



CHAMPIONS

OF WAYNE
Mentoring Toolkit

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History and Mission of Champions of Wayne

Champions of Wayne is a 501(c)(3) organization that is committed to making a positive difference in the lives of Wayne Memorial High School youth by:

- Ensuring all students have access to a supportive mentor
- Empowering students to develop and work toward personalized goals
- Promoting a culture of achievement

Founded in 2009 by school psychologist Bill Gray, Champions has grown from a small group of kids celebrating achievement with cake and a trophy to having nearly 700 students participate in the program. Generous contributions from alumni, including Richard Helppie and Jeff Styers, as well as contributions from businesses and organizations in the Wayne-Westland area have made this important work possible. In our most recent semester, 108 adults working in a variety of capacities from administrators to security guards have committed to mentoring students at WMHS.

"I have had friends that told me the Champions program changed their life as a student and their focus on school, yet I still decided not to participate in the program. I felt that I was already a sound student...how much more could I grow? The answer was a lot." – Nikita

This toolkit is meant to share some of the research and best practices we have learned along the way. It is my no means prescriptive; it is merely what has worked for us. Along the way, there will be brief vignettes and quotations from students, mentors, and others affiliated with the program. We are proud of the continued work of Champions of Wayne and, like Nikita mentions, our ability to push all students forward.

More information can be found on our website, www.championsofwayne.org, or you can contact us by using the information below.

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What Is a Mentor?

Mentoring is all about people—it's about caring, about relationships, and sensitivity. As it becomes increasingly in vogue it is becoming too formulated—concerned with performance metrics, critical success factors, investment and spending. It'll be a disaster.

—Rene Carayol

From a program and logistical standpoint, most mentors are staff members that will be in direct contact with their mentees daily. Seeing students—their mentees—every day is important. We know that the closer students are in proximity to their mentors, the more likely they are to actually reach out and work to establish strong relationships with them.

When it comes down to it, mentor, much like the word “champion” is both a verb and a noun. Our Champions mentors *champion* (the verb) their mentees and are champions, people who view themselves as able to improve and accomplish goals. In our program, it is not uncommon to hear about champions that go above and beyond the call of duty for their mentees. They advocate for opportunities for them, teach valuable life skills and lessons, and always working toward helping students become independent at the moment and for the future.

Like John Wooden, a ten-time NCAA championship winning coach has said, “Mentoring can be any action that inspires another.”¹ It is what you do that matters. The steps you take might be formal. Some mentors offer weekly grade reports. Some mentors expect a daily check-in and check-out. Others routinely make themselves and their classrooms available as safe spaces before and after school. And many often share their own journeys, allowing students to live vicariously and learn from another’s experiences. The small details are really up to you.

With that said, our mentors tend to build informal relationships with students to support academic achievement. We have found that informal relationships tend to produce better outcomes for students. Like the quote from Carayol above, when too much of an emphasis is placed on formula, metrics, or data, we can sometimes lose track of the personal aspects that matter most. We can never lose track of the very real reality that these are human beings we are working with. Further, our own executive director’s research conducted in 2015 suggests that students and mentors who spend more informal time together (having lunch, “hanging out,” etc.) report having a closer relationship than those that are strictly focused on academic achievement.²

“My Champion treated me like I was normal. He joked with me and talked with me. He didn’t know it, but that meant the world to me.” –
Cassandra

¹ Wooden, J., & Yaeger, D. (2011). *A game plan for life: the power of mentoring*. New York: Bloomsbury.

² Galvin, S. (2015). The impact of a mentoring/financial incentive program on at-risk high school students (Doctoral dissertation). Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti.

Jean Rhodes' research has led her to develop a pathway (see Figure 1 below) for mentoring. Driven by the formation of a trusting relationship, mentoring can yield many positive effects. This pathway guides much of our work and interaction with students, and we encourage mentors to constantly think about how they can best support mentees' development.

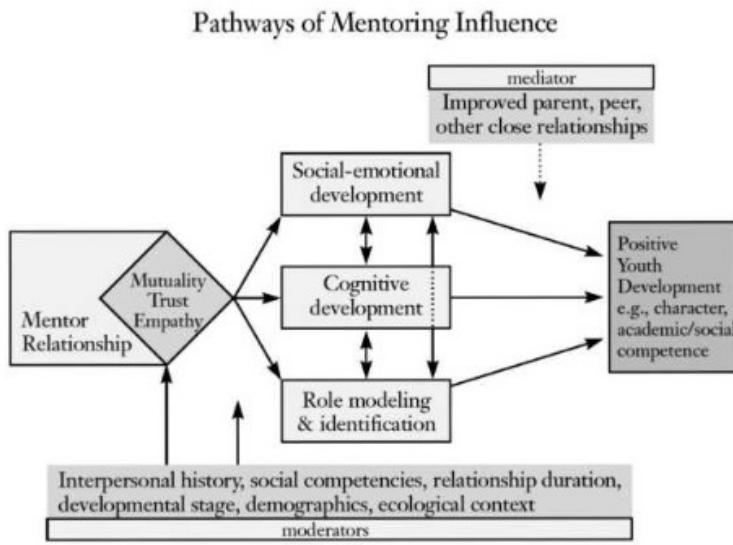


Figure Jean Rhodes' Conceptual

Model of Youth Mentoring

As a word of caution, let's also be clear that mentors are not "friends." While it is important to develop a bond with your mentee, you are not a teenager. You are not a parent, a counselor, an ATM, or even a social worker. It is our hope that you will share your experiences with your mentee but also appreciate the different life stages and experiences you can share with him or her. Fundamentally, you are what Lev Vygotsky would call a "more competent other," but you are *not* a peer.

Above all, the one key aspect of a mentoring relationship is a “close, trusting connection.” Without this, there is a greater likelihood that the relationship will deteriorate and/or not last long enough to have a positive impact on the mentee’s life.³ And it serves as the foundation for a meaningful and successful relationship.

Finally, as most of our program mentors are teachers, they know that they are considered “mandatory reporters” by law. The same expectation applies to our mentors that are not teachers as well. If there is anything that you are concerned about, you should always err on the side of caution. See Resource 1 in the Appendix for the mandatory reporting form required by the State of Michigan. More information can be found out about mandatory reporting at the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services website [here](#), which includes information about the reporting hotline.

What Are My Commitments?

When I give the best of me, that becomes my legacy.

—Karen Lopez McWilliams

Our process each semester works like this:

Our mentors approach their work with mentees in a variety of ways and have varying levels of commitment. Because most of our mentors are actively teaching, we recognize that being a champion is an additional commitment to the important work you do each day. Commit to whatever you feel comfortable with. It might also be helpful to ask yourself, *What skills or experiences have I had that others can learn from?*

We recommend that mentors and mentees meet at least once per week. This is easier, of course, when a mentor has their Champion as a student in class. Others have found ways to make meeting more manageable when they no longer have a student in class. Some dedicate a day after school for meeting (e.g., every Thursday) and others will even make themselves available during lunch. Because successful mentorship depends on interpersonal relationships, it goes without saying that spending time together is essential.

What skills or experiences have you had that others can learn from?

Beyond sending in students’ names that you wish to mentor, you will also receive a contract at the beginning of each semester that details the students’ name, grade, and personalized academic goal. This

³ Rhodes, J.E. (2004). *Stand by me: the risks and rewards of mentoring today's youth*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press



goal is customized based on information from the past and present about the student. (You can read more about how students' goals are set by visiting the Goal Setting section of this toolkit.) Once you receive the contract, it would be helpful for students to have a conversation about particular habits and routines they might enact in order to achieve their goal. This goal provides a framework, a vision of where the student will be academically in one semester's time.



Mentor Kelly Roupas regularly takes her Champions to Open Door Ministries' Food Bank to give back.

Some mentors go so far as requiring a weekly progress report. As long as there is follow-through, this is one method that has proven to allow the mentor to ensure the mentee is on track toward academic goals. We have found, however, that what matters most are the conversations that take place between the mentor and mentee. So, although the weekly progress report (see Resource 2 in the Appendix) creates the meeting or check in, it's the actual check in that matters more when making a difference in the life of the student.

Other mentors often take more of an advocacy approach with their relationship. They will seek out additional opportunities their mentee might benefit from, and they will actively work to help the mentee develop social and cultural capital to improve beyond the academic goal developed in the contract. Some mentors have reached out to financial aid offices, arranged internships, served as references for employment, etc.

Ultimately, the level of commitment is whatever you and your mentee are comfortable with.

The Case for School-Based Mentoring

Mentorship is simply learning from the mistakes and mastery of a successful person in his/her field.

At Wayne Memorial High School, nearly 70% of students are at-risk and/or qualify for free/reduced lunch. In an era where schools are charged with ensuring students are college and/or career ready, we must work to identify the barriers that students face when being successful after high school. We know that there are a few specific barriers that students face after high school, including: lack of access to relevant and appropriate information about education, academic preparation that includes nonacademic school skills (e.g., time management and study skills), and lack of integration within a school's community.⁴

"I chose Mrs. Bukosky as my Champion because I had her at my previous school and she was one of my main supporters, even when I was in the wrong." —Malika

Champions of Wayne is one of the only programs that allows all students, no matter the grade or ability level, to participate and feel as if they are a part of something larger than themselves.

Further, we strongly believe that school-based mentors can have an impact on student achievement. For many of our youth, their lives are unstable and inconsistent. As Jessica Cunningham summarized in *The Chronicle of Evidence-Based Mentoring*, "School is a constant in the lives of almost all children, but the structure of it may provide youth whose lives are otherwise chaotic a sense of comfort."⁵

A school-based program can also provide a common language and framework for goal setting. Information about students' grades, attendance, and other data can be easily gathered and shared with relevant stakeholders to set valuable and meaningful goals. We have even seen some students choose mentors because they teach classes that students struggled in. This kind of intentional relationship has proven beneficial, and encourages students to develop a deeper understanding of the content and a relationship with a teacher.



It's also within school that mentors can have daily or weekly interactions and access to wider support networks such as counselors, Family Resource Center, and other resources that both mentees and their families can benefit from.

⁴ Bettinger, E., & Baker, R. (2011). The Effects of Student Coaching in College: An Evaluation of a Randomized Experiment in Student Mentoring (Working Paper 16881). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.

⁵ Cunningham, J. (2017). New research explores impacts of inconsistent support on youth transitions. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.umbmentoring.org/vulnerable-youth-and-school-transition/>

Unique Challenges for At-Risk Youth

I think the most important quality of a mentor is that they are open to following students where they want to go. Not always pushing their own agenda.

—Cordelia Tencen

As concluded by Aronson (2001), research is clear that at-risk students face eight specific barriers: “poverty, racial and ethnic identity, isolation and lack of exposure, hostile environments, lack of educational history (learning how to learn), linguistic and cultural adjustment, conflict between school and home, and neglect/abuse.”⁶

What complicates this is that overwhelmingly, teachers in America’s schools tend to be middle class, white, and female⁷ despite an increase in diversity of student bodies and an increase in poverty levels.⁸ At times, this can make empathizing with students about their struggles difficult but not impossible. When mentors actively work to educate themselves to understand students’ experiences, it can positively affect their ability to connect to all students, especially their mentees.

Poverty can also create the feeling that students don’t belong in educational settings, and students may lack the capital necessary to navigate unfamiliar territory.⁹ As mentors, we recommend that you never assume students have a particular set of skills, like being how to inquire about re-testing or asking for help with an assignment. This does not mean assuming students have deficits or are unable to do these things; they would just benefit more from this type of modeling and explicit, direct conversations to add these skills to their repertoire in order to meet their goals.

“She has taught me even more so that no matter how hard times can be for me, I should not give up. She has made it known to me that she wants me to be successful in everything I do.” —Alyssa

The difficult thing for most adults to realize is that these difficulties can inhibit students’ “social skills, study habits, curiosity, and ease of expression.”¹⁰ This makes academic achievement even more difficult when we think about the skills that students need to be successful both in and out of the classroom.

⁶ Galvin, S. (2015). The impact of a mentoring/financial incentive program on at-risk high school students (Doctoral dissertation). Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti.

⁷ Goldring, R., Gray, L., and Bitterman, A. (2013). *Characteristics of Public and Private Elementary and Secondary School Teachers in the United States: Results From the 2011–12 Schools and Staffing Survey* (NCES 2013-314). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved [10 April 2017] from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>.

⁸ National Center for Education Statistics. (2013). Table 203.50: Enrollment and percentage distribution of enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools.

⁹ Kolodner, M. (2015). Why are low income students not showing up to college, even though they have been accepted? *The Hechinger Report*. Retrieved from <http://hechingerreport.org/why-are-low-income-students-not-showing-up-to-college-even-though-they-have-been-accepted/>.

¹⁰ Galvin, S. (2015). The impact of a mentoring/financial incentive program on at-risk high school students (Doctoral dissertation). Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti.

It isn't uncommon for mentees and mentors to have two different ideas of success. In fact, it has been documented that, at times, tension may develop between the adult and mentee. We encourage mentors to be mindful and attentive to a sense of "false self" that can seem at odds with mentees' actual experiences.¹¹ We do believe, however, that healthy and open dialogue can prevent or diminish the difficult situations that may develop. Remember, however, that as the adult and mentor, you do assume responsibility for remaining professional even in the most tumultuous of moments.

"One of the things that I learned pretty quickly is that I couldn't be too forceful with what I thought was best for Nick. I did, however, find myself posing the same question often: *Is this the Nick that you want to be?* —Kevin, a mentor

The other thing that makes mentoring difficult is that students can "internalize the impact projected upon them by their adversity."¹² These students may lack a sense of self-efficacy, the idea that they are able to accomplish and master difficult tasks in order to achieve particular results. Further, Aronson (2001) concludes that these students may, at first, seem standoffish and distant because at-risk youth have a tendency to create walls around themselves.¹³

This, however, does not mean that at-risk youth cannot be mentored; mentors should just prepare themselves for a sometimes difficult and arduous journey.

11 Rhodes, J.E. (2004). *Stand by me: the risks and rewards of mentoring today's youth*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

12 Galvin, S. (2015). The impact of a mentoring/financial incentive program on at-risk high school students (Doctoral dissertation). Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti.

13 Galvin, S. (2015). The impact of a mentoring/financial incentive program on at-risk high school students (Doctoral dissertation). Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti.

The Case for Financial Incentives

I joined Champions to see how good I could actually do in school when I actually had a reason to get good grades. When there's \$200 on the table, you get a sort of motivation to push for that.

—Sierrah, an eleventh grader



Donyae receives her reward check at an annual banquet.

As noted earlier, there is a bit of “saving face” at play for students who don’t necessarily identify with school. We have found that a financial incentive can operate as the “hook,” a way that students can “save face” in front of their peers while working toward academic success.

At first glance, a \$200 check can be viewed as extrinsic motivation. Research has shown that students are often quick to get excited about the idea of being paid to perform academically. Despite that initial excitement, however, students “had little idea of how to actually raise their achievement.”¹⁴ This is where the power of a mentor comes into play. Mentors, through a process of goal setting with students, can help students recognize the power of good habits that contribute toward goals and those that get in the way of success. When students strive to accomplish “incentivized inputs,” outputs, like improved GPAs, will follow.¹⁵

“I initially joined the program for the money, of course. But this year was different. I wanted the money, but being that I’m near the end of my high school career, I wanted to prove to myself that I am worthy and capable enough to get a high GPA.” —Algernai

With that in mind, we encourage our mentors to focus more on inputs, like improving attendance and punctuality to class and completing homework rather than just grades or test scores. It is about the underlying habits or the building blocks that matter that help ensure students are successful to meet their immediate semester goal and beyond.

¹⁴ Galvin, S. (2015). *The impact of a mentoring/financial incentive program on at-risk high school students* (Doctoral dissertation). Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti.

¹⁵ Galvin, S. (2015). *The impact of a mentoring/financial incentive program on at-risk high school students* (Doctoral dissertation). Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti.

Some of our affiliate programs will refer to the \$200 award check as a “scholarship.” We want to be clear, however, that the \$200 that students receive need not be directed toward future education. However one plans to spend this money is not a stipulation of his or her participation in the program.

Best Practices in Mentoring

Children must be taught how to think, not what to think.

—Margaret Mead

One of the primary goals of Champions of Wayne is to help students become successful academically. We also recognize that mentors, like teachers, are lifelong learners. The advice contained in this section isn’t prescriptive, as there may very well be approaches and techniques that work from you. This advice is gleaned from a variety of sources, including conversations with our mentors about what works and research on mentoring.

As larger numbers of students enter some type of postsecondary educational setting, it’s also important to remember the best ways that we can support students to be successful in school. We can learn from a study conducted by Bettinger and Baker (2011) that formed several conclusions about academic coaching for college students. First, regular contact is important. Through this regular contact, conversations focused on “assessing the student’s life outside of school” and “personal time commitments” had a significant impact on student achievement.¹⁶ This prioritization, these conversations about “soft skills,” can help students find success.

We have found that many mentors ground their conversations in some of the following topics and life stages:

Engaging Students in Conversations

Conversations don’t always have to be about “heavy” topics between mentees and mentors. It is, important, to work to a deeper, more personal understanding. In order for that to happen, you might initiate basic conversation to get to know the student. It’s not uncommon for mentors to identify things they have in common with others students, like favorite foods and films. Listening is also important. Sometimes, mentors function as sounding boards for students. Be prepared to listen more than you talk, and to ask open-ended questions to encourage the student to continue talking.

Emphasizing the Informal

¹⁶ The Effects of Student Coaching: An Evaluation of a Randomized Experiment in Student Advising, Page 4

Conversations need not always be focused on goals either. We have found that as students develop closer bonds with their mentors, other positive skills develop when in the presence of a concerned, caring, and educationally successful adult. Some mentors have even found it effective to participate in activities outside of goal-oriented projects and steps in order to get to know their mentee better.

Working to Set Clear Goals and Actionable Steps

Goal setting is difficult for most people, so we do encourage mentors to “walk the walk” and set and share goals with their mentees. Whether it’s eating a salad every day for lunch or walking 10,000 steps a day, sharing these goals helps students see that they, too, are capable of setting goals.

As mentioned before, it’s the inputs that really matter when it comes to achieving goals. Talk with students about clear and actionable steps that they can take. This part should be more about what the small changes they can make rather than big changes. It’s a lot easier to plan to “start homework at 3:00 PM everyday” than it is to “work harder.” The first step is clearer and can be based on a cue that Charles Duhigg’s, the author of *The Power of Habit*, research on habits and motivation would support.

Planning for the Short Term and Long Term

We also know that students who have mentors for a longer period of time tend to find success more often than those whose mentoring relationships fade. Earlier we mentioned the importance of a close bond between mentor and mentee. As research concludes, “If a bond does not form, then youth and mentors may disengage from the match before the mentoring relationship lasts long enough to have a positive impact on youth.”¹⁷ So work to establish the initial bond between you and your mentee, and then work to sustain and maintain the relationship. As Rhodes indicates, “Shorter lasting

Important Topics & Conversations

Freshman Year:

- GPAs and how grades are calculated
- Available academic supports, e.g., study tables, tutoring at Jefferson-Barns, etc.
- Joining clubs, sports, or other extra-curriculars
- Identifying interests, passions, and hobbies
- How high school is different than middle school
- Modeling ways that students can approach adults to ask questions
- Discuss PSAT 9 results and develop a plan for the PSAT10

Sophomore Year:

- Honest conversations about raising or maintaining GPAs
- Continuing participation in extra-curriculars
- Discuss PSAT 10 results and make a plan for the SAT for next year
- Plan a summer learning experience

Junior Year:

- Discuss match, reach, and safety schools
- Continuing participation in extra-curriculars
- Discuss SAT results and, if necessary, plan to re-test. Make sure students are aware of waivers to offset the cost
- Plan a summer learning experience
- Identify two teachers and ask them for recommendation letters before the summer break
- Talk about college campus visits, and even plan one
- Begin writing a college application essay and share writing with mentor

Senior Year:

- Send test scores and transcripts to colleges using Parchment
- Apply for financial aid and scholarships, including local applications
- Ways to advocate for additional financial aid at colleges, e.g., writing letters on their behalf to explain extenuating circumstances
- Complete the FAFSA
- Have conversations about advocating for additional financial aid

¹⁷ Rhodes, J.E. (2004). *Stand by me: the risks and rewards of mentoring today's youth*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

relationships were associated with heightened problems, and the positive effects of longer mentoring relationships increased with time.”¹⁸

¹⁸ Rhodes, J.E. (2004). *Stand by me: the risks and rewards of mentoring today's youth*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Goal Setting

Change might not be fast and it isn't always easy.

But with time and effort, almost any habit can be reshaped.

Since 2007, Champions of Wayne has worked to refine the goals that are personalized for every student that participates in our program. We recognize that each student's life experiences and circumstances are different, but we also know that we and the mentors involved have a responsibility to "stretch" students to their maximum potential.

"Participating in Champions changed me and helped me develop a sense of what it's like to work for something and to spend time each day working toward a goal" —Grace

Champions of Wayne's goal setting process is unique in that students are only competing against themselves to be better. It isn't like the honor roll, where students need to reach a threshold. Their goals are based off where they were last semester and prior to that and are then customized to be both challenging and attainable for each student.

"Before I joined the Champions program at Wayne, my grades were awful. I had a 1.8 GPA and was failing most of my classes. I hated school and never wanted to go. ... My ultimate GPA was a 3.0 this past semester, and that's the highest that it has ever been." —Cacie

Research shows that students struggle crafting actionable, clear steps to achieve their goals. As Galvin citing Allan & Fryer notes about other incentivized programs, "students ha[ve] little idea how to translate their enthusiasm to tangible steps that might lead to achieving the incentives." This has led us to understand that all students would benefit from discussions focused on concrete, actionable steps they can take to achieve goals.

Standard Semester Goals:

Our goals are initially set using this formula:

$$\text{Cumulative GPA} \times 1.15 (15\%) = \text{Semester GPA Goal}$$

While that quantitative data is initially important, each of our goals are then looked at and refined based on a student's unique circumstances and past academic success. We take into account:

- Current schedule, including course difficulty and instructors
 - Is this student taking Advanced Placement or accelerated courses?

- Are they taking more elective courses than core courses?
- Is there an instructor that tends to record higher marks than others?
- Are they in block-scheduled classes, like career and vocational programs, where one course counts for more than the traditional half credit per semester?
- Previous academic goals
- Did they meet their previous semester goal?
- Are they new to the district, e.g., transfer students, freshmen, etc., and to goal setting?
- Extenuating circumstances
- Did the student previously attend an online school and is now back in a brick and mortar building for the first time?
- Recent deaths or move into another family member's house

When using GPAs to approximate goals, we also keep this chart handy. There are certain GPAs that are nearly impossible for students to reach, so we work to ensure that we set goals that are realistic, but both challenging and attainable. This chart guides of our initial goal setting work:

4.0	3.0	2.0
3.8	2.8	1.8
3.6	2.6	Pass all classes
3.5	2.5	
3.3	2.3	
3.1	2.1	

High Achieving Students:

Some programs will allow students to achieve above a 4.0 for their semester goal. While this is one possibility, we have instituted a different approach to encourage students to go above and beyond in their goal setting.

“Our lives have always been centered around grades and doing well in school. That’s what we have been pushed to do. Through Champions, you get the opportunity to do something beyond grades and have someone push you to accomplish something you’ve always wanted to do, just never had the chance to.” —Savannah

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Realistic
Time-bound

Each semester, students that are considered “Champions High Achievers” (students who regularly earn a 4.0 GPA or higher) craft an additional S.M.A.R.T. goal with their mentor. They submit this additional goal in writing or a video essay (check out examples of these goals on our Flipgrid site by clicking [here](#)), and then they are either accepted or rejected.

We recognize that goals should be S.M.A.R.T., and we rely on our mentors to help students carry out the customized academic and personal goals that are set with and for students.

In the past, students have received Champions High Achiever invitation similar to the one below:

Dear High Achiever:

Thank you for your interest in Champions of Wayne. You are receiving this letter because you have excellent grades, and you are eligible for Champions High Achievers. Due to a large number of students with 4.0 GPAs wanting to participate in Champions, there are additional requirements. In addition to a goal of a 4.0, you will be required to do **ONE** of the following:

1. Set an additional goal.
- a. In other words, what have you always wanted to do but never made the time for?
 - i. In the past, students have set ACT/SAT goals, researched colleges, performed community service, set personal fitness goals, and started student organizations at WMHS. Be creative! Make an impact!
 - b. Make sure the goal is challenging and **measurable**.
 - i. Example: “I will read one book per month and submit a summary to my Champion” is a measurable goal. One caveat: You are encouraged to find a creative, easily shareable way to document your goal.
 - ii. “I will read more” is not a measurable goal.
 - c. **Submit a video essay to the Champions of Wayne Flipgrid site** that describes your goal and outlines the following:
 - i. Why do you want to participate in Champions?
 - ii. What will your goal be?
 - iii. How will the goal be measured?
 - iv. If achieved, how will the goal help you grow as an individual? How might it help the WMHS community?

Examples of past high achiever goals include:

- Volunteering for 25 hours at the local animal shelter
- Creating a fitness or personal health plan for a semester and documenting steps and results
- Coordinating an annual 5K event to benefit a local non-profit
- Developing a neighborhood event with a city’s parks and recreation department
- Reading 25 additional books for pleasure during a semester
- Participating in National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo), writing a 50,000-word novel
- Establish a voter registration drive and have 50% of the eligible seniors register to vote before graduation

Choosing Students to Mentor

One of the things that makes Champions of Wayne unique is students have much autonomy when finding a mentor. We believe this process teaches students a valuable lesson about securing mentors later in life: sometimes you must seek out those adults you want to learn from; they won’t necessarily just come to you.

Other times, however, adults do initiate the conversation. Some teachers regularly approach a student that they know is having a difficult time and ask them if they have considered being a part of the program.

There is, however, a difference when mentoring older students compared to their younger counterparts. As Jean Rhodes has written, “Mentors of older youths tend to experience their

“My Champion is Mrs. Brennan. I wouldn’t say that I chose her but that she chose me. And I have no idea why. I guess she saw something in me that I didn’t.” – Ramiva

relationships as less close and supportive..." and that "relationships with older adolescents are at higher risk for early termination."¹⁹

It's perfectly acceptable and reasonable to encourage students to have "skin in the game" before committing to be their mentor. Emphasize your expectations early on. Will you expect them to check in once a week or complete weekly progress reports? Will you expect them to come before or after school to meet every so often? It is okay to communicate clear expectations to your mentees.

Occasionally, we have students who ask two adults to be their mentors. When we find this in the system,



we alert both mentors and the student, encouraging the student to personally visit and discuss the decision with the mentor. This works to teach the student a valuable life skill of having a mature conversation, and it can also lead to students reflecting and clearly articulating their reasons behind choosing a mentor.

¹⁹ Rhodes, J.E. (2004). *Stand by me: the risks and rewards of mentoring today's youth*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Who Benefits?

It's hard to imagine someone successful who never had a mentor. Unfortunately, it's not so hard to imagine someone successful who quickly forgets about his/her mentors. Hey, they made time for you; now go and make time for others.

—Marcelo Gleiser, physicist

A variety of stakeholders benefit from participation in Champions of Wayne, including unlikely benefactors: parents and teachers.

Teachers

As is indicated in *Stand by Me*, there is little discussion in professional literature about the benefits that mentors receive in the mentee-mentor relationship. “We agree with Frank Riessman’s helper-therapy principle—that people help themselves through the process of being genuinely helpful to others—is particularly applicable to understanding the considerable rewards of mentoring.” As is further indicated, “Research has shown that older adults who volunteer feel greater satisfaction with their lives and enjoy improved health.”

“I have become closer with teachers at my school because of the Champions program; they look out for me and make sure that I am on track.” —Zackary

And some of our mentors have even expressed that mentoring—specifically their involvement with Champions of Wayne—has reminded them of why they got into teaching in the first place: to have a meaningful impact on the lives of young people.

School

Additionally, students who have mentors are more likely to have positive attitudes about school and less likely to use drugs.²⁰

If we want to build a positive culture in a school, mentoring is a great place to start. Because so many of mentors are staff members within the building, students automatically begin to rethink their association and connection with school. One staff member and mentor even responded that mentoring reminded them of the exact reason they went into teaching in the first place.

²⁰ M. A. Zinunerman, J. B. Bingenheimer, and P. C. Notaro, "Natural mentors and adolescent resiliency: A study with urban youth," *American Journal of Community Psychology* (in press).

Students

According to a study conducted by Beier et. al, “Adolescents with an adult mentor reported statistically significant less participation in 4 of the 5 risk-taking behaviors,” which include possessing a weapon, illicit drug use, smoking, and other risky behavior.²¹

Throughout the mentoring relationship, it is common for students to observe, compare, and even adapt their behaviors to be similar to their mentors’ behavior.²² This transference of skills is significant, as students’ mentors are educationally successful adults who have developed habits to ensure their success and can impart those very habits to students, allowing for the habits to be internalized.

Parents

Research concludes, too, that parents are more likely to experience a better relationship with their children when their children are actively involved in a mentoring relationship. In fact, one study concluded that “mentoring relationships led to increases in the levels of intimacy, communication, and trust that adolescents felt toward their parents.”²³

We have also seen an increase in collaboration between parents, teachers, and mentors as a result. It is not uncommon to have mentors sign up for parent-teacher conferences with their student’s mentor. In a way, mentors have become a liaison between the school, the student, and home. We have even seen mentors go out of their way to ensure homework requests were submitted for students when they were unable to attend school, ensuring their champions stayed on top of their work while absent.

“Mrs. Rhodes and my parents stayed on my case. When I wasn’t at home hearing my mom and dad telling me how important doing my work was, Mrs. Rhodes would also be saying the same things to me at school.”

²¹ S. R. Beier, W. D. Rosenfeld, K. C. Spitalny, S. M. Zanksy, and A. N. Bontemppo, "The potential role of an adult mentor in influencing high-risk behaviors in adolescents," *Archives of Pediatric Medicine* 154 (2000): 327-3

²² Rhodes, J.E. (2004). *Stand by me: the risks and rewards of mentoring today's youth*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

²³ Ibid.

Ending a Relationship

Because Champions of Wayne is a school-based mentoring program, we recognize the finality of the relationships that develop. It's important to recognize that there can be a significant shift in the mentor-mentee relationship when the semester or school year ends and when students graduate and pursue paths beyond high school.

As mentors, there are a variety of ways that you can embrace or initiate the shift or reasons that a shift will take place in the relationship.

Ending Unhealthy or Unproductive Relationships

We also recognize that there are times where, even as unfortunate as it may seem, that relationships have devolved beyond the point of repair. Working with at-risk youth in particular can be more difficult, yet they have the most to gain from these relationships. Research indicates that some relationships may also deteriorate when a mentor's encouragement becomes too much or at odds with how students see themselves and their abilities. We recognize that these conversations can be awkward and difficult for adults, and they are often just as awkward for students as well.

Maintaining Relationships Despite Barriers

Some of the most successful mentor-mentee relationships work around obstacles that develop. Some mentors will establish a weekly meeting time or "check in" with their mentee, which works well when they no longer have their mentee as a student.

"Since she's the one that got me to the place I am, I want to keep in touch to let her know how I'm doing as a student and a person. It's become more of a friendship through Champions rather than a sponsor for \$200. That bond goes a long way." – Khalil

It is also not uncommon for students to maintain a functioning mentor-mentee relationship once students have completed high school. These relationships then exist beyond Champions of Wayne and are not considered under our purview.

The Significance of the Banquet

Our end of the year banquet, which usually takes place the week after the last day of school, can also signal a shift in the relationship. All students that achieved their goals are invited to participate, along with two family members of their choice. Many mentors request the date of the banquet in advance so they can be sure to attend.

We have found that it functions as a perfect segue into summer vacation, as mentors and mentees can see each other one last time to celebrate success before break.

Appendix

Resource 1: Report of Actual or Suspected Child Abuse / Neglect

REPORT OF ACTUAL OR SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT Michigan Department of Human Services					
Was complain phoned to DHS? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, Log # _____			If no, contact Centralized Intake (855-444-3911) immediately if applicable). Send to Centralized Intake at the address list on page 2.		
INSTRUCTIONS: REPORTING PERSON: Complete items 1-19 (20-28 should be completed by medical personnel). 1. Date if applicable). Send to Centralized Intake at the address list on page 2.					
2. List of child(ren) suspected of being abused or neglected (Attach additional sheets if necessary)					
NAME	BIRTH DATE	SOCIAL SECURITY #	SEX	RACE	
3. Mother's name _____					
4. Father's name _____					
5. Child(ren)'s address (No. & Street)		6. City _____	7. County _____	8. Phone No. _____	
9. Name of alleged perpetrator of abuse or neglect _____					
10. Relationship to child(ren) _____					
11. Person(s) the child(ren) living with when abuse/neglect occurred _____		12. Address, City & Zip Code where abuse/neglect occurred _____			
13. Describe injury or conditions and reason for suspicion of abuse or neglect _____ _____					
14. Source of Complaint (Add reporter code below)					
14.1 Private Physician/Physician's Assistant 14.2 Hospital/Physician's Assistant 14.3 School Administrator 14.4 School Counselor 14.5 Court Social Worker 14.6 Concern/Medical Examiner 14.7 Law Enforcement 14.8 Other Social Worker 14.9 Dentist/Other Dental Hygienist 14.10 Other Health Care Providers 14.11 Friend of the Court 14.12 Social Services Specialist/Manager (CPS, FC, etc.) 14.13 Audiologist 14.14 Other Health Care Provider 14.15 Clergy 14.16 Nurse (Not School) 14.17 Child Care Provider 14.18 Other Health Care Provider 14.19 Hospital/Clinic Personnel 14.20 Psychologist 14.21 Hospital/Clinic Social Worker 14.22 Other Health Care Worker 14.23 Facility Personnel 14.24 Licensed Therapist 14.25 Hospital/Clinic Social Worker 14.26 Other Health Care Worker 14.27 Facility Personnel 14.28 Psychologist 14.29 Hospital/Clinic Social Worker 14.30 Other Health Care Worker 14.31 Facility Personnel 14.32 Licensed Counselor 14.33 Hospital/Clinic Social Worker 14.34 Other Health Care Worker 14.35 Facility Personnel 14.36 School Nurse 14.37 Public Social Worker 14.38 Other Public Social Worker 14.39 Court Personnel					
15a. Reporting person's name _____ 15b. Report Code (see above) 15c. Name of reporting organization (school, hospital, etc.)					
15d. Address (No. & Street) _____ 15e. City _____ 15f. State _____ 15g. Zip Code _____ 15h. Phone No. _____					
16a. Reporting person's name _____ 16b. Report Code (see above) 16c. Name of reporting organization (school, hospital, etc.)					
16d. Address (No. & Street) _____ 16e. City _____ 16f. State _____ 16g. Zip Code _____ 16h. Phone No. _____					
17a. Reporting person's name _____ 17b. Report Code (see above) 17c. Name of reporting organization (school, hospital, etc.)					
17d. Address (No. & Street) _____ 17e. City _____ 17f. State _____ 17g. Zip Code _____ 17h. Phone No. _____					
18a. Reporting person's name _____ 18b. Report Code (see above) 18c. Name of reporting organization (school, hospital, etc.)					
18d. Address (No. & Street) _____ 18e. City _____ 18f. State _____ 18g. Zip Code _____ 18h. Phone No. _____					
19a. Reporting person's name _____ 19b. Report Code (see above) 19c. Name of reporting organization (school, hospital, etc.)					
19d. Address (No. & Street) _____ 19e. City _____ 19f. State _____ 19g. Zip Code _____ 19h. Phone No. _____					
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TO BE COMPLETED BY MEDICAL PERSONNEL WHEN PHYSICAL EXAMINATION HAS BEEN DONE					
20. Summary Report and conclusions of physical examination (Attach Medical Documentation)					
21. Laboratory report 22. X-Ray					
23. Other (specify) 24. History or physical signs of previous abuse/neglect <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO					
25. Prior hospitalization or medical examination for this child DATES _____ PLACES _____					
26. Physician's Signature 27. Date 28. Hospital (if applicable)					
Department of Human Services (DHS) will not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, religion, age, sex, color, height, weight, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, expression, political affiliation, if you have difficulty reading, writing, hearing, etc., under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are invited to make your needs known to a DHS office. See DHS					
AUTHORITY: P.A. 238 of 1975. COMPLETION: Mandatory. PENALTY: None.					
INSTRUCTIONS					
GENERAL INFORMATION: This form is to be completed as the written follow-up to the oral report (as required in Sec. 3 (1) of 1975 PA 238, as amended) and mailed to Centralized Intake for Abuse & Neglect. Indicate if this report was phoned into DHS as a report of suspected CAN. If so, indicate the Log # (if known). The reporting person should fill out as completely as possible items 1-19. Only medical personnel should complete items 20-28.					
Mail this form to: Centralized Intake for Abuse & Neglect 5321 28th Street Court S.E. Grand Rapids, MI 49546					
OR					
Fax this form to 616-977-1154 or 616-977-1158 Or email this form to DHS-CPS-CISGroup@Michigan.gov					
1. Date - Enter the date the form is being completed. 2. List child(ren) suspected of being abused or neglected – Enter available information for the child(ren) believed to be abused or neglected. Indicate if child has a disability that may need accommodation. 3. Mother's name – Enter mother's name (or mother substitute) and other available information. Indicate if mother has a disability that may need accommodation. 4. Father's name – Enter father's name (or father substitute) and other available information. Indicate if father has a disability that may need accommodation. 5-7. Children's address – Enter the address of the child(ren). 8. Phone – Enter phone number of the household where child(ren) resides. 9. Name of alleged perpetrator of abuse or neglect – Indicate person(s) suspected or presumed to be responsible for the alleged abuse or neglect. 10. Relationship to child(ren) – Indicate the relationship to the child(ren) of the alleged perpetrator of neglect or abuse, e.g., parent, grandparent, babysitter. 11. Person(s) child(ren) living with when abuse/neglect occurred. 12. Address where abuse / neglect occurred. 13. Describe injury or conditions and reason of suspicion of abuse or neglect – Indicate the basis for making a report and the information available about the abuse or neglect. 14. Source of complaint – Check appropriate box noting professional group or appropriate category. Note: If abuse or neglect is suspected in a hospital, also check hospital. DHS Facility – Refers to any group home, shelter, halfway house or institution operated by the Department of Human Services. DHS Facility – Refers to any group home, shelter, halfway house or facility operated by the Department of Community Health. 15-19 - Reporting person's name – Enter the name and address of person(s) reporting this matter.					
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Resource 2: Weekly Progress Report



Hour/Course Name	Student Responsibilities	Teacher Comments/Signature
1 st	Assignments turned in: On time _____ Late _____ Not at all _____ Behavior in Class: Satisfactory _____ Unsatisfactory _____ Attendance: Satisfactory _____ Unsatisfactory _____ Upcoming Test? Yes _____ No _____	
2 nd	Assignments turned in: On time _____ Late _____ Not at all _____ Behavior in Class: Satisfactory _____ Unsatisfactory _____ Attendance: Satisfactory _____ Unsatisfactory _____ Upcoming Test? Yes _____ No _____	
3 rd	Assignments turned in: On time _____ Late _____ Not at all _____ Behavior in Class: Satisfactory _____ Unsatisfactory _____ Attendance: Satisfactory _____ Unsatisfactory _____ Upcoming Test? Yes _____ No _____	
4 th	Assignments turned in: On time _____ Late _____ Not at all _____ Behavior in Class: Satisfactory _____ Unsatisfactory _____ Attendance: Satisfactory _____ Unsatisfactory _____ Upcoming Test? Yes _____ No _____	
5 th	Assignments turned in: On time _____ Late _____ Not at all _____ Behavior in Class: Satisfactory _____ Unsatisfactory _____ Attendance: Satisfactory _____ Unsatisfactory _____ Upcoming Test? Yes _____ No _____	
6 th	Assignments turned in: On time _____ Late _____ Not at all _____ Behavior in Class: Satisfactory _____ Unsatisfactory _____ Attendance: Satisfactory _____ Unsatisfactory _____ Upcoming Test? Yes _____ No _____	
7 th	Assignments turned in: On time _____ Late _____ Not at all _____ Behavior in Class: Satisfactory _____ Unsatisfactory _____ Attendance: Satisfactory _____ Unsatisfactory _____ Upcoming Test? Yes _____ No _____	

Click [here](#) to access an electronic version of the progress report.