?

Research Design

A mixed methods approach was used to perform this investigation. This design was intended to investigate the program's influence on students' academic and social performance. Because both areas, academics and social conduct, are intimately tied to the purpose for being chosen to participate in the program. Using a qualitative method approach, the researcher investigated the influence and effect of the Brothers and Sisters United mentorship program on the academic achievement of the children under consideration. According to Creswell (2016), interviews and focus groups are regarded as a helpful strategy for gathering qualitative data. In particular, they let people offer their own viewpoints while also allowing the researcher to ask follow-up questions or probes to acquire further understanding on a subject (Creswell, 2016). Using a quantitative method approach, the researcher investigated whether a mentorship program has significant impacts on at-risk children's attendance, I-Ready scores, and behavior referrals. Through the use of a survey, quantitative analysis allowed participants to evaluate and self-report at-risk children’s attendance, I-Ready scores, and behavior referrals.

Participants

Recruitment

The researcher contacted Amelia Street School to recruit participants. Consent forms and an email was sent electronically with specific information detailing goals of the study, and expectations through convenience sampling. The information was sent by

the Principal via email to all personnel (teachers, mentors, parents, and administrators) who satisfied all of the criteria and wished to participate in the study (Appendix A). Each interested participant (teacher, mentor, parent, and administrator) filled out a Google form survey (Appendix B & C). Three focus groups and three interviews will be held at the end of each marking period (9 weeks) which will be govern be three research questions (Appendix D). Participants must be available to commit 60-90 minutes on that day. The focus groups and interviews will be videotaped and transcribed through Zoom.

Student Participants

For participants, non-probability purposive sampling was used as the Principal of the school picked the research participants based on poor academic performance and a high number of discipline referrals. The children belonged to at least one of the following groups: they lacked good adult role models, they resided in high-crime regions, they struggled academically, or they participated in criminal activities. A total of 10 students from the fourth through eighth grade was selected to participate in the study. About half of the children were male. The student's race distribution was (4) African American, (4) Latino, and (2) White.

Parent Participants

Each parent of the children in the Brothers and Sisters United program, as well as chosen instructors and administration, were contacted by email with a request to take the survey (Appendix D). The participants were given a link to access the 10-minute survey. The survey was also accompanied by a narrative that explained the goal of the study to the participants. Eligibility criteria for parents consisted of: (a) parent(s) must reside in high-crime regions, (b) must have a child enrolled in the Brothers and Sisters United

program, and (c) must be at least 21 years of age. Eight parents were chosen based on availability to participate in the study whose age ranged from 21-40 years of age. Half of the parents were male.

Teacher Participants

Eligibility criteria for educators consisted of: (a) teacher must have an active teaching license, and (b) must be at least 21 years of age**.** A total of ten teachers were chosen based on availability to participate in the study whose age ranged from 23-32 years of age. The teacher's race distribution was (4) African American, (4) Latino, and (2) White.

Administrator Participants

The Principal and Assistant Principal of Amelia Street School were the two administrators who participated in the study. Eligibility criteria for administrators consisted of: (a) principal must have an active leadership certification, and (b) must be at least 21 years of age. The administrator's race distribution was (1) African American female, and (1) White male.

Mentor Participants

Eligibility criteria for mentors consisted of: (a) mentor must work at Amelia Street School, and (b) must be at least 21 years of age. A total of ten mentors who worked at the school were chosen based on their availability and agreed to meet twice a week for one hour. The mentor's race distribution was (8) African American, (1) Latino, and (1) White. Half of the mentors were male. A Brothers and Sisters session lasts an hour and takes place twice a week (Monday and Friday). For those two days, students alternate various time slots to avoid missing the session again. Students may also choose to attend

their regularly scheduled class if they are on track academically and behaviorally (GPA of 3.0 or above, and no disciplinary action in the previous two weeks). Moving beyond the program is the most effective way to progress. The researcher acquired a discipline report from the school's Assistant Principal, an attendance record from the Principal, and I-Ready exam scores during the testing window of Fall 2023-Spring 2024.

Study Procedures

A mixed methods approach was used to perform this investigation. This design was intended to investigate the program's influence on students' academic and social performance. Because both areas, academics and social conduct, are intimately tied to the purpose for being chosen to participate in the program. The researcher's study uses a survey as a quantitative instrument and focus groups and interviews to acquire qualitative data. Using a quantitative method approach, the researcher investigated whether a mentorship program has significant impacts on at-risk children's attendance, I-Ready scores, and behavior referrals. The students' scores on the pre-and post-tests were computed and ranked using the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. The test was used to determine whether any data had statistical significance following the implementation of the mentorship program by evaluating the means of the accomplishment data from the I-Ready math and reading assessments from the pre-tests and the post-tests. To determine whether there was any significance, the same test was utilized to compare behavior referrals, and attendance from the fall semester to the spring semester of the current academic year. The researcher determined to add validity to the study by comparing the previous years’ data to the current year data.

Using a qualitative method approach, the researcher investigated the influence and effect of the Brothers and Sisters United mentorship program on the academic achievement of the children under consideration. According to Creswell (2016), interviews and focus groups are regarded as a helpful strategy for gathering qualitative data. In particular, they let people offer their own viewpoints while also allowing the researcher to ask follow-up questions or probes to acquire further understanding on a subject (Creswell, 2016). This was done to help the researcher assess the impact and influence of the school-based mentorship program on at-risk children. A triangulation of data sources was crucial in reaching this result with meaningful backing. Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) define triangulation as a methodical cross-checking of information and conclusions. In an effort to design a reputable study, a triangulation approach is necessary (see Table 1).

Table 1

Triangulation Matrix

Questions	Data Source 1	Data Source 2	Data Source 3	Data Source 4
What are the overall benefits of participating in a school-based mentoring program for at-risk students?	Teacher Survey	Parent Survey	Administrator Survey	Focus Groups
What factors determine the success of		Parent Survey		Focus Groups

school-based mentoring?	Teacher Survey		Administrator Survey	
What aspects of a student's life improve or significantly change as a result of participating in a school-based mentoring program?	Teacher Survey	Parent Survey	Administrator Survey	Focus Groups

Instrumentation and Measurement

Survey

Each parent of the children in the Brothers and Sisters United program, as well as chosen instructors and professors, were contacted by email with a request to take the survey (Appendix B & C). The participants were given a link to access the 10-minute survey. The survey was also accompanied by a narrative that explained the goal of the study to the participants. In addition, participants were given a written document outlining the survey's goal. There was no intention to pay participants for any expenditures or injuries incurred as a result of their participation in this study. A survey was deemed an effective method of data collecting. Because everything was online, it was convenient, as one could expect. The online survey contained specific questions as well as 10 open-ended questions.

This enabled the collection of quantitative data. The researcher believes that if these tactics had not been implemented, the survey would not have been valued.

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), open-ended questions in surveys dig into personal experiences and give information on participants' perspectives. This was done to acquire a better understanding of how parents, teachers, and staff feel about school-based mentoring. The researcher needed to follow and adhere to the guidelines made by Bloomberg and Volpe (2019). The research questions must be related to one another. As a result, the researcher allowed for a two-week timeframe for survey completion. At one week, reminder emails were sent out. Participants received a thank you email after completing the survey.

Focus Groups

Action research, according to Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), is often interactive and collaborative, and it can use both quantitative and qualitative data approaches. Observation, interviews, and focus groups are examples of qualitative methodologies. One of the most prevalent sorts of qualitative data collecting methods is focus groups. Focus groups are guided group conversations that combine components of participant observation and individual interviews while remaining distinct as a research approach (Barbour, 2018). There was a common denominator in this study in that all of the participants in the focus group were from the same school district. The researcher wanted to include teachers, parents, and administrators from various backgrounds and viewpoints in the focus groups. It is often assumed that eight individuals are the ideal amount for a focus group (Barbour, 2018).

The researcher took note of this recommendation and narrowed down the focus group to eight participants. Two teachers, two mentors, two parents, and two administrators were chosen for this focus group. They were given a consent document

that said that the discussions would be videotaped and transcribed. The moderator's questions were evaluated by an adviser to ensure that they were fair and objective. This demonstrated that the researcher had no prejudice and was committed to the selected study issues. The time commitment of 60-90 minutes was communicated to participants.

Interviews

For the last technique of data collection for this dissertation, interviews were required. According to Creswell (2016), interviews are regarded as a helpful strategy for gathering qualitative data. In particular, they let people offer their own viewpoints while also allowing the researcher to ask follow-up questions or probes to acquire further understanding on a subject (Creswell, 2016). An introductory email and information sheet were sent to all professors of students selected for the program in order to recruit the eight interview participants from each category. Two administrators were also chosen. Finally, an introductory email and information sheet were sent to all parents, teachers, and administrators in order to attract them. Eight participants were randomly chosen by the researcher. The interviewees were given information about the study. They were also informed that their participation was entirely optional. Prior to the interview, each interviewee signed a consent form. They were also notified that they were being recorded. The interviews were performed and recorded by the researcher using Zoom.

Ethical Considerations

A comprehensive consent to participate form includes several elements, such as the right to withdraw voluntarily at any time; identification of the objective of the

research and the methods to be used in data collection; assurance of confidentiality; and risks and/or benefits associated with participation (Creswell, 2020). Finally, both the researcher's and the participant's signatures serve as proof of informed permission. All names were kept anonymous, and identities were referred to as particular numbers in addition to gaining informed permission from all participants. Only little demographic information was sought to preserve anonymity. This survey was only found for the program Brothers and Sisters United. Recognizing the significance of secrecy, the researcher used Google Forms for the survey, and focus groups and interviews were videotaped and transcribed. Finally, the interviews and focus groups were held at a neutral place that was designated as private for the duration, resulting in a disruption-free setting. Data was collected and saved in a Google drive in the researcher's cloud, with the purpose of erasing it completely at the end of the study.

Reliability

According to Ritchie and Lewis (2020), dependability is the reproducibility of study findings. In other words, can the results of this study be duplicated in another study using the same methods? The researcher took various steps to ensure that this study could duplicate its findings and so be labeled as credible. Non-participants were given the survey as a "pre-test," and PhD colleagues reviewed the focus group and interview questions for reliability. The researcher and doctoral colleagues also used inter-rater reliability to categorize responses for overarching themes and patterns. A triangulation matrix technique was one of the last elements needed to generate a trustworthy research. Diverse viewpoints on the same problem were gathered using three distinct tools (survey, focus groups, and interviews).

Validity

According to Creswell (2020), validity may be defined as findings that are accurate or plausible. Validity also considers whether the findings are true and believable from the perspective of the people concerned. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), this comprises the researcher, participants, and audience. Understanding that quantitative research produces data from pure and solid numbers, but qualitative research relies on human input from numerous individuals. The researcher then clarifies this data. To say the least, guaranteeing validity in qualitative research is difficult. Multiple checks were put in place to assure the authenticity of this study. Developing a content validity procedure implies that the researcher intends to use or design data collecting tools that are matched with the research questions being posed. When creating the instruments for this study, colleagues doctorate candidates and advisers assessed the survey, focus group, and interview questions to see if there was any alignment. All questions were also evaluated for readability and clarity.

Following comments, questions were revised to establish and assure their validity, as well as a direct link with the three particular study issues. To build a viable study, additional measures were determined. Google Forms was used for the survey to automatically organize data into spreadsheets, charts, and graphs for the researcher's straightforward analysis. Zoom was used to record focus groups and interviews. The researcher coded the focus groups and interviews to ensure accurate depiction of the participants' replies. The researcher used a triangulation matrix technique by employing three independent instruments (survey, focus groups, and interviews). Using a variety of

approaches and sources, the researcher was able to identify and expand on patterns that arose from the data.

Credibility

When it comes to qualitative research, the phrase "trustworthiness" must be defined. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), trustworthiness may relate to and deal with the validity and dependability of a research study. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), if research is genuine, it clearly represents the work being presented, and if work is credible, researchers examining the same topic will come up with consistent observations. The appraisal of trustworthiness was crucial; credibility was highlighted in a dependable and trustworthy manner as it related to research quality. Credibility might be thought of as a synonym for validity (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2019). Credibility may also relate to the researcher's ability to convey how the participants act, think, and feel. This is in addition to what would be considered an accurate method of ensuring that participants accept the process's ethics (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2019). It is also acceptable to argue that examples of evidence credibility occur when the researcher has observed and removed his or her own assumptions (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2019).

Transferability

Transferability arises when a reader examines a detailed description supplied by the researcher and determines whether similar processes exist in the local context. These findings are unlikely to be transferrable. However, the concepts and results that emerged from this study may be beneficial and useful to other school districts throughout Virginia and nationally.

Dependability

When considering dependability, it is important to remember that it relates to the researcher's capacity to monitor and manage the essential methods used to gather and evaluate data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The researcher also provided a full description of the analysis during data collection.

Operationalization of Variables

Mentoring Program – the implementation of the mentorship program served as an independent variable in the study.

Academic and social performance – the dependent variables were the student's I-Ready reading and math scores from the 2023-2024 school year. Student's scores on the pre-and post-tests were computed and ranked using the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. The same test was utilized to compare behavior referrals, and attendance.

Data Analysis

A survey created with Google Forms was utilized to collect data for this action research experiment. Google Forms is a web-based platform that allows users to take an anonymous survey online and transmit it directly back to the researcher. Google Forms is connected with Google Sheets, enabling access to a spreadsheet version of the collected data for analysis and interpretation. The online survey used closed responses on a scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree to indicate the degrees of agreement. The quantitative data was gathered from the closed responses. Using a quantitative method approach, the researcher investigated whether a mentorship program has significant impacts on at-risk children's attendance, I-Ready scores, and behavior referrals. The students' scores on the

pre-and post-tests were computed and ranked using the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. The same test was utilized to compare behavior referrals, and attendance from the fall semester to the spring semester of the current academic year.

The data was only accessible to the researcher via a unique account and password. Given the capabilities of Google Forms, the researcher was able to transform the spreadsheet findings into various charts and graphs to acquire a better grasp of the data's significance. Focus groups and interviews were used to gather qualitative information. Responses were captured using Zoom in both circumstances. The recordings were literally transcribed, and participants were allocated identifying codes. Once the data was collected, the researcher began the process of coding, which is the act of reducing and arranging the results into digestible components. To do this, the researcher followed the advice of Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), who suggested that the objective of the study and the research questions be utilized to lead the selection of themes and categories. The researcher assigned a separate approach to assess the participants' responses and discover themes that arose based on the study's goal as well as the particular research questions.

Delimitations, Assumptions, and Limitations

The initial decisions made regarding the overall design of your study is referred to as delimitations. This is not the same as recording the limits of your study that were identified after the research was done, according to Bloomberg and Volpe (2019). As a result, it is critical to recognize that the researcher has total autonomy and control over the study's constraints and must identify what alternative methodologies were not feasible for the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The location of the study and the sample that is employed to engage in the research are two instances of delimitation

(Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). This study focused on a single school in an urban school system in Richmond, Virginia, with a small number of participants. As a result, it is vital to remember that there will be a restricted number of findings in relation to or in contrast to the bigger picture.

Assumptions

By demonstrating that relationships between children and adults are of the utmost importance and have a significant impact on the lives of the students we educate, the results of this study will be beneficial to students, school districts, the families they serve, and ultimately society as a whole. This study will assist the researcher in locating specific data to support the idea that relationships can influence classroom change from year to year.

Limitations

As per Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), paying little heed to how cautiously you plan a review, there are in every case a few constraints. According to Bloomberg and Volpe, the characteristics of a particular research design that have an effect on the interpretation of research findings and limit the transferability of results are referred to as a study's limitations. Using a mixed method design for my study can come with challenges. In order to interpret the results and collect and analyze data, they may require more expertise than a single method. Also, combining different approaches necessitates additional resources like time and money. It is always difficult to rely on technology. The fluidity of the conversation can be impacted by delays, inaccessible Wi-Fi, and a number of other technological issues. Time is also always a factor. Depending on the time of the

study all participants involved may experience a “burn-out” due to being in school all year.

Summary

This chapter offered a detailed overview of the study's research methods. The researcher conducted surveys, interviews, and focus groups to acquire a better understanding of the impact of a school-based mentorship program on children at-risk in an urban school system. Teachers who work with children at-risk took part in the study as well as crucial faculty and parents. Prior to the investigation, research participants had a solid understanding of the study's goal. Furthermore, they were provided with information outlining the privacy measures taken for their safety. The topics addressed are closely related to the research, as are the various techniques of data gathering to support triangulation. The study's findings helped to demonstrate the utility and importance of a school-based mentorship program for at-risk adolescents in the district.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to track changes in student confidence, academic skills, interaction between students and teachers, and overall performance. The goal was to see how mentoring affects attendance, academic achievement, and the number of behavioral issues and referrals for students. The motivation behind this study was to also investigate the impact of school-based mentoring post Covid-19. This study was administered at Amelia Street School, with data gathered through a survey, three one-on-one interviews, and three focus groups. Using a quantitative method approach, the researcher investigated whether a mentorship program had significant impacts on at-risk children's attendance, I-Ready scores, and behavior referrals. Focus groups and interviews were used to gather qualitative information and were both recorded.

Quantitative Research

Research Question

RQ1: What is the relationship between school-based mentoring, suspension rates and academic performance, as measured by I-Ready (Math and Reading) scores and GPA?

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1a: There will be an increase in I-Ready test scores for students who participate in the school-based mentoring groups.

Hypothesis $1_{0:}$ There will not be an increase in I-Ready test scores for students who participate in the school-based mentoring groups.

Hypothesis 2: There will be an increase in overall GPA for students who participate in the school-based mentoring groups.

Hypothesis 2_0: There will not be an increase in overall GPA for students who participate in the school-based mentoring groups.

Hypothesis 3a: There will be a decrease in student suspension for students who participate in the school-based mentoring groups.

Hypothesis 3_0: There will not be a decrease in student suspension for students who participate in the school-based mentoring groups.

Qualitative Research

RQ1: What are the overall benefits of participating in a school-based mentoring program for at-risk students?

RQ 2: What factors determine the success of school-based mentoring?

RQ 3: What aspects of a student's life improve or significantly change as a result of participating in a school-based mentoring program?

Descriptive Results

To collect data on the three investigation topics, three instruments were used: (a) a survey, (b) focus groups, and (c) one-on-one interviews. All participants ("teachers, mentors, parents, and administration") were asked to complete the survey. Purposeful random selection was used to recruit participants for both focus groups and interviews. For student participants, non-probability purposive sampling was used as the Principal of the school picked the research participants based on poor academic performance and a high number of discipline referrals.

Survey

A ten-questions survey was designed to obtain quantitative data (see Appendix B & C). Google Forms was used to develop and distribute the survey. Ten (16.7%) of the sixty teachers at Amelia Street School took part in the survey. The survey was completed

by eight (nine percent) of Amelia Street School's 84 parents. Of the 20 mentors at Amelia Street School, 10 (50%) took the survey. The survey was completed by two (100%) of Amelia Street School's administrators. Participants used a Likert scale to express their level of agreement or disagreement with the statements in the quantitative component.

Focus Groups

This study used three focus groups with eight participants (one Administrator, three Teachers, two Mentors, and two Parents) to obtain qualitative data on the three research objectives (see Appendix D). When assembling the focus group, the researcher desired to include parents of adolescents enrolled in the school-based mentorship program. The researcher used purposive sampling to form the focus group, selecting individuals based on particular criteria. The researcher, a CITI-certified doctorate student in Liberty University's psychology program, led the focus group discussion. The focus group emphasized the research study's objective and ensured anonymity. The participants gave permission to record the one-hour session via Zoom.

Interviews

One-on-one interviews were the final form of collection used in this study. Eight participants (one Administrator, three Teachers, two Mentors, and two Parents) were interviewed three times to gather qualitative data. When putting together the interview group, the researcher wanted to include parents of children involved in the school-based mentoring program. To establish the interview group, the researcher utilized purposive sampling, which involves selecting people based on certain criteria. The researcher, a CITI-certified doctorate student in Liberty University's psychology program, led the interviews.

Triangulation Matrix

The use of triangulation and several data sources verified the research's validity. The study's data collection included both quantitative and qualitative components.

Study Findings

This section summarizes the study's key results and how they relate to the three research topics. This section identifies each study topic and summarizes key findings, providing data sources used to support the analysis. The study's findings are as follows:

1. At Amelia Street, most participants believe that a school-based mentorship program benefits at-risk students by improving attendance and reducing discipline referrals.
2. School-based mentorship programs are viewed by most teachers, parents, and administrator participants to lead to higher academic achievements.
3. Mentorship, a defined leadership curriculum, and regular meeting times are identified as key elements for program success by parents, teachers, mentors and administrators.
4. School-based mentorship programs positively improve students' self-esteem and involvement in class according to participants.

RQ1: What are the overall benefits of participating in a school-based mentoring program for at-risk students?

Finding One: At Amelia Street School, most participants believe that a school-based mentorship program benefits children who are at risk by improving attendance and reducing discipline referrals.

***Survey Results*:** To assess the effectiveness of the school-based mentorship program for at-risk adolescents, four survey questions were posed to participants about Research Question 1. In response to the question, "Are there general benefits for adolescents engaged with a school-based program," 47% of participants strongly agreed and 40% agreed. In contrast, 13% of participants disagreed. In response to question two, "Do you concur with the factors that contribute to the program's success," 57% of participants strongly agreed and 30% agreed. In contrast, 13% of participants disagreed. In response to the question, "Do you feel the mentoring program made a difference in the student's life," 47% of participants strongly agreed and 40% agreed. In contrast, 13% of participants disagreed. Finally, in response to the question, "Have the mentored student's attendance rates increased in your class, 47% of participants strongly agreed and 40% agreed. In contrast, 13% of participants disagreed. Table 2 presents a summary of the data.

Table 2

Survey Results for Questions Aligned with Research Question 1

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Are there general benefits for adolescents engaged with a school-based program?	47%	40%	13%	0%
Do you concur with the factors that contribute to the program's success?	57%	30%	13%	0%
Do you feel the mentoring program made a	47%	40%	13%	0%

difference in the student's life?				
Have the mentored student's attendance rates increased in your class?	47%	40%	13%	0%

The researcher developed the survey with the notion that at-risk students require recognizable methods to interact with a school-based mentorship program. The researcher examined the impact of a school-based mentorship program on at-risk children, specifically whether participants felt it would enhance their overall achievements.

***Focus Groups Results*:** The majority of the focus group participants agreed with the survey results, emphasizing the need of school-based mentorship programs for at-risk adolescents. Six of the eight participants emphasized the necessity of a school-based mentorship program for at-risk adolescents.

Participant one states:

The benefits would be a reduction in discipline concerns. The concept of community extends beyond the streets to include schools. Improved attendance and behavior among children can lead to a stronger community. A program like this can help attain certain aims.

Participant two states:

I feel there are a variety of favorable aspects. I'm grateful there are no more phone calls from the Vice Principal. He hasn't called as much as he used to, and he did send a note stating that my son's discipline had improved from last year.

Participants three states:

I believe the mentor program's assistance and support benefited. My child's counselor did nothing, therefore I believe the mentorship program motivated him to do more. I believe that would be the gain.

During the focus group discussions on the benefits of a school-based mentoring program, one common topic was the importance of positive conduct. Students' attitudes and conduct have shifted towards authoritative figures and mentors.

Participant four states:

I have seen a major shift in my student's behavior and attendance. That is not always the case, however. Many initiatives in our city have minimal influence on children. This curriculum has improved the student's behavior and respect for teachers and school leaders.

Participate five states:

With engagement comes change. The program not only gave at-risk students benefits, it provided instructors the support they needed in overpopulated classroom settings. This keeps students busy and not disrupting the classroom.

Participant six states:

My student's absences decreased since being in the program. She has become more invested in her academics and has learned to deescalate from confrontations.

Interviews Results: Eight participants (one Administrator, three Teachers, two Mentors, and two Parents) were interviewed three times to gather qualitative data. All eight respondents agreed that a school-based mentorship program for at-risk adolescents should be permanent in the district.

Participant one states:

My child had a terrible time taking accountability for his actions. He would never admit to his wrongs and blame others. Now he becomes guilty and remorseful when he is wrong. I am appreciative of that step because to me that is a huge step forward.

Participant two states:

My student felt more obligated to come to school. Her mentor was a mother figure to her. I notice the shift in her attitude since the program began.

Participant three states:

One of the program's perks is the potential for successful children to become mentors to siblings or lower-grade children. Setting that positive example is the goal, we want them to take what they learned and pass it forward.

Participant four states:

These children's changing attitudes affect the younger students as well. I've observed an improvement in the student's attendance and conduct.

Participant five states:

My child became politer around the house to her siblings, that’s when I realized that we were on to something.

Participant six states:

Once a child knows that someone believes in them they will believe in themselves. My child has asked me about college for the first time ever. This is the same child who would hide under the bed to make me believe he left for school already.

Finding One Summary: The findings from three measures showed that the majority of the participants at Amelia Street School support a school-based mentorship

program for at-risk adolescents in an urban district. Benefits include improved attendance, behavior, and academic performance, as well as increased civic participation.

Finding Two: The majority of participants see increased academic achievements as a benefit of a school-based mentorship program.

***Survey Results*:** Question seven of the survey asked has the academic performance of the at-risk child enrolled in the program improved? In response to the question, “Has the academic performance of the at-risk child enrolled in the program improved,” 47% of participants strongly agreed and 40% agreed. In contrast, 13% of participants disagreed. In response to the question, “Have you observed an increase in the mentored students' attendance in your class?” 47% strongly agreed that they have witnessed an increase in attendance, 40% agreed, and 13% disagreed.

Focus Groups Results: The survey results were supported by feedback from participants' in the focus groups.

Participant one states:

Students are motivated to engage in school and stand up for themselves when they believe they are cared for. This motivates the academics, so children desire to learn.

Participant two states:

My child started to become angry when she would receive a bad grade. She would not care before she was introduced to her mentor. She has completely changed her outlook on her academics.

Participant three states:

I've observed a growing drive to learn, engage, and improve.

Participate four states:

This program provides support and supervision for at-risk children, such as my son, who previously lacked a male presence in the home. That motivation pushed my son to want to excel both academically and behaviorally.

Participate five states:

It's difficult being a single parent parenting these children. My taxes have a purpose, and I appreciate that they are helping to support this service. Although I am not privy to all the details, I am confident that my child has benefited by participating. His Math grades improved, I never imagined he could do that without a tutor. He now feels confident in his classroom performance. So, he doesn't mind attending school.

Participate six states:

My student enjoys time spent with her mentor, she expresses to me that she wishes she could spend more time with her. Her attendance has drastically improved this year. The first step is always showing up.

Interviews Results: One-on-one interviews had similar results to surveys and focus groups on improving academic achievements.

Participant two states:

I firmly think that every child deserves a champion. A child's success frequently depends on their interactions and environment. At-risk students are typically separated from school in some way. Many times, this is due to a lack of a trusted adult with whom they may discuss their concerns. This program helps kids solve academic difficulties, leading to improved academic achievement.

Across surveys, focus groups, and interviews, most participants agreed that school administrators should promote a school-based mentoring program to improve academic performance.

Finding Two Summary: Data from surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews associated with Research Question 1 indicate that most participants saw increased academic performance as a benefit of school-based mentoring program. Responses indicated that Amelia's school-based mentorship program improved academic achievements.

RQ2: What factors determine the success of school-based mentoring?

Finding Three: Mentorship, a defined leadership curriculum, and regular meeting times are identified as key elements for program success by parents, teachers, mentors and administrators.

***Survey Results*:** The survey found that most participants feel certain elements significantly impact the program's performance. In response to Question 2, "Do you concur with the factors that contribute to the program's success," 57% of participants strongly agreed and 30% agreed. 13% of participants disagreed. In response to the question, "Do you feel the mentoring program made a difference in the student's life," 47% of participants strongly agreed and 40% agreed. 13% of participants disagreed. In response to the question, “Does a school-based mentoring program have a significant impact on the student's life,” 57% of participants strongly agreed and 30% agreed. 13% of participants disagreed. Table 3 presents a summary of the data.

Table 3

Survey Results for Questions Aligned with Research Question 2

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Do you concur with the factors that contribute to the program's success?	57%	30%	13%	0%
Do you feel the mentoring program made a difference in the student's life?	47%	40%	13%	0%
Does a school-based mentoring program have a significant impact on the student's life?	57%	30%	13%	0%

Focus Groups Results: Six of eight participants in three focus groups agreed on key elements for a successful school-based mentoring program. During the debate, participants expressed various perspectives on what factors contribute to the success of a school-based mentoring program.

Participant one states:

The program emphasizes the significance of several variables in the program. I enjoy that it focuses on the child's development in several areas. Topics such as conflict resolution and personal identity. The curriculum is crucial because it offers structure to the children.

Participant two states:

Mentors, I feel, are also a decisive element. They are responsible for the structure that exists. This was our first time with the program itself, and it was fantastic!

Participant three states:

The structure and leadership the mentors provided made the children want to succeed, not just told to succeed.

Participant four states:

As a parent, I value the fact that my child has a support group. She began the program frustrated, as did many other children. She now has a regular support system in place. That consistent structure is what she needed.

Participant five states:

The consistency was the key in this program. The mentors knew what to do with the time being spent with the children.

Participant six states:

I love the discipline and structure this program provided for the children. You can tell in their attitudes.

Participants in the focus group agreed that a school-based mentoring program should be taught by mentors who understand the content presented to children. Six of eight participants agreed that mentorship, a defined leadership curriculum, and regular meeting times are identified as key elements for the program success.

Interviews Results: The one-on-one interviews supported the survey and focus group findings on the elements that contribute to a successful mentoring program. All eight interviewees agreed that certain elements contribute to the effectiveness of school-based mentorship programs. Mentorship, a defined leadership curriculum, and regular meeting times are identified as key elements for this program's success.

Participant two states:

It was inspiring to watch adolescents engage in a variety of areas, including Math, Science, and English, as well as social interaction. The structured leadership as well as the consistent times is what made the program a success.

Participant three states:

Having a good role model who has experienced trauma and oppression can provide children with valuable learning opportunities.

Participant four states:

This program encourages students to give their all, rise to their potential, and serve others in the future.

Participant five states:

The mentors really improved my child's life. The structure provided consistency that not only worked at school but followed to the household.

Participant six states:

I strongly support mentorship programs in schools. I believe they are incredibly essential because they provide opportunities and places for children who may feel excluded or overlooked in traditional classes.

All eight participants agreed that successful school-based mentorship programs rely on certain elements. Mentorship, a defined leadership curriculum, and regular meeting times are identified as key elements for this program's success.

Finding Three Summary: The survey, focus group, and one-on-one interviews revealed specific elements that contribute to the effectiveness of a school-based mentoring program. Mentorship, a defined leadership curriculum, and regular meeting times are identified as key elements for this program's success.

RQ3: What aspects of a student's life improve or significantly change as a result of participating in a school-based mentoring program?

Finding Four: School-based mentorship programs positively improve students' self-esteem and involvement in class according to participants.

***Survey Results*:** The study aimed to identify how a school-based mentorship program improves a student's life. The survey includes questions to assess how students' lives improved or changed as a result of participating in the program. In response to the question "Has the academic performance of the at-risk child enrolled in the program improved," 47% of participants strongly agreed and 40% agreed. 13% of participants disagreed. In response to the question, "Have the I-Ready test scores increased for mentored student's," 57% of participants strongly agreed and 30% agreed. 13% of participants disagreed. In response to the question, "Has the student shown overall appreciation for the program and improved communication," 47% of participants strongly agreed and 40% agreed. 13% of participants disagreed. In response to the question, "Have the mentored student's attendance rates increased in your class," 47% of participants strongly agreed and 40% agreed. 13% of participants disagreed. Table 4 presents a summary of the data.

Table 4

Survey Results for Questions Aligned with Research Question 3

Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Has the academic performance of the at-risk child enrolled in the program improved?	47%	40%	13%	0%

Have the I-Ready test scores increased for mentored student's?	57%	30%	13%	0%
Has the student shown overall appreciation for the program and improved communication?	47%	40%	13%	0%
Have the mentored student’s attendance rates increased in your class?	47%	40%	13%	0%

The majority of survey participants believed that a school-based mentorship program had a substantial influence on students' lives. A school-based mentorship program may significantly improve the lives of at-risk adolescents, according to the participants. School-based mentorship programs boost student class engagement and self-esteem.

Focus Groups Results: Focus groups provided valuable feedback on the school-based mentorship program's influence on children's lives. Participants in the focus group reported that the program enhanced children's self-esteem and classroom involvement. Participant one states:

The consistent meetings offered a forum for children to connect and relate with others experiencing similar problems. I believe that increased their confidence, which led them to want to show up and show out.

Participant two states:

My daughter had low self-esteem issues. She lacked the confidence in herself to achieve and speak up. The mentoring program brought in female high school students to work with my daughter and her friends. This was extremely beneficial as younger students are more likely to listen to older peers than to authority figures. She has completely turned her attitude around and her grades have come up.

Participant three states:

This school-based mentorship program helps children develop self-confidence, self-awareness, and self-control. This helped them meet academic benchmarks.

Participant four states:

Students' self-confidence empowers them to express themselves and communicate their requirements effectively. To feel comfortable asking necessary questions for improved comprehension. Having confidence naturally boosts self-esteem. This program helped most of them to believe in themselves.

Participant five states:

This program was able to bring my son’s confidence and grades up. They get two thumbs up from me and my family.

Participant six states:

One of the primary advantages is the capacity to feel connected. For my son, the absence of a male household member is significant. Connecting with others is crucial for a student's self-esteem and academic interest. This social support led to increased educational achievement for him. He has someone to talk to and connect with. As a woman, there are limitations on how far I can go with him.

Interviews Results: The interviewees' comments aligned with survey and focus group findings. A school-based mentorship program improves children' lives significantly, according to the majority of participants. School-based mentorship programs positively improve students' self-esteem and involvement in class according to participants.

Participant one states:

Prior to joining the program, you were aware of children who exhibited negative classroom conduct. Whether they were rude to educators, absent from class, involved in conflicts, or did not attend class. That demonstrated a cry for assistance. The shift in class engagement alters the paradigm for self-confidence.

Participant two states:

Yes, it has undoubtedly boosted children's confidence. Students are attending classes and expressing inspirations to attend college.

Participant three states:

You provide support and boost these student’s self-esteem. And if you are self-confident, you can conquer the world.

Participant four states:

The mentorship program significantly reduced chronic absenteeism and increased class participation for some students that I felt were not going to change. This program really made me a believer.

Participant five states:

I would recommend this program for all schools. The shift in attitudes that I have witness has been inspiring.

Participant six states:

I love the spark I have witness with the students. We have come a long way and I feel their dedication and hard work here, will lay the ground work for their futures.

Finding Four Summary: Based on survey, focus group, and one-on-one interviews the majority of participants believe that a school-based mentoring program substantially enhances students' lives (Research Question 3). School-based mentorship programs positively improve students' self-esteem and involvement in class according to participants.

Quantitative

Using a quantitative method approach, the researcher investigated whether a mentorship program had significant impacts on at-risk children's attendance, I-Ready scores, and behavior referrals. The student's scores on the pre-and post-tests were computed and ranked using the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. The same test was utilized to compare behavior referrals, and attendance from the fall semester to the spring semester of the current academic year. SPSS, a computer-based statistics tool, was used to run the nonparametric test to address the research question.

iReady (Reading) Results

The researcher aimed to investigate if mentorship had a statistically significant impact on children's Reading and Math iReady exams. The iReady examinations were administered three times annually: the fall, winter, and spring. To analyze student trends in reading, prior year's testing data was combined with current year's data. For the study, the researcher only gathered the pre-test (fall) and post-test (spring). A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed that reading test scores were significantly higher after the

intervention (Md=424.00, n=10) compared to before the intervention (Md=398.50, n=10), z = -2.14, p = .032, with a medium effect size, r = .48. Table 5 presents a depiction of the data.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Percentiles 25th	50th (Median)	75th
Reading Pretest	10	373.75	398.50	416.00
Reading Post	10	369.75	424.00	442.25

Test Statistics[a]

	Reading Post - Reading Pretest
Z	-2.143[b]
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.032

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test
b. Based on negative ranks.

iReady (Math) Results

To analyze student trends in math, prior year's testing data pre-mentorship was compared with current year's data post mentorship. For the study, the researcher only gathered the pre-test (fall) and post-test (spring). A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed that math test scores were significantly higher after the intervention (Md=428.00, n=10) compared to before the intervention (Md=393.50, n=10), z = -2.50, p = .012, with a large effect size, r = .56. Table 6 presents a depiction of the data.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Percentiles 25th	50th (Median)	75th

Math Pretest	10	373.50	393.50	421.50
Math Post	10	386.25	428.00	447.25

Test Statistics[a]

	Math Post - Math Pretest
Z	-2.501[b]
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.012

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test
b. Based on negative ranks.

Attendance Results

The study aimed to assess if mentoring improved students' motivation to attend school. The Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks Test evaluated attendance between experimental group in 2022-2023 pre-mentorship and 2023-2024 post mentorship. A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed that attendance improved (absences decreased) after the intervention (Md=6.50, n=10) compared to before the mentorship (Md=20.00, n=10), z = -2.81, p = .005, with a large effect size, r = .63. Table 7 presents a depiction of the data.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics

		Percentiles		
	N	25th	50th (Median)	75th
Absence23	10	14.25	20.00	33.25
Absence24	10	4.75	6.50	13.25

Test Statistics[a]

	Absence24 - Absence23
Z	-2.807[b]
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.005

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on positive ranks.

Behavior Results

The study aimed to examine if a mentoring program had a statistically significant impact on student conduct before and after the program. A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed that discipline referrals decreased (suspensions decreased) after the intervention (Md=9.50, n=10) compared to before the mentorship (Md=18.00, n=10), z = -2.40, p = .017, with a large effect size, r = .54. Table 8 presents a depiction of the data.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Percentiles 25th	50th (Median)	75th
Referrals23	10	12.25	18.00	30.25
Referrals24	10	6.75	9.50	17.75

Test Statistics[a]

	Referrals24 - Referrals23
Z	-2.395[b]
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.017

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test
b. Based on positive ranks.

Grade Point Average (GPA) Results

The study aimed to examine if a mentoring program had a statistically significant impact on student grade point average before and after the program. A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed that student grade point averages were significantly higher after the intervention (Md=2.30, n=10) compared to before the mentorship (Md=2.0, n=10), z = -1.98, p =.048, with a medium effect size, r = .44. Table 9 presents a depiction of the data.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Percentiles 25th	50th (Median)	75th
GPA2023	10	1.4500	2.0000	2.4000
GPA2024	10	1.7000	2.3000	2.7750

Test Statistics[a]

	GPA2024 - GPA2023
Z	-1.976[b]
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.048

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test
b. Based on negative ranks.

Summary

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of a school-based mentorship program for children at-risk in an urban school system. The study included a survey, three focus groups, and three one-on-one interviews. The data from each instrumentation tool was examined and organized into themes to support the four primary results. Participants in the research included mentors, instructors, parents, and administrators. Three research questions were designed to guide the study and guarantee adequate data collection. This was essential to reach legitimate findings. The study yielded four key conclusions. Findings One and Two addressed Research Question 1, whereas Finding Three was important to Research Question 2 and Finding Four linked to Research Question 3. There were four findings: (1.) At Amelia Street, most participants believe that a school-based mentorship program benefits at-risk students by improving attendance and reducing discipline referrals. (2.) School-based mentorship programs are viewed by most teachers, parents, and administrator participants to lead to higher academic

achievements. (3.) Mentorship, a defined leadership curriculum, and regular meeting times are identified as key elements for program success by parents, teachers, mentors and administrators. (4.) School-based mentorship programs positively improve students' self-esteem and involvement in class according to participants.

Using a quantitative method approach, the researcher investigated whether a mentorship program had significant impacts on at-risk children's attendance, I-Ready scores, and behavior referrals. The student's scores on the pre-and post-tests were computed and ranked using the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. The same test was utilized to compare behavior referrals, and attendance from the fall semester to the spring semester of the current academic year. A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed that reading test scores were significantly higher after the intervention (Md=424.00, n=10) compared to before the intervention (Md=398.50, n=10), $z = -2.14$, $p = .032$, with a medium effect size, $r = .48$. A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed that math test scores were significantly higher after the intervention (Md=428.00, n=10) compared to before the intervention (Md=393.50, n=10), $z = -2.50$, $p = .012$, with a large effect size, $r = .56$. A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed that attendance improved (absences decreased) after the intervention (Md=6.50, n=10) compared to before the mentorship (Md=20.00, n=10), $z = -2.81$, $p = .005$, with a large effect size, $r = .63$. A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed that discipline referrals decreased (suspensions decreased) after the intervention (Md=9.50, n=10) compared to before the mentorship (Md=18.00, n=10), $z = -2.40$, $p = .017$, with a large effect size, $r = .54$. In Chapter V, the researcher will evaluate the data and make suggestions for Amelia Street School, including next steps.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Overview

The purpose of this study was to track changes in student confidence, academic skills, interaction between students and teachers, and overall performance. The goal was to see how mentoring affects attendance, academic achievement, and the number of behavioral issues and referrals for students. The motivation behind this study was to also investigate the impact of school-based mentoring post Covid-19. This study was administered at Amelia Street School, with data gathered through a survey, three one-on-one interviews, and three focus groups. Using a quantitative method approach, the researcher investigated whether a mentorship program had significant impacts on at-risk children's attendance, I-Ready scores, and behavior referrals.

The organization of Chapter V

The researcher analyzed the perspectives of teachers, parents, mentors, and administrators on a school-based mentoring program for at-risk adolescents. Chapter IV summarized the study's four conclusions relating to the three research issues as well as the quantitative results. In Chapter V, we will explore the significance of the four results and develop conclusions based on them. Future recommendations will also be provided.

Summary of Findings

RQ1: What are the overall benefits of participating in a school-based mentoring program for at-risk students?

The first research question asked participants on the perceived benefits of a school-based mentorship program. Participants completed a survey to collect data to

answer the question. Additionally, data was gathered through focus groups and interviews.

Finding One: At Amelia Street School, most participants believe that a school-based mentorship program benefits children who are at risk by improving attendance and reducing discipline referrals.

The findings from three measures showed that the majority of the participants at Amelia Street School support a school-based mentorship program for at-risk adolescents in an urban district. In response to the question, "Are there general benefits for adolescents engaged with a school-based program," 47% of participants strongly agreed and 40% agreed. In contrast, 13% of participants disagreed. The survey, focus groups, and interviews indicate that at-risk adolescents in the Amelia Street School District benefit from school-based mentorship programs. Data suggests that implementing a school-based mentorship program for at-risk adolescents in the Amelia Street School District has significant advantages. Benefits include improved attendance, behavior, and academic performance, as well as increased civic participation.

Finding Two: The majority of participants see increased academic achievements as a benefit of a school-based mentorship program.

The second conclusion was supported by data from the survey, focus groups, and interviews. Combining data from three instruments revealed a consistent motif. Participants at Amelia Street School reported that their school-based mentorship program improves academic performance for at-risk children. Question seven of the survey asked has the academic performance of the at-risk child enrolled in the program improved? In response to the question, “Has the academic performance of the at-risk child enrolled in

the program improved," 47% of participants strongly agreed and 40% agreed. In contrast, 13% of participants disagreed. The survey found that most respondents believe a school-based mentorship program improves academic achievement for at-risk adolescents.

RQ2: What factors determine the success of school-based mentoring?

Finding Three: Mentorship, a defined leadership curriculum, and regular meeting times are identified as key elements for program success by parents, teachers, mentors and administrators.

The survey found that most participants feel certain elements significantly impact the program's performance. In response to Question 2, "Do you concur with the factors that contribute to the program's success," 57% of participants strongly agreed and 30% agreed. 13% percent of participants disagreed. The survey results were supported by feedback from focus groups and interviews with participants.

RQ3: What aspects of a student's life improve or significantly change as a result of participating in a school-based mentoring program?

Finding Four: School-based mentorship programs positively improve students' self-esteem and involvement in class according to participants.

The survey includes questions to assess how students' lives improved or changed as a result of participating in the program. In response to the question "Has the academic performance of the at-risk child enrolled in the program improved," 47% of participants strongly agreed and 40% agreed. 13% percent of participants disagreed. The survey results were supported by feedback from focus groups and interviews with participants.

Quantitative

Using a quantitative method approach, the researcher investigated whether a mentorship program had significant impacts on at-risk children's attendance, I-Ready scores, and behavior referrals. The student's scores on the pre-and post-tests were computed and ranked using the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. The same test was utilized to compare behavior referrals, and attendance from the fall semester to the spring semester of the current academic year.

iReady (Reading) Results

The researcher aimed to investigate if mentorship had a statistically significant impact on children's Reading and Math iReady exams. A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed that reading test scores were significantly higher after the intervention (Md=424.00, n=10) compared to before the intervention (Md=398.50, n=10), $z = -2.14$, $p = .032$, with a medium effect size, $r = .48$.

iReady (Math) Results

To analyze student trends in math, prior year's testing data pre-mentorship was compared with current year's data post mentorship. A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed that math test scores were significantly higher after the intervention (Md=428.00, n=10) compared to before the intervention (Md=393.50, n=10), $z = -2.50$, $p = .012$, with a large effect size, $r = .56$.

Attendance Results

The study aimed to assess if mentoring improved students' motivation to attend school. The Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks Test evaluated attendance between experimental group in 2022-2023 pre-mentorship and 2023-2024 post mentorship. A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed that attendance improved (absences decreased) after the intervention

(Md=6.50, n=10) compared to before the mentorship (Md=20.00, n=10), z = -2.81, p = .005, with a large effect size, r = .63.

Behavior Results

The study aimed to examine if a mentoring program had a statistically significant impact on student conduct before and after the program. A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed that discipline referrals decreased (suspensions decreased) after the intervention (Md=9.50, n=10) compared to before the mentorship (Md=18.00, n=10), z = -2.40, p = .017, with a large effect size, r = .54.

Grade Point Average (GPA) Results

The study aimed to examine if a mentoring program had a statistically significant impact on student grade point average before and after the program. A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed that student grade point averages were significantly higher after the intervention (Md=2.30, n=10) compared to before the mentorship (Md=2.0, n=10), z = -1.98, p =.048, with a medium effect size, r = .44.

Discussion of Findings

Despite limited research on K-12 student mentoring after Covid-19, studies inconsistently show favorable benefits on mentees' accomplishments, self-concept, and goals (Chen et al., 2020). While this study suggests that school-based mentorship programs help children, previous research calls for further investigation. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 aimed to provide educators with the tools they needed to ensure student achievement (Krieg, 2018). The act, however, is widely considered as a failure. It may have unintentionally worsened the disparity for at-risk children. Simoes and Alarcao (2020) showed that school-based mentoring programs did not consistently provide the

same beneficial results as community-based mentoring (CBM). Some school-based mentorship initiatives lack proof and so do not yield beneficial benefits. Mentoring on the other hand, may address several school-related difficulties, including academic success, attendance, conduct, motivation, and self-esteem (Herrera et al., 2019). The data from the three measures in this study supports a school-based mentorship program for at-risk adolescents.

Participants' beliefs that school-based mentoring improves academic performance align with some previous findings. Wood and Mayo-Wilson (2019) performed a study utilizing a Youth Empowerment Program in Los Angeles to mentor at-risk Latino children. Sixty-one fourth and fifth-grade children were connected with a mentor. The major metric was the length of the connection, which gives important information about how to effectively match students with mentors. These partnerships lasted an average of one and a half years, with some lasting more than two years. According to the researchers, the program is an excellent strategy to assist at-risk and disadvantaged adolescents in developing meaningful relationships with people in their community. This will follow them into the classrooms for social and academic benefits. These ties, according to the researchers, may assist to prevent dangerous behaviors when children enter puberty. Although the study was successful, more studies are needed to evaluate the veracity of these claims. Coller and Kuo (2019) did a systematic evaluation to establish the long-term effects of these mentoring programs, with an emphasis on delinquency. The researchers examined 46 research studies and discovered statistically significant favorable findings.

The researchers showed statistical gains in academic success (d=.11) and

aggressiveness (d=.29). Furthermore, the researchers gave information to policymakers who may utilize this data to justify financing for school-based mentoring programs. To close the performance gap and support at-risk children at Amelia Street School, they require access to school-based mentorship for academic development. Research participants emphasized the importance of vested interests, such as academic development, in assisting at-risk children. From Finding Two, two inferences may be drawn. As noted in Finding One, most participants at Amelia Street School agree that a school-based mentoring program improves at-risk children by increasing attendance and minimizing discipline referrals. This leads to successful academic results (Finding Two). A second conclusion might be drawn about assumptions. Engaging with at-risk students does not guarantee better outcomes. The learner must be consistent and engaged in the structured curriculum. In this study, the survey found that most participants feel certain elements significantly impact the program's performance.

In response to Question 2, "Do you concur with the factors that contribute to the program's success," 57% of participants strongly agreed and 30% agreed. 13% of participants disagreed. Participants' beliefs that certain elements significantly impact a program's performance align with some previous findings. Herrera and Karcher (2018) discussed how to effectively establish a school-based mentoring program. The researchers highlighted that there is no one-size-fits-all strategy to mentoring and that the program must be tailored to the unique community. The program's objectives and communication channels must be clearly established and communicated to all participants. Funding must also be considered, as a program cannot be sustained without resources (Herrera & Karcher, 2018). The termination of such a program due to a lack of

financing may have significant consequences for children who have learned to rely on these connections. Herrera and Karcher (2018) noted that school-based mentoring programs are complicated, but the benefits clearly exceed the expenditures. However, it is critical that these expenditures be factored into the program's planning phase. Smith and Stormont (2019) noted that the parent must be included in this interaction as a stakeholder in the student's outcomes.

Mentoring programs are gaining popularity nationwide, prompting a focus on assessing and evaluating their effectiveness. Research shows that engaging at-risk students in a school-based mentorship program significantly improves their lives. Mentoring may address school-related difficulties such as self-esteem, motivation, conduct, class engagement, and academic accomplishment. However, participants feel certain elements significantly impact the program's performance. In this study, Mentorship, a defined leadership curriculum, and regular meeting times are identified as key elements for program success by parents, teachers, mentors and administrators (Finding Three). Participants at Amelia Street School identified particular areas where mentees improved during the program. Focus groups and interviews provided valuable insights into the school-based mentorship program's influence on children's lives. Most participants reported increased self-esteem and involvement in class as a result of the intervention (Finding Four).

Participant four states:

The mentorship program significantly reduced chronic absenteeism and increased class participation for some students that I felt were not going to change. This program really made me a believer.

Participant five states:

I would recommend this program for all schools. The shift in attitudes that I have witness has been inspiring.

Participant six states:

I love the spark I have witness with the students. We have come a long way and I feel their dedication and hard work here, will lay the ground work for their futures.

Participants' beliefs that school-based mentoring can increase self-esteem and involvement in class align with some previous findings. According to Lakind et al. students cherish solid relationships with their mentors and see these opportunities as stepping stones to academic achievement and higher education. Frels et al. (2021) provided longitudinal research to demonstrate the usefulness of a middle school-based mentorship program. The study included 94 seventh-grade students from four different classrooms. The children were evaluated at the start of the school year and every three months thereafter. The intervention was implemented in two classrooms, while the other two got standard instruction and assistance. Across all data collection sites, the researchers discovered that self-regulated learning was considerably better in the experiment group.

While academic success increases were far smaller than improvements in self-regulated learning abilities, they were there. The researchers were optimistic that continuing this approach would result in further substantial gains in both areas of measurement. Finding Four suggests that a school-based mentorship program significantly impacts the lives of at-risk students. Data from three instruments indicate a common theme that resonates. Parents, teachers, and administrators perceive the school-

based mentoring program to have a significant impact on a student's self-esteem and class participation.

Implications

The study found that a school-based mentorship program at Amelia leads to reduced absences, suspensions, improved academic performance, and greater self-esteem among mentees. These characteristics are linked to positive school outcomes, including increased academic achievement and motivation (Lyons & McQuillin, 2019). School psychologists that want to improve student functioning may consider including mentorship programs into their treatment and preventive approaches. Clinicians who recognize children and adolescents with poor self-esteem might incorporate mentoring into their treatment plans also. Clinicians are increasingly employing them. Starting a mentorship program is within reach. However, successful mentorship programs do not just happen. They are founded on careful preparation and a long-term commitment to guide participants through the mentoring process while constantly enhancing the program (Herrera & Karcher, 2018). The first step is to determine why you are launching the mentorship program. Your design should be flexible and provide structure. Structure gives participants an example to follow. This is crucial for assisting participants in achieving productive learning that meets established mentoring objectives (Herrera & Karcher, 2018).

Similarly, flexibility is required to meet various individual mentoring needs based on learning goals, preferences, and learning styles. Even the best-designed mentoring programs will struggle without effective program recruiting, and mentoring training. A mentorship relationship requires solid chemistry, communication, and consistency.

(Smith & Stormont, 2019). Clinicians, administrators, and educators could collaborate with other mentoring groups or influential community leaders to assist in creating effective relationships in the mentoring programs. Partnering with other groups can help the community have a greater impact. A BBBS study found that children with mentors were less likely than their peers to start using drugs or alcohol during the course of the eighteen-month trial. Specifically, six percent of children with mentors began using drugs, compared to 11.4 percent of their peers who did not have mentors, and 19.4 percent began using alcohol, compared to 26.7 percent (Tony et al., 2019). Joining forces allows you to combine resources, use each other's networks, and launch mutually beneficial initiatives.

Today, school officials are evaluated primarily on their ability to improve student test scores and reduce achievement disparities. This study's findings on the influence of school-based mentorship on children at-risk may be useful for school counselors and clinicians.

Limitations

This evaluation has limitations that should be addressed in future research on youth mentoring programs. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), a study's limitations are those aspects of a particular research design that have an influence on how findings should be interpreted and put restrictions on how results may be generalized. First, this study's sample size is small and confined to one school in the Richmond public school district. Technology was an important resource in this study. Focus groups and one-on-one interviews were conducted using Zoom, a video conference tool. Having to rely on technology was a hurdle. Poor Wi-Fi, delays, and other technological difficulties

disrupted discussion flow. Therefore, participants may have felt irritated and rushed. Since this was a mixed research design participants honesty was crucial in determining the results. Dealing with human participants can be a limitation because you run the risk of individuals being dishonest or biased.

Although the current study provides preliminary evidence for program success, it lacks particular insights for future program creation and assessment efforts. The area of mentorship intervention is constantly evolving, making it challenging to generalize outcomes and anticipate future program success. Subsequent programs may introduce fresh ideas and breakthroughs not found in prior evaluations. According to Wheeler et al. (2020), clinicians should consider all available studies and avoid making decisions based solely on the findings of a single investigation. Nevertheless, mentoring programs offer significant benefits for physicians working with children, outweighing any drawbacks. Benefits from programs might even last for years after they end. Jackson's (2019) study found a link between mentorship and resilience in adults. Jackson found that those who were mentored as children reported greater resilience in adulthood, in spite of the length of the connection or the type of mentor.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study examined the influence of a mentorship program on children at-risk. The study focused on the benefits and critical aspects that improve a student's life through school-based mentorship. The findings from three data sources support past studies on school-based mentoring and highlight opportunities for improvement in the lives of at-risk adolescents. The research given in Chapter II examined the historical issue of at-risk children, defined what it means to be at-risk, analyzed the reasons and effects of

being at-risk, and examined prior remedies, such as school-based mentorship programs. This study was consistent with previous research on school-based mentoring. A mentorship program for at-risk adolescents at Amelia Street school has shown to reduce discipline referrals, increase student results, and boost self-esteem.

More research is needed to determine how school-based mentoring affects future outcomes including college enrollment and job placement. A second idea would be to research the elements that influence good mentors. A third recommendation is to examine a larger sample size. More studies could determine the optimal implementation procedure for school-based mentoring programs, or whether starting at an earlier grade level makes a difference. A longitudinal study might assess how mentoring affects the same set of participants over time. The researcher may connect a mentor with a student to explore the long-term effects of mentoring, particularly during the transition to middle and high school. The program's outcomes may reveal which grade levels had the biggest progress when mentoring was added. For future research using iReady tests, mentors should get extensive training that includes reports and next actions to provide instructional support. To provide the most effective training, mentors should meet with students' teachers to address tutoring requirements before and after benchmark examinations. A mentorship program for at-risk adolescents might involve mentors from the community, parents, and teachers. A quantitative analysis can identify statistically significant student groupings depending on mentor type. A qualitative research might examine student impressions of mentors, separated into three groups: community people, parents, and school workers. This research might also assess how teachers and mentors

perceive the mentoring program's success. Continued research would benefit Amelia Street School and the community as a whole.

Recommendations for Practice

It is vital to have a complete strategy for program success. The first step is to screen and identify at-risk students. Next, the student's schedules should be identified, as well as their professors. Fostering relationships among students, parents, mentors, and instructors is beneficial for the student. Teachers should be informed and educated about the program and its intended outcomes to support at-risk students. When a mentor is involved, students can really benefit from the experience. To address performance discrepancies in student accomplishment, Amelia and other urban school districts should review their mentoring program plans. To promote success among at-risk children in grades K-12, the district must maintain consistent program delivery. Early engagement with learners is crucial, rather than waiting until high school.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to track changes in student confidence, academic skills, interaction between students and teachers, and overall performance. The goal was to see how mentoring affects attendance, academic achievement, and the number of behavioral issues and referrals for students. The motivation behind this study was to also investigate the impact of school-based mentoring post Covid-19. The researcher analyzed the perspectives of teachers, parents, mentors, and administrators.

Finding One: At Amelia Street School, most participants believe that a school-based mentorship program benefits children who are at risk by improving attendance and reducing discipline referrals.

Finding Two: The majority of participants see increased academic achievements as a benefit of a school-based mentorship program.

Finding Three: Mentorship, a defined leadership curriculum, and regular meeting times are identified as key elements for program success by parents, teachers, mentors and administrators.

Finding Four: School-based mentorship programs positively improve students' self-esteem and involvement in class according to participants.

Using a quantitative method approach, the researcher investigated whether a mentorship program had significant impacts on at-risk children's attendance, I-Ready scores, and behavior referrals. The student's scores on the pre-and post-tests were computed and ranked using the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. The same test was utilized to compare behavior referrals, and attendance from the fall semester to the spring semester of the current academic year. SPSS, a computer-based statistics tool, was used to run the nonparametric test to address the research question.

The researcher aimed to investigate if mentorship had a statistically significant impact on children's Reading and Math iReady exams. A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed that reading test scores were significantly higher after the intervention (Md=424.00, n=10) compared to before the intervention (Md=398.50, n=10), $z = -2.14$, $p = .032$, with a medium effect size, $r = .48$.

To analyze student trends in math, prior year's testing data pre-mentorship was compared with current year's data post mentorship. A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed that math test scores were significantly higher after the intervention

(Md=428.00, n=10) compared to before the intervention (Md=393.50, n=10), z = -2.50, p = .012, with a large effect size, r = .56.

The study aimed to assess if mentoring improved students' motivation to attend school. The Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks Test evaluated attendance between experimental group in 2022-2023 pre-mentorship and 2023-2024 post mentorship. A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed that attendance improved (absences decreased) after the intervention (Md=6.50, n=10) compared to before the mentorship (Md=20.00, n=10), z = -2.81, p = .005, with a large effect size, r = .63.

The study aimed to examine if a mentoring program had a statistically significant impact on student conduct before and after the program. A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed that discipline referrals decreased (suspensions decreased) after the intervention (Md=9.50, n=10) compared to before the mentorship (Md=18.00, n=10), z = -2.40, p = .017, with a large effect size, r = .54.

The study aimed to examine if a mentoring program had a statistically significant impact on student grade point average before and after the program. A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed that student grade point averages were significantly higher after the intervention (Md=2.30, n=10) compared to before the mentorship (Md=2.0, n=10), z = -1.98, p =.048, with a medium effect size, r = .44.

As the study concludes, the researcher is pleased that the efforts of the program this year have yielded favorable results. Participants in the study agreed with previous studies on school-based mentorship.

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APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT/INFORMED CONSENT

Recruitment: Email / Letter

Dear Parents, Educators, & Administrators

As a doctoral candidate in the Psychology Department, at Liberty University, I am conducting research to better understand an issue. The purpose of my research is to investigate the influence at-risk adolescents in an urban school district get from a school-based mentorship program, and I am writing to invite you to join my study. Eligibility criteria for parents consists of: (a) parent(s) must reside in high-crime regions, (b) must have a child enrolled in the Brothers and Sisters United program, and (c) must be at least 21 years of age. Eligibility criteria for teachers consists of: (a) teacher must have an active teaching license, and (b) must be at least 21 years of age**.** Eligibility criteria for administrators consists of: (a) principal must have an active leadership certification, and (b) must be at least 21 years of age. Eligibility criteria for mentors consists of: (a) mentor must work at Amelia Street School, and (b) must be at least 21 years of age.

As part of this study, I will be requesting access to student records, which will include attendance reports, I-Ready scores, and behavior referrals. Participants, if willing, will be given a link to access a 10-minute survey. After the survey, you may be selected randomly to participate in either a focus group or an interview. The focus group and interviews will be held privately. Participants must be available to commit 60-90 minutes on that day. The focus group and interviews will be audio- and video-recorded and transcribed virtually via Zoom. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

For you to participate, please complete the attached survey and return it by email to [redacted] If you meet my participant criteria and are randomly selected, I will contact you to schedule an interview.
A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me prior to taking part in any procedures.
Sincerely,

Brandon Richardson
Doctoral Candidate
[redacted]

INFORMED CONSENT

Consent Form

Title of the Project: The Impact of School-Based Mentoring on At-Risk Students of an Urban School District
Principal Investigator: Brandon Richardson, Doctoral Candidate, School of Psychology, Liberty University

Invitation to Take Part in a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate eligibility criteria for parents consists of: (a) parent(s) must reside in high-crime regions, (b) must have a child enrolled in the Brothers and Sisters United program, and (c) must be at least 21 years of age. Eligibility criteria for teachers consists of: (a) teacher must have an active teaching license, and (b) must be at least 21 years of age**.** Eligibility criteria for administrators consists of: (a) principal must have an active leadership certification, and (b) must be at least 21 years of age. Eligibility criteria for mentors consists of: (a) mentor must work at Amelia Street School, and (b) must be at least 21 years of age. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of this mixed method study is to investigate the impact of a School-Based mentoring program. Specifically, the goal is to see how mentoring affects attendance, academic achievement, and the number of behavioral referrals for students.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1) Parent participants: As part of this study, I will be requesting access to your students' records, which will include attendance reports, I-Ready scores, and behavior referrals.
2) Each participant will be given a link to access a 10-minute online survey.
3) If selected randomly for further participation, you may take part in a focus group or an interview. The focus group and interviews will be held privately Participants must be available to commit 60-90 minutes on that day. The focus groups and interviews will be audio- and video-recorded and transcribed virtually via Zoom.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from participating in this study.

The results of this study will demonstrate that connections between children and adults are crucial and have a significant influence on the lives of the students we teach, which benefits at-risk students. Benefits to society include demonstrating connections between

children and adults that have a significant influence on the lives of the students we teach, which benefits at-risk students.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses to all procedures will be kept confidential by replacing names with a coding system.
- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation. Interviews and the focus group will be conducted virtually via Zoom meeting link.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then deleted. The researcher will be the only one to have access to these recordings.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision on whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Amelia Street School. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

The researcher conducting the study is Brandon Richardson. You may ask any questions you have now, or if you have questions at any time throughout the process, you are encouraged to contact Brandon at [redacted] You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Donna Busarow, at [redacted].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects' research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record and video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____

Printed Subject Name

_____

Date

APPENDIX B: ADMINISTRATORS/TEACHERS/MENTORS

1) Are there general benefits for adolescents engaged with a school-based program?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

2) Do you concur with the factors that contribute to the program's success?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

3) Does a school-based mentoring program have a significant impact on the student's life?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

4) Have the mentored student’s attendance rates increased in your class?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

5) Have the I-Ready test scores increased for mentored student's?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

6) Do you feel the mentoring program made a difference in the student's life?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

7) Has the academic performance of the at-risk child enrolled in the program improved?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

8) Has the student shown overall appreciation for the program and improved communication?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

9) Have discipline referrals decrease for the mentored student?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

10) Do you think more schools should introduce mentorship programs?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX C: PARENTS SURVEY

1) Has your child's sense of self-worth improve?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

2) Are your child's grades as high as you would like them to be?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

3) Is your child’s success in school essential to you?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

4) Does your child place a high value on succeeding in school?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

5) Do you think the teachers at your child's school want them to succeed?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

6) Do you think your child could benefit from a mentorship program during the school day?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

7) Do you believe your child's mentor cares about his or her success?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

8) Do you want your child to go to college?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

9) Will your child attend college or secondary school?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

10) Do you feel your child has benefited from the Brothers and Sisters Mentoring Program?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP/INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are the overall benefits of participating in a school-based mentoring program for at-risk students?
2. What factors determine the success of school-based mentoring?
3. What aspects of a student's life improve or significantly change as a result of participating in a school-based mentoring program?