Review of Best Practices for Peer-Mentored Tutoring Programs

Recommendations to Stoney Creek High School Administration for Implementation of the HOST Program (High School On-Site Tutoring)

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MPA 690
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TO: Dr. Cathryn Skedel, Principal Stoney Creek High School

FROM: Alex DeSantis

DATE: 4/3/2016

SUBJECT: Review of Best Practices for Peer-Mentored Tutoring Programs

Executive Summary

Overview

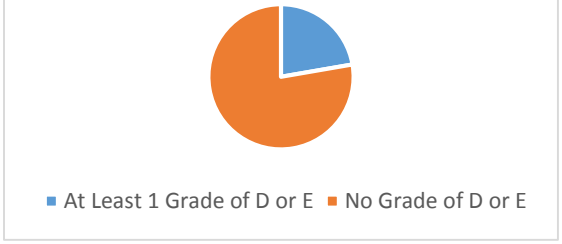
Stoney Creek High School (SCHS) is one of three high schools that are part of Rochester Community Schools. The mission of SCHS is to provide a student-centered, caring community with high expectations, successfully preparing students for the future. Stoney Creek serves over 1,700 students living in the Rochester and Rochester Hills communities.

Research shows the national dilemma over educating our children is not about the widening achievement gaps between white and people of color but rather the gaps in achievement between rich and poor.[1] The SCHS administrative team wants to implement a strategy that provides academic improvement opportunities for all students, but with a focus on students coming from an area of high poverty.

The area of high poverty is the Rochester Estates Mobile Home Park. Recent studies suggest that children from low-income families often have reduced exposure to stimulating interactions with adults and peers, and that poverty exerts a detrimental influence directly on both behavioral and cognitive outcomes.[2] How can a peer-mentor tutoring program at SCHS help improve academic performance for all students, with a focus on those coming from poverty?

A needs assessment was conducted and two findings stood out. First, a noticeable gap in student's G.P.A. was identified between students living in the area of high poverty and students not living in the area of high poverty. Second, when all students' grades were analyzed using watch list data, exactly 383 students had at least one grade of a D or an E. This is 22% of the student population.

Figure 1: SCHS Academic Performance



The gap in G.P.A. and the high number of poor grades show a need for a strategic intervention to improve academic performance and college readiness for all students. The objective of this report is to:

1. Identify best practices in tutoring and peer mentoring programs.
2. Provide specific recommendations for implementing a peer mentored tutoring program at SCHS based on best practices.
3. Discuss possible barriers and limitations to implementation.
4. Provide a basic budget and potential framework for an evaluation of the program if implemented.

Recommendations

The recommendations below are based on best practices found by researching policy briefs and peer-reviewed literature along with discussions between myself and SCHS administrators, SCHS staff, and Dr. Douglas Carr. These steps are options to consider if a successful program to improve academic

performance and college readiness is to be implemented at SCHS. The program will be called High School On-Site Tutoring or HOST.

- **The program must have clear goals.** Setting goals and desired outcomes is a cornerstone of afterschool program success.[3] The goals of the HOST program will specifically emphasize improving academic performance and college readiness for students who regularly attend.

- **HOST will use peer mentor student volunteers from the National Honors Society at SCHS and future teachers enrolled in Oakland University's Education Program.** By using peer and volunteer mentors the cost of the program can be kept down substantially. A major goal of this project is to ensure the program is as efficient and effective as possible. The National Honors Society (NHS) has offered to supply tutors for the program. The Learning Consultant at SCHS currently works with OU's Education Program to get future teachers observation hours within the school. These hours could also be earned by tutoring in the HOST program.

- **Assign one team of NHS students to the program.** Anywhere from 4-6 junior and senior NHS members should be assigned as the tutors for the program. This will develop familiarity and foster positive relationships between mentors and mentees. This will also facilitate a more functional environment, as mentors will become familiar with the process of mentoring and the program itself. Math and Science were the most frequent courses students had poor grades in, according to the watch list. The tutors must have a solid background in these areas of high need.

- **Offer enrichment opportunities other than tutoring to improve college readiness.** Techniques from **t**he Cognitive Training Program should be implemented. These techniques are proven to improve college readiness by improving students' ability to organize and condense information, inference and annotate, and interpreting the main messages from lessons in school.[4] Other opportunities would include SAT prep, self-esteem building activities and school/program improvement projects.

- **A certified teacher must oversee the program in a location with enough physical space and access to technology.** Having a certified teacher in charge ensures a high-quality environment is maintained. He or she will be in charge of communicating with staff, providing enrichment opportunities, training tutors, and maintaining academic and attendance records. The recommended location of the program is the SCHS Learning Center, where there are several large desks for 5-6 people to sit around and access to a computer lab.

- **SCHS staff must own the HOST program.** Clear communication between the program, administration and staff must be present for successful implementation and delivery of the program. Staff must understand the program structure so they can recommend the service to students in need. Coaches must also be aware of the program and must be involved in helping their players access the help if needed.

- **The program must be proactive in attracting and retaining high-school-age students.** The program should focus on attracting all high school students but specifically freshman. Research suggests that incentives can motivate teens to become interested in activities they may not have been interested in initially.[5]

Background

Introduction and Need for Intervention

The education system in the United States remains a foundational block of the American dream. However, students coming from poverty are at a disadvantage and score much lower academically compared to non-disadvantaged peers for myriad reasons. Regular participation in out-of-school time programs can benefit children and youth in many ways. They can spur higher academic achievement, improve school attendance and behavior, and increase effort and enjoyment of school.[6]

Rochester Community Schools (RCS) serves all K-12 aged children who reside in the district boundaries which include the communities of Rochester and Rochester Hills, Michigan. According to the RCS website,[7]the 2015-16 enrollment across the district was 14,991. The district provides an adult education center, three high schools, an alternative high school, four middle schools, 13 elementary schools, a facilities operations building, and an administrative building. The district employs 1,718 people including 904 teachers, of which over 70% hold masters degrees. This past school year the district had a 93% graduation rate with 95% of its graduates attending post-secondary schools. The district scored in the top 10% on state assessments and the composite MEAP score is above county averages. One of the schools in the district, Stoney Creek High School (SCHS), is the focus of this report.

A major problem in Michigan is the increasing number of children living in poverty. According to data from the Michigan League of Public Policy from 2006-2013 the number of children living in poverty in Michigan went up 70%.[8] According to the most recent census 6.7% of the children living in Rochester Hills live in poverty[9]. However analyzing the city as one entity can be misleading because there is an area of the city where 43.2% of the children are living in poverty.[10]The predominant residence of these children is the Rochester Estates Mobile Home Park located at 600 Le Grand Blvd Rochester Hills, Michigan. The high-school-aged students here attend SCHS.

Academic performance and college readiness are directly correlated to each other. According to the ACT, college and career readiness is the acquisition of the knowledge and skills a student needs to enroll and succeed in credit-bearing first-year courses at a postsecondary institution (such as a two-or four year college, trade school, or technical school) without the need for remediation.[11] Many of these skills are acquired and developed in school. If students perform poorly academically it limits their post-secondary opportunities. While academic performance is not the only variable used when measuring a student's aptitude for college, it is certainly one of the most important.

A primary tool to measure academic performance is the grade point average (G.P.A.). A needs assessment on academic performance was done using data from SCHS students. Analysis of the data showed that students living in poverty had an average G.P.A. of 2.2 compared to a G.P.A. of 3.3 for students not living in poverty. The Learning Consultant at SCHS maintains records of all students' grades and submits a watch list to all teachers in the building. This information identifies students who are performing poorly in any course. The most recent watch list was sent out on December 8th, 2015, and the data indicated that there were 383 students with a D or an E in at least one course. This is 22% of the student population, or one out of every five students.

The gap in G.P.A. and high number of poor grades shows a need to provide a strategic intervention to improve academic performance and college readiness for all students. How can a peer-mentor tutoring program at SCHS help improve academic performance for all students, with a focus on those coming from poverty? The objective of this report is to:

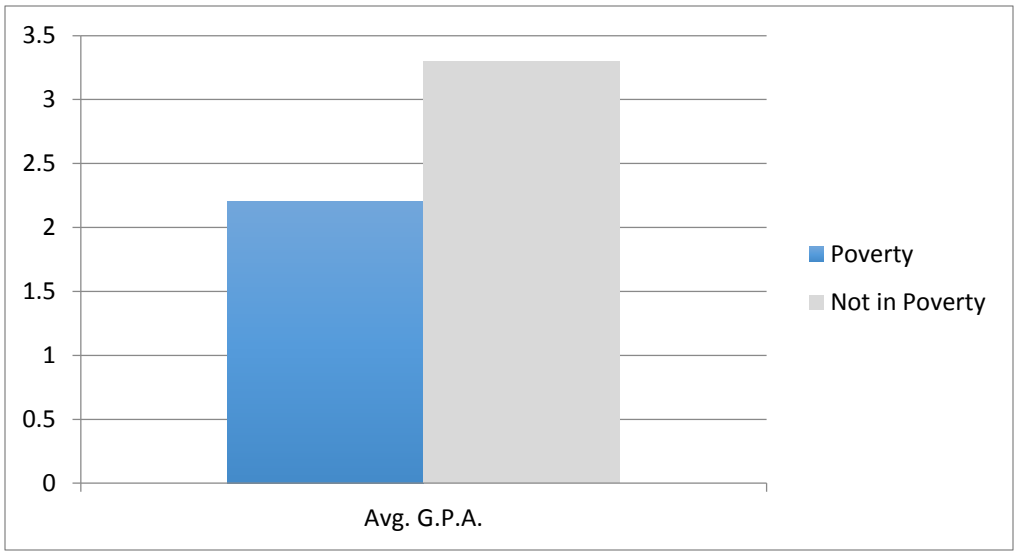
1. Identify best practices in tutoring programs and peer mentoring programs.
2. Provide specific recommendations for implementing a peer mentor-tutoring program at SCHS based on best practices.
3. Discuss possible barriers and limitations to implementation.
4. Provide a basic budget and potential framework for an evaluation of the program if implemented.

Data Analysis

Dr. Cathryn Skedel, the principal of Stoney Creek High School, approved all methods used for collecting and analyzing student data. All data analysis was done using a school computer on-site at SCHS. To protect student identities and allow for total anonymity, the SCHS Registrar omitted all names from the data prior to submitting it for this assessment. The data contained 50 students' G.P.A.s who lived in the Rochester Estates Mobile Home Park and received free/reduced lunch, a typical measure of poverty used by schools. The data also contained the G.P.A.s of 50 students who do not live in the trailer park and do not receive free/reduced lunch.

To allow for a random selection, 30 of the students' G.P.A.s were taken from the list of those living in poverty and 30 G.P.A.s were taken from those not living in poverty. The 30 G.P.A.s for each group were averaged and, when compared, the average G.P.A. for students coming from poverty was 2.2 while the students not living in poverty had an average G.P.A. of 3.3. The students attending SCHS from the target area that receive free or reduced lunch make up less than 5% of the student population; however, that does not justify ignoring the problem.

Figure 2: Average G.P.A. of students living in and out of poverty.



When data was collected on academic performance for the entire school, another need was identified. Not only is there a gap in academic performance among students living in and out of poverty but there are also a high number of students with poor grades across the entire school. This was determined by analyzing watch list data collected by the SCHS Learning Consultant. The watch list contains all students in grades 9-12 who currently have at least one D or E in any course. This data is sent out to all teachers once a quarter. It helps them identify students who may be struggling in other classes so they can get as much support as necessary.

Data from the watch list also revealed another need. The most prominent class on the watch list that students had a D or E in was Algebra I, the freshman level (ninth grade) math course. If students perform poorly in Algebra I it can lead to struggles in future math courses required for graduation.

Stakeholders

In 2005, students with a four-year college degree earned 74% more than their counterparts who only had a high school degree. In the same year on the assessment of math skills for eighth graders, only 13% of students in poverty were proficient, compared to students not living in poverty of which 40% were proficient. Researchers recommended the federal government strengthen high school graduation requirements to solve this problem. It is imperative that schools provide assistance to improve academic performance for all students. [12]

While states have traditionally maintained control over education standards, recently grants and funding provided by the federal government have incentivized many states to adopt tougher standards. Currently 42 of 50 states have adopted the Common Core Standards in English Language Arts and Math since 2011, and Michigan is one of those states.[13] However, despite improved requirements for graduation achievement gaps still exist in the G.P.A.s of students coming from poverty at SCHS.

Having students' ill prepared to face the challenges of the twenty-first century is something that impacts everyone, not just SCHS. The achievement gap between students from rich and poor families was larger in the United States than any other country represented in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.[14] This gap is responsible for a lower GDP and imposes on the U.S. the economic equivalent of a permanent national recession.[15] Other scholars agree; a rapidly changing economy has made skills and education even more important determinants of labor market outcomes. Finding a way to improve the academic performance for low-income youth would be a wise investment in the nation's future.[16]

Since overhauling graduation requirements is something individual high schools have no control over, I propose a more localized strategy: a peer-mentoring tutoring program. The goal of this program will be to improve students' college readiness and academic achievement, while focusing on attracting students coming from the Rochester Estates Mobile Home Park. Given the overall impact on stakeholders across the spectrum an efficient and effective program needs to be implemented.

Research shows a positive correlation between average student academic achievement and schools who engage all relevant stakeholders, and that includes community partners. The local community has something to gain from productive, educated citizens. The widespread improvement of social and economic conditions is a direct outcome of an educated population that is better able to use information to make good decisions and which is collectively better trained for work. The future of our communities depends on a generation, not only skilled in academics, but also excited about belonging to

an educated community. That community will arise only if schools engage and connect with today's children. [17]

Why Peer Mentoring?

SCHS must be as creative and efficient as possible when allocating time, energy, and limited resources to any program. Therefore it is essential that a tutoring program promotes academic and social competencies among a wide array of students. A way SCHS can have a big impact on a wide range of students is by implementing the HOST program. A student teaching other students is frequently more effective than teachers teaching students.[18] When students themselves assist in the delivery of guidance lessons and learning experiences for other students, the number of students affected by the developmental guidance program may be greatly magnified.[19]

Studies have demonstrated that peer tutoring has a positive impact on academic achievement in those being tutored. Peer tutoring is an effective intervention regardless of the amount, grade level, or disability status. Benefits of participation in mentoring programs are apparent from early childhood to adolescence, so age does not appear to be a factor. [20]

A recent survey of teachers at SCHS collected by administration revealed the desire to start focusing on developing students' social skills. These social skills include kindness, humility, communication skills, and problem-solving skills. A peer-mentored tutoring program will benefit both the program participants and the volunteer student tutors. A randomized study of 129 high school students found improvements in moral reasoning and empathy after youth served as peer mentors.[21]

Many students in peer-mentored programs have demonstrated:

- Improvements in self-concept
- Growth in social skills
- Increased understanding of human differences
- Increased tolerance for others
- Development of personal values, interpersonal acceptance, and friendship[22]

Studies that measured the impact of tutoring programs on students with learning disabilities were examined because a high number of students living in poverty receive support for various learning disabilities. The links between tutoring programs and improving the academic performance of at-risk students is strong. It has been shown that at-risk students can be taught to work cooperatively within groups and that they can problem solve – if they are shown ways to interact appropriately.[23] Another study showed that peer mentoring tutoring programs were most effective when they targeted youth with backgrounds of environmental risk or disadvantage.[24]

Recommendations for Implementation of HOST Based on Best Practices

HOST Structure

Best practices involving many different aspects of peer mentored tutoring programs were discovered through the research of peer-reviewed literature. Many of these will be recommended for implementation. I recommend that the HOST program be held once a week, on a Tuesday, in the Learning Center located at Stoney Creek High School. Ideally, one or two certified teachers will oversee the program and the NHS students and OU Education Program students will provide the tutoring. The program will run for the duration (40 weeks) of the school year and will be made available to all high

school students who attend SCHS, with a focus on students living in the Rochester Estates Mobile Home Park.

The SCHS Learning Center has agreed to let the program use its room as a meeting place. The facility has textbooks and other academic resources, Wi-Fi capabilities, access to a computer lab and enough tables and chairs to accommodate all participants. There is no charge to use this facility.

At each session the primary focus of the tutors will be to help participants complete any work or preparation for courses that are required to graduate. The certified teacher's primary focus will be communication with parents and staff, collecting attendance records, and informal evaluations of the program.

Each week the counseling department at Stoney Creek High School will provide the program with updated information on colleges, training programs, and scholarships that are available to students. The counseling department has also offered to help any student with college applications during the tutoring session. Supplemental lessons will be provided that develop students abilities to complete college level work, social skills, and improve SAT test-taking skills.

To keep track of attendance for the program I recommend using an online Google Document. Students who want to attend a session must sign up one day ahead of time. They can sign up themselves or parents can sign their children up. This will be the primary means of record keeping for the program. Using this online tool will help ensure there will be enough tutors and resources available.

Attendance records will be monitored by the program staff and will be used to keep track of students and help with program evaluation. If a student signs up and is not present at the tutoring session contact with the parent or guardian will be made as soon as possible. Successful programs shared similar methods of disseminating information to parents as well as a means of encouraging their involvement in afterschool programs.[25]

The specific recommendations listed below are described in more detail in the following paragraphs:

- The program must have clear goals.
- HOST uses peer mentors from the National Honors Society at SCHS and future teachers enrolled in Oakland University's Education Program as tutors
- Assign one team of NHS students to the program.
- Offer enrichment opportunities other than tutoring to improve college readiness.
- A certified teacher must oversee the program in a location with enough physical space and access to technology.
- HOST must communicate clearly with SCHS staff.
- The program must be proactive in attracting and retaining high school age students.

Goals

Successful peer mentoring programs have focused on building beliefs in their students' ability to be successful in school.[26] It is often assumed that students cannot achieve at a higher level because of the challenges they face at home. HOST will provide a stimulating environment with high-achieving peers.

HOST's primary goal will be delivering a program that can improve attending students academic performance. To accomplish this certified teachers will oversee the program and qualified tutors will be available. Another goal is student independence and engagement. The staffs of successful programs recognize the importance of considering student voices when making decisions regarding program activities and content. One way program staff can promote independence is by allowing the peer tutors to research activities for a lesson. By allowing the tutors and tutees a say in how the content is taught, students will be engaged and excited to participate.[27]

Another main goal of the program will be to improve all students' college readiness. This will be accomplished by providing access to information about colleges, assistance in applying for colleges, SAT prep and extracurricular opportunities.

The last goal of the program is to attract students coming from the area of high poverty, the Rochester Estates Mobile Home Park. Building a relationship with that community, having open communication with the parents of these students and possibly providing transportation home are all ways to accomplish this.

Tutors

The SCHS National Honors Society (NHS) and college students enrolled in Oakland University's (OU) Education Program will serve as the tutors for the HOST program. As mentioned in the introduction, there are several benefits to implementing a peer-mentored tutoring program. Researchers have consistently found benefits in peer-mentoring programs both for those being tutored and those doing the tutoring.[28] It will keep costs at a minimum, provide potential benefits for the tutors and program participants, and it will count as observation hours for students enrolled in OU's Education Program.

I have consulted with the advising teacher at SCHS in charge of the NHS program. She has offered any assistance the HOST program needs. I recommend using a small group of students from NHS for the duration of the program. Using a small group will help develop familiarity and foster positive relationships between mentors and mentees. This will allow for a more efficient program, as the NHS members will become accustomed to the process of the program. It would be important for program staff to monitor the academic achievement of mentors as well; those doing the tutoring should not see a decline in their own academic performance.[29]

The Learning Consultant at SCHS has a good relationship with OU's Education Program. Future teachers from the Program have earned observation hours at SCHS over the last several years. In the past, hours of observation were also be earned by tutoring during the school day in one of the learning resource rooms. The HOST program will supply future teachers the opportunity to earn observation hours by tutoring. Since the program will meet once a week on a specific day volunteers interested can sign up well ahead of time for specific sessions.

Math and Science were the most frequent classes students on the watch list had poor grades in on the watch list. Working with the Learning Consultant and NHS teacher advisor we can assure that the NHS peer tutors and OU students are highly qualified in those areas of need. Specific requests for tutors with the skills in Math and Science can be made if needed. This way students in the program can receive the necessary help. If tutors with the necessary skills cannot be acquired for a certain week, several math teachers have expressed interest in helping.

Opportunities to Improve College Readiness

On top of providing academic tutoring HOST should also provide information about college and other post-secondary opportunities at the sessions to help generate interest amongst students. Even if the majority of participants are freshman or sophomores, exposure to this information is important. Counselors at SCHS have already agreed to provide these materials and even offered to assist junior and senior students in applying for college during the sessions.

Extant research suggests that high-quality out-of-school programs can be fun and challenging for youth.[30] To develop the skills necessary for success in college, HOST will utilize several techniques each week from the Cognitive Training Program including:

- How to organize and condense relevant information
- How to inference and annotate
- How to understand and interpret the "take home" messages from lessons and activities [31]

Studies showed that students in poverty who received the Cognitive Training Program showed an increase in reasoning and synthesizing information,[32] both of which are higher-order thinking skills. It is these types of skills that are needed to be successful in college and beyond. These skills will benefit all students, especially those living in poverty.[33] The Cognitive Training Program is geared towards programs wanting to support a college-attending culture.

HOST will also offer SAT practice and training to eligible participants. The SAT is the primary exam used to measure the aptitude of junior students and is a major indicator, along with G.P.A., of college readiness. SCHS has many resources that can be utilized to help prepare participants for this exam. School and program improvement projects will also be offered to program participants. These can help bolster a student's college application and promote a sense of school pride.

HOST Program Staff and Location

A certified teacher must run the program in a location with ample physical space and access to technology. A study done by the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, & Student Testing found that high-functioning programs tend to have low staff turnover rates. Finding one or more teachers who are passionate and motivated to run the program is essential. The same study found that programs that had teachers with multiple years' experience were the most effective.[34]

Staff and mentor stability is vital in fostering relationships with students who attend the program. Programs with consistent staff and mentors are shown to build trust and positive attitudes in students who attend.[35] To help attract teachers to run the program administration should consider respectable financial compensation. A rate of $26.50 per hour is recommended. The rate of pay was determined using the Rochester Education Associations Master Agreement based on the hourly wage earned by a summer school teacher. After the first year administration should determine whether or not a pay scale is a viable option for implementation. This could help retain staff if they are given a raise based on their experience in the program.

Another incentive to attract quality teachers is offering training and professional development opportunities pertaining to tutoring programs.[36] These training opportunities will improve the overall effectiveness of the program and provide the staff running HOST with the tools necessary to succeed. Allowing teachers to satisfy the districts professional development requirements by completing tutoring related learning opportunities will only help make the HOST program better.

Currently there is not any type of professional development available regarding topics such as overseeing a peer-mentored program. Administration should identify or develop quality courses so interested teachers can take them. Course topics could include guidelines and best practices used in successful program implementation, program evaluation, use of data and data collection methods, and training for English Language Learners or students with learning disabilities.

Having more than one certified teacher overseeing the program is ideal and will allow for more flexibility. Teachers may not be available during certain tutoring sessions so having the ability to alternate with an additional teacher is optimal. Another teacher will also be able to provide additional knowledge in his or her area of expertise and have access to a wider array of teachers who could be resources to the program.

The most important thing the teacher overseeing the program has to do is build positive relationships with students. The quality of relationships with adult staff members has been linked repeatedly to youth attendance. Studies have shown that youth are motivated to attend programs because they like the staff and because students can tell the adults at the program care about their success. The more that youth perceived the staff as being caring and competent, the more the youth were engaged in the program[37]

The program must have access to a room with ample physical space and access to technology.[38] The location of the room is a huge factor to consider during implementation because having a consistent location will help alleviate some logistical concerns. If the program can be held in the same location it will allow for a more stable and effective program. With the increasing role technology is playing in education having access to technology is critical. To maximize efficiency I recommend using the Learning Center at SCHS as the location for HOST. It provides the physical space and technology needed to support the program and there is no additional cost to use it. The Learning Center also has several textbooks available from many of the classes offered at SCHS.

Communication Between HOST and SCHS Staff

In successful peer-mentored programs communication with school staff was essential. Teachers can help in identifying students who could benefit from the program. Participation in youth programs has been linked to identity exploration, gains in human and social capital, and connections between youth and their schools and communities.[39] This benefits the staff as well as program participants. Several teachers have offered to volunteer if needed, and even student teachers in the building have offered to their time. If the staff feels involved in the program they will be more likely to promote and support it.[40]

The teacher overseeing the HOST program will be in charge of communication with SCHS staff. The communication will include:

- Records of students who attend HOST Program
- Lessons being covered and upcoming tests in major classes
- Identifying potential students in need of tutoring
- Identifying and selecting potential NHS students to serve as tutors

Attracting and Retaining Students

With so many things competing for high school students' time and attention (jobs, sports, friends) it can be difficult to attract them to a tutoring program. Incentives offer a way to do this. Incentives can be used to help attract students to the HOST program. For high school students, many programs opt to

provide monetary incentives to reward youth attendance. Some, particularly those with a work-based focus, even pay youth by the hour to attend. Research suggests that youth enjoy these incentives and that the use of incentives may be an effective strategy for encouraging youth to attend programs.[41]

Studies suggest asking participants what types of incentives they would like. Successful programs were able to find support in the local community to help provide incentives. Community partnerships can help provide incentives by contributing to funds or providing special opportunities. In some cases community members have allowed students to shadow them for a day or help with certain leadership opportunities.

Other incentives used by successful tutoring programs found through research were:

- Food
- Prizes
- Special Field Trips

To help with retention the HOST program must maintain a clear line of communication with parents. Schools must reach out to parents and provide them with tools they can use at home to improve student achievement.[42] When parents know that school staff value and respect them, they will support the work being done with their children, and hold students to higher standards at home.[43] Using the an online sign up procedure to monitor attendance will allow HOST to maintain a clear line of communication with parents. HOST will provide access to all its educational materials and resources online as well so students and parents can access the information anytime.

Possible Barriers and Limitations

Background of Students in Poverty

An obstacle the HOST program may have to overcome is a phenomenon called cultural discontinuity. The backgrounds of many students coming from poverty already makes them a poor match to find success in school. A high achieving academic environment can be very different from the experience many students living in poverty get at home. Research shows that when students from poverty find success in school they face a sense of cultural disconnect.[44] By providing a peer-led environment these students will be exposed to the types of behaviors conducive to improved academic performance.

To combat cultural discontinuity, the program must be successful in selling the students on the idea that it is acceptable to be successful at school and they are capable regardless of the circumstances they face at home.[45] The HOST program can be a way to deliver the skills necessary to instill confidence in a program participant's ability to succeed academically and socially. Studies show that high-quality programs also had social or character development aspect in their program.[46]

Attendance

Incentives should be used to attract students to the program. Incentives are tangible and intangible rewards used to motivate a person or group to behave a certain way. Research suggests that incentives can motivate children and teens to become interested in activities that they might not have been interested in initially.[47] Over time the goal of the program is to have participants feel rewarded for their positive academic performance and no longer desire the other incentives. Research suggests that if incentives are used too often, program participants may begin to rely on incentives alone as the

motivation for attending. The incentive use should diminish (or be eliminated) as participants' intrinsic enjoyment of program components (skill building) retains their interest and involvement.[48] I recommend a system where early program participants are offered incentives for attending three, and then five sessions. After this no more individual incentives should be given, as improved academic performance should be the main intrinsic incentive and serve as the motivation for participating in HOST.

Transportation

In discussions with SCHS staff about previous tutoring programs, transportation was a major issue for students coming from the mobile home park. The logistics for transportation from SCHS to the Rochester Estates Trailer Park should be examined in the future. Possible options include using the school district's transportation provider, Durham School Services, Parent, Teacher, and Student Association (PTSA) volunteers, or the Older Persons Commission (OPC). Students receiving rides from any transportation provided by the school would have to provide signed permission from a parent or guardian.

Outline for a Potential Evaluation Plan

Evaluation Design

A major problem for peer mentoring programs is the fact that evaluating them can be extremely difficult. An obstacle in evaluating peer-mentoring programs implemented at schools is that they are limited in time. Because these programs are linked to the academic calendar the relationships established can fade over the summer. An evaluation should be done at the conclusion of each semester, or at the very least once at the conclusion of the school year. Researchers also admit that replicating the findings of a mentoring programs evaluation is difficult and often produces mixed results.[49] The evaluation must be done in a way that program staff understand the goal is to improve the program not shut it down. When dealing with results that are mixed or results that show a program is ineffective an evaluator must emphasize that the purpose of the evaluation was to help program staff improve or refine their perceptions of the program.[50]

Recently substantial progress has been made as far as evaluating peer-mentoring programs. The effectiveness of a peer-mentoring program should be based on the academic achievement shown by the participants. [51] I would recommend using both informal and formal evaluations to determine the effectiveness of the HOST Program. Program staff and building administrative staff should conduct the evaluations to help keep the cost down. Summative evaluations should be conducted by building administration. For the summative program evaluation I would recommend using a quasi-experimental design. There are several different comparison groups available depending on the variable being evaluated. To reduce the internal validity generated by this type of design, the comparison group chosen would have to be as similar to the treatment group as possible. Included in Appendix B is an example data sheet that could be used by an evaluator to measure academic achievement in program participants before and after attending the HOST program.

Evaluators should use a mixed methods approach of data collection techniques. [52] Collecting and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data will provide the most useful evaluation for the HOST program. Quantitative data collection strategies should include student G.P.A.s and can be done using the tool in Appendix B. This data would be confidential and could only be viewed by a teacher or

administrator. Qualitative data collection strategies should include written surveys or interviews with program staff, school staff, and parents.

Ethical Concerns

It would be difficult as a person in authority to survey minors in a manner that would address all ethical concerns. I would not recommend using any type of questionnaire or survey involving the students. As discussed with Dr. Carr using surveys on program participants should be avoided. However surveys can be given to staff or parents regarding the services provided by the program. This data can be collected to evaluate the program.

Actionable Steps for Implementation of HOST

Step 1

Find a certified teacher or teachers qualified to run the program. Have teachers review best practices and include them in implementing the program.

Step 2

Collaborate with program staff, the SCHS NHS advisor, and the SCHS Learning Consultant to select tutors. Program staff would be in charge of training and developing tutors..

Step 3

Communicate with stakeholders. Promote the HOST program in newsletters, emails, and flyers. Mail flyers to all families in the Rochester Estates Mobile Home Park. All teachers of freshman students should promote the program early in the school year and often. Have information and flyers available for teachers. Explain the needs statement and why the program is starting to SCHS staff and allow them to have input.

Step 4

Set up all electronic resources.

- Google Documents: google.com
    - Used to gather quantitative data (attendance). This will serve as the primary tool to keep track of the day-to-day operations of the program. Teachers can have access to the documents to follow-up and ensure students who need help are attending.

- Google Classroom: classroom.google.com
    - Where parents and students can access course materials provided by teachers and HOST as well as supplemental materials such as practice SAT and ACT resources.

Step 5

After the first 20 weeks use the recommended evaluation design to monitor the progress of the program participants and make any necessary adjustments. Both summative and formative evaluations should be conducted. Possible objectives could include:

- Objective 1: 80% of eligible participants will engage in a school/program improvement related activity. Attendance records can be used and analyzed to see what students were able to participate in these activities throughout the duration of the program
- Objective 2: There will be a 10% increase in program participants from the first session to the last session. Attendance records can be used as a data source to evaluate the change in participant attendance.
- Objective 3: We will see at least 10% of our participants come from the Rochester Hills Estates Trailer Park. Attendance records can be used as a data source to evaluate the change in participant attendance.
- Objective 4: Eligible participants will see an increase in G.P.A. after attending HOST program. The spreadsheet located in Appendix B can be used to measure student G.P.A. pre and post-program.
- Objective 5: There will be a 10% reduction in the number of students on the SCHS watch list.

Step 6

After evaluating the program possibilities for improvement and possibly expansion should be considered. These could include:

- Offering transportation to disadvantaged students in Mobile Home Park.
- Adding/reducing staff and tutors.
- Linking with tutoring program at feeder middles school (Hart Middle School).
- Offer increased financial incentives and professional development opportunities for staff in charge of HOST.
- Increase possible funding by looking at 31A grant money, PTSA funds, and the school store donations.

Conclusion

A tutoring program has the potential to provide a positive academic impact on students of SCHS. Currently the lack of intervention is having a negative affect on one out of every five students. There will be challenges but if staff, students, and administration work together we can improve our students' academic performance and college readiness.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Recommended HOST Budget

Table 1. Line Item Budget for Year 1 of HOST Program.

	Budget Item	**Amount**	**Sub-Total**
a.	**Personnel**		
	Compensation for supervising teacher @ $26.50/hr x 40 hr	$1060	
	Total Personnel Expenses		**$1,060**
b.	**Direct Expenses**		
	General Fund: Food and Incentives	$1600	
	Total Direct Expenses		**$1,600**
c.	**TOTAL REQUEST**		**$3019**

a. Personnel includes the cost for a certified teacher to oversee the program. This figure was based on the rate of pay of $26.50/hr. Each session is one hour are forty weeks in the semester.

b. Direct expenses include costs for food and incentives. The use of incentives will be used to attract and retain new participants. A snack will also be provided at each tutoring session. The cost per week is estimated at $40.

Appendix B: Evaluation Tool to show G.P.A. % Growth (pre and post-program).

Student	G.P.A. Pre-Program	G.P.A. Post-Program	% Growth
Sample 1			
Sample 2			
Sample 3			
Sample 4			
Sample 5			
Sample 6			
Sample 7			
Sample 8			
Sample 9			
Sample 10			
Sample 11			
Sample 12			
Sample 13			
Sample 14			
Sample 15			
Sample 16			
Sample 17			
Sample 18			
Sample 19			
Sample 20			