

Measuring the Impact of Strengths-Based Mentoring on Student Hope, Engagement, and Wellbeing

Findings for the TeamMates Mentoring Program

By Valerie Calderon, Ph.D.

Copyright

This document contains proprietary research, copyrighted materials, and literary property of Gallup, Inc. It is for your guidance only and is not to be copied, quoted, published, or divulged to others outside of your organization without the written permission of Gallup, Inc. Gallup®, StrengthsExplorer®, StrengthsFinder®, and Clifton StrengthsFinder® are trademarks of Gallup, Inc. All other trademarks are property of their respective owners.

This document is of great value to both you and Gallup, Inc. Accordingly, international and domestic laws and penalties guaranteeing patent, copyright, trademark, and trade secret protection safeguard the ideas, concepts, and recommendations related within this document.

No changes may be made to this document without the express written permission of Gallup, Inc.

Table of Contents

Foreword	4
Overview of Findings	4
About the Gallup Student Poll	4
About the TeamMates Mentoring Program	5
Results and Findings	6
Participation, Sample Population, and Methodology	6
Hope	7
Engagement	8
Wellbeing	8
Student Wellbeing Items.....	10
Item-Level Data.....	10
Strengths Index	11
Conclusion	13
References	13
APPENDIX A: Item List	14

Foreword

Increasingly, educators, community leaders, policymakers, and parents are looking for ways to build a brighter future for kids. With the United States falling behind other developed nations in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and innovation, and with a slow-growing economy beset by persistent unemployment and underemployment, leaders are seeking solutions to better prepare students for the future. Research suggests that the presence of a caring adult helps set students up for success in school and in life.

This study addresses important questions about the impact of mentoring on students, including:

- How does mentoring affect students' hope for the future, engagement with school, and wellbeing?
- More specifically, how does a strengths-based mentoring approach affect student hope, engagement, and wellbeing?
- Does strengths-based mentoring have any effect on students' perceptions of their mentor?
- How does strengths-based mentoring influence students' sense of self-efficacy?

This study probes these questions and others, setting a course for further research to lend support and rigor around the value and impact of mentoring programs across the country.

Overview of Findings

- Strengths-based mentoring positively influences student engagement with school.
- Students in the strengths-based mentoring program were more likely over time to strongly agree that they know how to build on their current strengths.
- There is a relationship between strengths self-efficacy and student engagement with school.
- Hope, engagement, and wellbeing data look similar for TeamMates students in both convenience sample and representative sample studies.
- Students in the control group who received no strengths training as part of their mentoring program were significantly less likely to strongly agree that they looked forward to seeing their mentor over time.

About the Gallup Student Poll

For more than 40 years, Gallup has provided its expertise and tools to drive student success in school districts across the United States. In 2009, Gallup launched the Gallup Student Poll, a Web-based survey for students that measures three variables: hope for the future, engagement with school, and wellbeing.



Through the Gallup Student Poll, schools, districts, and community organizations committed to youth development gather sound, actionable data that help explain and address student challenges and provide key indicators of what can be reinforced to support success for all students. The youth voice is a critical missing part of the national education dialogue, and the Gallup Student Poll gives America's young people a voice to convey their daily experiences and aspirations for the future.

Hope, engagement, and wellbeing are theoretically and psychometrically distinct constructs. These variables, based in a wide range of research and scholarship, are positioned as actionable targets and indicators of success, with links to grades, achievement scores, retention, and employment (see Lopez, Agrawal, & Calderon, 2010, for a review of the development of the constructs).

The Gallup Student Poll yields results for cohorts. These results are reported at the group level and have the rich capacity to initiate thoughtful and thorough conversations about how to capitalize on the best in students and improve the conditions that promote learning and growth. The Gallup Student Poll is not validated for use as a risk survey for student selection or mental health screening.

Some items in the Gallup Student Poll have been tested and used for decades through Gallup's workplace and education research, through global survey research, and most recently through the Gallup World Poll and the Gallup Daily tracking poll. The measure, developed through rational and empirical processes, has been subjected to psychometric examination, and a summary of reliability and validity evidence gathered to date is presented in the Gallup Student Poll Technical

Report (Lopez et al., 2010). For more information, go to www.gallupstudentpoll.com.

About the TeamMates™ Mentoring Program

The TeamMates Mentoring Program was founded in 1991 by University of Nebraska Head Football Coach Tom Osborne and his wife, Nancy. What began with 22 matches in the Lincoln Public Schools has grown to more than 5,000 matches across Nebraska, Iowa, and California. The mission of TeamMates is to positively impact the world by inspiring youth to reach their full potential.

The Osbornes founded the TeamMates Mentoring Program in an effort to provide support and encouragement to school-aged youth. The goal of the program is to see youth graduate from high school and pursue post-secondary education. To reach this goal, youth meet one hour per week with a caring adult who serves as a mentor. Mentors are volunteers from the community who have dedicated themselves to making a difference in the life of a young person. Mentors give youth a sense of hope, purpose, and vision.

The TeamMates Mentoring Program currently provides mentors for more than 3,000 youth, with a bold vision to serve 10,000 youth and be nationally recognized as the leading school-based mentoring program by 2015.

The National Mentoring Partnership has identified a "mentoring gap" and has issued a nationwide call to action. The partnership estimates 15 million youth are currently in need of a mentor.

"Our young people face different challenges today that affect them personally. If we are going to make a difference, we have to get involved with them as one-to-one mentors. We thank you for your support and we know that one student at a time, we can make a difference, not only in this generation, but for the generations to come."

— Dr. Tom and Nancy Osborne

Results and Findings

Participation, Sample Population, and Methodology

Students enrolled in the TeamMates Mentoring Program in the third through twelfth grades completed the Gallup Student Poll as part of this study. Participants in the study came from 15 different TeamMates chapter communities in Nebraska and Iowa, including Beatrice, Central City, Columbus, CORE, Doniphan, Gretna, Hastings, Hershey, Minden, Missouri Valley, Nebraska City, Ralston, Thayer County, Wayne, and Westside. Administrators in participating schools accessed the survey via the Internet, and students logged in with unique usernames and passwords to take the survey.

Gallup administered the survey twice during the school year. The first wave was conducted October 4–20, 2010, prior to the beginning of the TeamMates Mentoring Program. Gallup conducted the second wave April 26 through May 3, 2011.

The purpose of the study was twofold: first, to measure and observe changes in hope, engagement, and wellbeing in TeamMates participants in a pre- and post-test study design, and second, to see if there was a discernible difference in these data for students who had the opportunity to identify their strengths and whose mentors used strengths language in their work with students.

Students completed one of two strengths assessments designed and validated by Gallup: Younger students in third through eighth grades took the StrengthsExplorer, and older students in ninth through twelfth grades took the Clifton StrengthsFinder. The online assessments identify talent themes based upon natural thoughts, feelings, and patterns of behavior. Gallup consultants work with students and organizations to help them leverage their strengths for improved performance and success.

TeamMates mentors for the strengths intervention group received approximately two hours of training to give them a foundation in strengths psychology, learn about the talent themes, and understand how to incorporate strengths

language into student sessions. They also completed the StrengthsFinder assessment themselves. These mentors received information about their student's talent themes as identified and reported through the online strengths assessment, and they referred to the student's strengths throughout the course of mentoring. Mentors met with students about once per week at school over the course of the school year for approximately 25 one-hour sessions.

A total of 370 students participated in the first wave of the survey process, including 121 students who were part of a control group with no strengths emphasis in the mentoring program and 249 students who were part of the strengths-based mentoring intervention group. The second survey had an attrition rate of 9% between the control and intervention groups. A total of 114 students in the control group participated in the first and second administrations of the survey, and a total of 222 students in the strengths intervention group participated in both surveys. Female students outnumbered male students in the sample 1.5 to 1 in the first wave and 1.8 to 1 in the second wave. Following the Gallup Student Poll pre-test, the students in the intervention group took the strengths assessment. Intervention group mentoring session times and durations were otherwise similar to those of the control group.

Table 1: Participation by Wave

	Wave 1 N Size	Wave 2 N Size
Control	121	114
Intervention	249	222
Total	370	336

Table 2: Total Participation by Gender

	Male Students N Size	Female Students N Size	Total N Size
Wave 1	146	224	370
Wave 2	122	214	336

(See Appendix A for a list of items included in the questionnaire.)

Students in seventh grade had the highest frequency in the control population for both wave one and wave two of the survey; fifth graders were the highest frequency reported in the intervention group, with eighth graders the next highest frequency reported.

The majority of students in both survey waves were white (not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin). White students represented 74% of the total population in waves one and two (272 students and 249 students, respectively); non-white students comprised 20% of the total participating population for wave one (74 students) and 17% of the total population in wave two (58 students). These data were not statistically weighted and not generalizable beyond the study group results.

Students who live with both birth parents made up 46% of the participating population for wave one and 45% of wave two, representing the most frequently reported living arrangement. Students who live with their birth mother only made up the next most frequently reported living arrangement — 23% of the population for wave one and 26% of the population for wave two. Nearly one-third of students in both waves indicated another living arrangement.

Hope

- I know I will graduate from high school.
- There is an adult in my life who cares about my future.
- I can think of many ways to get good grades.
- I energetically pursue my goals.
- I can find lots of ways around any problem.
- I know I will find a good job after I graduate.

Hope is defined as the ideas and energy students have for the future and is a potent predictor of success for youth. Hopeful students are more likely to be energetic and full of

life. They are more likely to have a positive mindset, to see the future as better than the present, and to believe they have the power to make it so. Six items are included in the Hope Index calculation. Based upon students’ responses to the Hope Index items, Gallup categorizes them as hopeful, stuck, or discouraged. Gallup provides narrative descriptors of these categories to support the data that drive the scale creation. Hopeful students have lots of ideas and abundant energy for the future. Stuck students tend to have fewer futuristic ideas and thoughts and require some energy and support to achieve their goals. Discouraged students lack both ideas and energy for the future. Gallup studies show hopeful students tend to be engaged with school.

Results from the TeamMates Mentoring Program study show that the percentage of students who fall into the hopeful category for the control group is at least similar to or higher than that of a nationally representative sample population of youth polled in the summer of 2010 (Lopez, 2010). The hope GrandMean (the mean of the means for all six items in the Hope Index on a 1-to-5 scale) for the control group was 4.51 for the first wave and 4.33 for the second, and the GrandMeans for the intervention group were 4.37 and 4.39 for waves one and two, respectively. While the percentage of hopeful students increased for the intervention group and decreased for the control group between waves one and two, the change was not statistically significant for either group.

Table 3: Hope Index by Wave

	Wave 1 Control	Wave 2 Control	Wave 1 Intervention	Wave 2 Intervention
Hopeful	58%	54%	42%	47%
Stuck	36%	35%	45%	40%
Discouraged	6%	11%	13%	13%

Engagement

- I have a best friend at school.
- I feel safe in this school.
- My teachers make me feel my schoolwork is important.
- At this school, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
- In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good schoolwork.

Engagement is defined as a student’s involvement in and enthusiasm for school. Five items are included in the Engagement Index calculation. Based upon student responses to these index items, Gallup categorizes them as engaged, not engaged, or actively disengaged.

Engaged students are highly involved in and enthusiastic about school. They arrive at school prepared and eager to learn, and they likely promote excitement about learning among those around them. By contrast, actively disengaged students undermine the teaching and learning process. Gallup data suggest that students in the middle, who are neither engaged nor actively disengaged, simply go through the motions at school. While not overtly negative, these students may be coasting or blending into the learning landscape. They may be underachieving, not maximizing their own learning potential, or simply showing up without psychologically engaging with the school. Although disengaged students may require many resources and particular attention from teachers and administrators, it is perhaps parents who can have the most positive impact on their child in terms of his or her involvement in and enthusiasm for school.

Roughly 8 in 10 students from the control group and 7 in 10 students from the intervention group were engaged with their school in wave one. The percentage of engaged students fell in both groups from wave one to wave two — by 24 percentage points for the control group and 9 percentage points for the intervention group. The decline for the control group was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), but the decrease for

the intervention group was not significant when accounting for sample size and design effect. The percentage of actively disengaged students increased by 11 percentage points for the control group and by 2 percentage points for the intervention group from wave one to wave two. The percentage of not engaged students in the control group rose by 13 percentage points between waves one and two and by 7 percentage points for the intervention group in that same period.

Table 4: Engagement Index by Wave

	Wave 1 Control	Wave 2 Control	Wave 1 Intervention	Wave 2 Intervention
Engaged	78%	54%	71%	62%
Not Engaged	18%	31%	19%	26%
Actively Disengaged	4%	15%	10%	12%

The engagement GrandMeans (the mean of the means for all five items in the Engagement Index) for the control group were 4.43 for wave one and 4.04 for wave two. The intervention group GrandMeans were 4.29 and 4.16 for waves one and two, respectively. Again, the control group started with an engagement value higher than that of the intervention group prior to any intervention. When controlling for this variance in starting GrandMean between the control and intervention groups, the strengths intervention had a meaningful and statistically significant impact on the students’ engagement level with school over the course of the school year.¹

Incorporating strengths into the mentoring program had a positive influence on students’ engagement with school.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing, defined by Gallup as how we think about and experience our lives, is measured by the Gallup Student Poll Wellbeing Index. Wellbeing measures can reveal how students assess their current lives and how they feel their lives will be in the future. This self-reflection about wellbeing may reveal current needs for certain groups of students, and the data may indicate areas in which to concentrate efforts for students to

¹ Analyses of covariance (ANCOVA) on hope, engagement, and wellbeing results showed strengths intervention had a significant impact on engagement when controlling for the wave one GrandMean variance by group.

move toward healthy and productive future choices. Students whose responses reflect a high degree of wellbeing have positive thoughts of their present and future lives, good health, and strong social connections. Wellbeing tells us how our students are doing today and illustrates actionable patterns and themes that can affect their future success.

When students were asked to respond to questions based on the classic Cantril Self-Anchoring Striving Scale² (also known as the ladder questions), the average response for

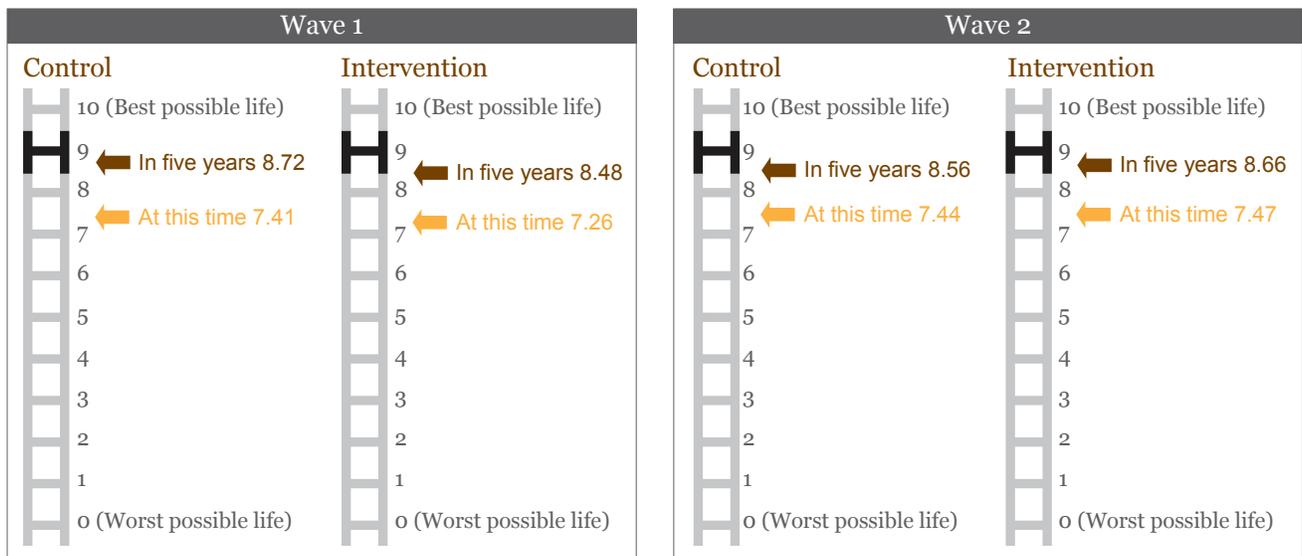
those in the control group to the question, “On which step of the ladder would you say you personally feel you stand at this time?” was 7.41 for wave one and 7.44 for wave two. When asked, “On which step do you think you will stand about five years from now?” students in the control group in wave one averaged 8.72, and in wave two averaged 8.56. (See Figure 1.) Students in the intervention group responded with an average 7.26 for wave one and 7.47 for wave two on the ladder present item, and 8.48 and 8.66, respectively, for the ladder future item. There was no significant change in wellbeing from wave one to wave two. These data are comparable to convenience sample data collected annually and to a representative sample study conducted by Gallup in the summer of 2010 (Lopez, 2010).

2 The Life Evaluation sub-index is based on the Cantril Self-Anchoring Striving Scale, which asks people to evaluate their present and future lives on a scale with steps numbered from 0 to 10, where 0 is the worst possible life and 10 is the best possible life. Those who rate their position on the ladder today a “7” or higher and in the future an “8” or higher are considered to be “thriving.” Those who rate today and the future a “4” or lower on the scale are considered to be “suffering.”

Figure 1. Evaluative Wellbeing

Please imagine a ladder with steps numbered from zero at the bottom to ten at the top. The top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you and the bottom of the ladder represents the worst possible life for you. On which step of the ladder would you say you personally feel you stand at this time?

On which step do you think you will stand about five years from now?



Student Wellbeing Items

Please think about yesterday, from the morning until the end of the day. Think about where you were, what you were doing, who you were with, and how you felt as you respond to the next six items.

Were you treated with respect all day yesterday?

Did you smile or laugh a lot yesterday?

Did you learn or do something interesting yesterday?

Did you have enough energy to get things done yesterday?

Do you have health problems that keep you from doing any of the things other people your age normally can do?

If you are in trouble, do you have family or friends you can count on to help whenever you need them?

Gallup uses the wellbeing classification system of thriving, struggling, and suffering to summarize a student’s responses to both ladder questions. In the control group, nearly two-thirds of students (64%) from wave one were thriving, as well as 7 in 10 (69%) from wave two. Similarly, 6 in 10 (61%) students in the intervention group were thriving in wave one and 65% in wave two. They selected responses that give insights into how they think about their present and future lives in positive terms. Students who are thriving tend to have their basic needs met, report being in good health, and

are aware of strong social support. Roughly one-third of the students from waves one and two in both groups gave responses indicating they were struggling. Two percent in the wave two control group were suffering. These students may lack adequate personal and social resources.

Table 5: Wellbeing by Wave

	Wave 1 Control	Wave 2 Control	Wave 1 Intervention	Wave 2 Intervention
Thriving	64%	69%	61%	65%
Struggling	36%	29%	39%	35%
Suffering	--	2%	--	--

Item-Level Data

Gallup studies show that within the Hope Index, students tend to give a higher percentage of 5 or “strongly agree” responses on a 1-to-5 scale for items that reflect having ideas about the future and having a caring adult in their lives, but they have difficulty giving a 5 to items that require navigating problems or setting goals. This trend is consistent in the item-level data for the TeamMates Mentoring Program students studied. Overall (data from the control and intervention groups over both waves), 85% of students strongly agreed that they know they will graduate from high school, and 87% strongly agreed that they have an adult in their life who cares about their future. However, only 37% strongly agreed that they can find lots of ways around any problem. It is important to help students anticipate and navigate obstacles to achieving goals such as graduation.

Table 6: Item-Level Data — Wave 1

Item	Wave 1 Control		Wave 1 Intervention	
	GrandMean	%5s	GrandMean	%5s
Know I will graduate	4.81	87	4.74	82
Adult cares	4.88	91	4.80	86
Many ways to get good grades	4.32	50	4.28	46
Pursue goals	4.35	51	4.01	33
Ways around any problem	3.93	32	3.89	32
Good job	4.61	68	4.48	64
Best friend	4.79	84	4.69	84
Feel safe	4.59	70	4.37	63
Schoolwork important	4.42	60	4.27	55
Opportunity to do best	4.31	55	4.22	53
Recognition	3.99	47	3.90	39
School committed to strengths	4.38	58	4.27	52
Volunteered	4.14	46	3.87	38

Item	Wave 2 Control		Wave 2 Intervention	
	GrandMean	%5s	GrandMean	%5s
Know I will graduate	4.78	87	4.81	86
Adult cares	4.73	83	4.81	87
Many ways to get good grades	4.15	46	4.21	47
Pursue goals	4.00	33	4.08	34
Ways around any problem	3.85	25	3.93	33
Good job	4.42	62	4.46	61
Best friend	4.49	74	4.70	81
Feel safe	4.20	51	4.25	54
Schoolwork important	4.09	45	4.12	46
Opportunity to do best	3.87	34	4.08	42
Recognition	3.40	33	3.67	31
School committed to strengths	4.02	45	4.09	45
Volunteered	3.79	38	3.92	40

The majority of students indicated that they learned or did something interesting yesterday (85%). About one-third of all students in waves one and two (31% and 30%, respectively) of this study answered “yes” to all four items that make up the Positive Yesterday Index, indicating that they had a positive yesterday, which is similar to large convenience sample studies.

In the control group, 4 in 10 indicated a positive yesterday in wave one, while 3 of in 10 students in the intervention group had a positive yesterday in wave one. For wave two, 3 in 10 students had a positive yesterday in both the control and intervention groups.

	Wave 1	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 2
	Control % Yes	Intervention % Yes	Control % Yes	Intervention % Yes
Treated with respect all day yesterday	72	69	59	62
Smiled or laughed a lot yesterday	91	85	86	86
Learned or did something interesting yesterday	80	85	77	74
Had enough energy to get things done yesterday	79	83	82	84
Health problems kept you from doing things people your age normally can do	8	13	14	20
Have family or friends you can count on for help	97	93	91	93

Strengths Index

A strengths-based approach to student success begins with the identification and development of student and mentor strengths. This focus on what is right with people creates discussions and learning strategies that lead to student academic success (see Lopez & Louis, 2009). Beginning in 2010, the Gallup Student Poll included a core item that asked students about strengths-based education at their school.

Specifically, students consider the following: “My school is committed to building the strengths of each student.” Gallup gauges student responses on a 5-point scale, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree. This item is part of the Strengths Index, which was included in the study. (See Lopez, 2011, for insights into the impact of strengths on school engagement and performance.) There were no meaningful changes in the Strengths Index data from wave one to wave two.

Item	Wave 1 Control		Wave 2 Control		Wave 1 Intervention		Wave 2 Intervention	
	GrandMean	%5s	GrandMean	%5s	GrandMean	%5s	GrandMean	%5s
Conversation about strengths	3.53	34	3.44	30	3.41	32	3.71	37
Friends know strengths	4.26	58	3.98	50	3.94	44	3.87	43
School committed to strengths*	4.38	58	4.02	45	4.27	52	4.09	45
Name strengths	4.16	50	3.78	40	3.62	36	3.84	39
Goals and expectations	3.67	32	3.30	24	3.34	29	3.47	26

*Note: This item is part of the core 20 items on the Gallup Student Poll.

Previous convenience sample and representative sample studies show that students who strongly agree with the item, “My school is committed to building the strengths of each student,” typically are engaged with school. This was also the case in this study, further demonstrating the premise that strengths-based education drives student engagement with school. For wave one, 97% of students in the control group who strongly agreed with this item were also found to be engaged with school. By wave two of the study, 78% of the students in the control group who strongly agreed with this item were engaged with school. For the intervention group, 87% of students who strongly agreed with this item were engaged with school in wave one, and 95% who strongly agreed with the statement were engaged with school in the second wave.

The Strengths Self-Efficacy Scale measures student perceptions of the utility of strengths in their everyday lives. Significantly fewer students in the control group strongly agreed that they accomplish a lot using strengths, use their strengths in many situations, and find ways to use their strengths every day by wave two of the study. In contrast, a significantly higher percentage of students from the intervention group strongly agreed by wave two that they know how to build on their current strengths, evincing a meaningful impact of strengths-based mentoring for helping students build their own self-concept through strengths development. There is a correlation (0.43) in wave two for all students between having strategies to grow strengths and students’ engagement GrandMean.

Item	Wave 1 Control		Wave 2 Control		Wave 1 Intervention		Wave 2 Intervention	
	GrandMean	%5s	GrandMean	%5s	GrandMean	%5s	GrandMean	%5s
Accomplish a lot using strengths	4.43	62	3.88	38	4.05	43	4.05	42
Use my strengths	4.37	56	3.92	37	3.99	43	3.89	34
Find ways to use strengths	4.20	50	3.83	34	3.75	37	3.86	37
Build on strengths	4.27	50	3.82	37	3.68	29	3.91	40
Growing my strengths	4.14	39	3.77	31	3.58	29	3.80	36

The Working Alliance Index is a short battery of items gauging each student’s perception of the mentoring relationship. Results were mostly consistent from wave one to wave two

for the control and intervention groups with the exception of the final item, which asks whether students look forward to seeing their TeamMates. A significantly lower percentage of

students in the control group strongly agreed with this item in wave two (on a 5-point scale where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree). Such a significant decline was not seen in the strengths intervention group. There is 0.36 correlation in wave one and a 0.24 correlation for wave two between a

student looking forward to seeing their TeamMate and the student's Ready for the Future score.³

3 The Ready for the Future score is on a 0-to-6 scale and is generated based upon which category the student falls in for the hope, engagement, and wellbeing scale. The respondent receives 0 points for falling in the lowest category of the scale, 1 point for the middle category, and 2 points for falling in the highest category of the scale.

Table 11: TeamMates Partnership: Working Alliance Index Results

Item	Wave 1 Control		Wave 2 Control		Wave 1 Intervention		Wave 2 Intervention	
	GrandMean	%5s	GrandMean	%5s	GrandMean	%5s	GrandMean	%5s
Work on goals	4.33	49	4.03	47	4.36	60	4.26	58
Do helpful things	4.62	68	4.14	56	4.47	66	4.34	60
Look forward	4.92	93	4.42	73	4.74	84	4.67	79

Conclusion

Data show that the TeamMates Mentoring Program provides an opportunity for students to have a caring adult support and encourage their development and growth. Strengths-based mentoring can help mitigate the trend toward declining school engagement and positively influence students' enthusiasm and involvement with school. Increased engagement can in turn result in better performance and student success. Additionally, strengths-based mentoring provides students with an opportunity to focus on tangible and meaningful personal growth, which also affects school engagement.

More work could be done to understand the impact of mentoring on student hope, engagement, and wellbeing. Future studies might include further strengths training and development for mentors. Such development could result in enhanced self-awareness and performance, improving mentor interactions and impact on students. Unlike students in the intervention group, students in the control group were significantly less likely to look forward to seeing their mentor by wave two. Further work could be done to shed light on whether mentor strengths development indeed curbs that tendency, as was the case in this study.

Research has shown that student strengths development can accelerate hope and engagement with school; therefore, further emphasis upon strengths and the intentional incorporation of student strengths into the TeamMates mentoring program

could further improve school engagement and student success, enhancing the value of the relationships facilitated through this bold program.

References

Anderson, E. (2005). *The genius and beauty found within the Clifton StrengthsFinder themes of talent*. Unpublished paper. Retrieved July 31, 2011, from <http://api.ning.com/files/68-v5Jh3UYBcCFuifzUDyUGueaF7qzCX634joOfQPKD1fJ69dS01mLNNOYaps6ae3ouRL7QgIoguSb18wamqcC4379Dfgd8N/GeniusandBeautyofStrengths1.pdf>.

Lopez, S. J. & Calderon, V. J. (2009). *Gallup Student Poll summary report*. Unpublished summary of the fall 2009 Gallup Student Poll data. Omaha, NE: Gallup.

Lopez, S. J., Agrawal, S., & Calderon, V. J. (2010). *Gallup Student Poll technical report*. Omaha, NE: Gallup.

Lopez, S. J. (2010). *Youth Readiness for the Future: A report on findings from a representative Gallup Student Poll sample*. Omaha, NE: Gallup. Retrieved July 31, 2011, from www.gallupstudentpoll.com.

Lopez, S. J. (2011). *Strengths-based education and student engagement*. Omaha, NE: Gallup. Retrieved July 31, 2011, from www.gallupstudentpoll.com.

APPENDIX A: Item List

- Please imagine a ladder with steps numbered from zero at the bottom to ten at the top. The top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you and the bottom of the ladder represents the worst possible life for you. On which step of the ladder would you say you personally feel you stand at this time?

On which step do you think you will stand about five years from now?

On a five-point scale, where 5 means strongly agree and 1 means strongly disagree, please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following items.

- I know I will graduate from high school.
- There is an adult in my life who cares about my future.
- I can think of many ways to get good grades.
- I energetically pursue my goals.
- I can find lots of ways around any problem.
- I know I will find a good job after I graduate.
- I have a best friend at school.
- I feel safe in this school.
- My teachers make me feel my schoolwork is important.
- At this school, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
- In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good schoolwork.
- My school is committed to building the strengths of each student.
- In the last month, I volunteered my time to help others.

Please think about yesterday, from the morning until the end of the day. Think about where you were, what you were doing, who you were with, and how you felt as you respond to the next six items.

- Were you treated with respect all day yesterday?
- Did you smile or laugh a lot yesterday?
- Did you learn or do something interesting yesterday?
- Did you have enough energy to get things done yesterday?
- Do you have health problems that keep you from doing any of the things other people your age normally can do?
- If you are in trouble, do you have family or friends you can count on to help whenever you need them?

Working Alliance Index

- My teammate and I are working on goals that are important to me.
- My teammate and I do things that are helpful to me.
- I look forward to seeing my teammate.

Strengths Index

- This school year, a teacher and I have had a meaningful conversation about my strengths.
- My friends know my strengths.
- My school is committed to building the strengths of each student. (Included within the core 20 items of the Gallup Student Poll.)
- I can quickly name my own strengths.
- Every week, I set goals and expectations based on my strengths.

Strengths Self-Efficacy Index

- I accomplish a lot by using my strengths.
- I use my strengths in many situations.
- I find ways to use my strengths every day.
- I know how to build on my current strengths.
- I use several strategies for growing my strengths.

Demographic Questions

- What is your age?
- What is your gender?
- Do you consider yourself to be: (students chose race or ethnicity that best describes them)
- What is the grade you are in at school?
- What best describes your living arrangement? Do you: (students choose option that best describes their living arrangement)