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Eagle Buddies: An Evaluation of a Peer Mentoring Program

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Abstract

The present study evaluated a peer mentoring program (Eagle Buddies) in a rural K-12 school to assess its effects on the academic achievement of student participants. Several types of data were collected: standardized ELA and Math scores were obtained over time, the students were interviewed about their experiences, and teachers were surveyed for suggestions of ways to improve the program. Results showed that academic scores significantly increased over time and the overall opinion of the program from both students and teachers was positive. Several limitations of the design of this program evaluation will be discussed.

Keywords: peer mentor program, academic achievement

Eagle Buddies: An Evaluation of a Peer Mentoring Program

It has become increasingly challenging to find ways to help students with academic and behavior problems that simultaneously minimize intrusiveness, decrease stigmatization, and maximize their potential in schools. The ramifications of not providing help to students in need include social costs of unemployment, school dropouts, and social isolation (Karcher, 2008). One technique that has been utilized successfully by schools is peer-based mentoring programs. These programs have traditionally employed adult mentors successfully (Bird, Martin, Tummons, & Ball, 2013), but contemporary programs are leaning more towards pairing up challenged youth with interns and/or peers who have good academic and behavioral standing. The following literature review will investigate the effects of peer mentoring programs on academic and behavioral functioning of students in school settings.

Regardless of the age of the mentors, providing constant caring relationships in academically- and behaviorally-supportive environments has proven to be extremely beneficial in schools (Bird et al., 2013). Peer mentoring programs are helpful for both academic and behavioral problems, but they are often focused on one outcome (e.g., academics or behavior). Academically-focused mentor programs have attended to a range of educational subjects, including reading, math, and science (Gondree & Doran, 1998; Rumler & Lewis, 2006; Seitz & Bartholomew, 2014).

Reading is one of the most common targets for mentoring programs. In one reading program involving Year 9 (age 13) and primary school-aged English as a Second Language (ESL) students in Hong Kong, the older mentors wrote and illustrated their own story books in English and then read them to their mentees in a primary school (Mak, Coniam, & Kwan, 2008). By reading to and engaging in related games and activities with their mentees, the mentors were

able to help the primary school students become more skilled at reading English. The success of this program resulted in the expansion of the peer mentoring program to other schools throughout Hong Kong. Although the age gap between the mentors and the mentees in the study conducted by Mak et al. (2008) was several years, this is not always the case; in fact, mentoring relationships with an age difference of only three or four years can still be very beneficial. Seitz and Bartholomew (2014) demonstrated the efficacy of second and third grade students as reading mentors for children in preschool. Mentors independently selected age-appropriate books for their peer buddies. They also chose hands-on activities (e.g., paper collages, molding playdough, and sponge paintings) to engage in after reading the books in order to reinforce the skills they learned. Reading fluency, comprehension, and expressive and receptive thinking improved among the mentees, and the mentors reported greater feelings of compassion and empathy towards their younger counterparts (Seitz & Bartholomew, 2014).

Although reading is often the primary target for peer mentoring programs, these programs have proven equally beneficial for other academic areas, including math. In a recent study, sixth grade students were paired with kindergarten students in order to mentor them in math. One activity that was used involved finding and measuring circles of different sizes on the playground. The sixth grade students were able to help their buddies understand the concept of circumference using this and other hands-on activities (Rumler & Lewis, 2006). Such hands-on activities are differential learning strategies that allow students to learn math in numerous ways, and the strategies employed in this study could expand the generalization of the students' math abilities to multiple settings (e.g., home and community).

While not commonly studied within the context of peer mentoring programs, science is another academic area that can be reinforced using such programs. In one study, first grade

teachers introduced new scientific concepts to their students, and their middle school buddies provided supplemental support to enhance the students' learning. These concepts were reviewed with the middle school students prior to meeting with their buddies, and the middle school students were given guidelines to follow and hands-on activities to utilize. This experience enhanced the middle school students' confidence in themselves and their abilities, and they served as academic and social role models for their first grade buddies (Gondree & Doran, 1998). In fact, the older students that serve as role models in peer mentoring programs inevitably assume the role of surrogate older siblings to their younger buddies, further emphasizing the benefit of having peers as mentors in schools.

Decreases in school-related behavioral and emotional problems have also been observed as a result of peer mentoring programs that target these concerns. Behavioral and emotional difficulties are psychologically distressing for students and cause a disruption in their ability to effectively engage with the school's curriculum. Peer mentoring programs are often utilized to assist students with these types of problems. Hughes, Cavell, Zhang, and Collie (2005) compared two mentoring programs: the Lunch Buddy program held during lunch hours at school and the PrimeTime program that involved supervised community visits. Undergraduate students were used as the mentors for both programs, and both were designed to reduce aggression in second and third grade students. Responses to the programs were compared in low versus high adversity schools. The adversity level of each school was calculated by averaging: (a) the percentage of students eligible for lunches for free or at reduced prices, (b) the frequency of aggressive acts on the playground, and (c) the percentage of students who entered the school after the beginning of the school year and left before the end of it. The Lunch Buddy program proved to be more successful in decreasing aggression in settings with high levels of school

adversity, while low adversity schools responded more positively to the PrimeTime program. However, the absence of a control group in the study calls into question the evidence for the effectiveness of either treatment in decreasing aggression. Another limitation was that the small sample of participants were young and from non-White ethnic backgrounds, thus decreasing the ability to generalize the results to the rest of the population of children with behavior problems (Hughes et al., 2005).

In addition to aggression, many young people struggle with their own self-concepts, including views of their personal strengths and weaknesses, and they manifest problematic behaviors as a result. The United Way's Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America program has been successful in improving the self-concepts of children whose parents recently divorced or separated. In one study, male adults were paired with boys ranging in age from 7 to 13. At the end of the program, the boys with adult mentors reported less anxiety and more positivity in regards to their perceived popularity and physical appearance. The instruments used to measure self-concept and behavior variables were highly reliable and had good criterion-related, construct, and content validity. However, the sample size was too small to detect statistically significant effects on some of the behaviors measured (Turner & Scherman, 1996).

In a similar study conducted by Saintonge, Achille, and Lachance (1998), Big Brothers were paired with male adolescents from single-parent households. Research shows that fathers play a significant role in the psychological development of adolescents, specifically affecting their sexual identity, individualism, and narcissism. Divorce makes this process of separation-individuation in adolescence significantly more difficult (Blos; Mahler: Mahler, Pine, & Bergman; as cited in Saintonge et al., 1998). In this study, one group of adolescents from single-parent families paired with Big Brothers was compared to a group of adolescents from single-

parent families without Big Brothers and to a group of adolescents from intact families without Big Brothers. Each adolescent's separation-individuation process was determined by measuring several variables (e.g., separation anxiety, independence/parental control conflict, and adult nurturance seeking) using a version of the Separation-Individuation Test of Adolescence (SITA; Levine, Green, & Millon, as cited in Saintonge et al., 1998). Results showed that Big Brothers were able to successfully assist their adolescent buddies through the separation-individuation process at a significantly higher rate than the adolescents who were not paired with Big Brothers (Saintonge et al., 1998). This study and that by Turner & Scherman (1996) have important implications for helping youth in school settings because they emphasize the fact that not all misbehaviors are the result of external antecedents or observable stressors.

Thus far, the discussion of the benefits gained from peer mentoring programs has focused on those received by the younger children in the dyads. However, the mentors reap as many benefits from these programs as the mentees. Karcher (2009) measured the social and emotional changes that occurred within high school students before and after they acted as cross-age peer mentors for fourth and fifth grade students. At the conclusion of the school year, the high school mentors reported significantly higher academic connectedness and self-esteem than they reported prior to the mentoring program. As expected, they also reported significantly higher academic connectedness and self-esteem than a comparison control group. According to Karcher (2001), academic connectedness is particularly important in adolescence because it paves the way for caring relationships, promotes involvement in healthy social contexts, and decreases the risk of current and future substance use and delinquency. In the study conducted by Karcher (2009), the scales used to measure connectedness, attachment, and self-esteem had adequate test-retest reliability and internal consistency. However, internal validity was limited due to the usage of a

non-equivalent comparison group, and the external validity was limited because the results of the study relied on self-report measures. In addition, all of the participants resided in a small, predominantly Caucasian town, reducing the generalizability of the study's results.

Few peer mentoring programs target both academic and behavior problems. One study, however, measured the effect of a peer mentoring program on the verbal and nonverbal skills and negative emotionality of four high school students (Westerlund, Granucci, Gamache, & Clark, 2006). Although both academics and behavior were targeted in this study, there were very few participants and the purpose of the mentoring program was to prepare the high school mentees for vocational (i.e., cosmetology) school. Therefore the results may not generalize to other samples or settings.

This literature review presents evidence for the effects of peer mentoring programs that is strengthened by the fact that the measures used had adequate to good test-retest reliability and internal consistency, and the content, construct, and criterion-related validity of the measures were also demonstrated. However, the limitations of the studies on these programs include limited generalizability, internal validity, and external validity. The proposed evaluation of the school-based mentoring program called Eagle Buddies will attempt to address some of these limitations in previous studies.

Eagle Buddies, a cross-age peer mentoring program at a rural K-12 school, serves students by providing them with assistance for both academic and behavioral difficulties. Elementary students (first to sixth grade) are either referred to the program by teachers or their parents request that their child be included. In order for high school students to qualify for the program, they must be responsible, have free time, and have good academic standing (i.e., not failing more than one class). High school students sometimes receive incentives, such as

community service hours, for their involvement in the program. Dyads meet weekly or biweekly after school, and the high school students are given the responsibility to keep track of meeting times.

This evaluation will assess the effect of the Eagle Buddies program on students' curriculum-based scores for Math and English Language Arts (ELA). Teachers will be surveyed on their perceptions of Eagle Buddies and their recommendations for improvement of the program. Elementary students (grades one through six) will be interviewed on the experiences they have had with their Buddies. When the data collected for this study are analyzed, it is expected that students' curriculum-based scores for both Math and ELA will increase rather than decrease throughout the school year.

Method

Participants

The participants were a convenience sample of 13 elementary students and 10 elementary school teachers drawn from one public elementary school located in Clinton County, New York. The elementary students (five girls, eight boys, age range: 5--13 years) were enrolled in the Eagle Buddies peer mentoring program. These children's teachers consisted of nine female teachers and one male teacher; one taught first grade, two taught second grade, two taught third grade, one taught fourth grade, two taught fifth grade, one taught sixth grade, and one was a special education teacher. No incentives were given to adult or child participants.

Materials

Interview and survey measures. The questions on the student interviews were designed to gain a better understanding of the effect of Eagle Buddies on elementary students both socially and emotionally. Students were interviewed in depth about the relationship they built with their

Buddies and how their Buddies made them feel during meetings (e.g., happy, frustrated; see Appendix D). Teachers were surveyed regarding the academic and behavioral impact of Eagle Buddies on the school, as well as opinions on ways to improve the program. A Likert scale was used for statements that teachers were asked to rate with *strongly agree*, *agree*, *disagree*, or *strongly disagree* (see Appendix E).

i-Ready benchmark data. i-Ready is an online curriculum-based benchmark and instruction system with brief ELA and Math assessments that align with Common Core standards. Students' scores were obtained from the two benchmark sessions (fall and spring) in order to assess their academic progress from the beginning to the end of the school year.

Procedure

Participants in this study consisted of students and teachers from a rural elementary school located in upstate New York in the town of Chazy. There were 13 students enrolled in an Eagle Buddies program with ages ranging from five to 13. The ten teachers taught grades ranging from first to sixth grade and were teachers of students participating in Eagle Buddies.

Eagle Buddies is a Tier-II academic and behavior intervention. There is no specific criterion for a student to be referred to this program; teachers or parents simply refer students for the program if they display academic and/or behavior problems in school. Each student is paired with an older student in seventh through 12th grade who acts as his or her mentor throughout the school year. Dyads meet weekly or biweekly during the last class period of school under the supervision of the elementary student's teacher. During the meetings, dyads complete activities that focus on the problems they were referred for. For example, if the elementary student was referred due to difficulties with math addition facts, the older student may help the elementary student complete a worksheet of addition problems. There is no method in place in the school at

present to evaluate the effectiveness of the program on the academic and behavioral problems displayed by the students.

Informed consent forms were distributed to the school's elementary principal, the students' teachers, and the students' parents/guardians. After obtaining consent from the principal, the teachers gave their consent by signing the form and returning it to the researcher. In order to ensure that consent forms reached parents/guardians, the teachers sent the forms home in their students' homework folders. Parents/guardians returned the forms using the same method. Copies of the informed consent forms for the principal, teachers, and parents/guardians can be found in Appendix A, B, and C, respectively.

In April 2015, teachers were surveyed using a combination of open- and closed-ended questions regarding the effectiveness of the Eagle Buddies program and suggestions for improvement. Teachers were given ample time to complete the survey and return it to the researcher. In May 2015, students' ELA and Math benchmark data for the fall and spring sessions were obtained. Students were taken out of their classroom during snack or free times and were brought to another room for the interviews.

Results

A paired samples t-test determined that Math i-Ready scores significantly increased between the two time points, $t(12) = -3.49, p = .004$. The mean scores were 425.54 ($SD = 31.37$) for the initial assessment and 448.77 ($SD = 32.76$) for the final assessment. A paired samples t-test also determined that ELA i-Ready scores significantly increased between the two time points, $t(12) = -3.07, p = .010$. The mean scores were 513.15 ($SD = 48.77$) for the initial assessment and 537.15 ($SD = 43.69$) for the final assessment (see Figure 1). A nonparametric

Wilcoxon Signed Rank test confirmed that final scores for Math and ELA differed significantly from the initial scores for each subject, $p = .009$.

Student responses to the questions regarding their relationships with their Buddies were generally positive (see Table 1). The majority of students (77%) stated that their favorite thing to do with their Buddy was to play games and/or do homework, and there were a small percentage of students who enjoyed drawing (15%) or reading books (8%) with their Buddies. In addition, most students (46%) responded that they learned academic skills from their Buddies, but 31% of students stated that they learned nothing or did not know. The remaining three students, comprising 27% of the participants, learned “to try your best”, organization, and common interests. Most of the responses to the query about how well the students got to know their Buddies were “really well” (46%) with a close second being “pretty good” (38%); the remaining two students responded with “a little” and “enough to know she likes sports”. Eleven of the students (85%) responded that they felt “happy” when they were with their Buddies, while the remaining two students responded that they felt “kind of excited”. The overall feelings of closeness they felt with their Buddies were “pretty close/a little close” (70%), “really close” (15%), and “not very close” (15%).

Overall, teachers responded positively when asked to rate certain aspects of the Eagle Buddies program (see Figure 2). Teachers either *strongly agreed* (50%) or *agreed* (50%) that the program has made a positive impact in the school. Similarly, they either *strongly agreed* (40%) or *agreed* (60%) that students enrolled in the program have benefitted from the experience. Most teachers were *neutral* (70%) to the idea that their students’ grades had improved since starting the program; other teachers either *agreed* (20%) or *disagreed* (10%). Teachers either *strongly agreed* (80%) or *agreed* (20%) that they would recommend the program to other schools.

The analysis of qualitative statements on the surveys collected from the teachers revealed several major themes about Eagle Buddies within their responses. Recommendations for changes to the program included more consistency with meetings with younger dyads, more consistent communication between elementary and high school, increased mentor accountability, and increased frequency of meetings. Teacher perceptions of the program's intended outcomes included supportive relationships, increased social skills, and positive role models for elementary students. A more comprehensive summary of teacher responses to these questions can be found in Table 2.

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to evaluate the effects of a school-based peer mentoring program (Eagle Buddies) on the academic achievement of its participants. The expectation was that the average performance of program participants on curriculum-based Math and ELA assessments would increase over the course of a school year. In accordance with this hypothesis, a statistically significant increase in participants' Math and ELA scores was observed over time. Therefore, it is possible that involvement in Eagle Buddies may elicit a statistically significant change in ELA or Math i-Ready scores over time. This result is consistent with prior studies on similar programs that reported improvement in participants' reading (e.g., Mak et al., 2008; Seitz & Bartholomew, 2014) and math performance (e.g., Rumler & Lewis, 2006).

Analysis of the qualitative data collected in this study produced mixed results. Teachers of the elementary students enrolled in Eagle Buddies generally viewed the program positively; however, they had several suggestions for improvement. The biggest criticism was that the program lacked consistency because high school students (mentors) often missed meetings with the elementary students (mentees) with whom they were paired. Although all of the students

claimed to experience positive feelings when they were with their Buddies, the most common level of closeness reported by the participants was ‘pretty close’ and over half of the participants were only able to get to know their Buddies to a modest degree. This may be due to the reduced frequency of meetings between mentors and mentees. Social and interpersonal benefits of the Eagle Buddies program can only be achieved if dyads spend enough time getting to know each other, as shown in a prior study by Gondree and Doran (1998) in which the older participants who reliably and consistently served as mentors became role models and even surrogate older siblings to their younger mentees.

Grade level restrictions of the Eagle Buddies program only allowed students to be older mentors if they were in seventh through 12th grade. One teacher participant in this study recommended that sixth grade students be allowed to assume the role of mentors because their schedules included fewer extracurricular activities that would conflict with meeting times. Results from prior studies (i.e., Mak et al., 2008; Seitz & Bartholomew, 2014) seem to indicate that, regardless of the age difference between mentors and mentees, there are noticeable academic benefits for participants in peer mentoring programs. Therefore, the Eagle Buddies program may benefit from decreasing the grade level requirements for their mentors.

Teachers were also surveyed about the intended outcomes of Eagle Buddies and whether the program had a positive impact on the school. Although some teachers expected academic improvement among their students, most of the teachers’ responses referred to behavioral and emotional benefits (i.e., building supportive relationships, increasing social skills, and creating role models). Prior studies have shown that peer mentoring programs have a positive impact on student behavioral and emotional functioning (Hughes et al., 2005; Turner & Scherman, 1996; Saintonge et al., 1998). Unfortunately, it was not possible to obtain a standardized measure of

the socioemotional functioning of the Eagle Buddies participants before and after they were enrolled in the program. This study was unable to assess both academic and behavioral problems of students. In a previous study, Westerlund and colleagues (2006) only had access to four female participants in one high school who were preparing for vocational training. Similarly, the present study had only 13 elementary student participants from one rural central school. Thus, it seems that a much larger sample is necessary to study both academic and behavioral effects of the Eagle Buddies program.

Several limitations to this study should be considered when drawing conclusions from these results. First, there were two extraneous variables that could not be controlled in this study that may have positively impacted the study. It would have been unethical to discontinue additional academic interventions that students were receiving or deny them access to special education services. Additionally, although the exact truancy rates of the mentors are unknown, it can be assumed that the Eagle Buddies intervention was not implemented with fidelity if many dyad meetings did not occur. Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain whether the improvement in scores was truly caused by Eagle Buddies. Internal validity was limited due to the omission of a control group to which to compare the participants' i-Ready scores. Furthermore, the generalizability of the study's results is reduced because all of the participants resided in a small, predominantly Caucasian town, and the sample size is too small to be representative of the larger population.

Some limitations exist within the structure of Eagle Buddies that make the implementation of the program challenging at times. There is no manual with guidelines and steps to ensure the accurate implementation of the program. Also, the older students in the dyads occasionally stop attending weekly meetings as regularly as they should, which lessens the

benefits that students gain from involvement in the program. In addition, the program lacks a simple or effective method of communication between teachers, students, and other school staff.

These findings suggest that the Eagle Buddies program, although popular and well-liked by both teachers and students, can be improved with a few changes to the program's structure. A more consistent schedule for dyad meetings and a reliable method of communication between mentors and mentees would decrease the feelings of frustration and disappointment in the mentees that are experienced when mentors are not able to meet with their partners. High school students should be explicitly notified of their responsibilities as mentors to the elementary students prior to assuming the role, and they should be able to offer the time necessary to meet with the younger students. Several teachers expressed that mentees would become very disappointed when their mentors did not show up for weekly meetings because they would look forward to that activity all week. Mentors (high school students) should also be interviewed about potential program benefits, including possible increases in academic connectedness and self-esteem, as shown in the prior study by Karcher (2009). In addition, a behavior rating scale that assesses elementary students' functioning before they begin participating in the program and then several months later would provide a more standardized view of their progress.

There is a documented need for evidence-based interventions that will promote the success of students. Peer mentoring programs like Eagle Buddies are important school-based interventions for students who are in need of academic and behavioral support. However, the efficacy of these interventions should be evaluated prior to widespread implementation in order to ensure that the benefits are significant and the costs, if present, are negligible.

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Table 1

Student Interview Responses

Question	Responses	Percentage of Students
What is your favorite thing to do with your buddy?	Games	31%
	Homework	31%
	Games and Homework	15%
	Draw	15%
	Read books together	8%
What have you learned from your buddy?	Academic stuff	46%
	Nothing / Don't know	31%
	Organization	8%
	Common interests	8%
	Try your best	8%
How well did you get to know your buddy?	Really well	46%
	Pretty good	38%
	A little	16%
How do you feel when you're with your buddy?	Happy	85%
	Kind of excited	15%
Overall, how close do you feel to your buddy?	Pretty close / A little close	70%
	Really close	15%
	Not very close	15%

Table 2

Teacher Survey Qualitative Responses

Question	Thematic category	Characteristic responses
What changes, if any, would you make to Eagle Buddies?	Consistency	We just need more of them. Consistency at times is lacking.
	Mentor accountability	High school students need to be held accountable for participation.
	Adult monitoring of dyads	An adult that checks in to see how they are performing.
What do you believe the Eagle Buddies program is supposed to achieve?	Supportive relationships	It should build a relationship between the students and provide a support for the younger child.
	Increase social skills	It offers academic help as well as social (<i>sic</i>).
	Role models	A positive connection/ friendship with a great role model.
	Academic improvement	Improved school performance; academic support

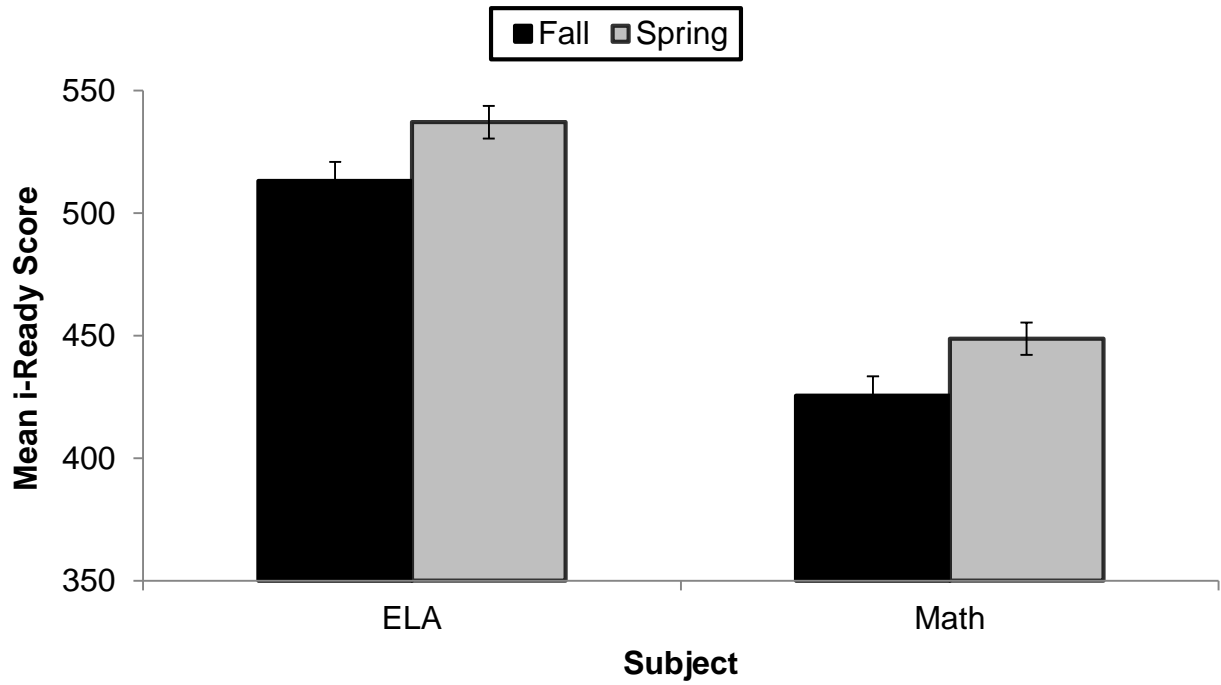


Figure 1. Mean values representing i-Ready scores in fall and spring. Significant increases in the ELA and Math scores were observed. Standard errors are represented in the figure by the error bars.

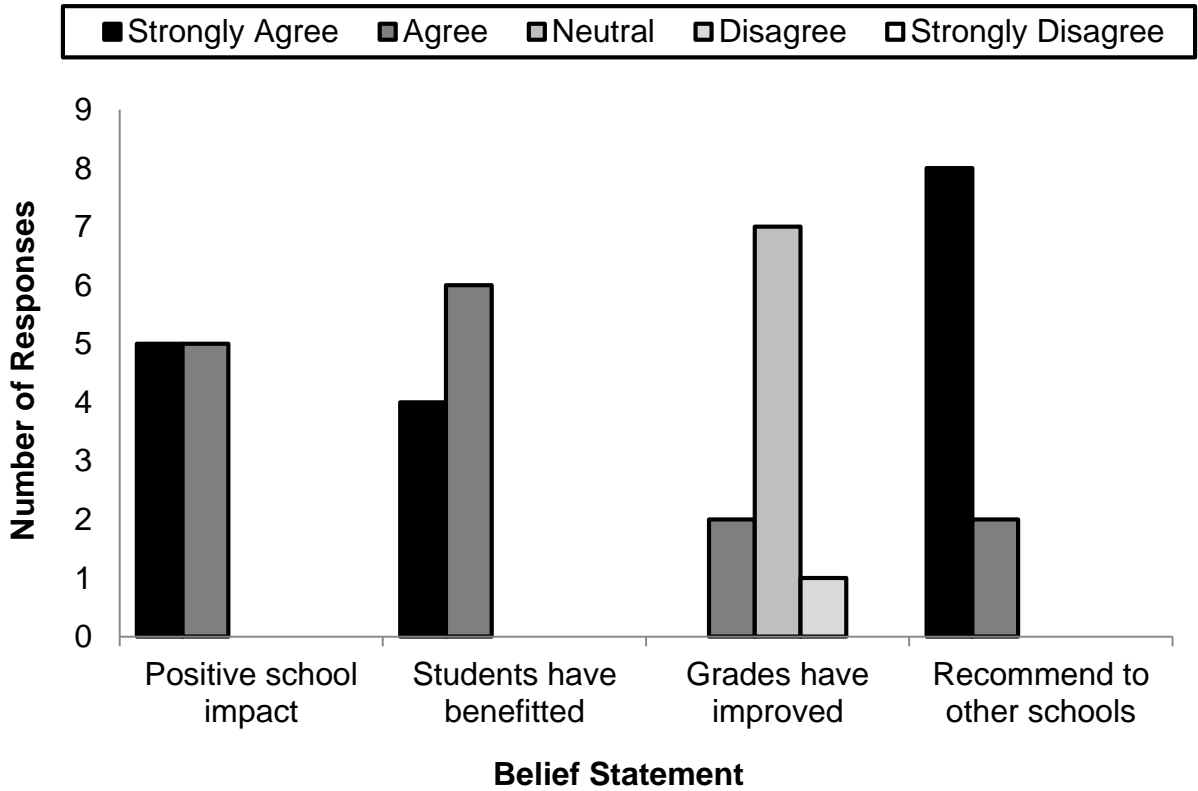


Figure 2. Number of teacher responses to each of the belief statements on the survey.

- Statement 1: The Eagle Buddies program has made a positive impact in my school.
- Statement 2: Eagle Buddies has benefitted the students who are enrolled in the program.
- Statement 3: Students from my classroom who are enrolled in Eagle Buddies have improved their grades since they started participating in the program.
- Statement 4: I will recommend the Eagle Buddies program to other schools.

*Appendix A***Statement of Informed Consent (Principal)**

We are conducting a research study to evaluate the effectiveness of the Eagle Buddies program by: 1) interviewing the elementary children involved using a brief (5-10 minutes) questionnaire to inquire about the relationship they have built with their Buddy; 2) obtaining their grades throughout the course of the year to determine whether or not the program has a positive effect on their academic achievement; and 3) surveying teachers to obtain their opinions on and recommendations for improving the program. The information and knowledge obtained from this study have the potential to inform school personnel about how the students and teachers are responding to Eagle Buddies and, overall, how to improve the program.

The following safeguards will be in place to protect the rights of participants:

1. Numerical codes will be used on all of the students' records in place of students' names to protect confidentiality.
2. No identifiable information will be used in any written notes or results of the study.
3. Participation in these activities is strictly voluntary, and the student's parent/guardian can withdraw the use of his/her child's interview results at any time. Similarly, teacher participation is voluntary and he/she can withdraw from the study at any time.
4. Brief demographic information of participants may be provided in professional meetings or psychology classes, but student and teacher names will not be used in these presentations, nor will any other identifying information be included about the students and teachers.
5. Informed consent forms will be sent to the teachers and the parents/guardians of all of the students whose data will be used. No data will be used from any student whose parents/guardians do not consent, nor from any teacher who does not consent.

Foreseeable risks include the following:

1. The only potential risk to the students would be the breach of confidentiality. Safeguards, however, are addressed above to avoid this risk.

I, _____, building principal consent to this research being conducted at Elementary. I understand that I may contact Dana Rainis or Dr. Katherine Dunham (contact information below), at any time.

Building Principal

Date

_____ I DO consent to this research being conducted at Elementary School.

_____ I DO NOT consent to this research being conducted at Elementary School.

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Appendix B

Statement of Informed Consent (Teachers)

We are conducting a research study to evaluate the effectiveness of the Eagle Buddies program. One evaluation method we would like to employ is surveying teachers to obtain their opinions on and recommendations for improving the program. The information and knowledge obtained from this study have the potential to inform school personnel about how the students and teachers are responding to Eagle Buddies and, overall, how to improve the program.

The following safeguards will be in place to protect the rights of participants:

1. Numerical codes will be used on all of the teachers’ records in place of teachers’ names to protect confidentiality.
2. No identifiable information will be used in any written notes or results of the study.
3. Participation in these activities is strictly voluntary, and the teacher can withdraw the use of his/her survey responses at any time.
4. Brief demographic information of participants may be provided in professional meetings or psychology classes, but teacher names will not be used in these presentations, nor will any other identifying information be included about the teachers.
5. Informed consent forms will be sent to the teachers and the parents/guardians of all of the students whose data will be used. No data will be used from any teacher who does not consent.

Foreseeable risks include the following:

1. The only potential risk to the teachers would be a concern about the effects of reporting anything negative about Eagle Buddies or about the children involved. However, all information will be kept confidential, and any identifiable or personal information will be changed or converted to number format to protect your privacy (see safeguards described above).

I, _____, agree to participate in this research. I understand that I may contact Dana Rainis or Dr. Katherine Dunham (contact information below), at any time.

Teacher

Date

_____ I DO agree to participate in this research.

_____ I DO NOT agree to participate in this research.

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Appendix C

Statement of Informed Consent (Parents)

We are conducting a research study to evaluate the effectiveness of the Eagle Buddies program by: 1) interviewing the elementary children involved using a brief (5-10 minutes) questionnaire to inquire about the relationship they have built with their Buddy, and 2) obtaining their grades throughout the course of the year to determine whether or not the program has a positive effect on their academic achievement. The information and knowledge obtained from this study have the potential to inform school personnel about how the students and teachers are responding to Eagle Buddies and, overall, how to improve the program.

The following safeguards will be in place to protect the rights of participants:

1. Numerical codes will be used on all of the students' records in place of students' names to protect confidentiality.
2. No identifiable information will be used in any written notes or results of the study.
3. Participation in these activities is strictly voluntary, and the student's parent/guardian can withdraw the use of his/her child's interview results at any time.
4. Brief demographic information of participants may be provided in professional meetings or psychology classes, but student names will not be used in these presentations, nor will any other identifying information be included about the students.
5. Informed consent forms will be sent to the parents/guardians of all of the students whose data will be used. No data will be used from any student whose parents/guardians do not consent.

Foreseeable risks include the following:

1. The only potential risk to the students would be the breach of confidentiality. Safeguards, however, are addressed above to avoid this risk.

I, _____, give permission for my child (Name _____) to participate in the research study described above. I understand that I may contact Dana Rainis or Dr. Katherine Dunham (contact information below), at any time.

Parent	Date
--------	------

- _____ I DO give permission for my child to participate in the research study.
 _____ I DO NOT give permission for my child to participate in the research study.

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*Appendix D***Student Interviews**

(face-to-face in case questions need to be clarified for understanding)

Interviewer: *I would like to ask you some questions about Eagle Buddies. Your answers will not be told to anyone else. Would you like to answer these questions?*

1. What is your favorite thing to do with your Buddy?
2. What have you learned from your Buddy?
3. How well did you get to know your Buddy?
4. How do you feel when you're with your Buddy? (As prompts, can ask student to name reactions such as happy, sad, excited, mad, frustrated, bored...)
5. Overall, how close do you feel to your Buddy?

*Appendix E***Teacher Survey**

**For confidentiality purposes, forms will be put into an envelope and not reviewed until all teacher responses have been collected.

1. What changes, if any, would you make to Eagle Buddies?

2. What do you believe the Eagle Buddies program is supposed to achieve?

Please rate your agreement with the following statements by circling the response option that best describes your view:

1. The Eagle Buddies program has made a positive impact in my school.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. Eagle Buddies has benefitted the students who are enrolled in the program.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. Students from my classroom who are enrolled in Eagle Buddies have improved their grades since they started participating in the program.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. I would recommend the Eagle Buddies program to other schools.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Thank you for participating in this research!