

Mentors in Toledo Schools 2016 – 2017

Evaluation Report

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Background

The Mentors in Toledo Schools program was initiated in 2012 as a social action project by a suburban religious institution, Temple Shomer Emunim. Volunteer Coordinator Jay Mirrow led the program with the support of Partners in Education (PIE), a local education support agency. The program operated in McKinley Elementary School during the first year, and expanded to Larchmont and Sherman Elementary schools during the second year. Old Orchard Elementary school was added during the third year, and DeVeaux Elementary joined the program during the fourth year. This report details program evaluation findings for year five (2016 – 2017) of the Mentors in Toledo Schools program.

Research about tutoring programs (Morris, 2006) geared toward early readers suggests that tutoring/ mentoring programs can be successful if they possess the following characteristics:

1. Students having prolonged interaction (>1 year) with the same tutor/mentor during the school year
2. Program features that foster tutor/mentor training, supervision, and school support
3. Quality relationships between the tutor/mentor and the students
4. Having a paid volunteer coordinator in place.

The Mentors in Toledo Schools program possesses each of these key attributes, and is therefore well-positioned to contribute to improvements in academic achievement and school engagement. The purpose of this report is to document the activities and outcomes related to the program during the 2016-17 school year, with the aim of providing project partners greater insight to the program's effects.

Program Summary

The Mentors in Toledo Schools program operates based on the collaboration and coordination of classroom teachers, volunteer mentors, and site coordinators at each school. Teachers mostly recommend students in their class to be included in the program based on an observed need in one or more areas of language arts (i.e., reading, writing). In the 2015-16 school year, however, teachers from McKinley school recommended high-achieving students to the program so the teachers could spend time in the classroom working with struggling students, and this practice continued to some degree during the 2016-17 school year as well, with two teachers from McKinley utilizing the mentoring offered via MITS to allow for high-performing readers to receive MITS services so that classroom teachers could spend more time with struggling readers. Although the program aims to help struggling readers, to date MITS has been flexible with allowing site-level and teacher-level decisions around student eligibility for participation in mentoring activities.

Teachers provide student-specific reading tasks—aligned with the classroom curriculum—for the mentors to complete with students during the mentoring sessions. The volunteer coordinators recruit and assign mentors to work with students, and ensure that mentors are prepared to facilitate the tasks assigned for the students by their teachers. Mentoring sessions are conducted Monday through Thursday mornings from 9:30 to 11:30 AM, except during school holidays and special events.

Mentoring information (e.g., location, time, student name, tasks) is recorded in a database, which tracks tutor/student meeting times, student behavior with the tutors, the teaching materials reviewed with each student, and allows for written tutor comments to the teacher regarding student performance and behavior. Mentors document the tasks that were accomplished, and evaluate the student's participation during the session using five categories: Behavior Issue, Indifferent, Somewhat Distracted, Somewhat Attentive, and Very Attentive. The mentor feedback is shared with teachers and building principals on a daily basis, so the information can be used to guide future instruction.

Critical components of this program are the structural organization maintained by the database, the consistency and frequency of the tutoring, and the quality of the communication between teacher and tutor/mentor about students' work. Since teachers select the work for students to do with the tutors, and teachers receive regular feedback on individual student's actual activity, teachers can accommodate the changing needs of the students over time.

Mentoring Activities in 2016 – 2017

Mentors in Toledo Schools operated from October 2016 to May 2017 in five elementary schools: Larchmont, McKinley, Old Orchard, Sherman, and DeVeaux. The table below summarizes several key outputs of the mentoring program from the past three years.

The program saw sustained mentoring activity in 2016-17

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	% Change
Participating Classrooms	20	32	31	- 3%
Mentoring Sessions	5,211	9,384	10,386	+ 11%
Students Mentored	256	340	373	+ 10%
Mentors	95	159	174	+ 9%
Average Sessions per Student	20	28	28	+ 0%
Average Sessions per Mentor	55	59	59	+ 0%

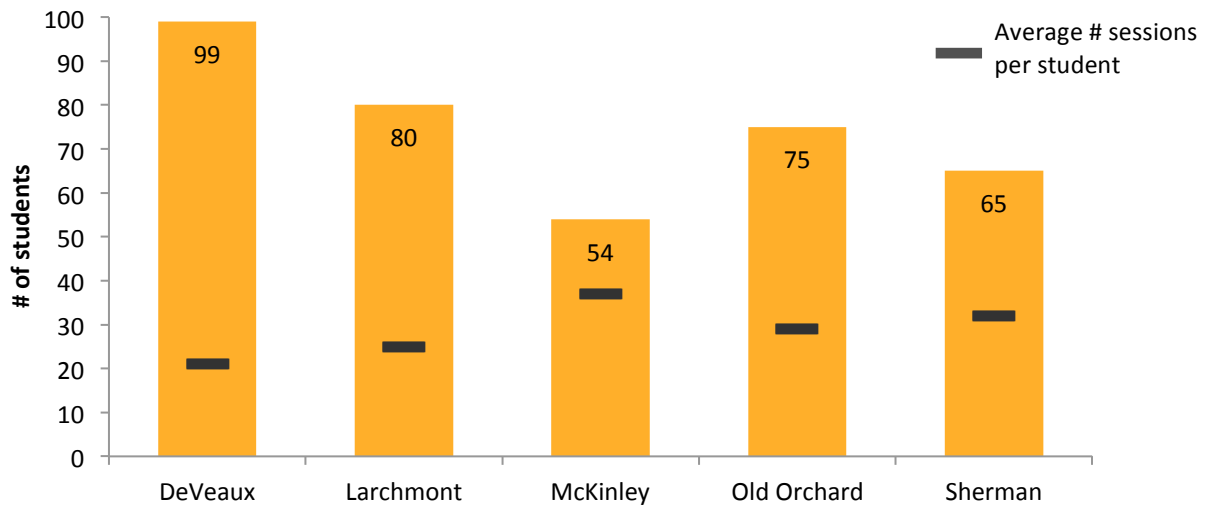
The table below shows mentoring activity for each school site. With the exception of McKinley Elementary, participating schools increased the number of students being served from 2015-16 to 2016-17. The overall program saw an increase in the number of mentoring sessions delivered, the number of students who received mentoring, the number of mentors who participated. The average number of mentoring sessions each student received was the same in 2016-17, as was the average number of mentoring sessions each individual mentor delivered. These results vary somewhat by school site; please see Appendix A for a more detailed table including numbers for each year.

School-level Mentoring Activity 2016-17

School	DeVeaux	Larchmont	McKinley	Old Orchard	Sherman
Participating Classrooms	10	8	4	4	5
Mentored Students	99	80	54	75	65
Mentoring Sessions	2117	2033	2023	2163	2050
Average Sessions per Student	21	25	37	29	32

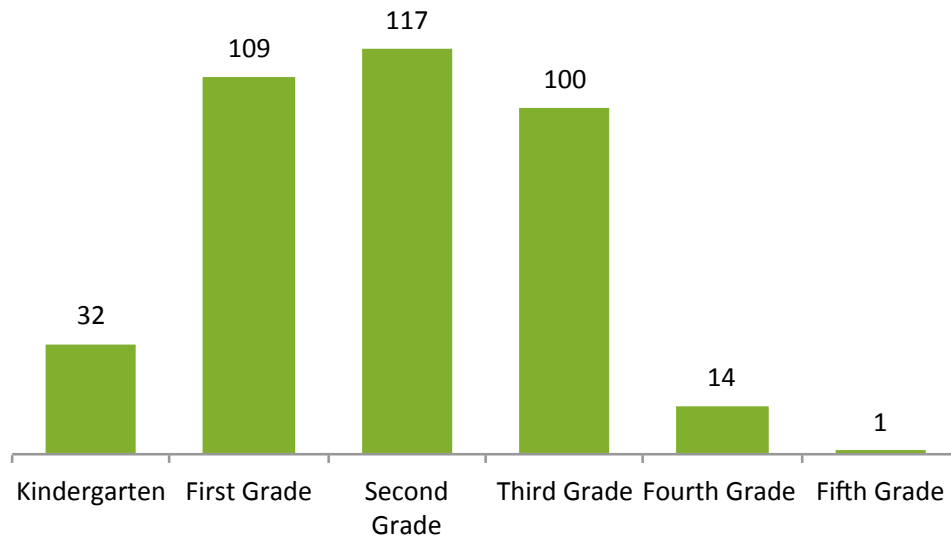
The figure below illustrates the total number of mentored students at each participating school in 2016-17, as well as the average number of sessions per student (which indicates mentoring activity relative to the number of students). While DeVeaux and Larchmont had the highest number of mentored students, McKinley and Sherman had the highest averages for number of times an individual student received mentoring.

More students were mentored at DeVeaux and Larchmont than any other school
However, students at McKinley and Sherman participated in the most sessions on average

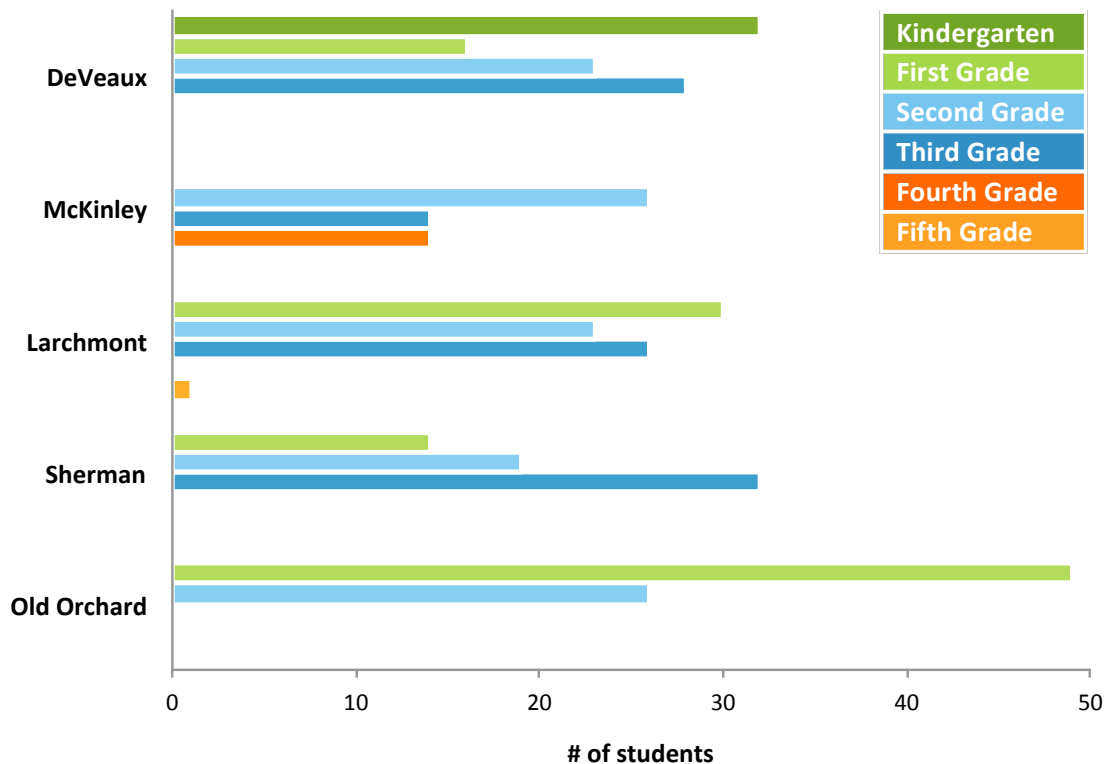


More first and second grade students participated in the MITS program than students in other grades, which is consistent with the focus the program has had since its inception. McKinley Elementary reached the most grade levels—in addition to the K to 2 mentoring offered in other schools, McKinley also offered mentoring in grades 3 and 5 (one student).

Mentoring was provided most to second grade students

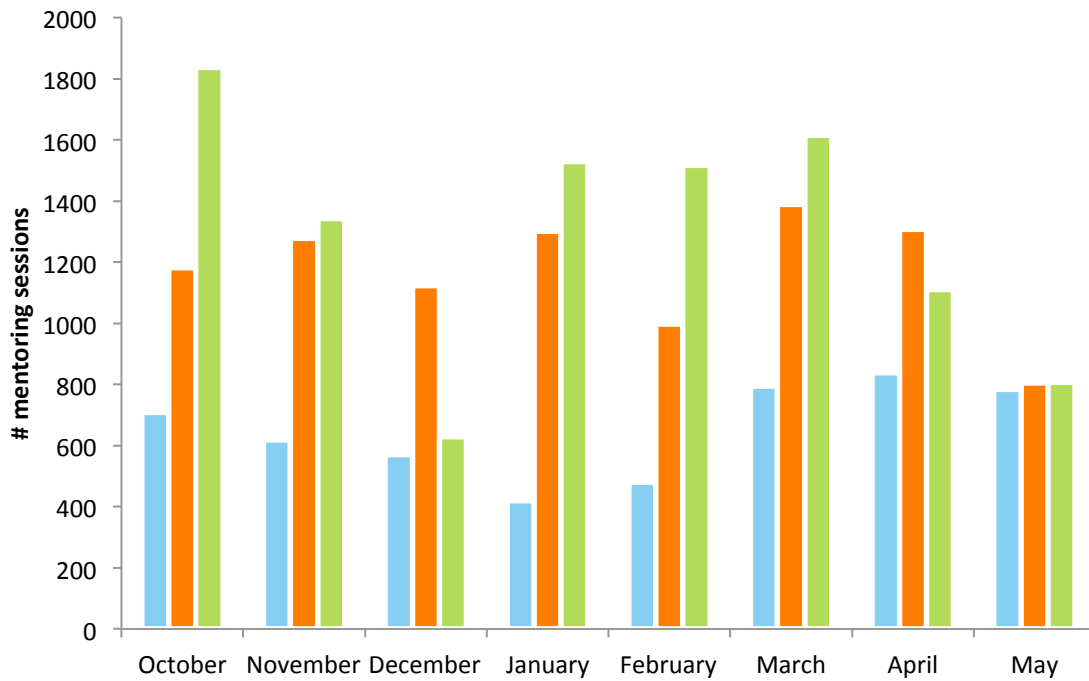


Most schools mentored students in grades one to three



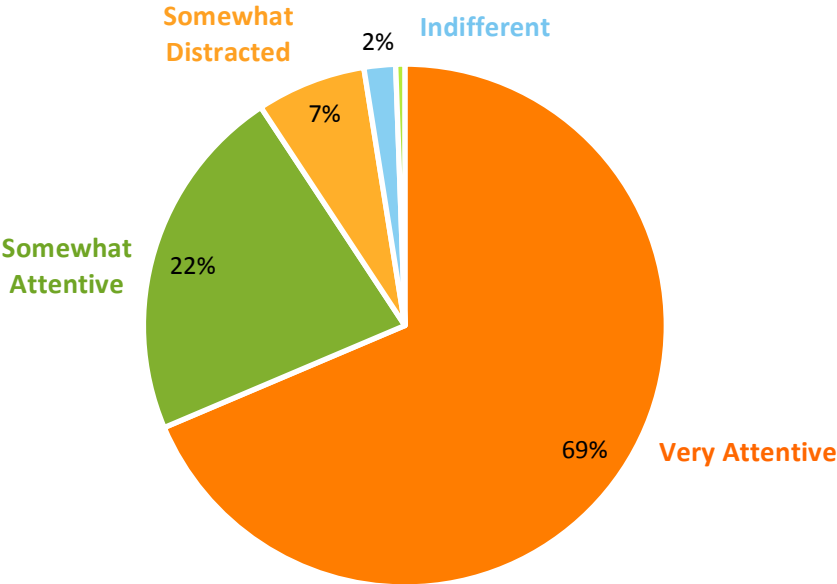
The number of mentoring sessions per month was higher overall during the 2016-17 school year, with a dramatic increase in the number of mentoring sessions provided during October 2016. The figure below illustrates the number of mentoring sessions per month for the previous three years of programming (current year in green, earliest year in blue).

Mentoring activity was higher overall during the 2016-17 school year, when compared to the 2015-16 and 2014-15 school years



According to the mentors' evaluations, students mostly demonstrated attentive behavior during most of the mentoring sessions. Of the 10,386 total mentoring sessions, mentors recorded "Very Attentive" or "Somewhat Attentive" behavior in 9,343 (91%) sessions.

According to the mentors, students were **Very Attentive during most of the mentoring sessions**



Perceptions of the Program

Program quality was evaluated by examining the perceptions of participating teachers, mentors, and site coordinators. Online surveys were used for this purpose, and were administered at the end of the 2016-17 school year. Different surveys were administered to each group (teachers, mentors, and site coordinators) in order to capture their unique experiences during the program. The surveys included questions about the program in general, as well as aspects of the program specific to each group. For example, all three groups were asked to provide examples of both positive and negative experiences during the project, as well as offer suggestions for improvement. However, only teachers were asked to comment on the benefits of the mentoring program in their classroom since they are best positioned to provide such information. The following sections summarize the results of these perception surveys. Teachers', mentors' and site coordinators' general perceptions of the program are reported separately, while their perceptions about teacher lesson plans, feedback and communication are reported together in order to provide a more complete picture of the program.

Teachers' General Perceptions

A total of 24 educators – 21 teachers and 3 administrators – from the five participating schools completed the survey. Most schools were represented by multiple teachers from at least two different grades. Also, five educators (21%) reported 2016-17 as their first year participating in the mentoring program, and nearly 50% (10) educators reported 2016-17 as their second year participating in the mentoring program.

Educators' general perceptions of the program were positive. Almost all of the teachers who completed the survey agreed with all five statements about the "general quality" of the mentoring program. The statements are listed in the table below, along with the percentage of teachers who agreed with each statement. Of the 24 educators who were asked to complete the survey, 20 did so. Responses below are percentages of those teachers who completed the survey.

Survey Statement	Percentage of Teachers in Agreement
The mentoring program supports the instruction I provide in my classroom.	95%
The mentoring program is beneficial for my students.	95%
The mentoring program is worth the class time my students miss because of the sessions.	95%
I would support having the mentoring program in my school next year.	95%
Other Toledo schools would benefit from the mentoring program.	100%

In describing the positive experiences had by teachers or students during the program, teachers often commented on how much students enjoyed going to the sessions. Teachers emphasized the one-on-one attention the students received during the sessions, and how students felt “special” because of it. A few teachers even mentioned that students felt disappointed when they could not go. Below are some of the teacher’s responses:

I had a girl that barely could read any of her kindergarten words when she started first grade. She is leaving me being able to read a lot of our vocabulary words in the curriculum, the various Dolch word lists, and her love of reading has grown over the year.

This has been a God Send for this young lady! Thank You Mentors!!!

The relationships my students established with the mentors was invaluable.

I love to see the bond some of students have made with the mentors. They feel more confident when reading in the class and are more excited about learning.

Only two of the educators who completed the survey reported any negative experiences during the program, and both were related to logistical concerns instead of program quality or impact on students. One teacher reported that on occasions when a mentor may be ill and/or unable to attend the mentoring session, their student(s) would feel sad.

Mentors’ General Perceptions

A total of 110 mentors completed the survey, which is 63% of the entire mentor group (n = 174) from 2016-17. The mentors who completed the survey represented all five participating schools, and several mentors reported working in more than one school. Many of the mentors (25%) were participating in the program for the first time in 2016-17, while another 22% were participating for the second or third year. Notably, 17% of the mentors who answered the survey were participating for their fourth or fifth year with MITS. The mentors participating for the first time learned about the program mostly from a friend or acquaintance or through Cedar Creek Church. The main reason provided by the other mentors for coming back another year was their belief in the program’s ability to help the children who participate, and their appreciation for how well the program is organized and delivered.

In describing their positive experiences during the program, mentors mentioned both the relationships they developed with their students as well as the progress students made in their reading. Mentors reported that the work they engaged in with students gave them something to look forward to and feel good about. Based on the comments mentors provided regarding positive experiences with the program, the mentors noted that students improved in their reading (both skill and confidence levels) over time. Some of the mentors wrote:

Seeing the improvement in the students each week is very rewarding. I also feel that some of the students just need to have someone care and listen to them and let them know that they are so important.

Getting to know the kids. Also watching them improve over the course of time I was there this year, or how much they would improve throughout one lesson!

I loved watching the kids become more confident in their reading and take on more responsibility during the mentoring session. Sometimes they would be the "teacher" and help guide us through our lesson plans.

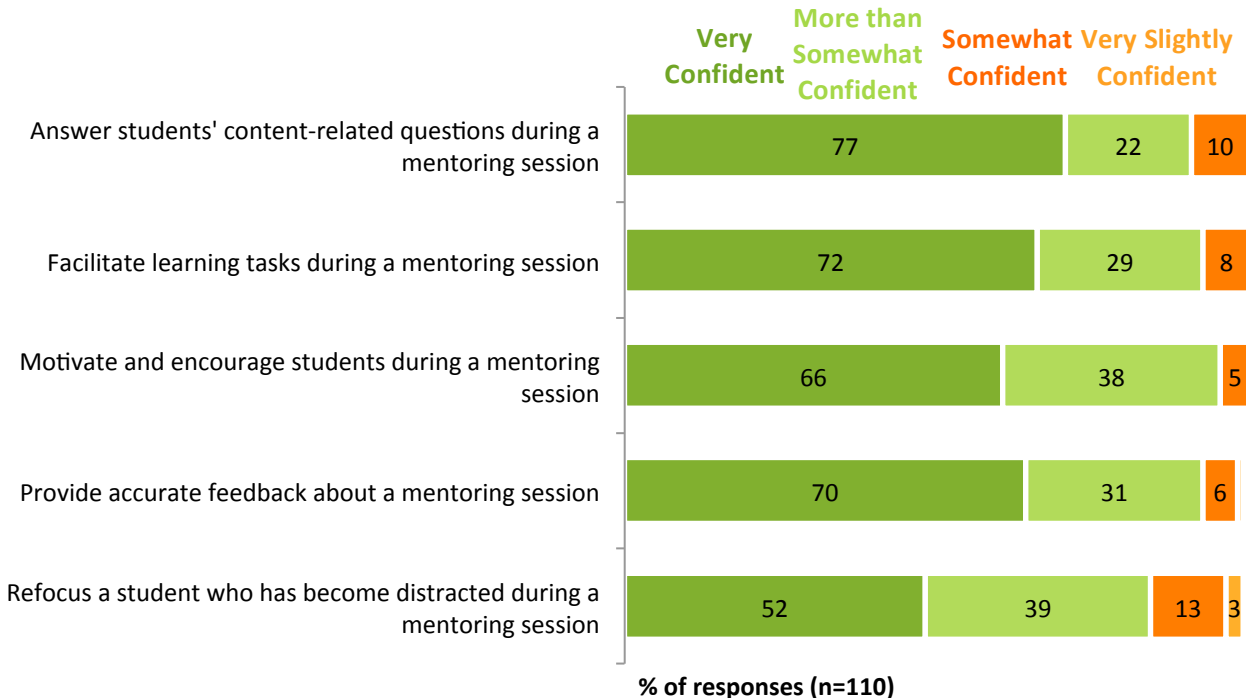
I thought that the students were very responsive and really wanted to learn. And I was touched that they trusted me and understood that I was trying to help them and truly believed that they would succeed.

It seemed like my more reluctant students showed more interest in our sessions, as time went by. I think this might have resulted from them becoming more confident in their abilities. This was an awesome transformation to witness.

Negative experiences were provided far less than positive experiences. However, one negative experience mentioned by several mentors was the distractibility or lack of attention given by some participating students. Two mentors mentioned that they did not feel very confident in their abilities to deal with students who misbehaved or refused to participate; it is worth noting that this happened very rarely, but may be one area for site coordinators to address with mentors so that when students are uncooperative the mentors know what the program expectations are for dealing with these types of occurrences. While many mentors did not feel the need for additional training, some requested training on providing feedback as well as how to help students who are distracted or not interested in reading. These suggestions align with the ratings in the figure on the next page, and should be considered for future training sessions.

Mentors were asked to evaluate their confidence in performing several mentoring tasks, and offer suggestions for training in the future. In general, mentors felt very confident to perform most mentoring tasks, especially those related to student learning. The figure on the next page summarizes mentors' survey responses. The distribution of responses is very similar to that observed for the 2016 MITS evaluation.

Mentors felt most confident performing tasks related to student learning



Site Coordinators' General Perceptions

Eight site coordinators responded to the online survey. The coordinators agreed that the school mentoring schedules were appropriate during the school year, and the program seemed to meet the needs of the school. The one difficulty reported by several site coordinators is that during testing time (i.e., standardized test administrations) it is difficult for teachers to be flexible with their schedules, and the standardized testing schedule can interfere with the mentoring schedule. In general, this did not seem to be a severe problem, but perhaps is one that might be planned for in the future.

It was clear from their description of the positive experiences during the school year that site coordinators thought highly of the mentors and were proud of the growth observed in the participating students. Many also noted the enthusiasm and eagerness demonstrated by participating students. Some of the coordinators wrote:

I enjoyed observing the dedication of the mentors & the positive relationships they formed with the students.

Some of my favorite moments were seeing the connections between the mentors and students, hearing the laughter coming from the stations, especially when a learning game was being played, recognizing the value of the one-on-one attention that each of these students were receiving that day.

I am in awe of and adore the mentors I work with. They love the kids, and the kids love them. I do think there is improvement in the rapport with teachers, and we are very supportive of one another.

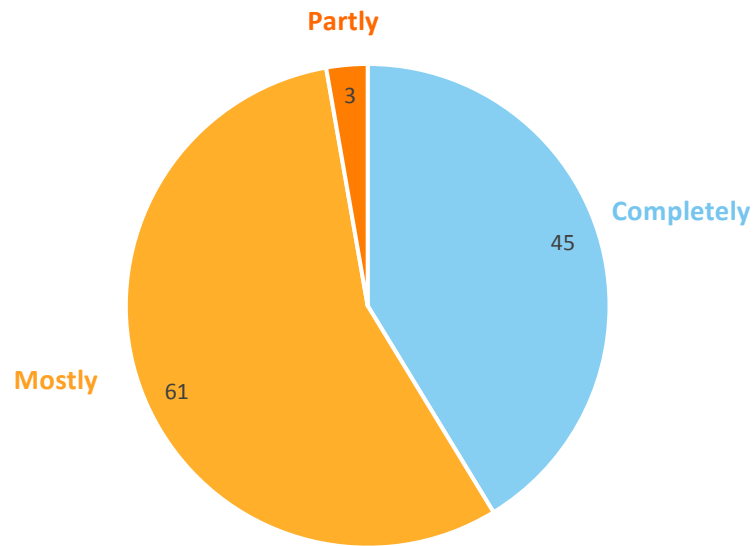
Many of the coordinators' negative experiences and suggestions stemmed from situations where mentors were absent, either because of illness or conflicting schedules. The site coordinators reported that when they had to tell a student that they could not attend mentoring because their mentor was not there, that was very difficult. Several site coordinators mentioned that it would be useful to have a list of reliable substitute mentors who can be called upon when there are absences. One mentor mentioned that at least one teacher in their school seemed to be using the mentoring opportunity as a way to send difficult students out of the classroom, and this was not pleasant for either the site coordinator or the mentors who were trying to work with these students. This did not seem to be a wide-spread problem, but is one area that may need to be addressed for upcoming years so that there is some protocol around how to handle these types of experiences.

One suggestion for program improvement that was mentioned by several site coordinators is that mentors may benefit from explicit training on what to expect during a typical mentoring session. The coordinators suggest more hands-on training for the mentors so that they have a more clear understanding of their upcoming work with students. One mentor also suggested that the program schedule more opportunities for site coordinators to meet together for occasions to discuss the program with other coordinators and how it's working in their particular schools.

Teacher Lesson Plans

The teacher lesson plans represent an important aspect of the program because they ensure that mentoring activities relate to the content being taught in the teachers' classrooms. Teachers provide mentors with lesson plans each week, and the mentor completes lesson tasks with the student during the mentoring sessions. Teachers spent an average of 19 minutes per week preparing lesson plans to share with the mentors, and nearly every teacher reported that they felt preparing the lesson plans was "time well spent." Almost all of the mentors (98%) reported using the teacher lesson plans during every session. Also, most mentors "mostly" or "completely" followed the lesson plans during the mentoring sessions. The figure below illustrates mentors' responses regarding the use of the teacher plans during the mentoring activities.

Mentors (n=110) mostly followed the teacher lesson plans during mentoring activities



The most common reason for not completely following the teachers' lesson plans was time constraints. Many mentors believed the mentoring sessions were too short to address all of the tasks on the lesson plans. Other mentors reported that they often spent more time on one task if the students seemed to struggle or show greater interest in doing that task. Some mentors suggested that students' lack of attention or distraction also resulted in less than complete coverage of the lesson plan. Regarding these reasons, some of the mentors wrote:

Sometimes we don't have time to complete the lesson as the children work at different paces.

Run out of time to do the last activity, but over planning is appreciated

If I can see a child is maybe not focused, like in spelling for example, I might skip the spelling and try something else.

Child is not responding so I try other things.

Sometimes there is too much work for the time.

Overall, mentors thought the lesson plans were helpful for their sessions (81% believed them to be “very helpful”). Several mentors suggested that the lesson plans could be made more helpful if teachers prioritize the tasks in order of importance for each student, and also provide appropriate background information about the student (e.g., reading level, strengths, or weaknesses) that may be helpful during the mentoring session. Two mentors also mentioned that it would be helpful if teachers would let the mentors know in advance if they expect the student to exhibit any behavior problems, and offer suggestions on how the mentors might best handle those situations, particularly if the teacher has specific classroom strategies that seem to be effective with a problem student.

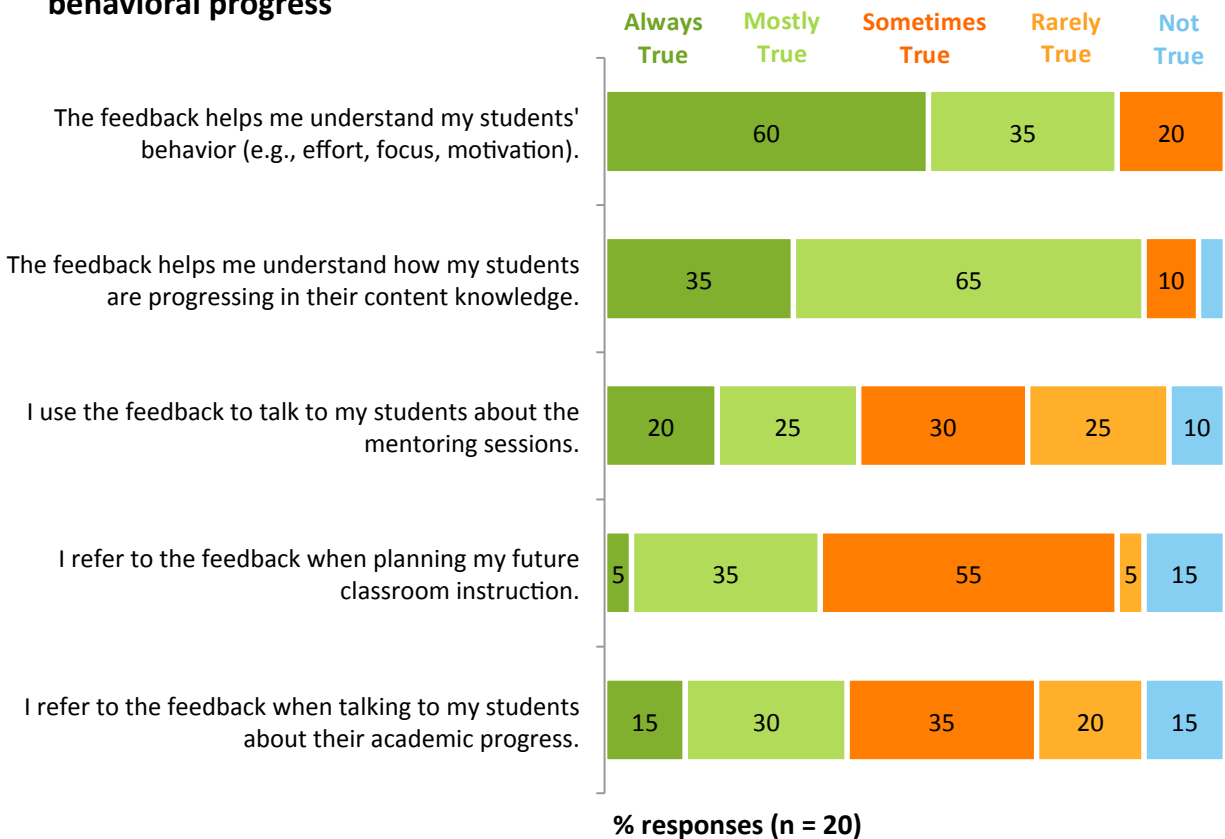
Feedback and Communication

After each mentoring session, mentors provide feedback to the teachers about their interactions with students. During the 2016-17 school year, most mentors (86%) completed the feedback form electronically. More than half the mentors (75%) believed the feedback form was “very easy” to complete. Very few mentors (1%) thought the forms were difficult to complete, and the primary reason cited for this difficulty was because the computer was not working.

All of the teachers who completed the survey reported reading the mentors’ feedback at least “sometimes.” Please note: The teachers were evenly split in their responses of reading the feedback “every time it is provided,” “almost every time it is provided,” and “sometimes.” Teachers mostly agreed that the mentors’ feedback was sufficient for classroom planning and instruction (i.e., there is no other information the mentor could provide that would be helpful). Teachers and mentors agreed on the sufficiency of the feedback form—mentors believed the feedback form included the information necessary to accurately describe the mentoring session.

Teachers were asked to respond to several statements about their thoughts uses of the mentoring feedback. Their responses suggest that teachers believe the feedback is useful in understanding their students’ academic and behavioral progress, but less useful in informing discussions with students and classroom instruction. The figure on the next page illustrates teachers’ responses. The distribution of responses is very similar to that observed for the 2016 MITS evaluation.

Mentoring feedback helped teachers understand their students' academic and behavioral progress



The feedback represents the communication between mentors and teachers. Another important avenue of communication for the program is that between mentors and site coordinators. Mentors were asked about three aspects of this communication, and their responses are included in the table below. These ratings are consistent with those from the 2015-16 school year.

Communication with site coordinators was mostly rated as “Excellent”

Aspect of communication	% of “Excellent” Ratings (n=110)
Frequency of communication	81%
Support for physical needs (e.g., supplies, lesson plans)	77%
Support for mentoring needs (e.g., suggestions, advice, training)	68%

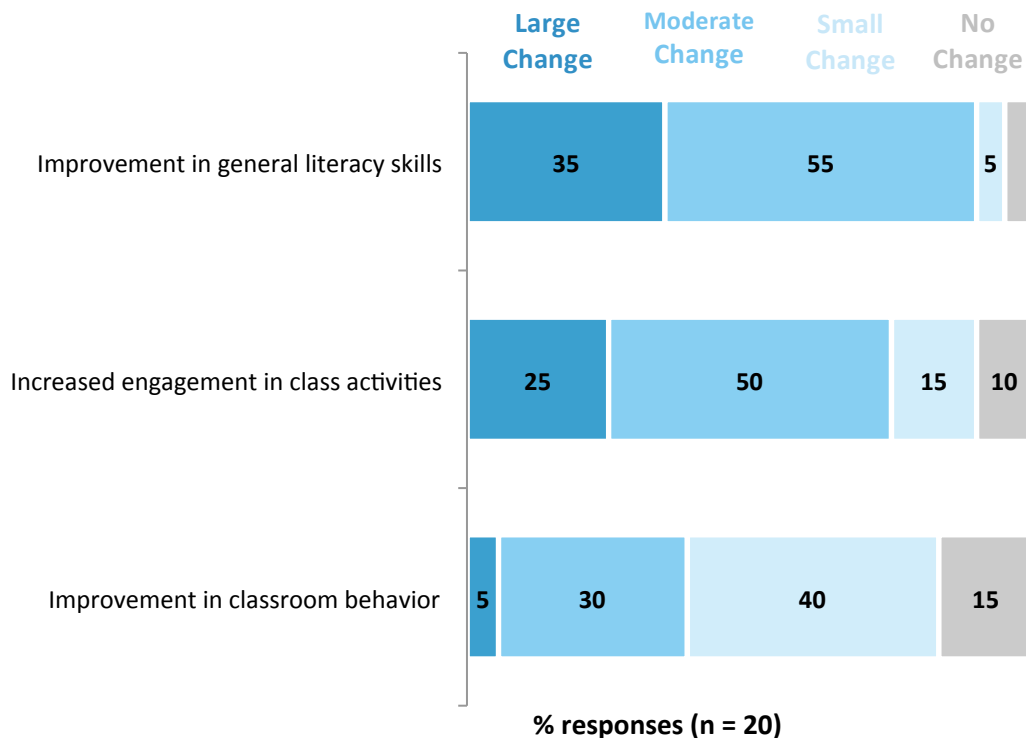
Impact of the Program

The impact of the program was determined using teachers' reports of student progress as well as student data from the STAR Early Literacy Assessment, which is completed by students in Toledo Public Schools at least three times each school year (fall, winter, and spring). Most of the mentored students (75%) completed the STAR Early Literacy Assessment (rather than the Reading Assessment), so the analysis of impact focused on those data sets. Please note: the analyses reported here are based on the two waves of STAR data that were made available to the evaluation team: fall 2016 and spring 2017.

Teachers' Reports of Student Progress

Teachers who completed the survey (n = 20) were asked rate any academic or behavioral changes they observed in the students who participated in the mentoring program. In general, teachers reported moderate to large positive changes in students' literacy skills, engagement in class activities, and classroom behavior. The figure below illustrates the teachers' responses.

Teachers observed positive changes in students participating in the mentoring program



Teachers specifically reported positive growth in the following literacy skills:

- Phonemic awareness (65% of teachers)
- Reading fluency (80% of teachers)
- Reading comprehension (35% of teachers)
- Sight words, Spelling, vocabulary, and writing (30% of teachers)

STAR Reading Assessment

The STAR Reading Assessment is focused on four major skills, which can be broken down into eleven domains. The table below includes the topics and domains measured by the assessment.

Topics and Domains included in the STAR Reading Assessment

Foundational Skills	Reading: Literature	Reading Information Text	Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonics and Word Recognition • Fluency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Ideas and Details • Craft and Structure • Integration of Knowledge and Ideas • Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Ideas and Details • Craft and Structure • Integration of Knowledge and Ideas • Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

The assessment is a computer-adaptive test, which continually adjusts the difficulty of a child’s test by choosing each test question based on the child’s previous response. If the child answers a question correctly, the difficulty level of the next item is increased. If the child misses a question, the difficulty level is decreased. On average, students complete the Reading Assessment in 15 minutes. The results of the assessment are used to monitor students’ literacy skills.¹

¹ Characteristics of the STAR Reading Assessment were taken from the “Parents Guide to STAR Assessments, found at <http://www.renaissance.com/Resources/Parents>.

The analyses reported here are based on the following analytic sample, and these are students who had complete data for all variables in the model(s) described.

Number of Students Included in the STAR Reading Outcome Analytic Sample (By Grade and Condition)

Grade	Mentored Students	Non-mentored Students	Total
First	—	12	12
Second	30	69	99
Third	86	161	247
Fourth	12	9	21
Total	128	251	379

Note: The analytic sample was 51.7% male.

In order to better understand the outcomes associated with the MITS program, a multilevel model was fit using the MIXED procedure in SPSS, with random effects for homeroom/teacher. The evaluation team decided to employ multilevel modeling primarily for conceptual reasons. Specifically, the use of multilevel models allows for preexisting differences between different classrooms and schools (i.e., we do not expect students from different classrooms and schools to have the same STAR Reading scores at baseline). The outcome measure used was the change in STAR Reading score from fall 2016 to spring 2017. This reading change score was calculated simply as spring 2017 minus fall 2016, using the standardized score from the STAR Reading data provided by Toledo Public Schools. Predictors in the first model run were Condition (i.e., mentored students vs. non-mentored students), Grade, and School. Results from this first model were very encouraging, and provide support for continued investment of resources in MITS. The table below provides details for this first model.

Multilevel Model Predicting STAR Reading Change Score Outcomes Using Students' Condition Status

	Coefficient	SE	<i>p</i>	Effect size
Within classroom				
Grade	-18.340	9.525	.065	—
Condition	18.761	11.658	.108	0.21
Between classrooms				
School ^a	—	—	—	—
Intercept	162.409	26.676	.000	—

Note. Student *N* = 379; School *N* = 6. Only the effect size for Condition is presented, which is calculated as Cohen's *d*. Boldface font indicates *p* < .05.

^a School indicates the vector of *n*–1 schools. Effects for school are not presented for visual simplicity.

Results from the model presented above indicate that the MITS program is important for students’ reading outcomes. Specifically, the expected effect size for students in the mentoring program is very close to what the What Works Clearinghouse² suggests is substantively important for educational outcomes, regardless of p-value. When attempting to assess the importance of a finding, one metric that can be useful, in addition to p-values, is effect size. Effect size calculations allow for moving beyond just knowing if a finding is statistically significant, and helps to evaluate the practical importance of a result. In addition, effect sizes can be compared across multiple studies. For purposes of this report, understanding the effect size associated with participation in the MITS program is important so that we may establish the practical importance for students’ educational outcomes in reading. According to the WWC, effect sizes for educational interventions of 0.25 or higher should be considered substantively important, and educationally meaningful, irrespective of p-value. For the STAR Reading Change outcome, this is calculated as: coefficient for Condition/standard deviation of the outcome variable = Effect Size (Cohen’s *d*). Specifically, (18.761/89.654) = 0.21 effect size. That the MITS program is generating results so close to what the WWC deems educationally meaningful is impressive, and warrants both continued program support and further investigation of program outcomes.

Because (a) the initial results for changes in STAR Reading outcomes were so encouraging, and (b) we saw variation in the number of mentoring sessions students participated in throughout the school year, the evaluation team decided to investigate whether dosage, or number of mentoring sessions, is predictive of STAR Reading change score outcomes. The same model presented above was fit, with the exception that instead of Condition as a predictor variable, Times Mentored was used as a predictor. Using Times Mentored allows us to estimate the impact of dosage, or number of mentoring sessions received, on students’ change in STAR Reading scores. Model results are presented below.

Multilevel Model Predicting STAR Reading Change Score Outcomes Using Number of Times Mentored

	Coefficient	SE	<i>p</i>	Effect size
Within classroom				
Grade	-16.821	9.502	.089	—
Times Mentored	0.529	0.265	.047	0.006
Between classrooms				
School ^a	—	—	—	—
Intercept	158.457	26.613	.000	—

Note. Student *N* = 379; School *N* = 6. Only the effect size for Times Mentored is presented, which is calculated as Cohen’s *d*. Boldface font indicates *p* < .05.

^aSchool indicates the vector of *n*–1 schools. Effects for school are not presented for visual simplicity.

² Institute of Education Sciences (2013). *What Works Clearinghouse procedures and standards (Version 3.0)*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

These results indicate that number of times mentored is a positive, statistically significant, predictor of STAR Reading Change score. For the STAR Reading Change outcome, this is calculated as: coefficient for Times Mentored/standard deviation of the Reading Change Score = Effect Size (Cohen’s *d*). Specifically, $(0.529/89.654) = 0.006$ Effect Size (Cohen’s *d*). This represents the predicted effect for one mentoring session.

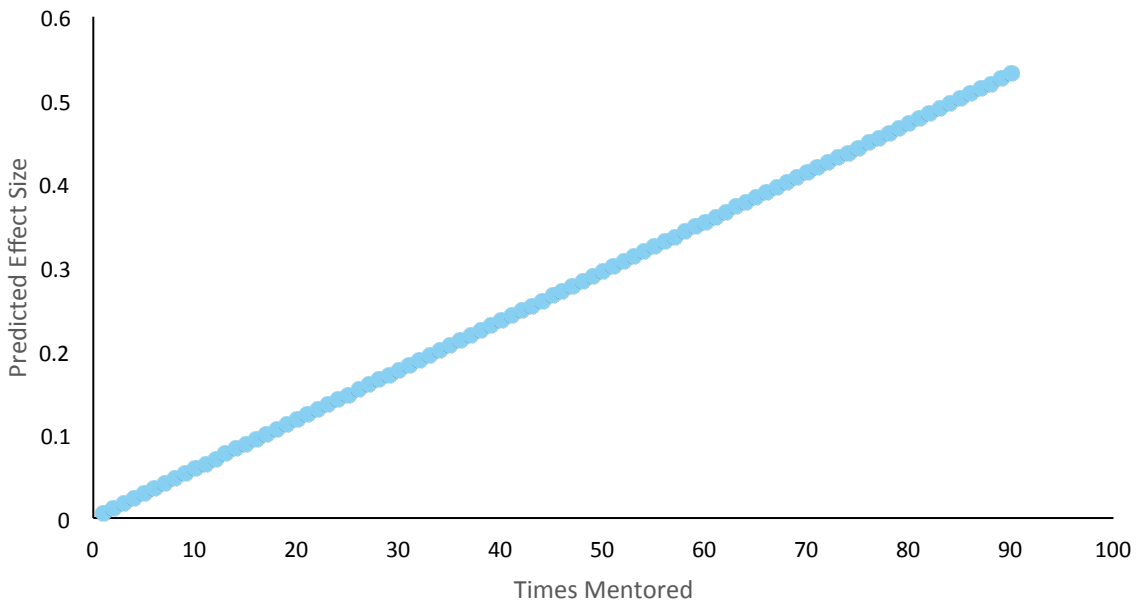
When we explore what this effect is predicted to be across more sessions, the following emerges:

Number of Times Mentored	Times Mentored*ES for One Session	Frequency for School Year	Predicted Effect Size	Effect Size Magnitude
1	(1*0.006)	One time	0.006	Small
18	(18*0.006)	Every other week	0.106	Small
28	(28*0.006)	2016-17 MITS average	0.168	Small
36	(36*0.006)	Once each week	0.213	Small
72	(72*0.006)	Twice each week	0.425	Medium

Note: The average for Number of Times Mentored = 28. Boldface font indicates an effect size that either approximates or exceeds the threshold set by the WWC as educationally meaningful, regardless of p-value.

It is worth noting that the average number of mentoring sessions was 28, and attending a mentoring session every other week would result in 18 mentoring sessions for any individual student. Given that more than 10,000 individual mentoring sessions were provided during the 2016-2017 school year, setting a goal of one mentoring session per week, or 36 sessions, for struggling students may be a reasonable program objective. This goal (i.e., one mentoring session per week for a struggling reader) would be expected to yield an educationally meaningful, and substantively important, effect for STAR Reading Change scores. Visually, this relationship can be represented as:

The number of times a student is mentored is positively related to effect size



Summary of STAR Reading Analyses

The first STAR Reading analysis asked the basic question “Did students who participated in MITS demonstrate higher change in their reading outcomes than students who did not participate in MITS?” In this model, group membership (i.e., MITS participant or not) was used to predict STAR Reading change scores. Results of this model suggest that although simply being part of the mentoring group was not a statistically significant predictor of STAR Reading change scores, it did show promise for being practically meaningful. This practical significance was demonstrated by calculating the effect size associated with group membership.

Because results from the first analysis were so encouraging, and students in the mentoring group varied considerably in how much/how often they received mentoring, further investigation was warranted. The second STAR Reading analysis asked the basic question “Is there a benefit for participation in multiple mentoring sessions for MITS students? And, if so, how much would we expect students to benefit for each mentoring session?” Results from this model suggest that more mentoring is better for students, and that those students who participate in mentoring at least once each week would be expected to demonstrate educationally meaningful gains in STAR Reading scores for one school year.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of the program evaluation for 2016-2017 MITS outcomes are overwhelmingly positive. Feedback from mentors, teachers, and site-coordinators, indicates strong stakeholder and participant satisfaction for all program components. Moreover, the STAR Reading Change results suggest that MITS has the potential to provide educationally meaningful improvements in reading outcomes for the students it serves. Our suggestions for the upcoming year of MITS implementation are:

1. Provide training for mentors on how best to deal with students who are either misbehaved or uninterested in the mentoring activities. Specifically, if teachers have any strategies that work well in their classrooms with a particular student, the mentors might benefit from knowing this information.
2. Site coordinators indicated a need for more substitute mentors in case of absences. Based on feedback from the site-coordinators, the current lists of substitutes is very helpful, but too short.
3. Site coordinators may benefit from structured opportunities to meet and discuss MITS implementation in their school sites. The time to work together and share ideas on how different site-coordinators handle obstacles or challenges when working to manage this program may allow the site coordinators to benefit from one another's knowledge and experience.
4. The evaluation team would like to secure winter 2017 STAR Reading data so that growth curves can be fit for data modeling. Given the very promising reading outcomes demonstrated thus far, there is good reason to expect that more data points may help refine our understanding of how well MITS is working to improve students' reading outcomes.
5. Based on the expected effect size of 0.006 for one mentoring session, the evaluation team would like to make a strong suggestion that the program work toward increasing the average number of mentoring sessions per student. For 2016-2017, the average number of sessions was 28; thus, the average student participated in mentoring three times per month. Based on the WWC threshold of an effect size of 0.25 or higher as educationally meaningful, we would expect students who attend mentoring sessions once per week to approximate this result of 0.25 effect size (i.e., educationally meaningful). If MITS can work toward having students participate in mentoring each week, this would be expected to result in very strong, positive, program outcomes for reading achievement.

Appendix A: School-specific changes in mentoring activity from 2014-15 to 2016-17

Key Result	School	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	% Change
Participating Classrooms	DeVeaux	---	10	10	--
	Larchmont	6	5	8	+60%
	McKinley	7	7	4	-43%
	Old Orchard	4	6	4	-33%
	Sherman	3	4	5	+25%
Mentored Students	DeVeaux	---	84	99	+17%
	Larchmont	67	64	80	+25%
	McKinley	91	82	54	-34%
	Old Orchard	42	50	75	+50%
	Sherman	56	60	65	+8%
Mentoring Sessions	DeVeaux	---	1,661	2117	+27%
	Larchmont	1,480	1,641	2033	+24%
	McKinley	1,926	2,159	2023	-6%
	Old Orchard	229	2,004	2163	+8%
	Sherman	1,576	1,919	2050	+7%
Average Sessions per Student	DeVeaux	---	20	21	+5%
	Larchmont	22	26	25	-4%
	McKinley	21	26	37	+42%
	Old Orchard	5	40	29	-28%
	Sherman	28	32	32	--