

**The Arthur Project
Theory of Change**
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Refining youth mentoring to expand the power of relationships toward healing, social and racial justice.

Mission: To create a replicable model that professionalizes traditional mentoring by using clinically focused mentors to work intensively with youth throughout middle school. Through the science of relationship-based learning, we foster a profound sense of mattering that expands opportunities in the lives of children and families.

The Purpose of Logic Models: The best logic models have an intentional theory of change that permeates all programmatic elements. Alignment between and among needs, theory, research, goals, inputs, activities and measurement tools should be explicitly illustrated as a guide for all stakeholders. When developed accurately, logic models support intentionality regarding program decisions and can lead to greater outcomes. Participants and stakeholders are more confident about the pathway of the program, and if they deviate from the course, they do so purposely.

Often, preparing a logic model and its processes facilitates thinking about program objectives and accomplishments and clarifies underlying principles and values of the program. “The clarity of thinking that occurs from building the model is critical to the overall success of the program” (W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide, 2004). Programs commonly operate on the assumption that they are effective, but data were not available to support that conclusion (Gandara & Bial, 2002). As the National Mentoring Resource Center explains, one of the most important components of any mentoring program is ongoing monitoring and program evaluation, while the National Institute of Justice defines an evaluation as a systematic assessment of the program’s design, activities and outcomes. It is only with these that a program can be held accountable for doing what they claim to do (Monitoring and Evaluation). With this in mind, TAP has engaged stakeholders informally and added programming that fosters collective voice and agency. To further seek the lived expertise of TAP stakeholders, TAP is currently engaging stakeholders and constituents in additional fora to establish goals and solidify TAP’s mission, vision, core values and outcomes in anticipation and preparation for an evaluation. The stakeholder fora include mentors, mentees, families, and TAP staff. Upcoming fora include TAP board members and school staff.

Increasingly, nonprofit organizations are being called upon to work equitably with the people and communities who are directly and indirectly affected by the nonprofit. As Elizabeth Castillo of Nonprofit Quarterly, recently explained, “thinking about stakeholders is essential for an organization to be effective, accountable and ethical, ie., maintaining equitable power dynamic (Castillo, 2020, p. 1). Castillo goes on to encourage all nonprofits to ask to whom they are

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accountable and what is important to them. The Arthur Project has consistently embraced shared accountability and decision-making in a systems approach that includes the past, present, and future (Castillo, 2020). For instance, TAP mentors take part in cultural competency training that includes anti-racism and community empowerment. While TAP has consistently lived their organizational values of mattering, radical evolution, accountability, collective wisdom, equitable relationships and liberation, these purposeful stakeholder forums will further cultivate shared understanding and the integration of multiple values and perspectives (Castillo, 2020). The result of this theory of change and evaluation plan and implementation is and will be a complex, yet accurate, chain of reasoning that illustrates the rationale of TAP's evolved program design. As intended, the theory of change will illustrate how the program design flows from its mission to its carefully calculated interventions through to its measurement instruments and outcomes. Importantly, the logic model acts as a guide for the forthcoming data collection and evaluation.

With programs as complex as TAP, the logic models are correspondingly complicated. Accordingly, connections run between and among programming elements as multiple theories support one activity and multiple activities often align with several goals. As an example, one of TAP's initial goals, such as increasing academic engagement, is connected to several types of need, multiple theoretical foundations and inputs that are all relevant and aligned with numerous program components. Given these complexities, this logic model will have this narrative and an illustrative graphic¹ (see Appendix B).

Inputs: The Arthur Project's inputs include financial, in-kind, school facilities and multiple university partnerships that provide social work student-mentors, as well as research and consultation. Financial inputs include donations and small grants that provide funding for staff and all programming. In-kind donations include consultation and evaluation services. School facilities are donated for all mentoring activities, with the exception of space that is rented through the COVID pandemic. The Arthur Project has partnered with New York University, Wagner School of Public Service to provide research services. Students in their capstone course undertake these projects in teams. All mentors are either undergraduate or graduate school social work students who donate their time to fulfill their clinical training requirements. During the pandemic, some school schedules have been altered. In those cases, in order to provide continuous mentoring services, TAP has provided stipends to some mentors.

Establishing the Need

General Need: Columbia University's National Center for Children in Poverty and Economic Security reports that the past 15 years has seen an increase in the income gap with the U.S. among the highest of all modern nations. This gap further persists significant educational inequalities for low-income students from underrepresented communities whose parents did not attend college (Black, 2017; Cataldi, et. al., 2018). Nationwide, school districts with the most students of color receive 15% less per student in state and local funding than the whitest

¹ Because TAP is complex, the illustrative graphic is symbolic and does not represent the full theory of change.

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districts; schools with high levels of Black or Latino enrollment have nearly twice as many first-year teachers as schools with low Black or Latino enrollment, and Black students in New York City have a 68.1% on-time graduation rate (Yin, 2017) compared to an 85% national rate (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2020). The Arthur Project middle schools are located in Bronx, New York City. According to 2018 data, 87% of all public students attending schools in the Bronx were eligible for free or reduced priced school lunches² (Kids' Well-Being Indicators Clearinghouse), indicating the socioeconomic level of the youth and the underserved nature of the public schools. Further, New York State Education Department reported that, during the 2017-2018 school year, 27% of Bronx County students were Black or African Americans and 62% Hispanic or Latino, suggesting that the TAP program focused on students who are more likely to be from under-resourced communities, with lower graduation rates, higher chronic absenteeism, and less experienced teachers.

Chronic Absenteeism: Students who are chronically absent are placed at serious risks of falling behind academically, having lower grades and test scores and exhibiting challenging behaviors (Garcia and Elaine, 2018). Ultimately these youth are placed at significantly higher risks of dropping out that, in turn, decreases economic opportunity (Burrus & Roberts, 2012). Youth who drop out of high school are three and one-half times more likely to be arrested than youth who graduate from high school. These same youth face an incarceration risk that is eight times greater than other youth (Dilulio & Morison, 2006). Among the TAP schools, chronic absenteeism is significantly higher than average for New York City schools. For instance, at the North Bronx School of Empowerment, 39% of students are chronically absent while the city average is 20% (New York City Schools, General Information, 2018-2019). There are many reasons that students are chronically absent. Those reasons include parents and guardians' poor health, nonstandard work schedules, changes in the household composition, extensive family responsibilities, and inadequate supports for student within the educational system itself (U.S. Department of Education, 2016, as cited in Garcia and Elaine, 2018). Low-income families and children living in historically underserved areas disproportionately face these challenges.

Mental Health Crisis:

Middle School Students: Middle school is a time of intense social and emotional change. There are many studies that have documented the benefits to mentor programs during this transitional time. Many of the goals of mentoring, such as increased resilience, perseverance and self-actualization, may be optimized during middle school years (Price, 2012, as cited in Lindt and Blair, 2017). Importantly, supporting students who are chronically absent could be especially beneficial during the middle-school years when early signs of dropping out appear (National Mentoring Resource Center).

The Arthur Project Program Narrative

² Eligibility for free lunch indicates household incomes at or below 130% of the federal poverty line.

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The Arthur Project's vision is to expand the power of relationships in a child's life. It recognizes that - due to institutional barriers like racism - young Black and Latino/a/x/ are placed at an undue disadvantage in benefiting from relationships with others and with institutions and systems, unlike their white peers. It also recognizes that due to institutional racism, race and socioeconomic status have been historically and inextricably linked in the United States and as a result, a disproportionate number of Black and Latino/a/x are living at the below the poverty line. The combined effect is these young people - and their caregivers - experience disproportionate levels of stress, have disproportionate unmet health and mental health needs, are less likely to have access to quality education, and are less likely to have opportunities for upward economic mobility.

For these reasons, The Arthur Project has chosen to work in communities where families are living at or below the poverty line and/or in communities that have been historically disenfranchised, marginalized, under resourced and underfunded by philanthropic efforts. This rests on the belief that there is a significant opportunity - through the therapeutic mentoring relationship and family advocacy - to address these issues of equitable access and to leverage the mentoring relationship to strengthen the relationship between young people and the individuals, institutions and systems around them.

The Arthur Project uses the following criteria to choose the communities with which to partner:

- Title I status: This Federal designation indicates that a majority of families in the school live at or below the poverty line (as determined by Census data) and so are entitled to free or reduced-price school meals
- Community School Model: This designation indicates that the school community has faced disproportionate challenges in any number of areas (chronic absenteeism, high incidences of violence, low enrollment, high teacher turnover, low state test scores) and would benefit from additional funding and services (e.g. medical and dental care, social emotional enrichment, after school programs, mentoring services, etc.)

Within these parameters, TAP identifies students who may be academically disengaged and/or may have unmet social emotional needs. These students become the target population for enrollment in The Arthur Project.

More specifically, The Arthur Project seeks to support economic, social and personal potential for underserved youth through intensive, therapeutic mentoring, community engagement, and critical life skills development. The Arthur Project seeks to engage children and family, build upon their relationship assets and join them to champion their most critical needs. It takes a unique approach to mentoring with clinicians-in-training, social work graduate and bachelor students fulfilling their clinical training requirements while serving as therapeutic TAP mentors. Trained and supervised, the TAP mentors work individually and collectively with children and their families for the duration of their middle school years with opportunities for further high school engagement. Criteria for mentee participation includes chronic absenteeism or other indicators of academic disengagement, such as low grades, behavioral challenges or social emotional needs. Referrals can come from the youth, family, or school staff. All youth

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voluntarily participate in the program. In addition to the mentors' university advisor, mentors are directly supported and supervised by a team of on-site licensed social workers. Additionally, TAP Executive Director, Jessica Greenwalt, holds a Ph.D. in social work and works directly with the mentors. This provides a safety net for more intense challenges that may need further resources in order to holistically serve and support the youth and their families.

Originally founded in 2017, TAP has grown in size, used qualitative and quantitative data to make programmatic changes and evolved to include a Family Advocacy Program. A core tenet of TAP's approach is that all successful youth intervention relies on the combination of effective relationships with caring adults and the strategic development of self-efficacy in youth. The Arthur Project currently runs the mentor programs with 180 students in 6th through 8th grade in the Bronx Borough of New York City. The mentors are matched with 3-6 mentees who become their primary focus. Collectively, each year, TAP mentees can spend up to 500 hours in focused programming, far exceeding most mentoring programs. Mentors provide services to students through three tiers of intervention: (1) Individual school-based counseling sessions; (2) Small afterschool group work; and (3) Saturday community-based activities and events. Based upon student feedback, some of these activities, such as after school groups and select Saturday events are open to other interested students. It also supports a smaller subset of 30-45 parents and guardians through the Family Advocacy Program. These parents receive individual and group support to achieve individual and family goals, with a focus on building relationships, academic student support and social networks (Greenwalt, 2020). Mentors also partner with parents and guardians in support of their students.

At the heart of TAP is the hope each of the students and families graduates the program with the knowledge that not only do they matter to their mentors, but to the community and world beyond. Consistent with TAP's focus on collective wisdom and equitable relationships, the program recently updated their multidimensional framework based upon student feedback³, in order to be more streamlined and understandable by the youth. These dimensions act as a guide for programming, activities and events, and as the students set personal goals, these dimensions create a better sense of interconnectivity. The dimensions are (1) School and Career; (2) Health and Wellness; (3) Family, Friends and Relationships; (4) Finance; and (5) Community and Culture. Also consistent with TAP's focus on healing and liberation, multiple program components, events, and goals include French's, et al., (2019), framework for radical healing in communities of color. These include 1) collectivism, 2) critical consciousness, 3) racial hope, 4) strength and resistance, and 5) cultural authenticity and self-knowledge.

Core Values: Program philosophies and values matter when examining how a program is developed and implemented. Beyond the training, activities and events, all programs operate and implement within a set of core values. When these values are clearly defined and assessed, programs are authentically delivered consistent with the programs theory of change.

³ It is noted that changes to programming are generally based upon feedback and responses from the primary stakeholders, including students and family or guardians. To this end, TAP builds in multiple programming elements that seek feedback and foster a sense of agency for students, families and the community.

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1. **Mattering:** We take responsibility for our impact on one another.
2. **Radical Evolution:** We reflect on what is and strive toward what ought to be.
3. **Accountability:** We hold ourselves accountable in the creation of a just society.
4. **Collective Wisdom:** We seek out and cultivate multiple perspectives.
5. **Equitable Relationships:** We foster relationships in which power is shared.
6. **Liberation:** We create opportunity for healing and self-actualization.

Aligned Goals:

1. Cultivate youths' social emotional wellness and mental health
2. Increase academic engagement
3. Provide youth with knowledge, self-advocacy, leadership and communication skills to reach their full potential
4. Provide the skills to successfully transition to high school and beyond
5. Foster family engagement through the Family Advocacy Program
6. Encourage culturally responsive community and civic engagement
7. Apply an antiracist, social justice lens to mentoring in furtherance of awareness and attunement to wider social impacts and social change.

TAP Major Program Components

The Arthur Project is based upon several key programmatic elements, including a model of therapeutic mentoring. While TAP is not affiliated with any behavioral healthcare system and works exclusively through schools, it adopts many of its programming elements and philosophies from therapeutic mentoring. As with therapeutic mentoring programs and consistent with TAP's mission, it works through a strength-based model, designed to provide youth the opportunity for building interpersonal, life, problem-solving, and socioemotional skills, in addition to a sense of mattering and belonging. Specifically, therapeutic mentors offer more structured activities than more informal programs. It builds on the youths' assets to develop communication skills, enhance conflict resolution and build confidence related to the youths' goals and individualized, tailored growth plans. Consistent with TAP values, therapeutic mentoring is culturally responsive and integrated with the youths' families, schools and communities (Therapeutic Mentoring Practice Guidelines, Children's Behavioral Health Initiative, 2015).

The Arthur Project also provides support for mentor advocacy which focuses on mentor activities that promote the mentee outside the mentor-mentee relationship. This is distinct from the practice of helping mentors self-advocate in that the mentor is encouraged to actively intervene on behalf of the youth. Most of the mentors spend a significant amount of time in the youths' schools in order to mentor and be available for further support during and after the school day. Recent research has found that support for mentor advocacy can increase mentee development. Heaney and Israel (2002) further found that mentor advocacy can help the youth broaden social ties and networks that may lead to future connections.

Theory and Evidence-Informed Principles and Program Elements (Activities)

The Arthur Project Mentors: Cavell et al. (2021) explains that the science of mentoring is often obstructed because volunteer mentors are a limited resource and the culture of mentoring is often based upon a “deficit view” (p.6). However, consistent with its mission, TAP mentors are master and bachelor Social Work students, clinicians-in-training (students) who are applying their significant number of clinical training hours in the TAP programming. Applying strength-based practices found in social work theory, TAP mentors emphasize the students’ self-determination, resilience, courage, strengths, abilities, talents and resources (Kim & Whitehill, 2013). As Chapin (2017) explains, the strengths-based perspective emphasizes the rights of individuals and communities to form their own goals and aspirations. It is through a strength-based approach that TAP mobilizes community, school, family and youth inner resources to advocate for the individual and seek collective social justice through empowerment. Mentors and mentees meet individually 1-2 hours each week. These sessions take place during the school day. In addition to individual meetings, mentors meet in small pods or mentor families and participate in Saturday activities that foster a sense of community and provide experiential opportunities the students would not otherwise have. Additional programming has been added as TAP staff identified additional needs and students and families provided their voices and feedback about further program needs or desires. Associated with TAP’s value of collective wisdom and equitable relationships, TAP seeks to share decision-making and power and cultivate multiple perspectives for its programming. For instance, some participants and their families explained that middle-to-high school transitions could be challenging for some students. As a result, the Emerging Leader Institute was developed to support the students’ transition from middle to high school and a Young Men’s Group was added to foster life skills, health education, hygiene, and healthy relationships. The latter is open to the school community in order to provide greater social networking opportunities and greater peer-to-peer support, as requested by mentees.

The Arthur Project relies on the science of relationship-based learning that fosters a profound sense of mattering. The three dimensions of mattering include 1) Do I matter to myself, 2) Do I matter to the world, and 3) Do I matter to my mentor? According to Dixon and Tucker (2008), mattering to others involves individuals’ perceptions that they are important and are valued by other people in interpersonal relationships. Jean Rhodes, Director for the Center for Evidence-based Mentoring, explains that many youth served by mentoring programs may face relationship challenges. Programs that include high quality mentoring, such as TAP, that seek to build upon and create trustful relationships and supportive communities, can lift children toward their full potential (Dubois, et al., 2011).

In order to advance the youths’ sense of mattering, TAP mentors engage in structured, intentional and purposeful individual sessions with their mentees, in addition to small group and Saturday activities chosen by students. These sessions are held during the school day either in-person or remotely, given the current pandemic. During the individual sessions, mentors, utilizing a social work perspective that emphasize intervention plans unique to each youth, seek to foster goal achievement in TAP’s five dimensions, including 1) school and career, 2) finances, 3) family and friends’ relationships, 4) community culture, and 5) health and wellness. Mentors also join in activities based upon the youths’ interests.

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Research supports mentoring programs, like TAP, that maximize both the relationship quality as an end unto itself and instrumental activities, such as goal-setting (Cavell, et al., 2021). These programs are more likely to increase the positive academic, behavioral, and social-emotional outcomes for youth (Lyons, McQuilllin, & Henderson, 2019). While the goal of developmental activities focus on forging strong and trusting bonds as a means of youth's development (Karcher, et. al., 2006; Cavell, et al., 2021), task-focused or instrumental mentoring often focuses on goal attainment or specific skills. As Karcher et. al., (2016) explains, as the mentor helps the mentee to meet certain shorter-term goals and provides advice, counsel, and suggestions about the instrumental skill, they are also fostering longer-term relationships, emotional and social skills. As such, activities that are focused on developing and sustaining trust and empathy combined with those that are more tangible and task focused, such as goal setting (Mentor, 2004), are positively correlated with developmental and interpersonal processes that can help youth overcome reach their full potential (Dubois, et. al., 2011), while increasing positive academic, behavioral and social emotional outcomes (Rhodes, et. al., 2006; Lyons, et. al., 2019).

Noncognitive goals include explorations of personal, interpersonal, and social emotional needs and desires. Individual sessions also focus on "relationship-brokering," healing and liberation, and developing help seeking skills. Research indicates that many students who would benefit from help are the least likely to ask for assistance. Often, these students are avoiding unsolicited inquiry into their academic or social challenges. Providing support for help-seeking and network skills, particularly in academic settings, can insulate students and provide protective factors (Parnes, et. al., 2020). Seeking to increase self-efficacy in enlisting social capital and help-seeking behaviors, TAP mentors support mentees in developing networks and encouraging them to seek academic and social support.

In small numbers, mentors and mentees meet in small mentor pods or families. The groups meet during lunch or afterschool preserving the benefits of school-based mentoring programs. The groups are youth-centered and provide youth with agency and decision-making in the curriculum with adult supervision. It also provides the opportunity to serve additional youth. Group mentoring can provide benefits that individual mentoring cannot, such as group cohesion and strong group identity. Research indicates they are effective across a large range of ages and provide the opportunity for positive peer interactions (Kuperminc, G., 2016). Mentees spend two-to-four hours each week in groups.

The TAP mentors provide deep support consistent with therapeutic mentoring that explores interpersonal, cognitive and emotional skills. These types of skills are also consistent with building cultural capital that includes resiliency, communication skills, cultural knowledge, coping and developing networks of people who offer emotional support (Yosso, 2005). The Arthur Project further engages in Positive Youth Development (PYD) principles that support youth to recognize 1) their resources, assets, and skills, 2) employ those assets to make their own decisions, 3) identify their enabling environment that maximizes their agency, and 4) contribute to positive change in their communities through service learning (Promoting Positive

Youth Development). Accordingly, and consistent with a strengths-based approach, (PYD), and youth theories of leadership, TAP seeks to foster and measure goal attainment, resilience, self-advocacy, communication, agency, and a sense of mattering. Additionally, TAP mentors seek to increase student academic engagement through collaborative goal setting focused on the youth's individual school and career goals. Research illustrates that engagement is a "robust" predictor of academic achievement, behavior, grades, test scores, attendance, graduation and pushout/dropout. Importantly, if support and opportunities continue, engagement generally builds overtime (Nakkula & Tashalis, 2012). This is aligned with TAP's efforts to build alumni programs that support students into high school and beyond.

Nakkula and Tashalis (2012) define engagement in learning as the student's investment in a given activity—a motivational and social process that culminates in a person's choice to apply effort, persist through struggle, self-determine, complete a task and resolve difficult experiences. The researchers further report that relationships, getting to know students, being curious about them and their interests and experiences is the best path to nurturing the students' "inner fire." Aligned noncognitive domain include self-direction, collaboration, authenticity, self-efficacy, self-regulation, and relational connection.

Social Work Mentors, Education and Training: Consistent with best-practices, all mentors receive both initial training and ongoing training (Anastasia, 2012) related to mentoring and social work studies that allows them to bridge theory to practice and apply social work to therapeutic mentoring.⁴ Throughout a semester, TAP mentors participate in weekly development sessions designed to further equip them with therapeutic methods with which to engage their mentees. Sessions include topics related to engagement and growth mindsets, adolescent development and relational attachment, critically informed goal setting, emotional self-regulation with unjust systems, trauma, grief, loss and healing, critical consciousness and internalized oppression and young people power. Overall, similar to professional mentoring, TAP mentors are more equipped to support youth in multidimensional growth and positively overcome relationship challenges that can be magnified with underserved youth (Lakind, et. al., 2014). Programs that utilize mentors who have the education, background and training in the helping professions, experience larger positive effects as do programs, like TAP, that require consistent and frequent interactions (Lakind et. al., 2014). Consistent self-monitoring is also a best-practice that helps create an environment that supports mentees' individual success (Anastasia, 2012). All TAP mentors complete regular self-assessments and reflections as part of TAP's formal support and training procedures.

Social Justice: In applying a social justice lens and aligned with TAP's value of radical evolution, TAP, engages mentors in a series of social justice training modules consistent with "critical mentoring." The point of anti-racism education and training is to help mentors to develop quality mentoring relationships with BIPOC adolescents that disrupt inequality, rather than reproduce it. Ultimately, the goals are to help mentors form relationships that promote the healthy development of BIPOC adolescents, buffer the harmful effects of White supremacy

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culture and racism, and foster liberation and social change. Weiston-Serdan (2017) explains that an essential requirement of critical mentoring is the understanding of social justice issues that impact the mentees' lives. Importantly, this is even more crucial as there can be a "sociocultural gap" (Sanchez, et al., p. 3) between the lived experiences of the majority of mentors and mentees.⁵ Yet, as the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics notes: "[s]ocial workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity..." Consequently, TAP training includes topics related to systemic oppression in the community and schools and movements for justice and equitability. This is combined with activities and a Culture Handbook, to teach and acclimate the mentors to the mentees communities. Striving for "what ought to be" (TAP Value), TAP mentors spend time walking the school communities and reflecting on the history, systems, institutions and current atmosphere that their mentees experience. Questions about oppression, political activities, resistance, and community building are posed and discussions about change, identity, and possibilities further engage the mentors in issues and learning vital to dismantling oppressive systems and empowering youth (Albright, et. al., 2017, as cited in Anderson, 2018).⁶ Contextualizing the lived experience of individual mentees within the systems in which they interact is also aligned with opportunities for healing and liberation. In applying this social justice lens to mentoring and increasing awareness and attunement to wider social impacts for mentees, TAP anticipates that mentors will further re-embrace the role of social change agents, thus contributing to a wider antiracist social movement (Gannon, 2021).

Consistent with Finn's (2016) social justice approach to social work, TAP mentors utilize an anti-racist framework that seeks to heal wounds of racial trauma through an eight-step process that is implemented in several ways, including narrative therapy and art therapeutic techniques and individual writings, in individual and collective spaces. The eight-steps include:

1. Affirmation and acknowledgement: Convey understanding that race is a critical organizing principle in society and deserves to be addressed.
2. Create space for race: Invite young people to tell the stories of their racial experiences.
3. Racial storytelling: Invite young people to tell the stories of their racial experiences.
4. Validation: Actively confirm the young person's world view and worth.
5. Naming: Affix words to racial oppression so it does not remain nameless. Help restore youths' voices.
6. Externalize devaluation: Help youth see how devaluation and disrespect are linked to racial oppression. Externalizing begins to heal wounds of internal devaluation.
7. Counteract devaluation: Provide resources that help youth see and build their strengths.

⁵ National data indicates that approximately 76% of mentees served are Black, Indigenous People of Color and 53% of the mentors are white (Garringer et al., 2017).

⁶ This is such an important, central goal for TAP that we may want to consider 1) adding it to the mission, and/or 2) assuring that we have an aligned measurement based upon the index recently developed for critical mentoring.

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8. **Rechanneling rage:** Rage is a predictable response to devaluation. If not channeled it can be all-consuming. Help youth gain awareness of rage and redirect its powerful energy (Finn, 2016, pp. 276-277).

Mental Health: In addition to cultural proficiency, TAP mentors are trauma informed and trained to explore topics significant to the youth's goal achievement and personal, interpersonal, cognitive and social emotional domains. In recognizing the current mental health crisis, especially among youth of color and those in under-resourced communities (Pataky, et al., 2019), TAP recently added mental health screenings for all their mentees that was adapted from several validated instruments (See Appendix D). As discussed previously, social workers have a unique skill set to address mental health concerns and an obligation to do so, especially when working with populations whom have been historically denied access to appropriate mental health services and screening tools. In signaling to the mentees that topics such as anxiety and depression are not off-limits, they can safely process their feelings and that, as caring professional, adults in their lives, TAP mentors can hold and handle their challenges.

Additional training domains include building rapport with students, family and community, growth mindsets, loss and grieving, and building community strength. Aligned with a more formal mentoring program, all mentors are required to submit several reports each quarter for each mentee that includes individualized growth plans, biopsychosocial assessments, and progress notes. At the end of each year, the mentor is also required to write a closure letter to their mentees and a letter to the next mentor class. Finally, consistent with best practices (Rhodes, 2015), TAP offers mentors crisis training and support during the entire match period. Moreover, based upon recent stakeholder forums, TAP is considering how to add additional mentor training based upon specific program characteristics to assure that the mentors are full equipped from the start of every school year. More specific activity recommendations aligned with TAP goals is also considered for the next school year based upon similar requests.

Academic Engagement: The Arthur Project is designed and implemented to increase academic engagement through students' increased sense of mattering, self-efficacy and advocacy, relationship building, and a fostering of civic engagement and community that have the potential to increase the students' social capital. Further, school-based mentoring has the capacity to increase school connectedness and attendance, feelings of academic competence and access to other types of support as the students' help-seeking increases (DuBois, et. al., 2011). Moreover, although TAP does not directly engage mentees in academic subjects explicitly, Bayer, et. al., (2013) found that school-based mentoring can increase academic achievement through an increase in students' beliefs in their own academic capabilities, including organizational, study, and test-taking skills. The research found that a strong mentoring relationship predicted a greater likelihood of improved academic outcomes. These findings are aligned with TAP's focus on formal and intensive mentoring that seeks to build strong relationships and the early data that indicates an improvement in grades and state math and readings tests for TAP students. (See TAP Program Report, Appendix A).

Recruitment: It is important to identify how TAP participants are chosen. According to a U.S. Department of Education report, few programs are explicit about how they select their participants (Gullet & Jan, 2003). However, this type of data is “critically” important to evaluating the overall impact and success of the program and who it can most benefit (Paige, et al., 2001). The Arthur Project mentees are usually referred by the schools based upon a pattern of absences or other indicators of academic disengagement, such as poor grades, behavioral challenges and social emotional needs. Accordingly, chronic absenteeism is used as a flexible parameter for eligibility. Additional referrals may come from the youth or the youth’s family.

Purposeful and Positive Relationship Ending: Because TAP mentors are fulfilling their clinical requirements, TAP experiences far less premature or early-endings to the mentoring relationships than other volunteer programs. Moreover, consistent with social work practices (Roberts, 2011), the closure processes are intentional, carefully considered and implemented to provide the mentee with a healthy and positive closure experience. Studies have shown that a large number of volunteer mentoring relationships suffer from negative closure experiences for the mentee, often catering to the experiences of the mentor. However, positive closure is very important to the overall benefits of a mentoring relationship, and a poor ending can run the risk of impeding an otherwise positive mentee experience (Spencer, et. al., 2021). More specifically, attachment theory suggests that relationships that end prematurely or endings that are not handled with care, can lead to decreases in self-worth and increases in problem behavior (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Rhodes & Spencer, 2002). In order to assure positive closure experiences, focused on the mentee, TAP describes relationship closure at the beginning of the relationship and holds a formal celebratory closure—a TAP graduation or “Moving Up” ceremony at the end of every school year as recommended by the National Mentoring Partnership (2015). Further, TAP mentors write closure letters to their mentees to celebrate their achievements. As such, TAP’s program provides much greater match length stability and the potential for increased positive outcomes for youth.

Matching: Mentor (2020) suggests that group matching can be successful as the pairs look for “natural chemistry” during group matching events. Similarly, TAP relies on a series of social events and networking that includes successive short conversations between mentors and mentees. After an opportunity to meet and talk, using directed prompts, the mentees choose their top three choices. These are shared with the mentors and the matches are made.

Mentor Families or Pods: As another example of TAP seeking to empower and give voice to the mentees, TAP instituted group mentoring. Students reported that they did not want to dedicate so much time for one-to-one mentoring and wanted to see their friends after school and on the weekends. In response, TAP began group mentoring activities and events. Research also supports these mentor families. Weiler et., al. (2014) reports that mentor families decreased feelings of isolation, increased mentor confidence and commitment, and provided a network of multiple role models. Similarly, most Saturday activities are facilitated by two or three mentors each week. In this way, the mentees are exposed to a greater number of role models and have additional opportunities to safely practice relationship skills.

Alumni Program Plan: As the first cohort of mentees began the process of transitioning to high school, TAP focused on supporting those students through the process and beyond. Accordingly, TAP focused on preparing students for high school and developing mechanisms for maintaining support and engagement once the students transition out of the program. The intention is that when students join The Arthur Project, they stay for life, ultimately becoming mentors themselves. To support continued engagement and consistent with research that indicates longer participation results in longer-term outcomes (Jekielek, et. al., 2002), TAP asks program alumni to facilitate the 8th Grade Emerging Leadership Institute that seeks to successfully transition students to high school.

Small Groups: Based upon staff, mentees and family suggestions, TAP develops small groups that are designed around the interests, capabilities and needs of the students enrolled in TAP. Often these are open to other students. For instance, TAP developed a Small Men’s Group that focused on topics such as life skills, health education, hygiene, healthy relationships, bullying, and careers. More recently, TAP developed MadRaps that provides TAP students with the ability to locate themselves within the systems around them and express those experiences through rap. Art as a means of communication helps youth understand their identity through an expression of their thoughts and feelings. The Harvard Center for the Developing Child found that creating art together can strengthen the relationships between mentors and mentees and between peers (Flowers, 2019). The Arthur Project seeks to provide youth with a safe space to express their identities through rap music during structured and guided sessions. The sessions, guided by mentors, provide students with agency and include mindfulness activities, and reflections. Specific words guide the students to examine personal definitions around subjects, such as justice, struggle, power, life, and destiny. (See Samples in Appendix C). These small groups continue to evolve based upon stakeholder needs and desires. If TAP mentees do not seem responsive, TAP may choose to place its resources elsewhere, as TAP is keen on assuring responsiveness, flexibility, and innovation for its participants.

Emerging Leaders Institute: Strengthening Connections and Building Leadership:

TAP students have the opportunity to spend their summer after their eighth-grade year participating in a series of workshops and activities designed to strengthen their connection to one another and to the program. Additionally, these activities will frame the possibilities for the future and forecast leadership and community opportunities as they move into high school and beyond. It also provides for additional individual growth and opportunities for alumni engagement as peer mentors. It includes specific focus on high school articulation, including preparing for and selecting an appropriate high school, in addition to personal development, relationships, social and interpersonal skills, finances, conflict resolution, speaking up, social justice and “leadership.” The intention is to extend this program for the full eighth-grade year.

The Arthur Project’s ultimate goal is to provide lifelong support for its students and families. Because research indicates that middle school is a crucial time for school engagement and ninth-grade status is the single-best predictor of whether a student will graduate (Allensworth & Easton, 2005) TAP seeks to support the crucial transition from middle to high school.

TAP Town Halls: The Town Hall is a monthly meeting of program stakeholders facilitated by the Student Leadership Council (TAP students) and held the last Saturday of the month before mentors and mentees venture out for Saturday activities. The purpose of the Town Hall is to create an ongoing conversation with students and keep consistent avenues of communication. The secondary purposes is also to help the Student Leadership Council develop their public speaking and community organizing skills. Town Halls also provide important opportunities for stakeholder advocacy and community-building. It fosters collective wisdom, shared power, and a program that is responsive and informed by stakeholders consistent with TAP priorities and program values. Programming decisions include these important stakeholder contributions.

Education Advocacy Program: The Arthur Project recognizes that true impact can only be made when a child's family is also supported. Generally, students that have parents or guardians who are engaged with their schools and their learning attend school more regularly, have higher grades and graduation rates and are more academically engaged overall (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Further, positive mentoring relationships are more likely when the mentee's parents are acquainted and their expectations are aligned (Meissen & Lounsbury, 1981, as cited in Heller & Spencer, 2018). To that end, TAP added new programming that provides liaising services to families of students enrolled in TAP. The TAP Education Advocate works closely with families to support them in whole family academic engagement, mentee academic engagement and transition to high school. The Advocate also acts as a liaison between the school and family to give technical assistance and navigate the complex online processes of applying to high schools while helping mentees identify strengths and interests in support of identifying the best high school for each mentee. Further, the Advocate trains mentors in supporting caregivers and whole families while collaborating with school and CBO partners in developing and implementing workshops, training, events, and gathering for parents, guardians, and whole families. Consistent with these efforts and with The Advocate's support, mentors are encouraged to reach out to mentee families on a regular basis, as evidence indicates that mentors who know the mentees' families had better outcomes than those who did not (Jekielek, et. al., 2002).

Community: Research confirms the importance of shifting the influence and power to the people in the communities. Herbert and Gallion, in collaboration with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, conducted a ten-year study entitled, *Fostering Resident Voices and Influence*. Based upon the foundational belief that communities have not only the right to govern themselves but the "specialized knowledge" that will lead to better policies, the work sought to understand community-building and resident engagement that strengthens families and bonds. The authors were careful to explain that these community voices must be heard in meaningful, not symbolic, ways that provide influence and decision-making that rests within the communities. This is especially true in low-income communities and communities of color. To this end, TAP is conducting a series of stakeholder forums and has sought feedback from the mentees and the families about their preferred activities and programming. For instance, the Education Advocate works closely with all families to solicit input around the development of periodic events chosen by the families. Recently, TAP hosted broader community events at the families' requests. The Center for the Study of Social Policy's reports that this type of family

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peer support can foster the development of social support and social capital and reduced stress (Center for the Study of Social Policy). Moreover, based upon additional stakeholder forums, efforts will be made to introduce and integrate the Family Advocacy program earlier and more cohesively with the mentor program.

Community-Based Saturday Activities: During the school year, mentors and mentees participate in community-based events that are chosen collectively by mentors and mentees and facilitated and funded by TAP staff. Mentors choose from a curated selection of five-to-seven community-based activities that will 1) support students in making progress toward their individualized goals, 2) provide access to opportunities that would not otherwise be available to mentees because of financial or time constraints, 3) celebrate a student milestone or accomplishment, or 4) build further community with TAP. Mentors facilitate conversation both during and after the activities. Event examples include the Botanical Gardens, Black Comic Book Exposition, Museum of Natural History, cooking classes and ice skating.

Conclusion: The purpose of a theory of change is make clear to all stakeholders and constituents TAP's purpose and objectives and to assure that all organizational elements are aligned in order to optimize impact. Needs should be clear and aligned with the mission and vision of any organization, just as the inputs should be connected to the program activities and events as they are here. Evidence-based programs, such as TAP, seek to align these with valid literature and evidence that supports programmatic decision-making. Based upon TAP's dedication to equitable relationships and shared power, this evidence includes the expertise of stakeholders' and their lived experiences. Finally, in order to foster an environment of continuous improvement, accountability and foster impact and outcomes, all goals will have valid and associated measurement tools. As TAP continues to hold stakeholder forums and solidify its goals, it lives its core value of collective wisdom and power sharing.

Evaluation and Measurement Tools

Measurement Tools: Current outcome measures are aligned with TAP activities and events and include attendance, grades, and Math and ELA state test scores, as indicators of academic achievement (Bayer et. al., 2014). Previously, TAP had sought disciplinary records as an addition measure of academic engagement. However, several studies have found that Black students are subject to disciplinary action at rates much higher than their white counterparts for the same behaviors indicating that this metric is not only invalid, but of great concern. (Riddle & Sinclair, 2019). Program retention is another important indicator, and the data illustrates that program retention is 100%. Attendance, grades and Math and ELA state test scores have improved and are higher for TAP program participants than for other school district youth not participating in the program (See Appendix A, TAP Program Report). Three times a year, in order to monitor closely the mentor-mentee relationship, as recommended by Dubois, et. al., (2002), mentor surveys are administered in order to provide ongoing relationship quality oversight aligned with TAP's therapeutic mentoring and focus on the power of relationships in a youth's life (Harris, et. al., 2018). Mentee surveys that measure the quality of the relationship are also administered. These are both based upon validated instruments (Harris, et. al., 2018). A

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survey that measures the youths' sense of mattering is administered at the end of the year as a primary tool aligned with TAP's mission and vision and based upon evidence and literature regarding youth mattering and valid measures (Elliott, G.C., Et. Al., 2004; Judd, 2016).

Social emotional outcomes are measured using a proprietary survey including perceptions of mattering, life satisfaction and self-worth, as well as through youth and family qualitative forums, mentor surveys and forums, and by retention in the program. Outcomes related to mental health are newly being measured through a proprietary assessment tool developed from validated tools measuring experiences of anxiety, depression and PTSD. The youth's sense of mattering can also impact other TAP ambitions such as an increase in help-seeking behaviors, confidence, self-advocacy and liberation. Additionally, an assessment that measures additional noncognitive outcomes aligned with TAP's activities and events is administered yearly. Through TAP's strengths-based approach, the program promotes competencies that include self-regulation, self-efficacy, and the ability to interact positively in healthy relationships (Benson, 1997). These noncognitive or socioemotional skills often combine personal traits, attitudes, and motivations, that can be learned and developed through a lifetime and are often correlated with academic and personal success (Zhou, 2016). However, as the 2014 Economic Policy Institute's report explains, it can be a challenging endeavor to identify, classify, measure and quantify noncognitive skills (Garcia, 2014). There is no single noncognitive strength that predicts long-term outcomes. "Rather, key skills are interrelated and need to be developed in combination with each other" (Gutman & Schoon, 2013, p.2). Accordingly, TAP seeks to foster and measure several domains, such as self-awareness, goal attainment, self-efficacy, self-advocacy, communication, and a sense of belonging and connectivity. These youth surveys, that seek to capture noncognitive changes based upon program interventions, will be administered with retrospective pre- then post-tests.

Retrospective Pre- than Post-Tests: Addressing Response Shift Bias. Many mentoring programs utilize pre- and post-tests in order to measure youths' changes brought about by the program interventions (Drennan & Hyde, 2008). However, if survey respondents overestimate their abilities or do not have prior experiences that influence the relative accuracy of their responses, response bias can increase. If participants seek to be perceived as desirable or choose the most "positive" answer, regardless of the question's content or the anonymity, the fairness and validity of the survey can be compromised. As the program moves forward, however, the participants' internal frame of reference can change due to the "influence of the educational programme" (Rosenman, et. al., 2011; Drennan & Hyde, 2008). This can be problematic if the youth's frame of reference changes based upon the program interventions themselves. These original biased responses can compromise program assessments and pose a serious threat to evaluation validity. Response bias can be particularly pronounced in adolescents and those with lower educational attainment, leading to a "destruction of the psychometric properties of the questionnaires" (Kreitchmann, et. al., 2019). One means to overcome response bias is qualitative focus groups that capture program results through individual, lived experiences. These type of focus groups can also capture participants' increase in trust that can lead to a decrease in the desire to "look good" (Rosenman, et. al., 2011). The Arthur Project will hold such stakeholder focus groups as part of its evaluation plan.

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Another means of addressing participants' desire to present positively is a retrospective pre-then post-test, administered at the end of the program, that measures participants' perceived changes in behaviors, attitudes, and knowledge before and after the program, at the same time (Young & Kallemeyn, 2019) These types of surveys help overcome response shift bias at the end of the program. As Cantrell (2003) explains, "[a]t the heart of these issues [response shift bias] is the challenge of accomplishing measurement of change that yields the potential to make appropriate inferences about the extent of the participants' growth as a result of program participation." In this way, if participants' frame of reference has changed as a result of the program's interventions, the measurement tools will more accurately reflect that change. As a result, TAP will administer retrospective pre- then post-tests at the end of its evaluation period.

Additional assessments based upon TAP's focus on goal achievement along TAP's five dimensions, as well as other skills-based assessments, will be developed. A survey tool to measure the impacts of the Family Advocacy program will also be created in conjunction with advancement of the program's goals by the stakeholders. Finally, a mentor survey will be added that seeks to measure the unique and positive educational and individual impacts for social work students who participate in therapeutic mentoring programs similar to TAP.

Survey Administration: How the surveys are administered can be just as important as the questions themselves. For instance, in order to minimize the potential for "response distortion" based upon the participants desire to "do well," TAP staff should administer the surveys and discuss the purpose of the assessments, that they are no right or wrong answers, and the absolute anonymous and confidential nature of the survey. Also, aligned with several studies conducted with youth participants, TAP will not utilize negatively worded questions. Instead TAP will engage in other strategies to reduce set bias such as separating domain questions. Regarding the intensity of Likert scales for youth, research is split. For this age group, the number is usually limited to four or five. Providing a neutral choice is also a matter of debate. However, a midpoint answer can increase response bias, as the respondents may minimize cognitive effort during intensive survey efforts (Moril, et. al., 2017). As a result, I am recommending a four-point Likert scale for most questions. Finally, every effort should be made to limit the number of essential questions for convenience, in order to increase motivation and to keep the survey to about 30 minutes, consistent with best-practices for youth assessments.

In the end, we are trying to ascertain the "but for" question of whether the TAP interventions "resulted" in the measured outcomes that are, in turn, aligned with the inputs and activities included in the programming. While similar to most programs of this kind, TAP is not utilizing a control group. However, TAP will take great care to assure that the results can reasonably be attributed to the programmatic interventions.

Evaluation Plan

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The evaluation will take place over a year’s time with incremental data collection and qualitative forum themes in order to triangulate the data for further validity. A precise calendar will be established.

Data Collection and Analysis Plan

A detailed data analysis plan has been developed based upon this theory of change. Please see Appendix C. Overall, we are trying to determine to what extent TAP resulted in the desired measured outcomes identified for the program. Further, the analysis will address which are the most critical predictor of a student’s success in TAP. What weights do the various focus areas and activities contribute to the students success as determined by the goals and outputs. Included in the data analysis plan is stakeholder qualitative forums and interviews, in addition to surveys and school data.

The Arthur Project Goals	Measures
Cultivate youth’s social emotional wellness and mental health	Mentee Surveys Mentee Mental Health Assessment (measuring indicators of PTSD, Anxiety and Depression) Youth Qualitative Forums Family Qualitative Forums Mentor Surveys and Qualitative Forums
Increase academic engagement	Attendance, grades, state test scores, graduation pushout/dropout Teacher Survey Family Survey
Provide youth with knowledge, self-advocacy, leadership and communication skills to reach their full potential	Aligned with TAP’s 5 dimensions, survey questions regarding health & wellness, career, finances, relationships, communication & expression and culture; Noncognitive survey domains regarding self-advocacy, leadership, and persistence. Qualitative focus groups with students and families. Mentor quarterly reports. Mentor Survey

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Provide the skills to successfully transition to high school and beyond	Student survey and forum questions regarding goal attainment and additional overlapping noncognitive and cognitive domains, such as help-seeking skills
Foster family engagement through the Family Advocacy Program	Family survey questions and focus groups
Encourage culturally response community and civic engagement	Student event outcomes, survey and qualitative forums

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October 2019
Jessica Greenawalt, Program Director
Appendix A

As the third year of The Arthur Project (“TAP”) begins, we are excited to report on the results of the program over the past two years and the enhanced ways in which we measure our effectiveness.

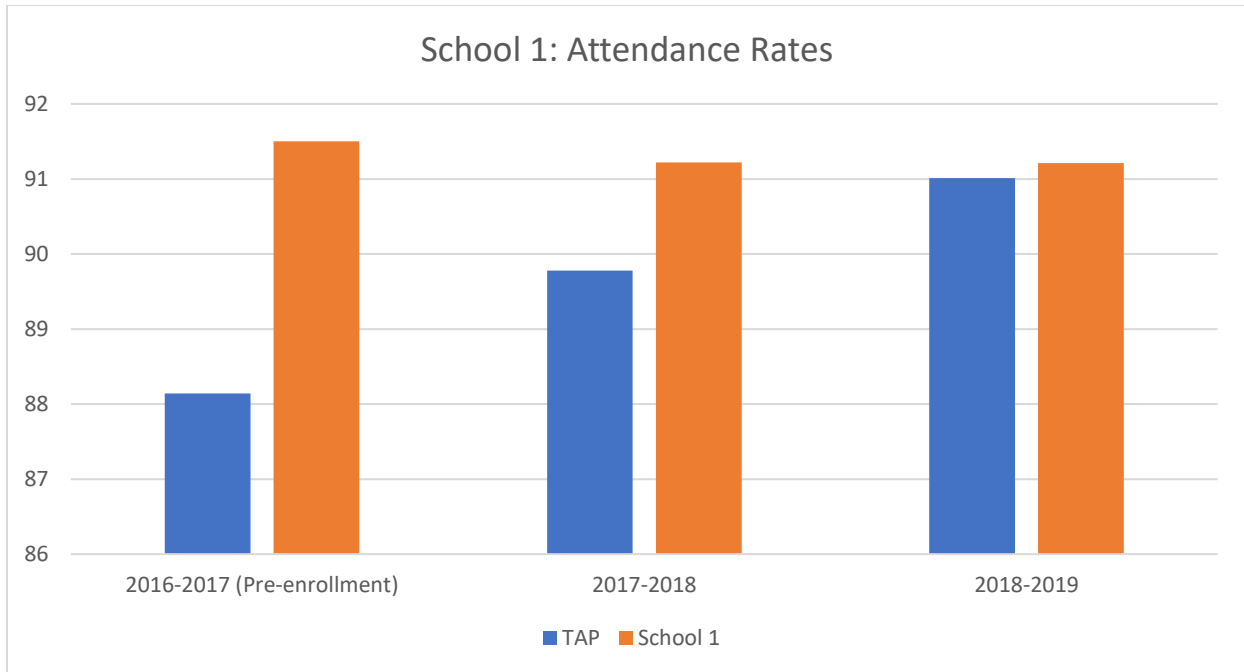
Retention

We are eager to report that in our second year of operation, 100% of eligible students stayed engaged in The Arthur Project! We are finding that this program is extremely valuable to both students and families and that even as we expand, families and students are reporting experiencing high quality services. Furthermore, we have a significant waiting list, as teachers and parents are often referring their students for services and even more promising, students are requesting to join the program on a near daily basis. This exciting trend suggests not only that our therapeutic services are de-stigmatized but also that we will have limited barriers in engaging and enrolling students in future partner schools.

Attendance

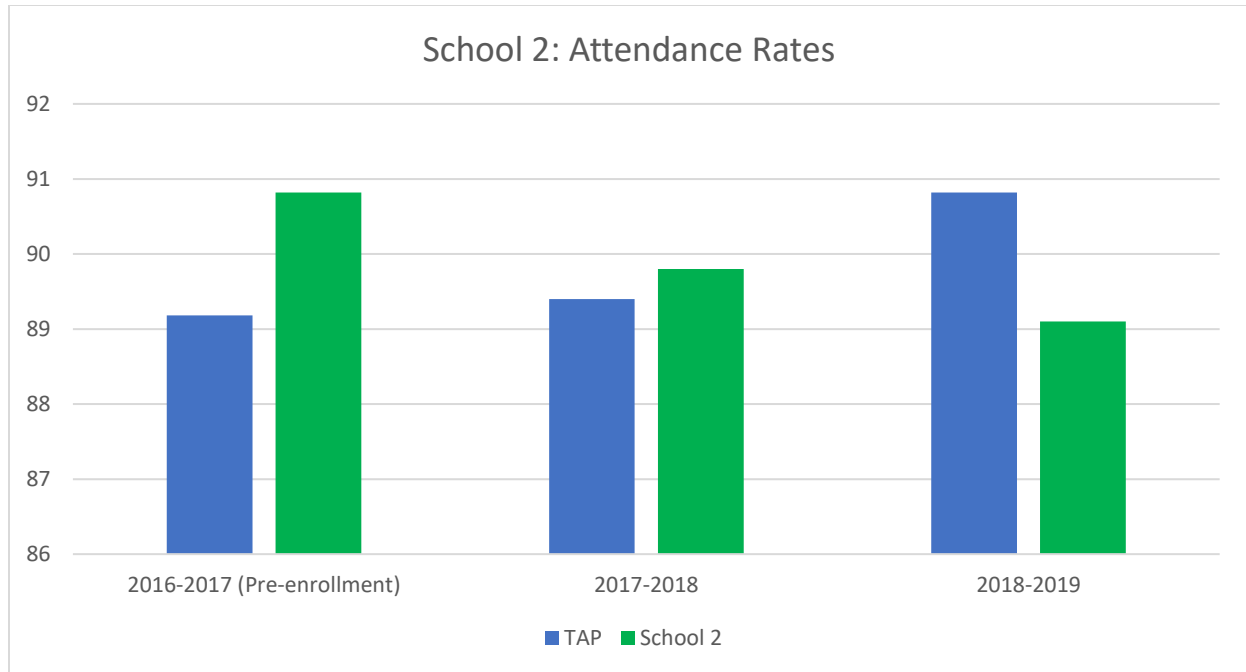
Once again, we are pleased to report that we saw significant growth in the area of attendance. In their fifth-grade year - the year before joining the program - Arthur Project students in one partner school had an average attendance rate of 88.14% in the 2016-2017 year, reached an average of 89.78% in the 2017-2018 year and an extraordinary average of 91.01% in the 2018-2019 year. By comparison, this partner school’s schoolwide attendance averaged 91.5% in 2016-2017, fell to 91.22% in 2017-2018 and dropped further to 91.21% in 2018-2019. We are enthused by the fact that despite Arthur Project students starting far below the school average, they are making significant gains and have almost completely closed the gap between themselves and their non-enrolled peers. See the following graph for a summary of the comparison:

The Arthur Project Theory of Change



Prior to joining the program, Arthur Project students in our second partner school had an average attendance rate of 89.18% in the 2016-2017 year (their fifth-grade year), reached an average of 89.4% in the 2017-2018 year and an average of 90.73% in the 2018-2019 year. By comparison, this partner school's schoolwide attendance averaged 90.82% in 2016-2017, fell to 89.8% in 2017-2018 and dropped further to 89.1% in 2018-2019. Incredibly, Arthur Project students in our second partner school, who started a program with a significant disparity, were able to make significant gains, far exceeding the school's average. See the following graph for a summary of the comparison.

The Arthur Project Theory of Change



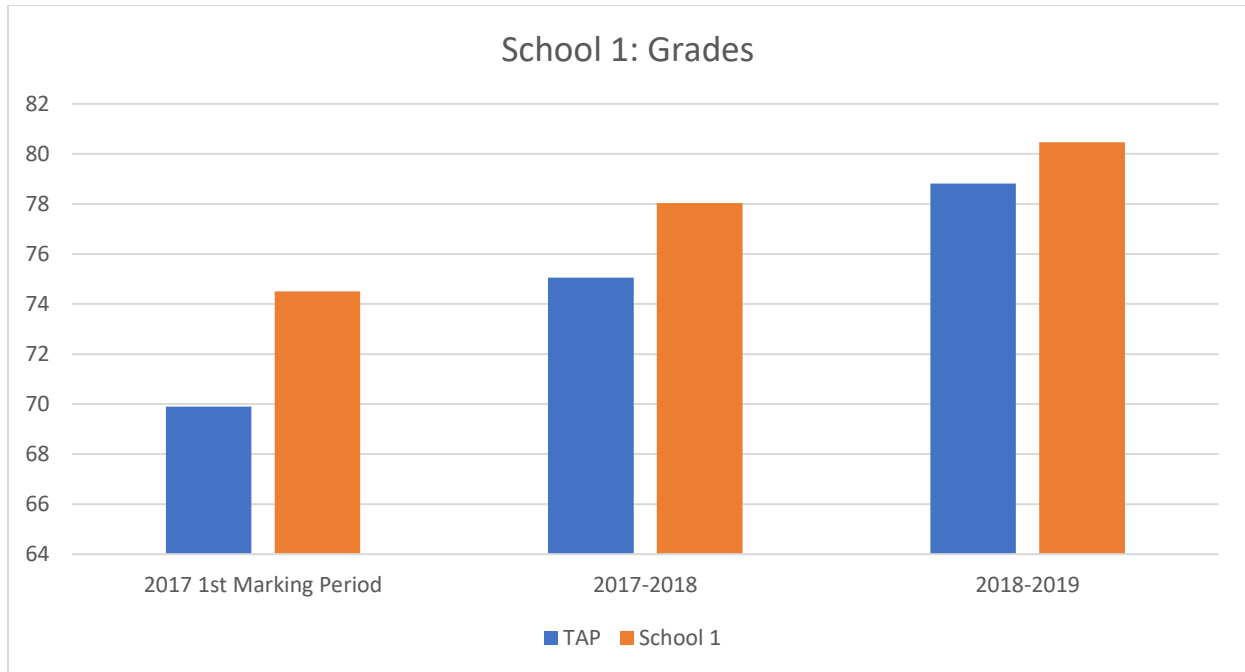
Overall, students in The Arthur Project had an average of 88.65% in the 2016-2017 school year, rising to 89.6% in the 2017-2018 year and to 90.73% in the 2018-2019 year. These trends are extremely promising, as this indicates that the majority of our students are rising up out of the category of “Chronically Absent”, which is typically indicated as below 90% attendance. These improvement means significant gains for our students in many areas of their lives.

Grades

We are excited to report that at the end of the second year of programming, Arthur Project students continue to grow academically, demonstrating their engagement through the improvement in course grades.

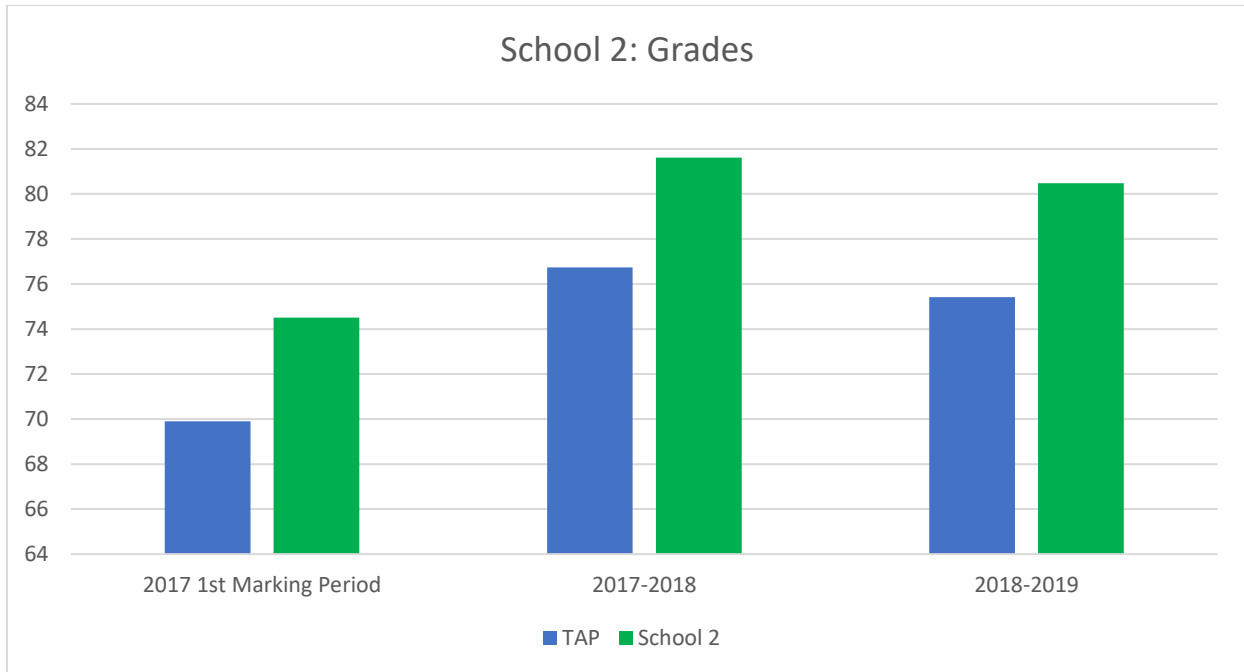
Arthur Project students began the program at almost a five-point deficit in the first marking period of 6th grade, compared to their non-enrolled peers (69.9% compared to 74.5%). At the end of the 2017-2018 school year, Arthur Project students in our first partner school raised their grade average to 75.06%. At the end of the 2018-2019 school year, Arthur Project students in the first partner school raised their average even more, ending the year at 78.81%! By comparison, non-enrolled peers, ended the 2017-2018 year at 78.04% and the 2018-2019 year at 80.47%. We are enthused by the fact that Arthur Project students are closing the academic gap with their non-enrolled peers. Please see the chart below for a summary of this data:

The Arthur Project Theory of Change



Arthur Project students in our second partner school also demonstrated promising academic engagement over the course of the last year. Although student grades dropped, there was a much more significant decline with non-enrolled peers, as compared to Arthur Project students. At the end of the 2017-2018 school year, Arthur Project students in our second partner school raised their grade average to 76.74%. At the end of the 2018-2019 school year, Arthur Project students in the second partner school saw a small drop in grade average, ending the year at 75.41%. By comparison, non-enrolled peers, ended the 2017-2018 year at 81.61% and the 2018-2019 year at 77.67%. See the chart below for a summary of this data:

The Arthur Project Theory of Change



While it is promising that Arthur Project students in our second partner school did not experience as significant a drop as their non-enrolled peers, we would like to see our students grade improve along a more positive trajectory. We recognize that there are a number of factors potentially affecting schoolwide grades. In fact, our second partner school now offers students additional instructional hours in both Math and ELA, hoping to bolster the overall student body performance. We will continue to collaborate with school administrators to tackle the challenge of course grades.

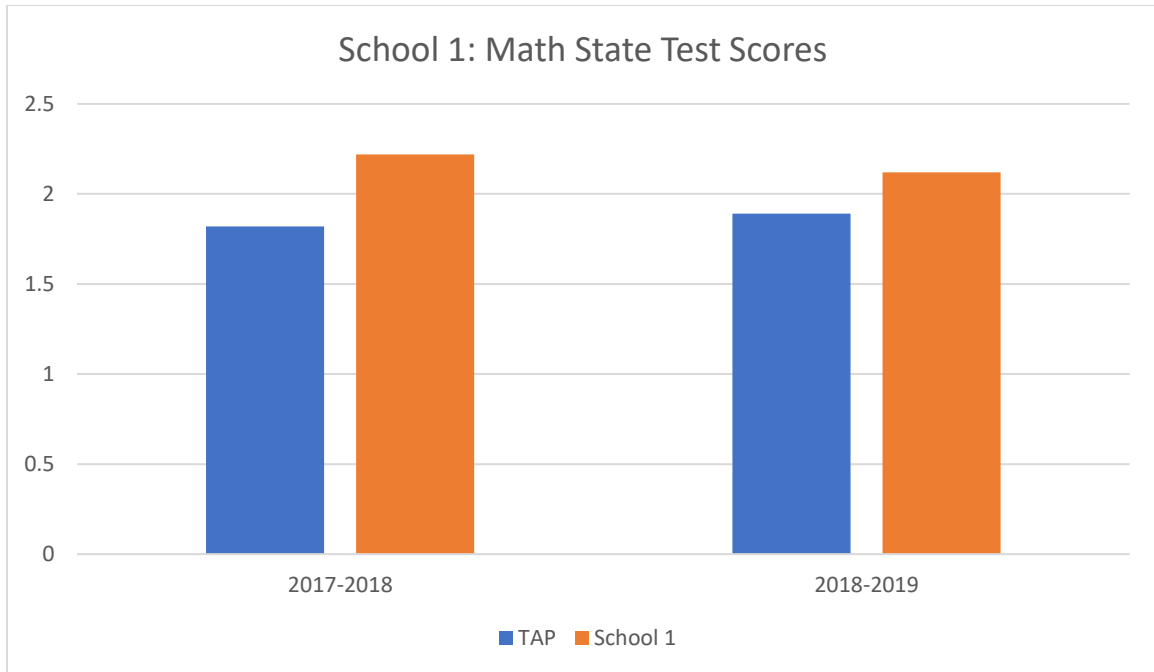
State Test Scores

We are excited to report that Arthur Project students in our first partner school improved both their Math and ELA State Test scores from the 2017-2018 to the 2018-2019 school year⁷ despite the fact that their non-enrolled peers experienced a significant drop in scores.

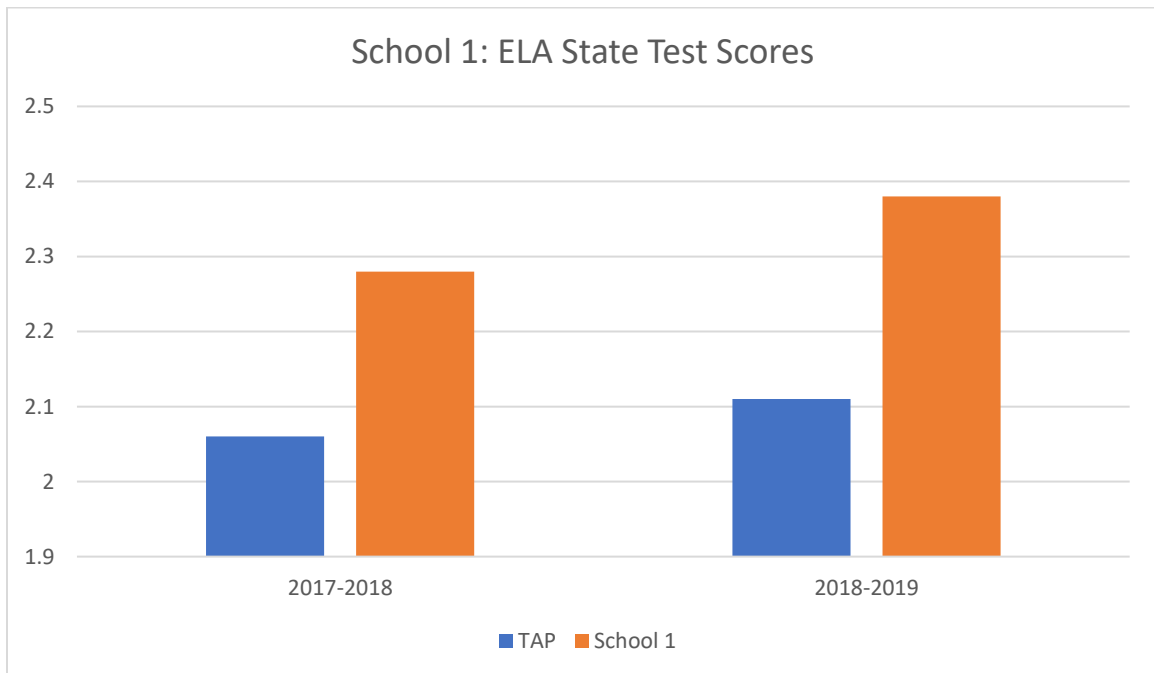
Arthur Project students had an average Math score of 1.82 (out of a possible 4) in 2017-2018 and grew to an average of 1.89 in 2018-2019. By comparison, non-enrolled peers had an average of 2.22 in 2017-2018 and dropped to 2.12 in 2018-2019. Please see the chart below for a summary of the data:

⁷ Baseline (5th grade) test score data is not available

The Arthur Project Theory of Change

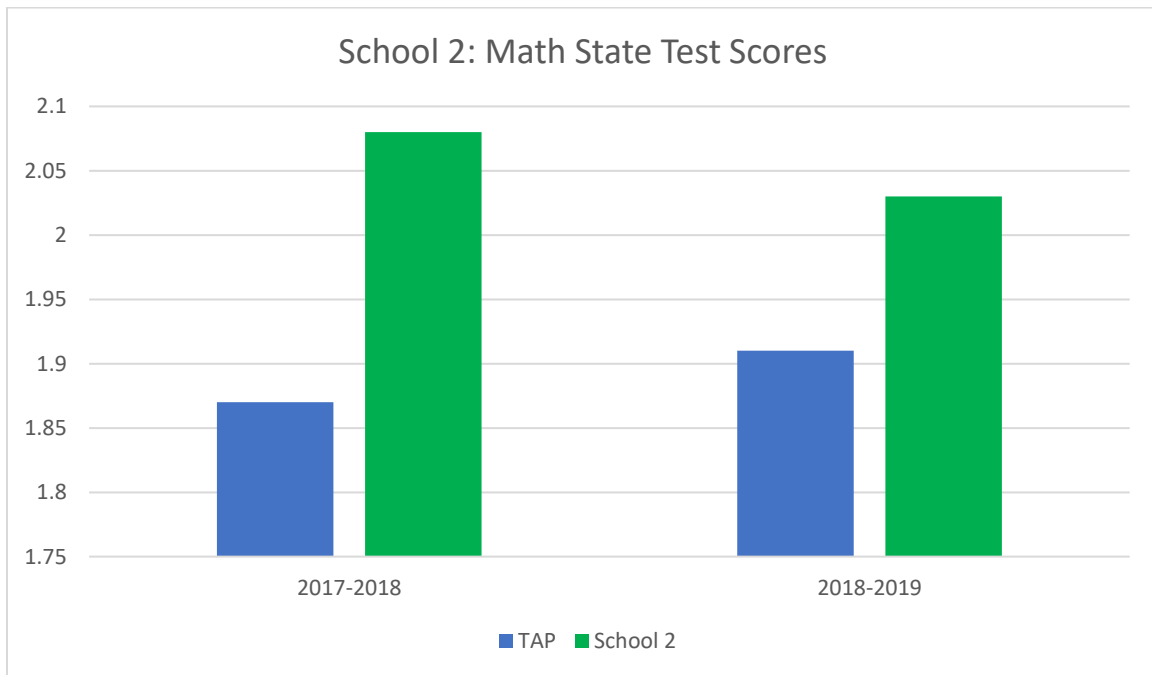


Arthur Project students also demonstrated a significant gain in their ELA State Test scores. Arthur Project students had an average ELA score of 2.06 in 2017-2018 and grew to an average of 2.11 in 2018-2019. By comparison, non-enrolled peers had an average of 2.28 in 2017-2018 and grew to 2.38 in 2018-2019. We are enthused by the fact that both Arthur Project students and the overall student body of our first partner school are making significant gains in ELA. See the chart below for a summary of the data:

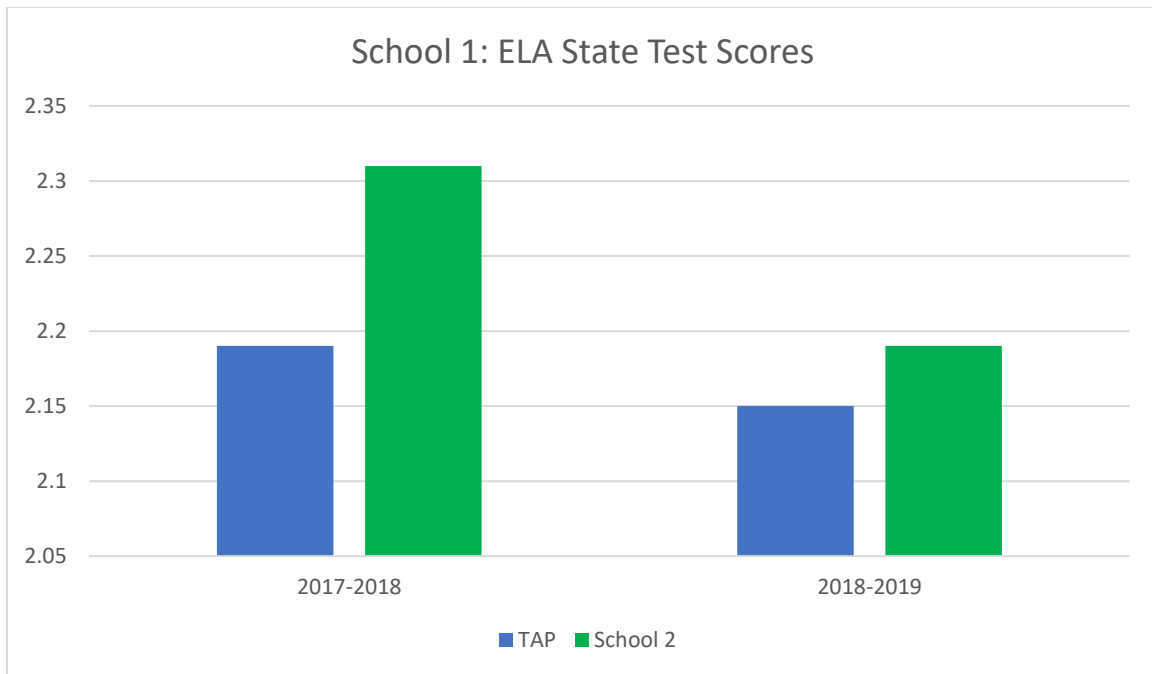


The Arthur Project Theory of Change

Similar to our first partner school, Arthur Project students experienced a significant gain in Math State Test scores, despite the fact that non-enrolled peers experienced a significant drop in scores from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019. Arthur Project students had an average Math score of 1.87 in 2017-2018 and grew to an average of 1.91 in 2018-2019. By comparison, non-enrolled peers had an average of 2.08 in 2017-2018 and dropped to 2.03 in 2018-2019. Please see the chart below for a summary of the data:



Unfortunately, both the overall student population of our second partner school as well as Arthur Project students experienced a drop in ELA State Test Scores from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019. Arthur Project students had an average ELA score of 2.19 in 2017-2018 and dropped to an average of 2.03 in 2018-2019. By comparison, non-enrolled peers had an average of 2.31 in 2017-2018 and dropped to 2.19 in 2018-2019. While we are pleased that Arthur Project students are closing the academic gap with their non-enrolled peers, we continue to develop collaborative strategies with our partner schools to improve the overall school culture around test scores. Please see the chart below for a summary of the data:



Qualitative Impact

As mentioned, students and families are reporting that they find our programming uniquely valuable. We often hear from parents that they feel so grateful that their students not only get support in and after school, but are provided with free, safe, and enriching weekend activities. Furthermore, parents report that their child’s mentor has helped in a number of meaningful areas – including improved academic engagement, improved hygiene and improved communication skills. Parents are noticing that their children are better able to identify their emotions and express themselves in healthy ways, reducing the number of outbursts at home and in school.

We are also finding that parents are viewing us as true partners, reaching out to us when they need additional support and/or an advocate. In fact, we are seeing an increase in requests (by parents) for mentors to join Parent Teacher Conferences and IEP (Individual Education Plan) meetings, as well as meetings with Guidance Counselors and other school staff.

We are also observing that school partners are increasingly viewing us as a meaningful resource for students and families. We have an ever-expanding referral list from school staff, including teachers and Guidance Counselors. Moreover, we are finding that school staff are increasingly seeking out mentors to have a better understanding of what’s going on with those mentors’ students and their families. This suggests that our mentors and mentees are creating uniquely close bonds, wherein the mentors are getting to know their students and families in a much deeper way than previously experienced with school staff.

In fact, we have a number of families who were previously “unreachable” by school staff, yet we have developed a close working relationship with those families. Moreover, those relationships

The Arthur Project Theory of Change

go beyond the mentor-mentee/family relationship. Even the staff at The Arthur Project have developed close working relationships with families and we find that families feel comfortable reaching out to us for support regarding school or the program.

New Funding

In addition to students, families, and schools, we are also experiencing positive feedback from funders. In this last school year, we were able to secure significant funding, which will support both the overall operational costs of the program, as well as the development of a new aspect of programming: Family Work.

Updates to Data Collection

This year, TAP is making a number of improvements to our data collection system as well as our metrics.

Data Collection Software

Of greatest importance is that we have recently begun working with a company, Zudy, to create an online platform for data collection and management. As we will now be serving close to 150 students, data collection has become unmanageable without the appropriate software. We are eager to rollout this system as it will not only improve data analysis, but will streamline data collection.

Metrics

In this school year, we will continue to track Retention, Attendance, Grades and State Test Scores. Attendance in particular remains a highly important variable, both for us and our partner schools. We will continue to monitor disciplinary infractions and will seek to find a method to capture reliable and valid data in this area.

Additionally, we will begin to address some of the aforementioned concerns with previous instruments by utilizing new tools. First, instead of the Classroom Behavior form, we will utilize the widely accepted Functional Behavioral Assessment Tool. This tool will allow the mentor to observe – over multiple points in time – the student in the classroom and capture the frequency of both desirable and undesirable behaviors. This is a widely validated tool and our hope is that it will produce more reliable data.

We will also begin to utilize two new tools, developed in conjunction with the NYU Wagner team. These tools were adapted from validated instruments and our hope is that they will capture data that is of great interest to us. First, we have adapted a tool which captures the perceptions of “Mattering” by the child, as it pertains to family, friends, school and the community. This instrument will be used at various points in the year with the anticipation that we will see a rise over the course of three years in perceptions of mattering.

The Arthur Project Theory of Change

We will also begin to use a tool that measures the “Quality of Relationship” between the mentor and mentee. We believe that the quality of relationship may be the single most important variable in predicting other outcomes. This assessment will be taken by both the mentor and mentee over different points of the year. We anticipate that understanding the quality of relationship will improve not only outcomes, but will allow us to intervene in the early stages of a mentor-mentee relationship if we are observing that the quality is lower than desired.

The Arthur Project is also in the process of identifying and/or developing a tool to capture overall Social Emotional Well-Being. While there are a number of instruments in the field, it is important that it utilizes one that honors the specific type of strengths-based growth the TAP is looking for.

Summary

As TAP enters in its fourth year of operation with 100% student retention, it is enthused by the positive impact our program has had. We have been intentional about utilizing these pilot years to learn about what works for our students and families and feel we have been responsive to the feedback we’ve received. It looks forward to supporting our first cohort of students as they transition into high school while continuing to deliver high quality services to our middle school students and families. We anticipate continued growth for our program and its participants, even as the organization evolves.

Appendix B

The Arthur Project Goals	Measures
Cultivate youth’s sense of mattering through therapeutic mentoring as a natural precursor to other skills-based goals.	Mattering Index (youth survey questions). Note that these overlap with other domains, including academic engagement. Youth Qualitative Forums Family Qualitative Forums Mentor Surveys and Qualitative Forums
Increase academic engagement	Attendance, grades, state test scores, teacher survey, graduation pushout/dropout Teacher Survey Family Survey
Provide youth with knowledge, self-advocacy, self-help, ability to seek and find “natural” mentors, leadership and communication skills to reach their full potential	Aligned with TAP’s 5 dimensions, survey questions regarding health & wellness, career, finances, relationships, communication & expression and culture, including techniques to

The Arthur Project Theory of Change

	<p>heal would of racial trauma; Mentor Noncognitive survey domains regarding self-advocacy, self-help, leadership, and persistence. Qualitative focus groups with students and families. Mentor quarterly reports to determine more precise methods utilized during sessions.</p> <p>Mentor Survey</p>
Provide the skills to successfully transition to high school and beyond	Student survey and forum questions regarding goal attainment and additional overlapping noncognitive and cognitive domains, such as help-seeking skills
Foster family engagement through the Family Advocacy Program	Family survey questions and focus groups
Encourage culturally response community and civic engagement toward healing and racial and social justice.	Student event outcomes, survey and qualitative forums

The Arthur Project Data Collection Plan

Type of Methods and Timing

Mentor surveys are posttests.

Mentee surveys are retrospective pre-then-posttests. For further explanation, see the TAP theory of change.

Family surveys are posttests.

Teacher surveys are posttests.

Qualitative surveys are second semester.

Surveys

Mentor Survey

I enjoyed being a mentor.

My mentees and I were interested in the same things.

I felt confident handling the challenges of being a mentor.

My mentees have achieved goals that we set.

My mentees and I were sometimes at a loss for things to talk about.

My mentees' communication skills have grown.

My mentees seem more confident than when I met them.

My mentees trust me.

My mentees and I were well-matched.

I felt close to my mentees.

I helped my mentees prepare for high school.

My mentees and I solved problems together.

I helped my mentees find their strengths.

I helped my mentees complete a task

I helped my mentees resolve difficult experiences.

The Arthur Project Theory of Change

My mentees and I had enough time together.

I had enough training to be a mentor for the Arthur Project mentees.⁸

I helped my mentees find natural mentors.

I utilized the following methods or training during mentoring session: (qualitative follow up for more specifics)

Critically informed goal setting,

Emotional self-regulation with unjust systems, trauma, grief or loss (drop down: choose which ones)

Engagement and growth mindsets

Young people power

Adolescent development and relational attachment

I have knowledge about my own personal social identity, including race, class, sexual orientation and ethnicity

I am able to perceive social, political and economic challenges for my mentees.

I understand my mentees' racial and cultural identities communities

I drew on my social work curriculum to bridge theory to practice and apply what I have learned (qualitative follow up for specifics during forums)

I drew on TAP's social justice training to increase mentees critical consciousness about internalized oppression.

I drew on TAP's social justice training to discuss healing and liberation with my mentees.

I drew on TAP's antiracist training to help my mentees respond to racism they encounter in an empowered and effective manner.

The COVID pandemic has impacted my abilities as a mentor.

Scale: *Never true, Hardly ever true, Sometimes true, Most of time true, Always true*

Mentee 7th and 8th Grade Surveys

My mentor and I talked together about how to solve problems

My mentor and I spent time working on how I can reach my goals.

Learning new things together was an important part of our relationship.

My mentor helped me to set and reach goals.

My mentor and I worked on projects together. (Qualitative follow-up)

[My mentor helped me identify my interests. \(new based upon Family Advocacy notes\)](#)

My mentor and I accomplished a lot of things together.

I felt safe when I was with my mentor.

[My mentor helped me apply for high schools. \(new\)](#)

My mentor looked out for me and helped me.

My mentor cared about me even when I make a mistake.

⁸ Follow up during qualitative forums: *Are our mentors trained and informed about specific youth issues such as mental health or other diagnoses?*

The Arthur Project Theory of Change

The other students in my mentor group cared about me.

I matter to my mentor

Scale: *Very false, Mostly false, Mostly true, Very true*

Mentee 6th Grade Survey

My mentor listened to me.

My mentor helped me talk to other people.

My mentor helped me solve problems.

My mentor helped me set goals.

My mentor helped me reach my goals.

My mentor helped me in school.

I trust my mentor.

My mentor made me feel safe.

My mentor and I shared interests.

My mentor still supported me even if I made a mistake.

I matter to my mentor

Scale: *Not at all, Sometimes, Often, Always*

All Student Survey

Domains: Grit, Decision-Making, Critical Thinking Goal Pursuit

When I decide I have a goal, I stick to it.

I keep trying as many different possibilities as I can to reach my goal.

Scale: *Not all like me, A little like me, Somewhat like me, A lot like me, Very much like me*

Domains: Problem-Solving, Critical Thinking, Youth Leadership Potential

When you have a problem, you usually try to think of as many different ways to solve the problem as possible.

I watch how other people solve problems and learn from them.

Scale: *Strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree*

Domains: Perseverance, Grit, Confidence

I finish what I begin.

I keep at my schoolwork until I am done with it.

Scale: *Almost never, sometimes, often, very often, almost always*

Domains: Career Exploration, Strengths and Values Identification.

I have spent time finding my strongest talents.

Scale: *Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree*

Domains: Self-Advocacy, Communication, Leadership, Natural Mentoring, Self-Help

I can tell other kids what I think, even if they disagree with me.

I have relationships with other caring adults. (Natural Mentoring)

I ask for help if I need it.

Scale: *Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree*

Persistence, Self-Efficacy, Problem-Solving, Decision-Making, Self-Advocacy

Setbacks don't discourage me. I don't give up easily.

The Arthur Project Theory of Change

I finish what I begin.

Scale: *Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree*

Domain: Leadership

I am sometimes looked up to by others.

Scale: *Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree*

Domains: Communication, Leadership, Speaking

I can talk with people I don't know.

I am a good listener.

Scale: *Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree*

Domains: Self-Efficacy, Persistence, Grit

I can do most things if I try.

I expect to do well in high school.

Scale: *Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree*

Domains: Mattering

When people need me, they come to me. (reliance)

Other people trust me with things that are important to them. (reliance)

People care about what happens to me. (importance)

There are people who take pride when I succeed. (importance)

People pay attention to me. (awareness)

Teacher Survey Question Domains

Likert Scale Likert Scale Strongly Agree, Agree, Somewhat Agree, Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Strongly Disagree

I have observed that students who participate in The Arthur Project...

Increased in help-seeking behaviors

Increased in engagement (participation, interest, attention, questions, assignments)

Positive behavioral changes

Negative behavioral changes

Increased academic improvements

Increased positive social engagement with peers

Increased Hygiene

Greater family interaction, communication or interest

Increased skills development

Increased timeliness and attendance

I have regular communication with Arthur Program mentors.

Families Survey and Qualitative Forum Domains (Based upon early goals of Family Advocacy program)

Likert Scale Strongly Agree, Agree, Somewhat Agree, Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Strongly Disagree

The Arthur Project Theory of Change

The Arthur Project has helped my child with...

Academic relationships with school staff and teachers.

Academic engagement with my child

Attendance

State test preparation

Behavioral Changes (Similar domains to youth survey)

High school preparation

The Arthur Project has helped me with ...

Understanding state tests

Understanding report cards

Finding academic support in schools

The COVID pandemic has impacted my child's...

Academic progress

Mental health

Positive social Engagement with teachers

Positive social engagement with peers

Timeline for Qualitative Forums

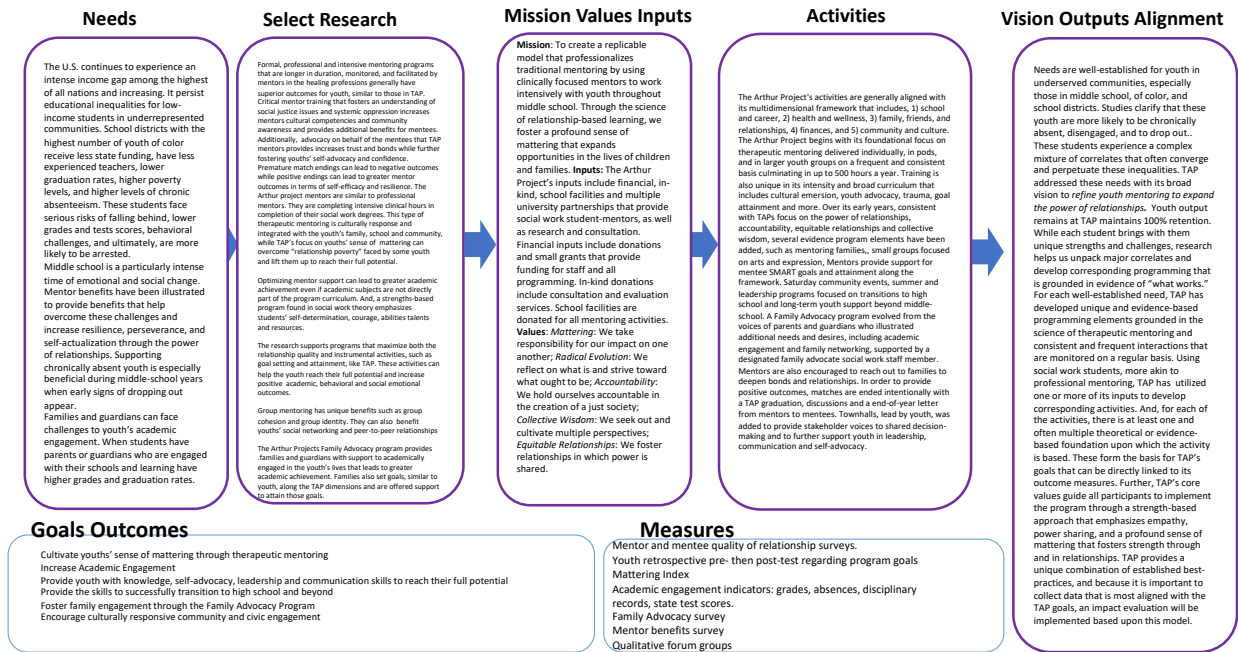
Mentees: Beginning in February through April.

Mentors (Virtual) Three Sessions. Have each mentor sign up for one. 60 minutes. Generally, same questions as surveys. To begin in January, 2022 through March.

Appendix C Select Alignments

The Arthur Project Theory of Change

The Arthur Project Logic Model or Theory of Change



Appendix D

TAP MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT

ANXIETY

Below is a list of sentences that describe how people feel. Read each sentence and decide if it is "Not True or Hardly Ever True", "Somewhat True or Sometimes True" or "Very True or Often True". For each sentence, mark the response that best seems to describe you for the last three months. There are no right or wrong answers!

1. When I feel frightened, it is hard for me to breathe
2. I get headaches and/or stomachaches when I am at school
3. I worry about other people liking me
4. I follow my mother or father wherever they go
5. I feel nervous with people I don't know well
6. I worry about going to school
7. When I get frightened, my heart beats fast and/or I sweat a lot
8. I am afraid to be alone at my home
9. It is hard for me to talk with people I don't know well
10. People tell me I worry too much
11. I don't like to be away from my family
12. I worry that something bad might happen to my parent(s)
13. When I get frightened, I feel like throwing up and/or I feel dizzy/shaky
14. I worry about how well I do things
15. I worry about things that have already happened

The Arthur Project Theory of Change

16. I feel nervous when I am with other people and I have to do something while they watch me (for example, read aloud in class or play a sport)

DEPRESSION

Below is a list of sentences that describe how people feel. Read each sentence and decide if it is "Not True or Hardly Ever True", "Somewhat True or Sometimes True" or "Very True or Often True". For each sentence, mark the response that best seems to describe how you have felt for the last week. There are no right or wrong answers!

17. I have felt down, sad, depressed or hopeless
18. I have had little interest in doing things
19. I have had trouble falling asleep, staying asleep or sleeping too much
20. I have had no appetite or am eating a lot
21. I have felt tired or like I have no energy
22. I have felt bad about myself
23. I have had trouble concentrating on things like schoolwork or watching TV
24. I am moving and speaking slower than normal OR the opposite – I am fidgety and restless
25. I have had thoughts I would be better off dead, or that I might hurt myself in some way

PTSD

Scary and stressful events happen to many people. Below is a list of stressful and scary events that sometimes happen. Mark YES if it happened to you. Mark NO if it didn't happen to you.

26. I experienced a natural disaster like flood, tornado, hurricane, earthquake, or fire
27. I was robbed by threat, force, or weapon
28. I was slapped, punched, or beat up in your family
29. I saw someone in your family get slapped, punched, or beat up
30. I saw someone in the community get slapped, punched or beat up
31. Someone older touched my private parts when they shouldn't have
32. Someone close to me died suddenly or violently
33. I had a stressful or scary medical procedure
34. I had another scary or stressful event. (Please describe) _____
35. Which one is bothering you most now?

If you marked YES to any questions above, please continue. If you marked NO to all, your survey is complete.

Below is a list of sentences that describe how people feel. Read each sentence and decide if it is "Not True or Hardly Ever True", "Somewhat True or Sometimes True" or "Very True or Often True". Thinking about the things that are bothering you most from the previous section, for each

The Arthur Project Theory of Change

*sentence, mark the response that best seems to describe you for the **last two weeks**. There are no right or wrong answers!*

36. I have had upsetting thoughts or pictures about what happened that pop into my head
37. I have had bad dreams reminding me of what happened
38. I have felt as if what happened is happening all over again
39. I have had strong feelings in my body where I am reminded of what happened (sweating, heart beating fast, upset stomach)
40. I have stayed away from anything that reminds me of what happened (people, places, things, situations, conversations)
41. I have not been able to remember part of what happened
42. I have blamed myself for what happened or blamed someone else when it isn't their fault
43. I have not been able to have good or happy feelings
44. I have felt mad or have had fits of anger and taking it out on others
45. I've had problems paying attention
46. I've had trouble falling or staying asleep

Adapted from:

- <https://www.ohsu.edu/sites/default/files/2019-06/SCARED-form-Parent-and-Child-version.pdf> -
- https://depts.washington.edu/dbpeds/Screening%20Tools/APA_DSM5_Severity-Measure-For-Depression-Child-Age-11-to-17.pdf
- [https://istss.org/getattachment/Clinical-Resources/Child-Trauma-Assessments/Child-and-Adolescent-Trauma-Screen-\(CATS\)/CATS-Selfreport-7-17.pdf?lang=en-US](https://istss.org/getattachment/Clinical-Resources/Child-Trauma-Assessments/Child-and-Adolescent-Trauma-Screen-(CATS)/CATS-Selfreport-7-17.pdf?lang=en-US)