2018 National Convening

May 9-10, 2018
Baltimore, Maryland
Tapping into the Power of Peers

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Beshon Smith, Center for Supportive Schools
Dudney Sylla, MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership

Peer Leaders: Kylik Kimbrough, 11th Grader, Edmondson-Westside High School
Taylor Shaw, 11th Grader, Edmondson-Westside High School
Session Objectives

• Feel inspired to include peers as part of your Success Mentors and other student support strategies

• Understand key considerations and best practices for designing an effective school-based peer mentoring program

• Know where you can find resources and support to start tapping into the power of peer mentors in your own schools
Agenda

• Introductions & icebreaker
• Overview of peer mentoring programs
• What does peer mentoring look like in practice?
  • Fresno Public Schools
  • Peer Group Connection
• Next steps & resources
About Dudney

Dudney Sylla
Program Manager
MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership

MentorNational

/MentorNational

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Who are we?

• Unifying champion for expanding quality youth mentoring relationships in the US for more than 25 years.

• Develops and delivers evidence-based standards, innovative research and essential tools for youth-serving programs, including the Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring™

• Supports a network of 26 Mentoring Partnerships and 50+ Technical Assistance Providers who support mentoring programs locally.

• Manages the National Mentoring Resource Center, which provides no-cost training and technical assistance to mentoring programs nationwide.
Who I am

- Dr. Beshon Smith, Ph.D., MPA
- Executive Director, DC & MD
- Provide strategic vision and leadership for growth
- Partnered with school districts in New York City, Washington D.C., and Maryland
Who are we?
Center for Supportive Schools (CSS)

- CSS helps schools become places students want to be. We leverage the resources already in schools to create safer and more supportive, engaging, and inspiring learning communities.
- National organization currently partnering with schools in NYC, PA, MD, DC, NC
- There are currently 230 schools operating CSS programs reaching approximately 50,000 students per year.
- We serve urban, suburban, and rural communities and work in public (including charter), private, and independent schools.
Fresno Unified Mentoring Office

- Darrin Person, MSW
- Manager, Mentor Office
- Oversee 50 + Mentoring Programs
- Over 4,000 students receiving services
Who are you?

• District Administrator
• School Administrator
• Principal or Assistant Principal
• School Program Coordinator
• School Social Work
• Other?
How involved is your school with peer mentoring?

• We’ve already launched a peer mentoring program.
• We’re planning to launch a peer mentoring program.
• We’re considering a peer mentoring model at our school.
• We don’t know much about peer mentoring at all.
Ice-Breaker

Peer Leaders:

Kylik Kimbrough & Taylor Shaw

11th Grade

Edmondson-Westside High School
Overview of Peer Mentoring

- Making sure that peer mentors receive substantial training on how to implement the program and how to manage their behaviors to avoid negative role modeling.
- Offering additional training on topics related to relationship management, such as the mentor’s role, active listening, negotiation strategies, and conflict resolution.
- Providing strong adult support in planning and supervising activities.
- Discussing and even practicing closure so that all participants are prepared for the eventual dissolution of the relationship.

Handbook on Youth Mentoring, 2014
What is Peer Group Connection (PGC)?

A peer-to-peer group mentoring model that trains and mobilizes older/more experienced students to help ease the transition into school for incoming students and improve school culture and climate.

- **PGC for high schools:** 11th and 12th graders support 9th graders
- **PGC for middle schools:** 8th graders support 6th graders

Each of these programs uses a distinct and developmentally appropriate curriculum.
Peer Group Connection Program Structure

16-18 peer leaders co-facilitate weekly activities for freshmen in small groups to discuss common issues facing high school students.

Faculty Advisor Team

Stakeholder Team
(8-10 administrators, faculty, parents, students)

Stakeholder Team Coordinator

Two faculty advisors team-teach the daily peer leadership course.
Results

% of 9th grade students who graduated from high school

### All Students

- Program Group: 77%
- Control Group: 68%

### Male Students

- Program Group: 81%
- Control Group: 63%

**Comparison of 9th grade attendance and chronic absence rates**

**Attendance Rates (2014-2015 SY)**

- Program Group Participants: 87.4%
- School-Wide: 84.3%
- City-Wide: 82.4%

**Chronic Absentee Rates (2014-2015 SY)**

- PGC Participants: 30.6%
- School-Wide: 39.0%
- City-Wide: 41.6%
Other Results

- Higher grades
- Higher on-time promotion rates
- Better attendance
- Fewer discipline referrals
- Fewer instances of fighting and suspension
- Improved communication with peers and others
Fresno Unified-Peer Mentoring

- Program Features
  - Weekly Meetings (2 hours)
  - Mentor/Mentee Training
  - High-Middle school match
  - Peer Mentoring Curriculum
  - Homework Assistance
  - Team Building Retreat
  - College Tours
  - Service Learning Projects
Best Practices - Peer Mentoring

- School site leads – (the right people)
- Administration support
- Mentor selection
- Consistent meetings with staff
- Trainings Mentors/Mentees
- Mentee incentives

350 High School Students
350 Middle School Students
Fresno Unified – Peer Mentoring
Resources

- The Peer Mentoring Handbook provides recommended practices for teens and young adults to mentor younger students or children.

- This webinar, entitled Peer Mentoring: A Discussion with Experienced Practitioners, engages seasoned peer mentoring practitioners in a conversation about best practices for this model.

- Peer Mentoring: An Effective Vehicle for Promoting Healthy Behaviors (2014, Chronicle of Evidence-Based Mentoring)


- The ABC of Peer Mentoring – What Secondary Students Have to Say About Cross-Age Peer Mentoring (2015, Chronicle of Evidence-Based Mentoring)
What Should I Do Next?

- **Connect:**
  - Check out the OJJDP [National Mentoring Resource Center](https://www.mentoring.org) to access a wealth of free mentoring resources, and for the opportunity to request no-cost technical assistance for your program.
  - Connect with the [MENTOR affiliate](https://www.mentoring.org) in your state or region.
  - Reach out to [dhagan@mentoring.org](mailto:dhagan@mentoring.org) or (617) 303 1804 to request no-cost TA.
Q&A
Organizations that we work with:

Everyone Graduates Center: http://new.every1graduates.org

Attendance Works: http://www.attendanceworks.org

MENTOR: http://www.mentoring.org

My Brother’s Keeper Alliance: https://www.mbkalliance.org

Jobs for the Future: http://jff.org

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