

What Works Clearinghouse



June 2009

WWC Quick Review of the Report “Impact Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Education’s Student Mentoring Program”†

What is this study about?

The study examined the effects of the U.S. Department of Education’s Student Mentoring Program (SMP) on students’ interpersonal relationships, academic outcomes, and delinquent and risk behaviors.

The study focused on about 2,600 at-risk fourth-through-eighth-grade students in 32 SMP sites.

Applicants were randomly assigned to a program group that was offered SMP services or to a control group that was not. Control-group students were free to receive mentoring services through other programs.

The authors collected data on students’ interpersonal relationships and delinquent and risk behaviors through student surveys. They collected data on course grades, statewide assessment scores, and disciplinary infractions from school records.

What did the study authors report?

Study authors found that the student mentoring program had no statistically significant effect on the academic and behavioral outcomes they examined once they adjusted their statistical tests for the analysis of multiple outcomes.

Features of the Student Mentoring Program

School-based program that serves fourth through eighth graders

Matches participants with an adult or peer mentor to discuss academics, relationships, and future plans

Mentors meet with students at their schools about once a week for six months

Administered through the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools in the U.S. Department of Education

Funded through competitive grants

WWC Rating

The research described in this report is consistent with WWC evidence standards

Strengths: The study is a well-implemented randomized controlled trial.

Cautions: About 20 to 35 percent of students in the original sample were missing school records data, depending on the outcome. These students are excluded from the analyses of grades, test scores, and disciplinary infractions.

†Bernstein, L., Dun Rappaport, C., Olsho, L., Hunt, D., & Levin, M. (2009). *Impact evaluation of the U.S. Department of Education’s Student Mentoring Program* (NCEE 2009-4047). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

WWC quick reviews are based on the evidence published in the report cited and rely on effect sizes and significance levels as reported by study authors. WWC does not confirm study authors’ findings or contact authors for additional information about the study. The WWC rating refers only to the results summarized above and not necessarily to all results presented in the study.