PROJECT 10 TOPICAL BRIEFS are published on a bi-monthly basis. Each issue focuses on a specific topic or theme and also highlights current and upcoming information and events related to secondary transition. This month the *Topical Brief* is focused on Mentoring.

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A Mentoring Story You Don't Want to Miss: Joe and Robin Shared Their Amazing Story at the National Mentoring Summit 2015

The National Mentoring Partnership (MENTOR) is the unifying champion for expanding quality youth mentoring relationships in the United States. For more than 25 years, MENTOR has served the mentoring field by developing and delivering resources to mentoring programs nationwide and promoting quality for mentoring through evidence-based standards, innovative research and essential tools.
More information is available at http://www.mentoring.org/.

Excerpts from the video:

Robin (mentor): If I wasn't a mentor, my life would be less fulfilling, would have less depth. . . I can't imagine life without Joe right now.

Joe (mentee): Robin changed my life because I knew at the end of the day I had him in my corner. . . Having a mentor was one of the best decisions my mother ever made for me.

Click on the photo to watch this moving three-minute video.

Mentoring: A Dynamic Catalyst for Reaching Transition Goals

Youth need caring adults to help them live successful lives and mentoring programs can help meet that need. While often considered a tool to assist youth at risk to reduce problem behaviors and increase academic improvement, mentoring can help all students. Mentoring has wide-ranging positive impacts that can unlock true student potential.

Mentoring, at its core, guarantees young people that there is someone who cares about them, assures them they are not alone in dealing with day-to-day challenges, and makes them feel like they matter. Research confirms that quality mentoring relationships have powerful positive effects on young people in a variety of personal, academic, and professional situations. Ultimately, mentoring connects a young person to personal growth and development, and social and economic opportunity. (DuBois & Karcher, 2005)

According to the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs (IWGYP), a group composed of representatives from 19 federal agencies that support youth through a variety of programs and services, youth who have a mentor are more likely to:

- Attend and be more engaged in school.
- Finish high school and continue onto college.
- Form more positive social attitudes and relationships.

The IWGYP is quick to note that mentors do not replace parents, guardians or teachers. However, mentors can provide experiences that encourage students to make positive choices, improve skills that support academic achievement and much more. Mentored youth are:

- Less likely to use drugs

- Less likely to use alcohol
- More likely to be confident in their academic abilities
- Less like to exhibit depressive symptoms
- Less likely to exhibit behavior problems in school
- More likely to maintain a better attitude toward school (Sipe, 2002; Herrera, DuBois & Grossman, 2013, p. 9).

Youth who are disadvantaged or at risk tend to benefit most from the mentoring experience (Office of Disability Employment Policy website, n.d.). Studies show that students with disabilities who are mentored are more likely to access available educational services and be more engaged in their individual educational plan (IEP) transition planning (Sinclair, Christenson & Thurlow, 2005).

"With the right kinds of support, these young people could put themselves on a path toward bright, productive futures, and make vital contributions to their families, neighborhoods and nation" (Herrera, DuBois & Grossman, 2013, p. 9).

References
DuBois, D.L., & Karcher, M.J. (2005). Youth mentoring: Theory, Research, and Practice. In D.L. DuBois & M.J. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of youth mentoring* (pp. 2-11). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Herrera, C., DuBois, D. L. & Grossman, J.B. (2013). *The Role of Risk: Mentoring Experiences and Outcomes for Youth with Varying Risk Profiles*. New York, NY: A Public/Private Ventures project distributed by MDRC.

Sinclair, M. F., Christenson, S. L., & Thurlow, M. L. (2005). Promoting school completion of urban secondary youth with emotional or behavioral disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 71*(4), 465-482.

Sipe, C. (2002). Mentoring programs for adolescents: A research summary. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 31*(6), 251-260.

Youth.Gov. (n.d.). *National Mentoring Month.* Retrieved from http://youth.gov/feature-article /national-mentoring-month.

An Interview with Check & Connect Staff

Check & Connect is a model of support that promotes student engagement and family involvement with learning. Each student participating in Check & Connect is assigned a mentor who seeks to build long-term, sustained relationships with participating students that will connect them with their school and help them make academic progress.

Check & Connect

The Institute's research-based intervention model to increase student engagement at school and with learning

In a brief interview, the Check & Connect (C&C) staff reflected on program accomplishments and sustainability.

Interviewer: What are some of the positive outcomes you've seen emerge from the C&C initiative?

C&C Staff:

- We see the goals of the program being met. We see an enthusiasm among the

mentors with the desire to come alongside students and become that adult in their life whom they can depend upon.

- We see an increasing number of mentors being trained. It's like wildfire in some of the districts.

- We see mentees who are beginning to believe that they are capable of graduating from high school. We see mentees who are building confidence in themselves and planning for their futures.

Interviewer: Many of the schools and districts using C&C are making plans for sustaining the program long-term. What are some of the strategies being used?

C&C Staff:

- In the final phase of program implementation, districts are required to put together a sustainability plan. C&C staff members help schools and districts think through this process, and create a plan for sustainability if they choose to do so. At this point every district has submitted a plan for sustainability.

- Schools are creating individual structures to support C&C at their sites. Some schools have principals and assistant principals who not only serve on the C&C leadership team, but mentor students as well. One Principal has chosen to become a C&C trainer, as well as a mentor, because he believes modeling his expectations is important.

- Schools in Florida have chosen to implement the program with existing school staff. Using school staff, versus hiring a designated full-time mentor, seems to be a useful approach for sustainability.

Interviewer: After four years of C&C implementation, what accomplishment is the most meaningful to you?

C&C Staff

- Seeing the extent of the commitment mentors have to their students is incredible. I haven't been to a mentor meeting yet where a mentor didn't tear up when talking about what it feels like to make a real, game-changing difference in the life of a student.

- Observing mentors and districts moving from the beginning stages of their mentoring programs to where they are now is very rewarding.

- The bottom line is that we are helping students to stay in school, graduate from high school and have hope for an independent and successful future. . . that is meaningful for us.

Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) on Mentoring

The ODEP website shares that students are not the only ones to benefit from the mentoring process. Mentors and employers are also positively impacted. Mentors gain a sense of accomplishment that builds self-esteem, increases patience and improves supervisory skills. For employers, mentoring can provide an effective tool to recruit and retain employees through increased job satisfaction and positive impact on the organization's culture.

According to ODEP (n.d.), effective program practices for building quality mentoring relationships include the folllowing:

- "A highly qualified staff.
- Screening of mentors.
- Structured and regularly monitored mentoring match.
- Training for mentors, both before a match and ongoing.
- A focus on the needs and interests of youth, not the expectations of mentors.
- Appropriate levels of visibility and accountability built into the mentoring relationship."

More information is available at the ODEP website, https://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/fact/cultivate.htm.

Announcements

FloridaShines' First Virtual College Night - A Successful Statewide Event!
FloridaShines, Florida's student hub of innovative educational services, hosted its first Virtual College Night on November 16 - 17, 2016. Representatives from the Florida College System, State University System, Florida Department of Education and others presented live during the two-day event. By the numbers, this event featured two days, six sessions and over 15 higher education experts in postsecondary opportunities in Florida. The Virtual College Night hosted presentations on preparing for college, including where to go, what degree to earn and how to pay for it without breaking the bank. Recordings of the presentations are now available, along with materials shared and can be accessed here.

Coming Soon - Information on the next Virtual College Night, Spring 2017.

Just Released the New Family Café Advocacy Toolkit
The Family Café has created an Advocacy Toolkit as a guide for individuals with disabilities and their families who would like to take control of their futures by getting involved in the legislative process. This toolkit will help individuals with disabilities and their families progress through the advocacy process. Access the Family Cafe Advocacy Toolkit here.

Mentoring Resources

Community Tool Box, Youth Mentoring Programs
http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/implement/youth-mentoring
The Community Tool Box is a free, online resource for those working to build healthier communities and bring about social change. This section of the Community Tool Box features sections on building mentoring programs, recruiting and training mentors, as well as building relationships and monitoring mentoring programs.

Connecting to Success
https://ici.umn.edu/ementoring/mentors/default.html
Businesses support and encourage em[ployees to form a mentoring partnership with students via email and occasionally meet face-to-face to share their gifts and experiences in order to help students become aware of new possibilities in their lives.

Disability Mentoring Day
http://www.aapd.com/what-we-do/employment/disability-mentoring-day/
The American Association of People with Disabilities' (AAPD) Disability Mentoring Day (DMD) program connects nationally nearly 20,000 students and jobseekers with all types of disabilities to thousands of employers each year and currently takes place in more than 300 locations in every U.S. state and territory. DMD is held on the third Wednesday of October each year, but has expanded to a year-round initiative in many areas.

Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology (DO-IT)
http://www.washington.edu/doit/
The DO-IT Center is dedicated to empowering people with disabilities through technology and education. It promotes awareness and accessibility-in both the classroom and the workplace-to maximize the potential of individuals with disabilities and make our communities more vibrant, diverse, and inclusive.

Dropout Prevention Programs and Strategies
http://www.fldoe.org/family/dropoutp/strategies.asp
The Florida Department of Education highlights several dropout prevention programs that incorporate mentoring, including:

- Best Buddies Florida Program
  https://bestbuddies.org/find-programs/florida/

- Big Brothers Big Sisters Program
  http://www.bbbs.org

- Boys and Girls Club Mentoring Services
  http://www.bgca.org/Pages/index.aspx

- Communities In Schools of Florida
  http://www.cisfl.org/

- Florida State Alliance of YMCAs
  http://www.floridaymcas.org/

- Take Stock in Children
  http://www.takestockinchildren.org/

- Volunteer Florida - Governor's Mentoring Initiative (GMI)
  http://www.volunteerflorida.org/about/

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership
http://www.mentoring.org/
MENTOR's mission is to fuel the quality and quantity of mentoring relationships for America's young people and to close the mentoring gap for the one in three young people growing up without this critical support.

National Center on Secondary Education and Training: Issue Brief
http://www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=704

Examines strategies to provide mentoring opportunities for youth with disabilities.

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability
http://www.ncwd-youth.info/topic/mentoring
Provides information about how to create your own mentoring programs and how you can use mentoring to facilitate positive transition outcomes for youth with disabilities.

National Disability Mentoring Coalition
http://www.pyd.org/national-disability-mentoring-coalition.php
The mission of the National Disability Mentoring Coalition (NDMC) is to increase the awareness, quality, and impact of mentoring for individuals with disabilities across the nation.

National Dropout Prevention Center/Network, Mentoring/Tutoring
http://dropoutprevention.org/effective-strategies/mentoring-tutoring/
This website features an overview of mentoring, including a rationale for and the impact of mentoring. This page also features key elements of successful mentoring programs and a link to related resources.

PACER Center, Dropout Prevention (The Role of Mentors)
http://www.pacer.org/parent/dropout-prevention/
This website features several resources related to student dropout prevention, including an information sheet entitled "Dropout Prevention and Youth with Disabilities: The Role of Mentors" (2009) as well as links for additional information.

Youth Mentoring
http://www.ncset.org/topics/mentoring/default.asp?topic=32
This report from the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition describes how youth mentoring provided by caring adults can help both youth and adults with professional development, growth, and support-as well as benefit the overall community.

Upcoming Events

2017 Regional Winter Institutes
This year's Regional Winter Institutes will include updates from the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Project 10, the Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education and much more.

Clarification Between the Project 10 Regional Institutes and the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities (FCSUA) Workshops

The Project 10 Regional Institutes will be held concurrent to the FCSUA Workshops. The two concurrent meetings will be held at the same or nearby locations. The target audience for each meeting is different as the Project 10 Regional Institutes are focused on secondary transition. The purpose of the FCSUA workshops is to increase understanding of resources available to postsecondary institutions to develop programs for students with intellectual disabilities on higher education campuses.

For more information, please visit http://ucf.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0qDiZZpd3xNCj53.

Lunch will be provided to all who register for the Project 10 Regional Institutes, courtesy of the FCSUA. During lunch, FCSUA will provide an update on the Center as well as an opportunity to network with other participants to generate ideas about increasing postsecondary options for students with disabilities.

This is an all-day event. Registration is free, but space is limited. Find your district's region below to learn more and register for the Project 10 Regional Institutes.

Please register by February 1st, 2017.

Region 1 | Monday, February 6, 2017 | 8:45 AM - 3:30 PM CST

- PAEC Center, 753 West Blvd., Chipley, FL
- Register here (Region 1 only)
- Questions? Email Tury Lewis (tllewis@usfsp.edu)

Region 2 | Tuesday, February 7, 2017 | 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM EST

- Bradford County School District, 501 W. Washington St., Starke, FL
- Register here (Region 2 only)
- Questions? Email Carly Detlefsen (cdetlefsen@usfsp.edu)

Region 3 and 4 | Wednesday, February 8, 2017 | 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM EST

- Auburndale Civic Center - Ariana Beach Yacht Club, 104 Old Dixie Highway, Auburndale, FL
- Register here (Region 3 and 4 only)
- Questions?
    - Region 3 - Email Franklin Coker (fjcoker@mail.usf.edu)
    - Region 4 - Email Federico Valadez (fvaladez@usfsp.edu)

Region 5 | Friday, February 10, 2017 | 8:45 AM - 3:30 PM EST

- Sunrise Civic Center, 10610 W. Oakland Park Blvd., Sunrise, FL
- Register here (Region 5 only)
- Questions? Email Lisa Friedman-Chavez (lfchavez@usfsp.edu)

Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) Collaboration 2017 "Re-Inventing Special Education with a Growth Mindset"

- February 16-17 | Hilton Orlando | Altamonte Springs, FL
- Registration is now open for for the CASE, Florida Organization of Instructional Leaders (FOIL) and Florida Association of Student Service Administrators(FASSA)
  Collaboration 2017.
- Click below for conference, hotel and vendor registrations.
    - Conference Registration

- - Hotel Registration
  - Vendor Registration

Florida Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT) VISIONS XXIV: A Transition Planning Institute and Conference

- May 3-5 | Sirata Beach Resort and Conference Center | St. Petersburg, FL
- This year the theme is **SURVIVOR: VISIONS Edition - College, Career, Community.**
- Additional information regarding the conference may be found on the FL DCDT website, www.FloridaDCDT.org
- If you are interested in presenting, there is a link to presentation proposals on the web page. Make plans now to attend.
- VISIONS Registration Form
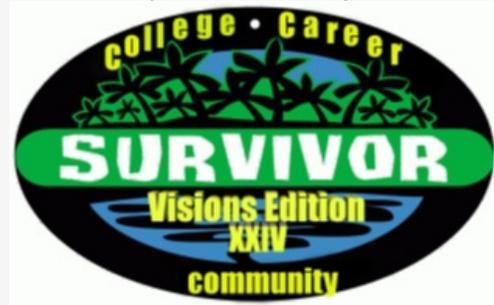
Upcoming Webinars

Family Network on Disabilities' IEP Webinar Series: Understanding The Evaluation Process In Special Education
Thursday, January 26, 2017 @ 12:00PM and 7:00 PM
Registration (12:00PM)
https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7344951356861451524
Registration (7:00PM)

https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/registe/6279324478433883139

Family Network on Disabilities' IEP Webinar Series: Rights And Responsibilities
Thursday, February 2, 2017 @ 12:00PM and 7:00PM
Registration (12:00PM)
https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5588028532698822660
Registration (7:00PM)
https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/registe/7433679746203392771

Family Network on Disabilities' IEP Webinar Series: Section 504 - From Referral to Placement: What Everyone Should Know
Thursday, February 9, 2017 @ 12:00PM and 7:00PM
Registration (12:00PM)
https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/24524314810286029
Registration (7:00PM)
https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3468316349396746755

Think College- You Belong Here: Building BRIDGES to Students' College Success (Bonds, Respect, Inclusion, Discourse, Guidance, Engagement, Support)
Thursday, February 23, 2017 @ 3:00PM - 4:00PM
http://www.thinkcollege.net/

Florida Department of Health and University of Florida Pediatric Pulmonary Center- Compassion Fatigue: A Five-Part Webinar Series for Family Leaders
https://www.gotomeet.me/CMSMCP
> Session 2: Understanding Your Warning Signs and Developing Early Intervention Strategies
> Thursday, February 23, 2017 @ 1:00PM
>
> Session 3: Strategies for Your Workplace - Low Impact Disclosure, Social Support at Work, Taming the Dragon
> March 23, 2017 @ 1:00PM
>
> Session 4: Self Awareness & Staying on Top of Our Stressful/Challenging Lives
> April 27, 2017 @ 1:00PM
>
> Session 5: Balancing Life and Work
> May 25, 2017 @ 1:00PM

Think College- Tales from the Help Desk: Answers to your Most Commonly Asked Questions
Tuesday, March 14, 2017 @ 3:00PM - 4:00PM
https://events-na6.adobeconnect.com/content/connect/c1/839220836/en/events/event/shared/1152068189/event_registration.html?sco-id=1378874696

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About Project 10 Topical Briefs:
Project 10 Topical Briefs provide short informational summaries and resource links related to secondary transition.

Have a question? Want to find or recommend a resource? Have some great news to share?
Send us an email at
project10@stpete.usf.edu

For back issues of Project 10 Topical Briefs, visit the newsletter page on the Project 10 website at http://www.project10.info/Newsletter.php.

Project 10: Transition Education Network

Assists Florida school districts and relevant stakeholders in building capacity to provide secondary transition services to students with disabilities in order to improve

their academic success and post-school outcomes.

Project 10: Transition Education Network
University of South Florida St. Petersburg
Questions or comments?
Email us at
project10@stpete.usf.edu
www.Project10.info