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Implementer Perspectives: The Implementation of a School-Based Mentoring Program

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Implementer Perspectives: The Implementation of a School-Based Mentoring Program

by

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Abstract

This research describes organizational level implementation strategies utilized in piloting enhancements to the school-based mentoring program from Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. Semi-structured interviews (n=15) with lead agency implementers along with conference call meeting notes were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Findings yield a description of the challenges to implementation and strategies to overcome these challenges, formal implementation strategies engaged in, and the extent to which these align with an implementation framework put forth by Klein, Conn, and Sorra (2001) with supplement from Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, and Wallace (2005). Findings from this study indicate that financial resources, management support, implementation climate and select implementation policies and practices are important to attend to during the implementation of a school-based mentoring program. Additionally, organizational readiness for change and organizational climate should be attended to before program implementation. Implementation strategies identified through this research help to define important organizational factors that drive the implementation of school-based mentoring programs.

Dedication

To all those great thinkers who came before me in the burgeoning science of implementation. Thank you for paving the path I have set off on, and for letting me play in the muck to help lay the next stones.

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To my parents. You have been my most trusted advisors in life and in research. Your unwavering support has always allowed me to 'go for it'.

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Glossary

Term	Definition
Implementation driver	A term used to describe each of the four main categories in the Klein, Conn, and Sorra (2001) implementation framework (management support, financial resource availability, implementation climate, implementation policies and practices).
Implementation strategy	A term used to describe all factors that fall within each of the four implementation drivers. These are perceived to support implementation.
Implementation policies and practices	The name of one of the four implementation drivers – from Klein, Conn, and Sorra (2001)
Program fidelity	"…the match between an intervention as it was intended to be delivered and the intervention as it actually is in real-world circumstances" (Hill, Maucione, & Hood, 2006).

Chapter 1

Introduction

In the last decade the number of school-based mentoring (SBM) programs has rapidly increased. From 1996 to 2001, there was a 40% growth in youth mentoring programs in the United States, with 70% of that growth being in formal SBM programs (Dappen & Isernhagen, 2006; Rhodes, 2005). Mentoring has been defined as a "…relationship between an older, more experienced adult and an unrelated, younger protégé – a relationship in which the adult provides ongoing guidance, instruction, and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the protégé" (Rhodes, 2005). In SBM, the mentoring relationship occurs within a school or supervised community center setting.

In 2003, the Federal Department of Education allotted $150 million dollars over three years for "student mentoring programs" (Bernstein, Dun Rappaport, Olsho, Hunt, & Levin, 2009). While this investment is impressive, demonstrating support for SBM, there is still much that is not understood about the factors that contribute to highly effective SBM programs (Karcher, 2008). Along with the need to continue building effective mentoring programs, an understanding of implementation strategies that support effective school-based mentoring programs is needed.

In a Spring 2012 search of the Psych Info Database using the terms 'youth', 'school-based', 'implement*', and 'mentor*', only 12 articles met the search criteria, 4 of which were dissertations. Of these 12, none addressed implementation strategies involved in implementing school-based mentoring programs specifically, though some did examine program fidelity. The same search in the ERIC Database yielded 22 articles,

and in Social Services Abstracts, only 4, with 1 of those being Masters Theses. With the dearth of academic literature as to how school-based mentoring programs are implemented, further study is warranted.

Overview and Research Questions

This dissertation research focuses on the pilot implementation of an enhanced version of an established school-based mentoring program (referred to in this dissertation as ESBM) from Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) over the course of two years across 23 local agencies. During this time the national organization (BBBSA) hosted conference calls with implementers from each local agency piloting the program (n=23). These conference calls occurred between July 2008 and summer 2010 for the purpose of supporting program implementation across agencies. The national office (BBBSA) utilized these phone calls as a way to troubleshoot program challenges with local agencies. This research attended to the interplay between BBBSA, (where the formulation of the enhancements began) and the agency level (where the local program changes took place).

Research questions are addressed through analysis of four types of data; notes from phone calls across groups of program implementers, review of one question from an end of year Program Survey, in-depth semi-structured interviews with program implementers, and an interview and subsequent conversations with the BBBSA Director of Research and Evaluation. Research questions focus on describing challenges identified by local agency implementers in implementing the program, the strategies developed to overcome these challenges, the strategies that local agency implementers

engage in to implement the programmatic changes (originating their local agency, and/or national organizational level) and lastly, the potential relationship between implementation strategies and perceived program effectiveness. Klein and Sorra (1996), and Klein, Conn, and Sorra (2001), have developed and empirically tested a framework of implementation that posits four main drivers of implementation and linkages between these drivers.

An intended outcome of this dissertation is to develop an understanding of the implementation strategies that are used to support the implementation of enhancements to a school-based mentoring program, and to understand how implementers perceive the effectiveness of the implementation. There is a need to more fully understand strategies that contribute to the successful implementation of school-based mentoring programs, the challenges at the program level, and the strategies to overcome challenges.

Brief History of Youth Mentoring

Most authors ascribe the origins of the term mentoring to around 800 B.C. when the character "Mentor" was created in Homer's *The Odyssey* (Baker & Maguire, 2005). Mentor was given the responsibility of watching over the King's son while he was at war. This role involved Mentor being "…a father figure, a teacher, a role model, an approachable counselor, a trusted adviser, a challenger, and an encourager" (Carruthers, 1993, pg. 9). Moving beyond historical and literary conceptions, the contemporary mentoring movement in the United States has progressed through four stages of development (Baker & Maguire, 2005). The first stage was one of emergence. During this stage there was a rise in the number of "friendly visitors" (Rauch, 1975), and other

concerned individuals who began to attempt to prevent youth delinquency. In the stage that followed, establishment, formal mentoring organizations and other organizations designed to aid youth were formed. With these organizations established, a stage of divergence soon followed, with the field of youth mentoring becoming more scientific, and the programs offered beginning to focus more on delinquency prevention. The last and current stage of mentoring that began in the early 21st century, as conceptualized by Baker and Maguire (2005), is one of focus. This stage is characterized by the need for an understanding of variables involved in the process of mentoring, along with the establishment of additional policy and organizational support. For a detailed account of the history of youth mentoring in the United States, see Baker and Maguire (2005).

School-based mentoring programs have continued to be developed as distinct from community-based mentoring. This development began partly in response to many reports in the 1980s highlighting the connection between low levels of educational achievement with poverty (Furano, Roaf, Styles, & Branch, 1993; Lazar et al., 1982). There was a need to establish school-based services to help address those issues. More recently, SBM has become more widely accepted as a type of prevention or youth development program with increasing governmental and organizational support (Bernstein et al., 2009). Additionally, as SBM has been shown to have some modest effect on academic outcomes, school leaders may be more likely to promote SBM in schools, in addition to many other school-based programs that attempt to increase test scores (Portwood & Ayers, 2005). More research specifically on youth mentoring as a prevention strategy can be found in Chapter 2.

Implementation

As there have been rapid increases over the last decade in the number of SBM programs, it seems that the time is right to begin to understand the strategies that contribute to effective implementation of these programs. Both program fidelity and implementation strategies have been identified in the implementation literature and are important to attend to during program implementation, with program fidelity being the extent to which a program delivers services as intended.

Measuring program fidelity can provide useful information to program developers, implementers, and end-users, especially during the piloting of a program. If it is unclear as to which components of a program were utilized by practitioners during a pilot, then it will not be possible to tell for certain what produced program outcomes or how to replicate a program. As a result it will be difficult to evaluate outcomes beyond a pilot phase (Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2000). Having a clear picture of program fidelity during implementation may allow for program operations to be assessed and adjustments to be made during the pilot or start-up phase of a program (Werner, 2004). It may also provide information for future implementation.

Studying the use of implementation strategies that drive successful implementation of programs is also important. Implementation strategies are described throughout this dissertation as residing in one of four implementation drivers (Klein et al., 2001). These are called ‘drivers’ as they are posited to drive successful implementation (Metz, Blase, & Bowie, 2007). The four implementation drivers are: management support, financial resource availability, implementation climate, and lastly, implementation policies and practices (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace,

2005; Klein et al., 2001). There is a dearth of description of how, or if, implementation strategies are utilized within the mentoring research literature. As the documentation of the use of various implementation strategies becomes more prevalent in research studies it will become easier to assess the effect of these strategies on program outcomes. More research specifically on implementation can be found in Chapter 2.

Context of the Study

The context for implementation of the ESBM program is within the existing Big Brothers Big Sisters of America network of agencies. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) is a widely known name in mentoring in the United States (Grossman & Garry, 1997; Keating, Tomishima, Foster, & Alessandri, 2002). Big Brothers and Big Sisters were founded as separate organizations around 1904 in New York, and it was not until the late 1970s that these two organizations merged to become Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. A core focus on school-based mentoring within the organization was established more recently in the year 2000. The popularity of SBM is reflected in the 270% increase in school-based matches during the period between 1997 and 2003, going from 27,000 to 100,000 matches (Hansen, 2007). As of 2007, when the largest BBBSA SBM impact study was conducted, it was reported that there were 126,000 school-based matches (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, Feldman, & McMaken, 2007). This impact study demonstrated room for improvement in outcomes for youth engaging in SBM programs through BBBSA agencies.

It was from this impact study (Herrera et al., 2007) that the enhancements to the SBM program began to be formulated. In light of limited research findings released

before the entire impact study became public, an advisory group was formed by the national BBBSA organization in order to develop a response to findings, and to then develop refinements to the SBM program. In implementing any program, or enhancements to programs, there come challenges to implementation as well as challenges in understanding what implementation strategies are being used. One intended result of this dissertation is the development of an understanding of the implementer perceptions of implementation strategies employed at both the local agency and those that came from BBBSA. Findings may aid in scaling-up the ESBM program to a national level in the future. More information about BBBSA and the context in which the ESBM program was developed and implemented, can be found in Chapter 3.

Relevance to Social Work

Studying the implementation of a SBM program has both micro and macro practice implications for social work. At the micro-practice level, mentoring programs generally fall within the purview of social work, and thus may involve social workers who manage or supervise these programs. At the micro level, the social worker in a school setting may carry responsibilities when a SBM program is implemented as they may be responsible for developing, implementing, and/or evaluating various components of SBM programs (Randolph & Johnson, 2008). In the case of the BBBSA ESBM program, the social worker's presence in the school environment may offer support to the ESBM program during implementation and beyond. What ever their involvement, social workers in schools need to be informed in order to effectively aid program implementation, or aid in monitoring youth involved in an SBM program. Relevant

information for social workers in schools may include mentoring frameworks, best practices, evaluation methods, implementation strategies that affect implementation and ongoing program fidelity, and potential outcomes (Randolph & Johnson, 2008).

At the macro-practice level, an understanding of the strategies that support implementation of human service programs may prove valuable for program developers and practitioners (Mildon & Shlonsky, 2011) Studying the implementation of a SBM program requires that insights be drawn in from the broader implementation literature into the specific human service context. This dissertation draws heavily on a framework of implementation that has been previously evaluated in non-human service settings, and imposes the framework onto this programmatic context (Klein et al., 2001). Additionally, this dissertation draws on some of the core implementation components that have been identified by the National Implementation Research Network through their cross-discipline review of the implementation literature (Fixsen et al., 2005).

This introduction makes clear that SBM programs represent a relatively young offshoot of youth mentoring that is poised for growth (Hansen, 2007; Rhodes, 2005). Consistent with the nature of the current stage of youth mentoring (focus), researchers and practitioners may find it increasingly important to understand processes and practices, including implementation strategies, that contribute to mentoring program effectiveness (Baker & Maguire, 2005). As the ESBM program has been developed at the national level, this offers a unique context from which to study the implementation strategies that support program practices and program fidelity at the local agency level. The implementer perspective as to the program challenges and the implementation

strategies used during ESBM program implementation can serve as a source of feedback to inform future program implementers.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This review examines three streams of literature. The areas of literature to explore when examining the implementation of school-based mentoring (SBM) programs include youth mentoring as a prevention strategy, school-based mentoring, and implementation. An in-depth look at research conducted on BBBSA mentoring programs specifically is presented in Chapter 3. Since SBM programs grew out of established community-based mentoring (CBM) programs, it stands to reason that SBM programs have a similar form to their community-based counterparts. With similarities across these two types of mentoring programs it is important to have an overview of the literature that depicts youth mentoring as a prevention strategy.

Youth Mentoring as a Prevention Strategy

Many rigorous studies have been conducted that highlight youth mentoring as a prevention strategy, as a way to reduce problem behaviors, and also as a strategy to improve youth competencies (Keller, 2005). Various mentoring programs have different foci as to what they aim to prevent. Aseltine, DuPre, and Lamlein (2000) found that youth participation in the Across Ages mentoring program resulted in fewer behavior problems and less substance abuse than those youth who were in control conditions. Grossman and Garry (1997) describe the Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP) and its proven effects on reducing juvenile gang participation, delinquency, and school dropout rates, as well as improving academic performance. In their study of 959 youth receiving mentoring through BBBSA, Tierney, Grossman and Resch (1995) found, through self-

reports, that those youth who had regular contact with their mentor for at least a year were less likely to start drinking, using illegal drugs, and were less likely to skip a day or even a class during school. Keating et al. (2002) suggest that mentoring programs with greater intensity (i.e., higher frequency of mentor/mentee contact) are likely to have better prevention effects.

DuBois, along with various co-authors, conducted two key reviews of youth mentoring studies in 2002 and 2011. Both reviews serve to highlight the effects of mentoring programs on youth. The 2002 meta-analysis reported overall but modest positive effects of mentoring programs with estimated effect sizes of .14 to .18 (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002), while the 2011 study reported slightly larger, but still modest, effect size of .21 (DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, & Valentine, 2011) From the 2002 meta-analysis, youth mentoring program 'best practices' were derived and have since been widely cited (Dappen & Isernhagen, 2005; Karcher, 2004; Randolph & Johnson, 2008). The components of 'best practice' for youth mentoring programs involve monitoring program implementation (i.e., program fidelity), screening of mentors, matching mentors and mentees on at least one criteria, having pre-match training for mentors, ongoing training for mentors, program supervision, additional support for mentors, some level of structured activity during mentor/mentee interaction, parental support or involvement, expectations for frequency of contact, and the duration of the mentoring relationship (DuBois et al., 2002).

These practices may be similar to those of school-based mentoring programs, though no comparative meta-analysis examining school-based mentoring programs has been conducted (see Wheeler, Keller & DuBois, 2010 for a recent analysis of the

effectiveness of three school-based mentoring studies and Wood & Mayo-Wilson, 2012 for a recent, though not comparative, meta-analysis). The differences between school-based and community-based programs have been well described (Herrera, Sipe, McClanahan, Arbreton, & Pepper, 2000). As compared to SBM programs, community-based programs tend to focus less on academic activities, involve less frequent teacher contact, are less likely to affect school outcomes, and serve fewer youth with problems in school and who have been held back. School-based programs however, are thought to cost less than community-based programs, and require fewer full-time staff (Herrera et al., 2000).

School-based Mentoring

Herrera et al. (2000) have outlined typical operations of school-based programs. These programs tend to have less rigorous mentor screening as they meet in supervised settings at school or other community facilities, usually have regularly scheduled meeting times, require a shorter term commitment from the mentor, have less stringent matching criteria than community-based programs, have matches who spend less time together than community-based matches, and are likely to dictate many of the activities the matches engage in.

Several reasons for the implementation of mentoring programs in schools have been discussed (Randolph & Johnson, 2008). First, schools are frequently under pressure to increase student performance while experiencing declines in financial and human resources. External mentoring agencies, such as the network of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America agencies, may provide a relatively low cost way to help increase student

achievement through a program offered in the school environment. Second, schools offer a natural structure within which to implement mentoring programs, making program implementation relatively easier than implementing a program in other community settings.

Third, SBM programs generally serve youth who otherwise may not be reached through community-based mentoring (CBM) programs, though both programs serve low to moderately at-risk youth (Randolph & Johnson, 2008). Students chosen by school personnel to participate in SBM programs may primarily be those who are experiencing moderately stressful life events. These youth may be more vulnerable than other students (Herrera et al., 2000) making it even more important for the field of social work to understand the effectiveness of programs serving this population and also how these programs can be effectively implemented to produce positive outcomes. Finally, relatively lower costs of SBM programs as compared to CBM programs make SBM attractive to schools and communities. Cost has been the point of some controversy however, as SBM programs have been documented to be less costly than CBM programs, but with the tradeoff of weaker outcomes due to less frequent mentor/mentee contact (Herrera et al., 2000).

Beyond this list of possible reasons for the widespread implementation of SBM programs, studies have also been conducted in the past 10 years to highlight the diverse, positive outcomes that can result. To date, there have been comparatively fewer studies addressing the potential impacts of mentoring programs on youth in school settings than those studies focusing on youth receiving mentoring in other community settings. As

such, there are few studies published that have evaluated the effectiveness of SBM programs in producing positive youth outcomes (Karcher, 2008; Wheeler et al., 2010).

A recent study of SBM program effectiveness and implementation has come from Bernstein et al. (2009) and their examination of a government-funded student mentoring project. The U.S. Department of Education's Student Mentoring Program, authorized under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2002, was a competitive federal grant program managed by the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools (OSDFS). Though this grant has since ended, and programs are no longer being tracked, a detailed report was issued that outlined the effectiveness of student mentoring programs funded over the course of several years. Bernstein et al. (2009) described inconsistencies in program delivery across 32 grantees sampled. One tenth of mentors had not undergone a reference check (which was required by the grant), only 41% of mentors received ongoing training, 17% of mentees who should have received a mentor did not, and the average match length was only 5.8 months. With inconsistencies across these programs, and a low level of program fidelity, it is not surprising that statistically significant impacts were absent across the outcomes assessed.

In another study evaluating the effectiveness of a SBM program, Karcher (2008) examined the additive effects of providing school-based mentors to Latino/a youth who were already receiving supportive service(s) in the school environment. As many SBM programs frequently occur in tandem with other supportive services, assessing the additive effects of a SBM program may paint a more real-world picture of expected outcomes for many SBM programs. Results of this study demonstrated greater significant main effects for youth in the additive mentoring group in comparison to those

receiving supportive services alone (Karcher, 2008). The four main effects were in domains representing connectedness to peers, global self-esteem, self-in-the-present, and perceived support from friends. Among youth sampled in this study, elementary school boys and high school girls benefited most from the additive mentoring condition, while minor iatrogenic effects were seen in elementary school girls and high school boys. Overall, effect sizes for the four main effects were low, with the average effect size (*d*=.10) being very similar to those reported by DuBois et al. (2002).

Other, general outcomes resulting from youth participation in SBM programs are, a demonstrated improvement in community engagement, socio-emotional skills, academic attitude, conventional connectedness, connectedness with school, family, and to the community, as well as a decrease in office referrals and alcohol initiation (Converse, 2009; Harwood & Radoff, 2009; Karcher & Lindwall, 2003; Randolph & Johnson, 2008; Rhodes, Reddy, Grossman, & Lee, 2002). Other studies have found no effect on youth outcomes after involvement in an SBM program (Barron-McKeagney, Woody, & D'Souza, 2003; Wood & Mayo-Wilson, 2012).

In studying the effects of a one-year SBM program on a small group of 10 year-old Latino/a children it was found that no positive outcomes were experienced in the domains of grades or self-concept. Studies such as this that find no effect on youth outcomes may not demonstrate a weakness of SBM so much as they may demonstrate a lack of alignment between mentoring objectives and outcomes measured (Barron-McKeagney et al., 2003). These studies do however highlight the need for mentor/mentee relationships to continue beyond the one-year mark in order to increase the likelihood that positive outcomes will be observed (Barron-McKeagney et al., 2003).

Results from studies of community-based and school-based mentoring programs suggest that mentoring relationships lasting *at least* one year tend to have greater positive effects for mentees than those closing before the one-year mark (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Herrera, 2004).

Lee and Cramond (1999) studied students who had been mentored for various amounts of time (n=82) versus those in a waitlist condition (n=48) to assess self-efficacy, aspiration, and possible future selves. It was found that only those students who had been mentored for more than one year had significantly higher scores on the aspiration scale than students in the waitlist condition. These findings may support DuBois et al.'s (2002) best practice of setting expectations about the duration of the match relationship with the mentee. If the mentee understands the length of the relationship, and the mentor follows through on their commitment, the youth may be more likely to experience more positive outcomes.

Monitoring fidelity of implementation is another of DuBois et al.'s (2002) best practices mirrored by findings in the SBM literature. Through survey methodology, Dappen and Isernhagen (2006) have explored contextual issues that were hypothesized to have an effect on the outcomes of a Nebraska-based SBM program called TeamMates. One purpose of this study was to examine the level of program fidelity across urban and nonurban schools by comparing the number of mentors recruited in each location. It was found that there were more matches (higher program fidelity), based on percent of population, in nonurban settings than urban settings. This contextual factor may be informative for future youth and mentor recruitment efforts.

In a review of the literature on SBM programs, Randolph and Johnson (2008) discuss frameworks, best practices, evaluation, and outcomes. Seven of the eight SBM programs reviewed were couched in a prevention program framework, targeting youth who were at a somewhat elevated risk status. The best practices identified by DuBois et al. (2002) were used as a benchmark from which to assess the programs in these eight studies. Each of the programs set expectations for mentors about the length of involvement and also in the frequency of contact. It was found that all programs involved mentor training before any direct involvement between a mentor and mentee, as well as ongoing monitoring after a mentor and mentee had been matched. In the seven other dimensions of best practice (DuBois et al., 2002), programs varied widely. Most of the SBM programs studied by Randolph and Johnson (2008) resulted in positive outcomes that were either behavioral and/or attitudinal in nature. Evidence from this review points to the positive effects of SBM programs on pro-social outcomes for youth (Randolph & Johnson, 2008), with an emphasis on the relationship between mentor and mentee as a major tool for success.

This review of SBM programs has described program components, discussed possible outcomes, focused on studies of program effectiveness, as well as highlighted the need for matches to last at least one year for greater positive effects to be seen.

Implementation

The number of school-based mentoring programs has increased rapidly in the last ten or more years, and research has increasingly emphasized the importance of high practitioner fidelity to program practices to produce positive outcomes. With an increase

in the number of SBM programs it is important to understand how high fidelity program implementation can be supported. In many instances in the implementation literature, challenges and barriers to successful program implementation have been identified. The sources of challenges identified in the implementation literature in human services are diverse and include, among other challenges, a lack of time, high cost or lack of funding, legalities and policies, lack of buy-in and internalization of a newly implemented program, system organization, lack of reward for use of a program, lack of program fidelity, lack of definition as to what a successful program looks like, inadequate staff training or a lack of knowledge, lack of coaching, high staff turnover, and problems with staff selection (Aiyer, 2002; Ayres & Griffith, 2007; Babor & Higgins-Biddle, 2000; Clarke et al., 2005; Bond et al., 2001; Corrigan, Steiner, McCracken, Blaser, & Barr, 2001; Cranney, 2001; Barber, Barber, & Clark, 1983; Chamberlain, 2003; Bauman, Stein, & Ireys, 1991; Ben-Porath, Peterson, & Smee, 2004; Carta & Greenwood, 1997; Cleaver & Walker, 2004; Mancini et al., 2009). Additionally, obstacles to implementation of mentoring programs in particular have been described as being five-fold (Borden, 2010). These include insufficient resources, inadequate infrastructure, lack of support, limited knowledge of mentoring best practices, and unclear or unrealistic expectations.

In order for researchers and practitioners to overcome implementation challenges such as those listed above, it may be helpful to clearly demonstrate the ties between the use of effective implementation strategies in implementing a program in an organization, and high fidelity practitioner use of effective program practices, to the ultimate effectiveness of a mentoring program. To be clear, there are three different levels being linked. At the broadest level are implementation strategies – these are practices at the

agency, or larger organizational level that support the new mentoring program being implemented well. At the next level are the program practices, these are both how program staff who support matches operate, and may also refer to how mentors operate. The narrowest level represents the outcomes, or the effectiveness of the program, generally focused on youth outcomes.

A low level of practitioner fidelity to effective program practices (at both the program practitioner and mentor level) has been linked to inconsistencies in how mentoring relationships affect youth (Rhodes & Lowe, 2008). This link demonstrates a need for greater consistency of the use of effective program practices (higher program fidelity) to allow mentees to experience more positive outcomes. These inconsistencies may be indicative of a lack of a clear program model, or a clearly articulated model (Rhodes & Lowe, 2008).

It may be possible that barriers to consistently implementing effective program practices are rooted in a lack of a clear program model for what constitutes an effective mentoring program (Ben-Porath et al., 2004). Identifying components of effective school-based mentoring programs may help to create consistent positive outcomes for youth (Rhodes & Lowe, 2008). Additionally, understanding the implementation strategies at the agency level that may be useful during program implementation is important. A program is likely to be implemented with low fidelity when there is a lack of proper implementation supports such as organizational infrastructure and training (Rhodes & Lowe, 2008). When an effective mentoring program is implemented with high fidelity, the program then has a greater chance to be effective in producing positive youth outcomes.

DuBois et al. (2002) highlight the possibility of unintended negative effects for youth when mentoring programs operate with low practitioner fidelity to program practices. In their review of the effects of mentoring on youth, significant individual moderators of the overall effect size emerged and included factors related to the program and fidelity to program practices. Moderators included ongoing training for mentors, expectations for frequency of contact between mentor and mentee, structured activities during meetings, mechanisms for mentor support and involvement of parents, and monitoring of overall program implementation. Those studies that reported using procedures for monitoring program implementation had larger effect sizes (*d*=.18) than those who did not report monitoring program implementation (*d*=.06; DuBois, et al., 2002).

Additionally, DuBois, et al. (2002) identified a lack of ongoing training across mentoring programs (23% of studies), while there was a relatively high percentage of programs providing initial training or orientation to mentors (71% of studies). This review, however, did not address the use of potentially effective implementation strategies (Dubois et al., 2002). It may be that as program staff are trained, or coached, or even given more frequent evaluations of their performance, that mentors will then be better trained, both initially and over time. Again, it is not possible to make any sound conclusions without information about the implementation strategies employed.

In the school-based prevention literature, factors contributing to successful program implementation have been documented and highlight the importance of high fidelity program implementation. Program effectiveness, of programs shown to have positive outcomes for youth, is a function of that fidelity. In collecting data from over

3,500 school-based prevention programs, Gottfredson and Gottfredson (2002) describe a general lack of knowledge about the quality of program implementation in prevention programs. Characteristics of successful implementation of school-based prevention programs were identified as being: organizational capacity, organizational support (including training, principal support and other supervision), the features of the program itself (including implementation standards, relevant manuals, and quality control mechanisms), and the integration of the program into daily operations of the school (including local initiation and planning). These characteristics are representative of implementation strategies as well as components of the program itself.

Gottfredson and Gottfredson (2002) also highlight mentoring programs in schools in their review of school-based prevention programs. Through their review, it was demonstrated that the level of program implementation of mentoring programs in schools tended to be stronger than five other types of school-based prevention programs. The level of program fidelity for mentoring programs alone however was found to be substantially lower than those standards prescribed by BBBSA, the mentoring organization of study in this dissertation (Herrera et al., 2007). Standards for high fidelity to the BBBSA SBM model include that matches meet for 52 sessions or more each year, and that the match last at least one year. In practice, only one-fourth of the SBM programs assessed involved 52 sessions or more, and only 59% of those matches lasted at least one year (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 2002). These findings emphasize the possibility that a low level of program fidelity may be related to low usage of implementation strategies at the agency level. Without mentoring studies that document

the implementation process, it is impossible to know if, which, or to what extent, implementation strategies were used.

In studying SBM programs, Karcher (2008) has described that without higher quality program implementation, and more attention to program fidelity, SBM may be "...of modest immediate value beyond other services provided to youth in schools and that it may have no direct, appreciable effect on academic achievement." (p. 111). As the published literature evaluating SBM programs is still in its infancy, it is not surprising that little is known about the potential impacts of SBM programs that are delivered with full program fidelity. Findings from the evaluation of the U.S. Department of Education's Student Mentoring Programs were described as being informative, and providing a rich context for a *typical* implementation of a SBM program (Bernstein et al., 2009).

As an example of a typical implementation, Karcher (2008) found that students in an additive mentoring condition did not receive the full dosage of mentoring as was outlined in program practices. Matching mentors and mentees frequently (83%) occurred on the basis of schedule matching and not on the basis of mutual interest. Mentors were expected to meet with their mentees 60 min per week for 8 months in the school year, but in practice they met an average of 8 times across a 3 month span during the school year.

Though mentoring programs that are 'typically implemented' may be of limited value to youth, an increase in program staff fidelity to effective program practices could potentially increase program effectiveness (Karcher, 2008). The use of recognized implementation strategies may be of substantial use in increasing program staff fidelity to program practices. If staff at the program level receive more training, coaching, or feel

an increase in management support then issues in the areas of mentor recruitment, scheduling meetings for mentors, scheduling supervision, and maintaining matches, among others may begin to be ameliorated. Mentors may then receive better training or supervision, which may result in improved outcomes for youth.

Moving now from the discussion of implementation within the mentoring literature, to the broader implementation literature, implementation challenges can be viewed in the context of various implementation frameworks. Implementation frameworks offer a structure from which to examine implementation strategies, and help to highlight intentional ways to overcome implementation challenges and drive effective implementation (Fixsen et al., 2005; Greenhalgh et al., 2004; Klein & Sorra, 1996; Klein et al., 2001; Wandersman et al., 2008). To date, "no one model of dissemination and implementation has taken hold in the social services" (McMillen, 2012, p. 388).

This dissertation research focuses on Klein et al.'s (2001) implementation framework. This framework is user-based, which means that it begins with an organization's awareness for the opportunity to change a practice, or to implement a new program, and follows the process through to the organization fully implementing and incorporating that program into business as usual (Klein & Sorra, 1996; Wandersman et al., 2008). This is much like what has happened with the development of the ESBM program in the context of local BBBSA agencies.

Within the Klein et al. (2001) framework several implementation drivers are explored here specifically within the context of youth mentoring and human service organizations. In Chapter 4, Klein's implementation framework itself is discussed more in depth. The implementation drivers are; management support, financial resource

availability, implementation climate, and implementation policies and practices. The implementation policies and practices driver is also influenced by Fixsen et al.'s (2005) work in defining core implementation components.

Though the design of the innovation or program is not part of an implementation driver, according to the model put forth by Klein et al. (2001), there are aspects of youth mentoring programs that make them more or less likely to be adopted and implemented. Other implementation models do include program design as one factor in implementation (see Rogers, 2003 for a good example), but that is not the model used by this researcher. In this research, programmatic aspects are discussed separate from the Klein et al. (2001) model.

Programmatic aspects relating to the ESBM pilot programs are explored first. Many factors have been described to explain variance in a program's rate of adoption. One factor affecting the rate of adoption of a program is the complexity of the program itself (Greenhalgh et al., 2004; Rogers, 2003; Tornatzky & Klein, 1982). If a program is perceived to be complex by those implementing it, it is less likely to be adopted quickly, or with ease. As the implementation of the ESBM program may not be a significant change for some agencies as it focuses on altering practices and encouraging new staff behaviors, the program may or may not be perceived as complex. If the program is perceived to be complex, then other implementation strategies can help to compensate for the complexity, in order to implement the program well.

Another factor affecting the rate of adoption of a program is relative advantage (Greenhalgh et al., 2004; Rogers, 2003; Tornatzky & Klein, 1982). Rogers (2003) has described 'relative advantage' to be a strong predictor of an innovation's rate of adoption

in an organization. A program may be more readily adopted if it has a clear advantage in terms of cost or simplifying tasks and processes (Greenhalgh et al., 2004). Additionally, the fit of the program with implementer and user values is important (Greenhalgh et al., 2004; Klein et al., 2001; Tornatzky & Klein, 1982). Rogers (2003) describes this as 'compatibility', and thus the perceived fit of the program to existing personal or organizational values is relevant in implementation. Other factors relating to the rate of adoption of a program include allowing users to experiment with the program on a limited basis (trialability), having the benefits of the program being observable (observability), and allowing space for the program and organization to adapt to one another (reinvention) (Greenhalgh et al., 2004).

What links a program to its adoption is the innovation-decision (Rogers, 2003). The innovation-decision is where the process of implementation begins. If there are many people who must be involved in making a decision to adopt a program, the rate of adoption may be slow as the rate of decision-making is likely a function of the number of decision-makers involved. In the case of the ESBM program, a relatively small group (the Task Force) was formed to develop the ESBM program, and to then make recommendations as to the enhancements that should be piloted in the school-based programs within the BBBSA network of agencies.

Beyond the program design and innovation decision, management support is one of the four implementation drivers that is explored here in the context of youth mentoring (Klein et al., 2001). Social workers involved in implementing practice-based research have noted that a barrier to implementation is a lack of organizational support (Wade & Neuman, 2007). Organizational and top management support for a mentoring program is

beneficial to the sustained implementation of that program (Hollin, 1995; Nielsen, 2005). Organizational support is needed to help develop a climate for implementation that values, and supports the implementation of the program (Klein et al., 2001; Wade & Neuman, 2007) and may consist of management offering training and supervision to employees (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 2002). Program staff perceptions of the level of organizational support for the program may affect the quality of implementation, which then may influence the quality of the mentor/mentee relationship (Nielsen, 2005). This implementation driver (e.g., the presence of organizational support) may ultimately influence the quality or outcome of program practices (e.g., the mentoring relationship).

The second implementation driver posited to affect implementation is the availability of financial resources (Klein et al., 2001). In order to develop and implement a mentoring program, adequate financial resources should be available (Dappen & Isernhagen, 2005; Hollin, 1995; Klein et al., 2001). Unlike other businesses that may attract investors because of potential future monetary payoffs, mentoring organizations must actively seek funding to support their programs (Grossman, 1999). Funding may hinge on whether or not they are able to show how their organization is able to make a difference as compared with other possible beneficiaries of the public or philanthropic investment. Mentoring programs must measure success in order to demonstrate that they produce positive effects for youth in the community, otherwise funding may become hard to find or maintain.

Saito and Sipe (2007) highlight this difficulty in a recent survey of mentoring programs where over 75% of providers described fundraising to be ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ difficult. At the agency level, components of mentoring, such as match support, need to

have sufficient resources supporting them to maintain adequate support to matches (Rhodes, Grossman, & Resch, 2000). It has been shown that the availability of financial resources is a significant predictor of the overall quality of another implementation driver – implementation policies and practices (Nord & Tucker, 1987; Klein et al., 2001; Klein & Knight, 2005).

Organizational climate for implementation is another driver of implementation and is explored here in the context of mentoring and human service organizations (Klein et al., 2001). In the implementation research literature, organizational climate for implementation reflects a strategic climate while general organizational climate has been defined as the psychological impact of the work environment on the individual worker (Aarons, Horowitz, Dlugosz, & Ehrhart, 2012; Glisson, Dukes, & Green, 2006). When program staff members perceive that they work in a fair and supportive organizational climate they may be more likely to remain on the job longer, have better attitudes about work, deliver higher quality services, and ultimately achieve better outcomes for youth. For example, an implication of a positive organizational climate for mentoring programs may be that program staff trained in the program are retained and have the opportunity to master the skill over time, therefore performing at a higher level (Keller, 2007).

The strategic climate for implementation, or the organizational climate for implementation, is the way staff members feel about implementing a new program in general (Aarons, et al., 2012; Klein, et al., 2001). The more positive the implementation climate, the better the attitudes of program staff should be about implementing and using a new program. When employees perceive that a new program is better than the program it is replacing (relative advantage), it may be reflected in the implementation climate as

the benefits are expected to outweigh the costs of adopting the new program (Greenhalgh et al., 2004). Additionally, Rogers (2003) describes that offering incentives for those implementing a new program may speed up employee behavior change, and strengthen the climate for implementation.

Implementation policies and practices is the final implementation driver described in the Klein et al. (2001) framework. There are multiple implementation strategies embedded within this implementation driver, and these constitute the core strategies driving the quality implementation of program practices (Klein et al., 2001). These strategies are described in depth in the following sections as they apply to mentoring and human service organizations. Also highlighted in the discussion that follows is the lack of attention and research in the overall youth mentoring literature about these specific strategies.

The headings for the following subsections of implementation strategies are drawn from Klein et al. (2001) and Fixsen et al. (2005). These strategies have been identified and fully described by Fixsen et al. (2005) in their publication: *Implementation Research: A Synthesis of the Literature*. The goal of their work was to synthesize implementation research and to subsequently determine "…what is known about relevant components and conditions of implementation" (p. 3). Over 1,000 articles across a wide range of domains were reviewed in full-text, which resulted in 743 articles being kept in the review and 377 of those being identified as significant implementation articles.

An outcome of their synthesis was the identification and definition of core implementation components. Core implementation components are "…the most essential and indispensable components of an implementation practice or program" (Fixsen et al.,

2005, p. 24). Many of these core implementation components have also been more generally described in human services research and include attention to: staff selection, staff training, coaching, quality administrative practices, staff evaluation, program evaluation, and systems interventions (Hollin, 1995; Jekielek, Moore, & Hair, 2001; Keller, 2007; Metz, Goldsmith, & Arbreton, 2008; Powers, Sowers, & Stevens, 1995). Rabin and Brownson (2012) describe the above implementation strategies as encompassing some of the many "…systematic processes, activities, and resources that are used to integrate interventions into usual settings" (p. 26).

The basis for including the following discussion is to allow the reader to gain a greater perspective for implementation policies and practices that have been found to facilitate the implementation of human service programs. The implementation policies and practices described here are compensatory and cumulative: not all programs will make use of all of the implementation strategies, and the strength and quality of each of these implementation strategies may vary across programs and organizations.

Selection. Fixsen, et al. (2005) state that selection may be "…a key ingredient of implementation at every level" (p. 36). There is a notable absence of discussion in the youth mentoring literature about the characteristics of professional staff employed by mentoring organizations. Favorable skills to be selected for, when possible, in mentoring program staff include: interpersonal skills, clinical skills (assessment, training, advising, negotiation, resolving conflicts within matches), ability to manage mentor/mentee matches, and caseworker-like skills (Keller, 2007). If these skills cannot be selected for, then it may be most appropriate for them to be a focus of training. As there are no formal academic programs to prepare mentoring professionals, educational qualifications of

mentoring program staff generally are that they have a B.A. in human services (Keller, 2007). Selecting higher quality program staff could lead to improved outcomes for youth. This is an example of how using an implementation strategy (i.e., selection or training) can contribute to better programmatic outcomes for youth.

Training and coaching. Fixsen et al. (2005) define training as having three functional components "…knowledge of the program and practices, demonstrations of key skills, and practice to criterion of key skills." (p. 43). Additionally, they describe the core of coaching to be "…teaching and reinforcing evidence-based skill development and adaptations of skills and craft knowledge to fit the personal styles of the practitioners" (p. 47). Within the context of mentoring, Keller (2007) discusses the need for professional mentoring staff to be trained in order to acquire knowledge, and then transfer that knowledge to practice. Training may focus on core principles and practices of the mentoring program, improving interpersonal skills, strengthening clinical skills, developing match management skills, developing caseworker skills (Keller, 2007), understanding the role of the mentor, understanding youth needs, and understanding the youth population (Cannata, Garringer, Rummell, Arevalo, & Jucovy, 2008).

The U.S. Department of Education's Mentoring Resource Center offers more resources that specifically highlight components of mentor training (http://www.edmentoring.org/online_res3.html). In addition to describing the content of training, Keller (2007) also describes the barriers to transfer of training to practice. These include a lack of manager support, time and workload pressures, staff resistance to new ideas, as well as inadequate performance and reward structures.

In an assessment of eight BBBSA agencies, match supervision was the program practice most associated with the rate of mentor/mentee interaction (Jekielek et al., 2001). This association highlights the importance of the skill level of professional mentoring staff (i.e., ability to offer quality match supervision) in having an influence on the quality of the mentoring relationship, and thus youth outcomes. Without adequate training, program staff may not be able to provide quality supervision to matches.

In a New Zealand-based study, McLaren (2003) describes how the presence of effective program staff can bolster positive youth outcomes. In New Zealand there are a relatively high percentage (10-15%) of youth ages 15-19 who are inactive in education, training, and work settings at any given time. McLaren (2003) reviews the consequences of inactivity, the reasons for inactivity, and strategies and interventions shown to be effective in increasing youth activity. Interventions discussed include those directed at increasing education participation and outcomes, as well as work readiness.

One 'principle of effectiveness for interventions to increase participation in education' was the presence of effective program coordinators (Hahn 1999; Sigel & Renninger, 1998). Program staff effectiveness results in positive youth outcomes such as better attitudes about school and school performance (McLaren, 2003). In defining what 'staff effectiveness' means (i.e., keeping in touch with youth, getting to know parents, arranging outside services if needed), focused training may be developed to support program practices.

In their discussion of after-school programs, Metz et al., (2008) state that effective and ongoing staff training will yield high quality program infrastructure and program implementation. This is an example of how making use of implementation strategies

(i.e., training on program practices) can yield high fidelity program practices (i.e., adherence to program model) (Miller, Sorensen, Selzer, & Brigham, 2006). They suggest that training should be ongoing and be both formal and informal. Metz et al., (2008) also emphasize a need for additional monitoring if training is to be effective. Thus, continuous feedback and coaching are needed.

Staff evaluation. It is important to understand the extent to which program staff follow outlined program practices, whether it be in the first year or the tenth year of implementation (Bond et al., 2001). Fixsen et al. (2005) describe staff evaluation to be "…essential for determining the extent to which the core intervention components were delivered…when interacting with consumers" (p.55). In addition to program staff, mentors should also be evaluated to ensure they are developing an appropriate relationship with the youth, spending adequate time with the youth, and to ensure that other prescribed elements of the mentoring program are in place. Mentor, mentee, and match relationship evaluation receive much attention within mentoring research.

Short-term, experimental studies often use measures of practitioner fidelity to ensure that program practices are followed as intended. In a study using a two-independent group, randomized block design to evaluate the impact of mentoring, Powers et al., (1995) used checklists completed by mentors as a form of self-evaluation and as a measure of fidelity to program practices. As another example, a program using Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) evaluated practitioners on a monthly basis to assess their fidelity to program practices (Schoenwald, Henggeler, Brondino, & Rowland, 2000). Frequent fidelity checks are useful for any program, especially one that may be more complex or take special skill on the part of the professional.

In youth mentoring research there is a need for evaluation of program staff in addition to the more frequent focus on mentors or the mentoring relationship. DuBois, et al. (2006) note that, though there have been studies examining how program fidelity relates to mentoring *relationship* factors, "…there has been comparatively little corresponding examination of how fidelity of implementation in *program* level factors (e.g., training) relates to youth outcomes" (p. 669). Program staff should be assessed for adherence to aspects of the mentoring program, such as: practices to recruit mentors, the frequency with which mentors are trained, and the amount of time, or the frequency with which staff are engaged in match support activities.

Program evaluation. It is important to evaluate a mentoring program in an ongoing manner to ensure and support congruence over time with organizational level practices that support local agency-level mentoring practices. Continuous evaluation will support the implementation of the program, as well as program fidelity, and will support continued positive outcomes for youth. Just as staff members need to be evaluated to ensure they are providing appropriate services and support to mentors and mentees, the program needs to be evaluated as well (Bond et al., 2001). One example of this type of evaluation is the New York State Afterschool Network's Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool (2005). This self-assessment allows provider organizations to engage in quality improvement through the evaluation of diverse areas such as organizational climate, administration, relationships, staffing, professional development, programming, youth participation, and community partnerships.

All of the above-described areas of literature highlight various aspects of SBM programs or the implementation of SBM programs. Understanding that SBM programs

are situated within a larger context of community-based programs is important as there is much more research on CBM programs than there is on SBM programs. There is much to be learned from research outside of SBM and thus, this dissertation research draws on a framework of implementation (Fixsen et al., 2005; Klein et al., 2001) which allows for a more in-depth exploration of implementation strategies as separate from the more often described and investigated program components.

This dissertation adds to the literature in school-based mentoring, and also adds to the implementation literature. Results from this work may inform other SBM program developers as to how to better implement their programs, and will certainly serve as a valuable piece of feedback to BBBSA, as the ESBM program was developed within their organization. This research will move the knowledge base about implementation from Klein et al.'s (2001) perspective forward. The Klein et al. (2001) implementation framework has not been examined in the context of mentoring programs previously, and there are currently only a few studies that have examined the framework as a whole (Helfrich, Weiner, McKinney, & Minasian, 2007; Robertson, Sorbello, & Unsworth, 2008; Sawang, 2008), with two of these studies being qualitative (Helfrich et al., 2007; Robertson et al., 2008).

A detailed description of the context for this study follows in the next chapter, with attention to the overall BBBSA organization, and how the SBM program has been enhanced to create the ESBM program.

Chapter 3

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America

This chapter begins with a description and history of the BBBSA organization, it continues by detailing research that has been conducted on community-based mentoring (CBM) programs and school-based mentoring (SBM) programs. The chapter concludes with a description of the school-based mentoring program, the reasons for enhancement of the program, and the resulting enhanced school-based mentoring (ESBM) program.

History

BBBSA was founded in 1904 by Ernest Coulter, a New York City court clerk, who upon noticing many young men coming through his courtroom saw an opportunity for adult volunteers to help these youth stay out of trouble and out of his courtroom. Within 12 years there were Big Brothers in 96 cities across the country. Around this same time a plan was developed to partner Big Brothers with what was at that time, the Catholic Big Sisters of New York to form a Big Brothers Big Sisters organization. In 1917, the Big Brothers Big Sisters Federation was formed and in 1977, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America was formally established with 357 agencies nationwide. In 1986, standards and required procedures began to be established for the mentoring programs. In 1998, Big Brothers Big Sisters International was formed, and established as an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Internationally, BBBS programs are currently serving youth in 12 countries.

As of 1991 there were nearly 500 agencies supervising more than 70,000 matches (Furano et al., 1993). In 1999, 27,000 of 118,000 (23%) matches were school-based

(BBBSA, 2008). As of 2005, BBBSA was composed of nearly 450 agencies, and served more than 220,000 youth throughout the United States (www.promisingpractices.net). In 2007, there were approximately 252,000 matches within BBBSA agencies with approximately half of these matches being school-based (BBBSA, 2008).

BBBSA was founded on community-based mentoring programs and these programs continue to be a strong focus in the organization. The organization also offers several mentoring programs to serve a variety of populations of youth. In the 1990's, a partnership was developed with the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity to provide African American Mentoring to youth receiving services in some agencies. Ten years later, school-based mentoring became a core program within the organization in the year 2000, with the Amachi program also beginning to be piloted in that same year. The Amachi program matches children who have at least one parent in prison with a mentor who is a member of a church congregation.

Another specific initiative developed in BBBSA agencies has been to increase the number of Latino/a mentors and youth participating in BBBSA programs, with the Hispanic Mentoring Model being formally adopted in 2004 with an additional focus on SBM within that model. A Native American mentoring initiative was developed in 30 agencies across 16 states with a focus on increasing and improving services to Native American youth, with an organizational goal of making 2,125 new matches with this population by 2010. Most recently, there has been a focus on mentoring children who have parents in the military. Through a grant from the T. Boone Pickens Foundation, the capacity to serve this population of youth began to be built in 2009 across 22 BBBSA agencies.

In addition to agencies operating a variety of mentoring programs, each Big Brothers Big Sisters agency interacts with the national Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) organization. Agencies operate as their own independent non-profit, or operate their program within a non-profit, with their own board and leadership. Local agencies pay dues to BBBSA, and in turn are given access to program tools specifically built for them as well as a structured service delivery model that each agency adheres to. One main tool built for agency use is the Agency Information Management system, or AIM. This database tool allows agency staff members to track their matches, and prompts staff to conduct match support, among other program practices over time.

As is evident from the above description, local agencies operate quite independently from BBBSA. Given the structure of the relationship between individual agencies and BBBSA, there is limited authority that BBBSA has over agencies. The ESBM pilot involved more interaction between the local and national level, with BBBSA taking a more active role in how agencies were implementing the pilot.

BBBSA Youth Mentoring Research

Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) is a nonprofit organization that focuses on creating and strengthening programs to improve the lives of those in low-income communities. P/PV's work occurs in three areas: identifying promising programs or developing new programs, evaluating programs to determine effectiveness, and providing technical assistance. Since the late 1980's one of the areas of research that P/PV has been engaged in has been mentoring. In the early 1990's studies that focused exclusively on BBBSA programs began with Furano et al. (1993) being among the first at P/PV to

examine the mentoring program practices underlying the mentor/mentee interactions of Big Brothers Big Sisters matches. The sources of data for this first study included week-long site interviews with 8 BBBSA agencies, focus groups with youth, parents, and mentors, a review of program records, and a phone survey with a random sample of volunteers from the agencies. Findings were described in five areas, with the first being the area of how matches were made. When parent and youth preference for the kind of mentor desired were taken into account, it was found that matches had a greater chance of lasting longer. Second, rates of interaction were described. Nationwide it was reported that matches lasted for an average of one-and-a-half years, with matches in the study sites lasting from 28 months to 13 years. Mentors also reported meeting with mentees an average of 3.1 times within a 4-week period, with 96% of mentors surveyed stating that they had met with the mentee at least once.

Third, subgroup differences were discussed to highlight the relationship between youth gender, race, and length of time before being matched. In general, girls were more likely to be matched more quickly than were boys, and white youth were more likely to be matched more quickly than minority youth. Fourth, match support was examined and it was found that a high level of mentor supervision was most related to a high rate of match interaction. Lastly, volunteer recruitment was highlighted, as it is a necessary program practice to keep up with the number of youth on waiting lists for mentors (Furano et al., 1993). This report was the first of four in a series issued from P/PV to examine community-based mentoring programs within BBBSA.

The second study from P/PV by Roaf, Tierney, and Hunte (1994), focused on understanding volunteer recruitment and screening in 8 BBBS agencies. Data were

collected through several sources: file reviews documenting all individuals who had made an inquiry to volunteer as a mentor, interviews with agency personnel, and focus groups with volunteers. Results demonstrated that volunteer applicants were typically younger than 30 years of age, well educated, and close to 60% female, and 74% white. Television coverage and word of mouth were the most often described recruitment strategies for volunteers. Two years after BBBSA issued a recruitment manual to its agencies outlining ways to increase minority volunteer participation, there was an increase in minority volunteers – from 8,365 in 1990, to 11,341 in 1992. The study went on to outline the recruitment and intake process for volunteers.

In 1995, Morrow and Styles studied the dynamics of mentoring relationships in 82 BBBSA matches over a nine-month period. This study categorized all match relationships as being either developmental, with the mentor's expectations of the relationship varying with the perceived needs of the youth, or prescriptive, with the mentor setting up the relationship around their own needs. Two-thirds of the relationships were described as being developmental, which meant that early in the relationship there was a focus on relationship building, while the other one-third of prescriptive matches had early goals centering on transforming the youth. It was shown that those volunteers taking a developmental approach were more likely to create a relationship lasting long enough to create positive effects for the youth (Morrow & Styles, 1995). The activities that matches engaged in were similar across the two types of match relationships though the process by which matches arrived at deciding on activities differed. Out of this study came recommendations to alter screening, training, and supervision practices based on the apparent success of developmental relationships.

Also in 1995, a large-scale impact study of BBBSA community-based mentoring programs was conducted. Nine-hundred and fifty-nine youth participated in this study, with half of the youth being randomly assigned to be mentees, and half assigned to a waitlist condition (Tierney et al., 1995). Three-hundred and seventy-eight of the 487 youth (78%) in the mentoring condition received mentors, and of these, matches met an average of 3 times each month for 4 hours each time. All findings from this study were based on youth, parent, or agency staff self-report. Outcomes were assessed in the areas of academic performance, attitudes and behaviors, relationships with family, relationships with friends, self-concept and, social and cultural enrichment.

Statistically significant improvements were not found for those mentored youth in the area of self-concept, nor were they found for the number of social and cultural activities in which mentees participated (Tierney et al., 1995). There were significant and positive findings for those youth who were mentored in comparison to those youth in the waitlist condition in a variety of areas: mentees were 46% less likely to begin using illegal drugs, 27% less likely to start using alcohol, 52% less likely to skip school, 37% less likely to skip a class, 33% less likely to hit someone, and were found to be more confident in their performance in school as well as well as reporting getting along better with their family (Tierney et al., 1995).

BBBSA SBM Research

In 1999, Herrera first examined program characteristics and effects of BBBSA school-based programs using qualitative interviews during 3-day site visits to 2 BBBSA agencies. In this study, the characteristics of students and mentors, the processes to

recruit, screen, and train mentors, benefits to mentors and students, as well as the benefits from 1 hour per week of mentoring were all assessed. With overall findings from this exploratory study being positive, SBM programs continued to expand.

In 2004, Herrera again examined BBBSA school-based mentoring programs and studied the characteristics and quality of school-based matches, along with the benefits resulting from school-based mentoring. Three BBBSA agencies, and 212 youth between grades three and five, were assessed using survey methodology with data being collected at the beginning and end of the school year through youth and teacher surveys, and at the end of the school year from mentors and case managers. All school-based mentoring programs in this study had been in operation for at least 5 years.

The general conclusions drawn by Herrera (2004) were that match relationships were fairly close, agency support was critical for supporting long lasting matches, and that youth involved with mentors may see benefits, though some benefits may be limited. Also, it was found that the outcomes for school-based matches might be different than those resulting from community-based matches. Outcomes for youth participating in SBM programs may be more targeted towards improving behaviors in, or close to, the school context. Lastly, match length was discussed as a key variable to increasing the benefits that youth may receive through the mentoring relationship.

In 2007, Herrera and colleagues again studied BBBSA SBM programs, this time assessing programs and their impacts more in-depth (Herrera et al., 2007). Ten BBBSA agencies, 70 schools, and 1,139 youth were involved in this impact study, with half of the youth being matched with a mentor and half on a waiting list. The aspects of SBM

programs assessed were: program characteristics, mentor and mentee characteristics, benefits to mentees, mentoring experiences linked to mentee benefits, and program costs.

It was found that SBM programs were diverse in structure and focus with function and community need shaping programs over time. Contrary to some conceptions that SBM programs focus centrally on academics, this study found that only 9% of mentors and 11% of programs cited academic goals as central to their work with youth (Herrera et al., 2007). Many youth sampled were considered at-risk with approximately 80% receiving free or reduced price lunch and/or living with only one parent. Mentors in this study were composed of adults, college students, and high school students, with almost half of the mentors in high school. Through teacher and youth reports, youth outcomes after one school year (5-6 months of mentoring) were positive and youth showed improvement in an array of academic outcomes, in feelings of academic competency, as well as a decrease in more serious school-based issues such as fighting, suspensions, and skipping school (Herrera et al., 2007).

Youth in the mentoring condition did not receive a full year of mentoring due to late starts in matching youth with mentors. This represents an example of a 'typically implemented' mentoring program (Karcher, 2008). While this may not be problematic if youth continue to be mentored for several years, it was problematic in this study as only 52% of youth who were matched with a mentor in the first year continued to receive mentoring in the second year of the study (Herrera et al., 2007). This low level of program fidelity to the prescribed program model may have resulted in weaker impacts for youth.

SBM and the ESBM

In a 2008 press release from BBBSA the development of the enhanced school-based mentoring (ESBM) program was described, and it was noted that there were more than 125,000 youth with school-based mentors in the United States (www.bbbs.org). In the early 2000's it was BBBSA's aim to begin developing SBM programs as a compliment to CBM programs, with SBM being a way to reach additional youth who may not otherwise have a parent who would refer them to a CBM program (Herrera et al., 2007). The SBM programs generally retained the structure of CBM programs, in terms of screening, training, and supervision, but the context of service delivery was changed to schools. Over time, BBBSA agencies have moved from offering SBM programs with the same overall structure and focus, to more recently diversifying aspects of the programs across agencies (Herrera et al., 2007).

SBM matches typically only meet within a school or other community setting, with the activities that matches engage in varying within that setting. Some matches may meet over the summer months, or outside of the school setting (Herrera et al., 2007). When mentees are elementary-aged, a large number of BBBSA programs (83% as surveyed by Herrera et al., 2007) ask that matches meet four or more times each month, while only 20% of programs serving older youth ask mentors to meet with mentees at this frequency. In addition, programs serving younger youth request that high school mentors meet with mentees at least four times a month, which was much more often than adults or college students were asked to meet with youth (Herrera et al., 2007). It seems that the younger the mentee, and the younger the mentor, the more frequently meetings are to be held.

In terms of what occurs during the match meetings, this is most often left up to the matches to decide, though some BBBSA SBM programs prescribe activities. Herrera et al. (2007) noted that 49% of mentors reported that decisions about activities were arrived at after discussion between the mentor and mentee. Match support for school-based matches was also described as being similar to that of community-based matches (Herrera et al., 2007) with the addition of match staff presence at some or all of the meetings between school-based mentors and mentees.

Resulting from the preliminary findings and recommendations from the first large scale SBM impact study (Herrera et al., 2007), those at BBBSA began their work in June 2006 to improve the SBM program and to implement changes based on the recommendations from the study. The ESBM pilot program was developed in two stages. First, BBBSA had previewed the findings from the study conducted by Herrera et al. (2007) and formulated recommendations for improving the school-based mentoring program. The national Director of Research and Evaluation then shared these findings and recommendations with BBBS agencies across the United States. The second stage of development involved the creation of a task force that was comprised of local agency representatives, BBBSA representatives (including the national Director of Research and Evaluation), and prominent mentoring researchers. The task force then formulated changes to existing school-based program practices based on both recommendations based on Herrera et al.'s (2007) work and current mentoring research.

In the fall of 2008, a statement was released from BBBSA about the pilot ESBM program describing, in general, the improvements that were to be made in order to create "longer, stronger matches". The pilot began in the fall of 2008 and concluded in the fall

of 2010. The desired results of enhancements outlined in the statement released by BBBSA were: increasing match length to 15.2 from 11 months by the year 2011, asking volunteers to commit to at least one calendar year of mentoring, selecting supportive schools to be involved with the ESBM program, sustaining relationships with schools, exploring ways to bridge the gap in the summer months, and exploring ways to support mentors and train them in an ongoing manner to support the mentoring relationship (www.bbbs.org).

Some elements of the original SBM service delivery model remained through the process of developing the ESBM and others were enhancements on the original model or new to the model. Some of the main ESBM pilot program components include: Measuring success through metrics and setting goals 3-5 year goals for average match length, retention rate, strength of relationships, and outcomes; Using a four-part framework for match support to include: child safety, positive youth development, match relationship development, and volunteer engagement; Using a year-round SBM calendar and asking mentors for at least a 12 month commitment as well as encouraging mentors to communicate with mentees at least twice a month in the summer; Using the winter months to form new partnerships and the spring months to recruit volunteers and students for an early fall start; Transitioning the match to CBM where possible; Taking special steps with high school mentors; Encouraging contacts between mentors and mentees during the summer and if the matches are having contact, conduct match support; Not closing matches at the end of the school year if the expectation is that they will continue in the fall; Training high school mentors for at least 2 hours initially and all others at least 1 hour; Asking matches to meet at least bi-weekly for 2 hours and orienting meetings

toward socio-emotional activities; Providing monthly match support to mentors for the first year and for high school mentors maintain this level of support for 2 years; and Encouraging parental involvement (BBBSA, 2008).

Though many of these program components were a part of the original SBM service delivery model, there was to be more of a focus on ensuring that the elements were put into practice through the ESBM program. The ESBM pilot involved agencies implementing the above practices (the entire list of ESBM program components - those required, and those recommended, can be found in Appendix A), as well as collecting research data. The research component of the pilot program involved agency staff collecting baseline data from teachers, youth, and mentors; mid-year data from mentors; end of school-year program surveys at each pilot site within each agency piloting the ESBM and data from teachers, youth, parents, and mentors; administering the Strength of Relationship survey after 3 months and then at the end of each school year; and administering the Youth Outcomes Survey at baseline and then at the end of each school year. As is evidenced by this list of research components, the research side of the pilot was quite involved and required additional staff time to administer and collect data.

Chapter 4

Theory and Framework

There are multiple levels of theory to work with in order to understand how program implementers perceive the process of program implementation. The three levels of theory focus on a micro, relationship level; a meso, implementation level; and lastly a general theory of complex systems. The meso level provides a framework for this study, with methods mirroring a focus on implementation. The micro-level and complexity theories serve as a general guide to where other levels of research may, or already have occurred. Especially in youth mentoring research literature, there is a strong focus on the mentor/mentee relationship, thereby warranting a look at these micro-level theories. Complexity theories offer a way to think about how systems, or organizations, go through changes.

Social Learning and Resilience

Theories pertaining to the practice-level of youth mentoring are foundational in understanding why youth mentoring is being implemented in schools. Rhodes (2005) describes a mentoring process by which the mentoring relationship results in positive outcomes for the mentee. This perspective is rooted in social learning theory and also resilience theory (Bandura, 1977). Social learning theory posits that behavior is learned through the observation of others behavior. Additionally, a behavior is more likely to be adopted if the modeler of behavior is one who is liked, if the behavior they are modeling has functional value, and if the outcomes resulting from the behavior are valued by the learner (Bandura, 1977). It has been found that mentors who are viewed more positively

by mentees meet more consistently with mentees, and have a greater effect on some mentee outcomes (Converse, 2009). Thus, this theory can be useful in describing how mentors may positively affect a receptive mentee when exhibiting appropriate or desired behavior (Darling, Hamilton, & Niego, 1994; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004).

Resilience has been operationally defined as "…the ability to overcome adversity, and be successful in spite of exposure to high risk" (Greene, Galambos, & Lee, 2003, p. 77). Two key theoretical assumptions most applicable to youth mentoring are that resilience is a transactional process of person-environment exchanges and, that it is enhanced through connection with others. Resilience involves internal factors as well as the aforementioned external factors. Internally, the attitude or temperament of an individual affects their resilience. If youth are considered at-risk and receptive to change then they may be positively affected through interactions with a mentor and/or other individuals or systems in their life (Greene, 2003).

Rhodes (2005) offers a model of youth mentoring to demonstrate the connection between the mentoring relationship and positive outcomes for the mentee. The mentoring relationship is characterized by mutuality, trust, and empathy. When a meaningful relationship is developed between a mentor and mentee, it contributes positively to the social-emotional, cognitive, and overall identity development of the mentee. The social-emotional development may be mediated by parental or peer relationships. Moderators of the model include interpersonal history, social competencies, the developmental stage of the youth, the duration of the mentoring relationship, mentoring program practices, and family as well as community context.

The whole model is posited to have positive effects for the mentee on grades, emotional well-being, and behavior.

Both resilience and social learning theory are especially applicable when exploring youth mentoring in schools. The interactions between mentor and mentee may serve to further strengthen the acquisition of appropriate or adaptive behavior by the mentee in contexts where these behaviors are appropriate to be exhibited.

Implementation Framework

The mid-range of relevant theory focuses on the macro-level practice of implementation itself. It is at this level where the main framework for this dissertation lies. While the framework was introduced in the context of mentoring and human service research in Chapter 2, it is more fully described here. Examining the implementation strategies involved in implementing the ESBM program requires an understanding of perspectives rooted at the organizational level.

Klein and Sorra (1996) and Klein et al. (2001) originally developed and refined an implementation framework to examine the implementation of innovations in technology and were the first to document that organizational differences in implementation effectiveness are significantly related to four distinct implementation drivers. These are: management support, financial resource availability, implementation policies and practices, and implementation climate. Implementation effectiveness, as defined by Klein et al. (2001) is the use of the innovation, which is, essentially, program fidelity. The more implementation drivers that are enacted during implementation, the stronger

the program or innovation will be implemented and thus, there will be greater program fidelity.

Each driver of implementation is described here. In addition to Klein's implementation drivers, awareness of the program is included in the proposed framework (See Figure 1).

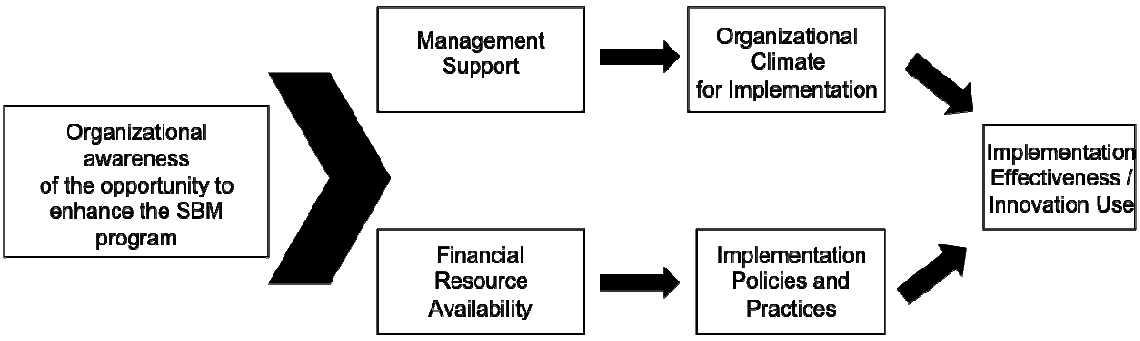

Figure 1. Implementation framework, adapted from Klein, Conn, and Sorra (2001)

The program. An innovation is a practice or program that is perceived as being new by the organization, whether or not other organizations have previously used it (Klein & Sorra, 1996; Rogers, 2003). The innovation in the current research context is the ESBM program that was developed by a Task Force established by BBBSA upon awareness for the opportunity to enhance the SBM program. The ESBM program includes components in the following domains: setting goals and monitoring metrics, fostering longer and stronger matches, bridging the summer gap and increasing communication between matches, encouraging parental involvement, deepening partnerships with schools and districts, deepening partnerships within the corporate and business community, and enhancing staff development.

Management support. Management support is managers' commitment to transform practices within the organization and to invest in quality program use to

support the implementation of the innovation (Klein et al., 2001). Manager support is said to affect the implementation climate, and manager behavior sends a message to employees about the level of importance of a newly implemented program.

If management support is present, local agency level implementers may describe BBBSA management commitment to, and investment in the implementation of the ESBM program. Agency level implementers may also indicate whether or not there is management support locally, if there is a commitment to quality implementation within their agency, or if there are ways in which the ESBM program implementation has been pushed to be successful.

Financial resource availability. Financial resource availability is a "…cushion of actual or potential resources which allow an organization to adapt successfully to internal pressures for adjustment or to external pressures for change in policy as well as to initiate changes in strategy with respect to the external environment" (Bourgeois, 1981, pg. 30). Financial resource availability was found to be significantly and positively related to implementation policies and practices (Klein et al., 2001). This suggests that high quality implementation policies and practices may be more expensive to provide.

To understand how program implementers perceive financial resource availability, local agency level implementers may describe their perceptions of the amount of funding available to support their local implementation of the ESBM program. This funding may be described as coming from BBBSA, or from within other agency-level funding efforts.

Organizational climate for implementation. The strategic organizational climate for implementation is "…employees' shared perceptions of the importance of

innovation implementation within the organization" (Klein et al., 2001, pg. 813). Organizational climate for implementation is positive and strong if "…employees perceive that innovation implementation is a major organizational priority-promoted, supported, and rewarded by the organization" (Klein et al., 2001, pg. 813). Implementation climate is posited to affect implementation effectiveness in this model. Klein et al. (2001) describe that a strong climate for implementation may influence innovation use (high program fidelity) by building employee acceptance and recognition of the importance of the implementation of the innovation.

Local level implementers may describe implementing the ESBM program to be a personal priority and one that is a priority for their agency and staff. If implementation climate is positive, then local agency level implementers may describe incentives for using the ESBM program locally, a recognition of the importance of the program, a commitment and skill to using the program, and instances where obstacles to implementation and use have been removed. A strong implementation climate may be fostered at the local agency level through interaction with BBBSA (i.e., being a part of a national initiative), thus local agency level implementers may discuss the implementation climate locally, and nationally.

Implementation policies and practices. Implementation policies and practices are the formal strategies (i.e., the policies) the organization or implementers apply in order to put the program into use and the actions that follow from those strategies (i.e., the practices). Implementers may describe characteristics of the ESBM program itself in terms of its quality, accessibility, and user friendliness. Klein et al. (2001) describe that implementation policies and practices may influence program use through shaping

employee skill and comfort with using the program.

Local level implementers of the ESBM program may also describe formal implementation strategies, occurring locally or from the national BBBSA level, that have been used to put the program into place. Those most relevant to this dissertation work are listed in Table 1 and include strategies described by Klein et al. (2001) and Fixsen et al. (2005). Implementation policies and practices are also posited to affect implementation effectiveness in this framework. The core implementation components from Fixsen et al. (2005) are drawn on here to add more depth to this implementation driver in Klein et al.'s (2001) model. Fixsen et al. (2005) examine implementation strategies across various disciplines and offer commentary in their work as to how implementation science can be applied to human service settings. Given this, it is appropriate to attend to their implementation strategies here, as they may be distinctly relevant when studying the implementation process of a mentoring program.

Table 1.

Implementation Policies and Practices: Roadmap of Findings

Implementation policies and practices	Klein et al. (2001)	Fixsen et al. (2005)	Other
Staff selection		✓	
Staff training	✓	✓	
Coaching		✓	
Technical Assistance	✓		
Program Evaluation		✓	
Staff Evaluation		✓	
Rewards	✓		
Time and Effort	✓		
Systems Interventions		✓	
Policy changes			✓
Other implementation strategies			✓

To date, there have been no studies examining the utility of implementation strategies in implementing mentoring programs. Given this, utilizing an implementation framework developed in another discipline is useful in order to understand and contextualize the activities involved in implementing a school-based mentoring program.

Complexity Theory

Finally, the most macro-level of theories used to frame the current research are those detailing open or complex systems. While hard sciences like physics or biology may use complexity theories in a quantitatively focused or technical manner, the social sciences can draw on the theories as heuristics (Manuel-Navarrete, 2000). The use of technical theory in this way has been described as a 'metaphoric-analytical' application.

As Holmes, Finegood, Riley, and Best (2012) describe, "…complex problems in society require intervention at many different levels and the engagement of actors and organizations across levels ranging from the home, school, and work environments to communities, regions, and entire countries" (p. 178). In implementing programs in complex systems the authors suggest that there are "…benefits of systems thinking in approaching dissemination and implementation" (p.186).

Systems thinking is useful to consider here, as certain characteristics of complex systems can aid in understanding those areas to attend to during implementation. One characteristic of a complex system is that the system, as well as control and order within that system, are emergent and the system is understood through seeking patterns in complexity. Another characteristic of a complex system is that the description of the system is largely dependent on the observer. In the current research, local level program

implementers are the main observers, and this is the perspective from which much of the data for this dissertation originates. A third characteristic of a complex adaptive system is nonlinearity. As there is nonlinearity to the flow of information and resources within a system, it is important to document the factors involved in implementing a program with high fidelity. Understanding all of these characteristics of complex systems may aid in anticipating what will happen in a system. Describing these core ideas of complex systems also allows for a more holistic picture of organizational change to be formed (Dooley, 1997; Holmes, et al., 2012).

Chapter 5

Methods

Overview

This dissertation works from within a naturalistic qualitative paradigm rooted in pragmatism (Creswell, 2007). Reflecting a pragmatic lens, the results of studying program challenges, strategies to overcome challenges during pilot implementation, as well as studying implementation strategies all have practical implications (Creswell, 2007). Findings from this study serve as feedback to the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) organization as they disseminate ESBM program practices nationwide. There may also be additional applicability of this research to other mentoring organizations seeking to implement new, or improve upon existing, school-based programs. Findings may help to inform future qualitative studies utilizing the Klein et al. (2001) implementation framework.

A main aim of this study is to develop an understanding of the implementation strategies engaged in during the implementation of the enhanced school-based mentoring program (ESBM) pilot. As there is a dearth of implementation research within the field of mentoring, a qualitative approach is warranted. Klein and Sorra (1996) suggest that in studying implementation, a qualitative approach may be valuable when gaining "…an in-depth understanding of a given innovation and its implementation across organizations" (p. 1076).

A variety of perspectives could be examined to assess the implementation of this program, and this study does so through the lens of local agency level implementers.

Through this lens, implementation strategies are explored at both the local agency and the national BBBSA level. The BBBSA Director of Research and Evaluation identified lead implementers for the researcher. The Director had a list of staff members who were the most responsible for the implementation of the pilot at their agency. It was these individuals that were then named 'lead implementers' for the purpose of this research.

This study draws on four main sources of data. Two sources are secondary and include 1) notes from phone calls over the course of one year between implementers and BBBSA program staff, and 2) results from end of year Program Surveys. Two additional sources have been utilized to collect original data for this dissertation. Original data includes 1) an interview with the Director of Research and Evaluation for BBBSA, and 2) semi-structured telephone interviews with key informants who were identified as 'lead implementers' in their agency piloting the ESBM. The research questions addressed in this dissertation are:

RQ1. What program challenges and strategies to address these challenges were identified during the pilot implementation of the ESBM program?

a) As evidenced by bi-weekly implementer phone call notes.

b) As evidenced by in-depth interviews with key informants.

RQ2. What implementation strategies were used during the pilot implementation of the ESBM program?

a) As evidenced by bi-weekly implementer phone call notes.

b) As evidenced by in-depth interviews with key informants.

RQ3. In what ways do implementation strategies identified by implementers align, misalign, or add to those described in Klein, Conn, and Sorra's (2001) implementation framework?

a) In what ways do implementers perceive financial resource availability during the implementation of the ESBM program?

b) In what ways do implementers perceive the implementation policies and practices during the implementation of the ESBM program?

c) In what ways do implementers perceive management support from the BBBSA and within the local level as it relates to the implementation of the ESBM program?

d) In what ways do implementers perceive the local and broader organizational climate for implementation?

e) What implementation strategies did implementers perceive to be the most influential on the effectiveness of implementation?

As Table 2 demonstrates, the BBBSA perspective informs research question three, while all research questions are more deeply investigated through the implementer lens. Through semi-structured interviews, lead implementers discuss challenges and strategies to overcome challenges during implementation, and implementation strategies that originated from BBBSA and/or the local agency level. Additionally, qualitative content analysis is conducted and findings reported across and/or within participants. Findings reported across participants offer an aggregate picture of implementation strategies, challenges, and strategies to overcome challenges, while findings reported

within participants take a ‘case study’ approach and examine individual agency vignettes to offer some context to each agency’s experience.

Table 2.

Method of Answering and Reporting Research Questions

	Sampling	RQ1	RQ2	RQ3
Level				
Local Agency Level Only		X		
BBBSA & Agency Level			X	X
Report Findings				
Across Participants Only		X	X	
Within and Across Participants				X
Data Sources				
Implementer Phone Call Data		X	X	X
Program Survey Q.#30	X			
Dir. Of Rsch and Eval.	X			X
Implementer Interview		X	X	X

All phone call data and semi-structured interviews were analyzed using directed qualitative content analysis. Rationale and details of the analysis are found within the following sections. Implementer phone call data collection and analysis methods are first presented. Then, a description of Program Survey data, a description of the interview with the Director of Research and Evaluation at BBBSA and subsequent analysis methods, and a description of the collection of implementer interviews and analysis methods are presented. Lastly, the sampling and recruitment strategy, trustworthiness, and the protection of human subjects are discussed.

Data Collection and Analysis

Phone call data collection. One year of notes from implementer phone calls that began in July 2008 was collected in order to investigate RQ1 and RQ2. The purpose of implementer phone calls was to support the implementation of the ESBM pilot. The Director of Research and Evaluation at BBBSA facilitated these conference calls and provided a venue for discussion of the pilot as it was being implemented. Initially, conference calls started out as one large group call with all agencies piloting the ESBM. As it became clear that such a large group was not facilitative of agency interaction and participation, the Director broke up the calls into different regions in order to promote team building and increase agency involvement.

Notes from these conference calls along with other information for the pilot were posted by BBBSA on a website for all agencies to see. Access to phone call notes was provided to the researcher for this dissertation through this website. Upon researcher receipt of the notes, the Director of Research and Evaluation stipulated that any personal identifying information (i.e., individual names) be removed before proceeding with data analysis. After identifying information was removed, all phone call notes were then printed out for the purpose of analysis. As these were phone call notes and were not transcripts of calls, much of the data was already condensed.

Phone call data analysis. The aim of analysis for the phone call data was to explore three main areas: program issues, solutions to issues, as well as implementation strategies. Qualitative content analysis provides a framework from which to study discussions about program and implementation challenges. This analysis allows for transcripts and other textual material to be studied, as opposed to other qualitative

methods that may focus solely on the analysis of field notes from observation (Patton, 2002). When an aim of the analysis is to identify core meanings and consistencies in text, content analysis is even more appropriate (Morgan, 1993; Patton, 2002).

Using directed qualitative content analysis, a top-down method was employed in order to search for categories within three main areas (program issues, solutions to issues, as well as implementation strategies), as they related to the research questions. This process is known as deductive category formulation and application (Mayring, 2000). While categories were searched for, there was awareness on leaving room for themes to emerge from the data within these categories. Categories within the three areas include the specific ESBM program components, including all those detailed in Appendix A, and the implementation strategies identified by Klein et al. (2001) and Fixsen et al. (2005).

Program components and implementation strategies were attended to in phone call data analysis and themes were emergent in that analysis was sensitive to themes that did not fit the program components or implementation strategies well. In identifying challenges and strategies to overcome challenges, there were no preconceived notions about what the specific barriers to implementation of program components would be or what strategies may be described to overcome the barriers. As the researcher analyzing the data for this dissertation is most familiar with implementation research and organizational literature, there may have been less openness when exploring implementation strategies in phone call notes.

During analysis, the three main areas (program issues, solutions to issues, as well as implementation strategies) were first searched for in the phone call notes. All phone call meeting notes were analyzed using print-outs of the notes and highlighters or pens to

record the presence of various areas. For example, a green highlighter was used to highlight challenges, a blue highlighter was used to identify strategies to overcome challenges, and a pen was used to identify implementation strategies. With this focus on only three areas relating to the research questions, there were passages in the phone call notes that were not analyzed.

Once data was identified as residing in one of the three areas, it was then condensed and put into one of two Word documents. One Word document had a table in which to enter challenges and strategies, and another had a list of implementation strategy categories. Within each of these documents, the categories described above were used as organizing headers within which highlighted passages from the phone call data could be placed. From here, each category of findings was distilled down and summarized so that it could be succinctly described within the Findings chapter of this dissertation. As identifying information was removed prior to analysis, the findings of data analysis are reported only across participants.

While the phone call data was helpful in grounding the researcher in the ESBM pilot and in challenges faced by agencies throughout implementation, there was a lack of depth in discussion pertaining to implementation strategies. In order to understand the whole pilot project and the implementation factors at play it was necessary to draw on other data sources in addition to phone call notes.

Program survey data. As a part of the ESBM pilot a Program Survey was administered to each school or site formally piloting the ESBM. The individual most directly responsible for implementation at the school or site completed the survey. Information obtained from Program Surveys offer a gross idea of program components

implemented both before and after the ESBM pilot was formally introduced. Survey question #30a-b asks specifically about the extent to which agencies implemented the ESBM during the pilot and if they had been making use of components before the ESBM program was formally implemented.

The purpose of examining Program Survey data for this dissertation was two-fold. First, this data offers a general picture of how completely each agency implemented the pilot (i.e., program fidelity). Second, Program Survey data from each agency could be used to categorize agencies to then offer more structure and guidance during the sampling process for this research (later described in this Chapter).

Program Survey data was received by the researcher from the Director of Research and Evaluation at BBBSA in Excel format. Data was first received for 11 agencies, with additional data for 10 agencies being made available to the researcher one month later. Though there were 23 agencies involved in the ESBM pilot, Program Survey data were not available to the researcher for 2 agencies.

For the purpose of this study, data from Program Surveys was initially used to categorize agencies as those who made major program changes, those who made minor program changes, and those who did not implement the ESBM program. Agencies that made major program changes were those who perceived they had a low level of program implementation before the ESBM program was implemented (as reflected in #30, 1) and who then perceived that they had a high level of program implementation after the ESBM program was implemented (as reflected in #30, 2). Agencies who made minor changes during program implementation perceived they had a high level of program implementation before the ESBM program was implemented, and who then perceived to

have a high level of program implementation after the ESBM program was implemented. Non-implementers consisted of agencies that documented a low level of program implementation after the ESBM program was introduced (as reflected in #30, 2).

The categorizations: major program changes, minor program changes, and non-implementers helped to better define the amount of information each type of implementer was posited to yield about implementation strategies. One could infer that an agency having to make major program changes would likely describe many implementation strategies utilized during the pilot. Conversely, agencies having minor program changes to make would likely describe fewer implementation strategies or perhaps different strategies that focus more on sustaining program practices. Those who are identified as non-implementers may have utilized implementation strategies as they attempted to implement the program, but were not successful in implementing the pilot.

In classifying agencies as those who had to make major changes, minor changes, or those who were non-implementers, composite scores from the two parts of question #30 were formed. For question #30, 1, the higher an agency's composite score, the more components they were implementing prior to the official implementation of the pilot. For question #30, 2, the higher an agency's composite score, the more components they were implementing one-year into the implementation of the pilot (See Table 2).

Table 3.

Classifying Implementers

Strength of implementation	Number of Agencies	Composite Scores	
		#30, 1	#30, 2
Minor Changes	12	10-13	35-52
Major Changes	4	0-4	35-52
Non-Implementers	5	NA	0-34

Interview with director of research and evaluation. The Director of Research and Evaluation was interviewed using the same semi-structured interview schedule that was later used to interview a sample of implementers (see Appendix B for Interview Schedule). This initial interview served several purposes. First, it allowed the researcher to obtain a general overview and clear background about the ESBM program. Due to the very different nature of the conversation with a BBBSA Director as compared to the interviews that were to follow, it did not serve as a true pilot for this interview schedule. Second, input from the Director of Research and Evaluation as to which agencies to sample was obtained during this interview when the researcher specifically asked which agencies would be good examples of quality implementers. And lastly, the interview offered a look into the BBBSA perspective of the implementation process of the ESBM pilot.

A consent form was first given to the Director to sign before the interview began. Additionally, a copy of the interview schedule was made available to the Director approximately one week before the interview took place. The interview was scheduled at a time when the Director was at Portland State University and could be interviewed in person. All notes, recordings, and resulting transcripts have been stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home in an effort to help protect participant confidentiality.

During this interview, information was gathered about implementation from the BBBSA perspective. Gaining a perspective from BBBSA gave some context to later interviews with local agency implementers. The different levels of the system (the local agency and BBBSA, where the ESBM program was developed) are explicitly parsed out during data analysis of all interview data to the greatest extent possible.

Analysis of interview with director of research and evaluation. The interview with the Director was analyzed before the implementer interviews began. Analysis for this initial interview was conducted in the same manner as all other implementer interview data, with a description of the process of analysis described in depth in the coming sections. Based on the experience with this initial interview, the research concluded that the interview schedule did not need further modification prior to conducting interviews with implementers.

Implementer interviews.

Data collection. Interviews were conducted by phone and recorded (See Appendix B for the Interview Schedule). Data from all interviews serve to answer RQ1, on a very general level, RQ2, and data from all interviews serve as a basis from which to explore RQ3.

Semi-structured interviews capture perceptions as to the ways in which the implementation of the ESBM program has been supported. The semi-structured interview is appropriate when the aim of research is to gain an understanding of a participant's view (Creswell, 2007). The advantages of using semi-structured interviews are several. On a practical note, interviews can be set up to occur by telephone, be recorded, and then later be transcribed for analysis. The semi-structured interview format also allows for the possibility of more discussion of topics to occur, rather than a more structured survey format in which respondent's responses may not be probed for further detail (Grinnell & Unrau, 2008).

The focus of the interview schedule (See Appendix B) is on understanding the whole process of implementation of the ESBM program, from the time at which the

implementer began to be involved to the present day. Interviews also serve as a way to qualitatively evaluate the presence and use of, or absence of, various implementation strategies described in Klein et al.'s (2001) implementation framework. The format of the interview allowed the participant to tell their story about how the ESBM program was implemented in their agency. The interview schedule was used as a guide for the researcher, and as a tool for the participant to review beforehand to allow the interview to be more of a conversation, while still making an effort to attend to the relevant topic areas being studied in this research.

Thematic areas of information guiding interviews were: a) general background about the interviewee, b) general process of implementation, c) ESBM program characteristics, d) perception and types of management support for the ESBM program, e) perception of financial resource availability, f) perception of implementation policies and practices utilized, g) perception of organizational climate for implementation, and h) perception of implementation effectiveness and innovation use.

Interviews with agency implementers were conducted at mutually agreed upon times after each participant had read, signed, and returned a consent form to the researcher. Consent forms, along with all other notes, recordings, and resulting data files or transcripts are kept in a locked file cabinet to help protect the confidentiality of the participants. Before an interview was scheduled, the participant was given at least one week to look over the interview schedule. Each interview lasted between 26 and 65 minutes. During the four months in which interviews were conducted the researcher transcribed the interviews and imported each interview into TAMS Analyzer, a qualitative data analysis program (Weinstein, 2002-2012).

Data analysis. The first steps of directed qualitative content analysis began after completion of the first implementer interview, and concurrent to other interviews being conducted. The transcripts were read over individually both on paper and again once they were imported into the TAMS Analyzer software package (Agar, 1980; Weinstein, 2002-2012). Notes based on multiple readings of transcripts served as preliminary findings while interviews were still being conducted. Based on preliminary findings, interview questions were not altered, and the way in which probes were used did not change. Memos written during data analysis allowed for personal reflection and ideas to develop about potential codes (Rodwell, 1998).

While qualitative content analysis of the phone call data was much more deductive, analysis here first involved open coding which allowed for codes and themes to emerge from the data (Creswell, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The main focus of analysis of the interviews is to understand discussions in the context of the implementation framework (Klein et al., 2001). Due to this, many prefigured categories were used in concert with the open coding process (Creswell, 2007). A list of prefigured categories based on the implementation framework served to narrow the scope of data analysis and allow for specific research questions to be answered. Utilizing prefigured themes or categories is contrary to some qualitative research that leaves all codes open to best reflect participant views and responses. In an attempt to honor participants' responses, open coding was conducted alongside the application of prefigured categories.

Each sentence or thought displayed in the transcript, the meaning unit, was condensed and coded for meaning, allowing for several codes to be applied if necessary

(Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). Coding was recursive and allowed the researcher to go back through the data while coding to alter codes, and to develop operational definitions of each code based on the data coding process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Once an initial coding process was complete for three of the interviews, codes were examined as to how they fit into the larger themes and pre-figured categories. Themes and relevant categories began to be solidified based on the analysis of the first three interviews. Analysis then continued, utilizing established themes and codes, adding new codes when necessary, and taking care to notice when new themes needed to be established.

After many themes had been established based on an in depth analysis of the first three interviews, codes were then categorized within themes, and sub-themes if applicable. For example, discussion about technological challenges faced when implementing the ESBM, per Klein et al.'s (2001) framework, fell within the context of the organizational climate for implementation. A sample passage coded as such is: "Umm, the match support piece is really hard because it's not supported in our system." The nomenclature for the code associated with this passage is, OCI>agency_chllgs_with_imp>technological. As you can see, it was crucial at this point of analysis to have the larger themes mapped out to a great extent as each code was an extension of a sub-theme (i.e., agency challenges with implementation) and a theme (i.e., organizational climate for implementation).

When the above process of coding was complete for all interviews, further organization of themes within each participant was then done in order to formulate agency vignettes. Vignettes were developed to offer a brief overview of each agency and how they perceived implementation effectiveness as conceptualized in Klein et al.'s

(2001) framework. Vignettes include relevant information about the agency itself as derived from semi-structured interviews (number of staff working on the ESBM, how long the agency had been operating SBM, etc.), as well as implementer perceptions of the why implementation was effective in the agency.

Findings from implementer interviews, along with phone call note data, serve to answer RQ1 and describe agency level challenges and strategies to overcome challenges during implementation, while findings from implementer interviews serving to answer RQ2 describe implementation strategies at both the local agency, and BBBSA level. The results of data analysis for these two research questions are reported across participants. Findings from implementer interviews serving to answer RQ3 describe implementation strategies at both the local agency, and BBBSA level, and findings are reported both within participants via vignettes and across participants.

Sampling Strategy and Recruitment

After analysis of implementer phone call data was nearly complete, sampling of agencies with whom to conduct semi-structured interviews began. While an initial sampling strategy was developed, the criteria for inclusion expanded during the study due to reasons that are captured in this section. The sampling strategy and rationale are presented here along with the subsequent rationale that resulted in a change to inclusion criteria.

Initially, a sample of interview participants was drawn using data from the BBBSA end of year Program Survey question #30 (see Appendix C for question #30) and through input from the Director of Research and Evaluation at BBBSA. A sample of 15

implementers was eventually drawn from the population of 21 pilot agencies in order to conduct semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2007). Two agencies piloting the ESBM were not included in the population of agencies from which to sample as Program Survey data was not available for them.

It was an initial aim of the study to draw a purposive criterion sample that was not necessarily representative of all implementers of programs at BBBSA agencies, but that would offer the most information about effective implementation strategies. Patton (2002) describes a purposeful sample as one that provides rich cases to study. Thus, the initial sample was to be comprised of implementers from only those agencies piloting the ESBM that demonstrated a high level of implementation of the ESBM program one year into implementation (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). A sample of implementers was drawn from agencies that made major changes or minor changes, as identified through Program Survey data. As implementer interviews began, a third category, non-implementers, was also added to the potential sample. It was thought that a comparison might be able to be made between agencies making major changes to their school-based program, those who made minor changes to their program, and those who were classified as non-implementers.

The first contact between the implementers at each agency and the researcher was through an introductory email originating from the Director of Research and Evaluation at BBBSA. This email was sent to all 23 pilot agencies. One week following this email, the researcher sent an email out to the 11 agencies for which there was available Program Survey data at that time. Of these, eight agencies responded via email, six of whom agreed to participate, one declined to participate, and one telephoned the researcher, but

after several calls and messages no contact was made. The remaining three agencies initially contacted did not respond to the researcher's email invitation. The six agency implementers (four who made major program changes and two who made minor program changes) who agreed to participate were given an interview schedule to read over and a consent form to sign and return to the researcher before interviews began.

Once the first six implementers were interviewed, ongoing data analysis revealed that the depth at which the research questions were being addressed was not yet sufficient. Thus, it was desirable to conduct additional interviews. When additional Program Survey data was received (approximately one month after the first email contact was made with agencies) five additional email invitations to participate were sent out to those agencies that made major or minor program changes. From these invitations, four agencies (all making minor program changes) responded and agreed to participate, and one agency did not respond to the invitation.

Interviews continued until saturation was reached, with saturation being defined as "…the point in data collection and analysis when new information produces little or no change to the codebook" (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Saturation may also be the point at which the researcher's resources are exhausted, meaning that there are no remaining implementers willing to be interviewed who have made major changes or minor changes to their program during ESBM implementation. Indeed, this was the case. At this time, half the implementers who had made minor changes, and all implementers who had made major program changes had been interviewed.

As interviews progressed and as data began to be reviewed, curiosities arose about the initial sampling strategy and whether or not Program Survey data really were

representative of how well agencies had implemented the ESBM pilot. There did not seem to be a great deal of consistency in how agencies making major changes to their program were describing the implementation of the ESBM. Likewise, agencies that made minor program changes also varied widely as to how they described the implementation of the ESBM. These observations put into question how well Program Survey data actually represented agency implementation of ESBM components. Was the categorization of non-implementers also then questionable?

After further communication with the Director of Research and Evaluation about perceptions of how well each agency implemented the ESBM pilot and how much they participated in implementation supports provided by BBBSA (i.e., meetings and phone calls) it became apparent that the perceptions of agency implementation of the ESBM coming from BBBSA did not, in most cases, mirror the characterizations of the agencies that were formed through Program Survey data. This firmly called into question the accuracy of the non-implementer category, also drawn from Program Survey data, and led the researcher to expand the parameters of the sample to any agency with Program Survey data who was willing to participate.

It was thus decided, approximately three months after the first email invitation went out to agencies, to open up the sample to the remaining five agencies that were classified as non-implementers. Upon contacting these agencies via email, all five agreed to participate in the study. The two agencies for which there was no Program Survey data were never contacted.

Trustworthiness

Here, various aspects of the trustworthiness of this research are discussed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). First, a statement of reflexivity is offered. In qualitative research this is often made to make plain to the reader any biases that the researcher may perceive they have, and to offer description about personal characteristics of the researcher as these too may influence the way that data have been collected and analyzed (Mays & Pope, 2000). The researcher offers the following statement:

I am a woman in my late 20's who has continuously been in school. While I have had much academic research experience, I have only recently honed in on implementation research as an area of passion. It is worth noting that I am very close with my parents who are implementation researchers and we often discuss research and the field of implementation science. I am sure that their views on implementation have helped to structure my own. This study represents a few 'firsts' for me – this is the first study I have conducted on my own, the first study I have worked on that focuses on implementation, and my first qualitative study. My practical experience in implementing programs is almost non-existent.

Coming from 'academia' I think my view of implementation strategies may be naïve as compared to those who have implemented programs on the ground, or those who have had experience evaluating the implementation of a program more in depth. I recognize that I have come to this research with a specific focus on examining implementation strategies, challenges to implementation generally, and strategies to overcome these challenges. While I was open to codes and themes emerging within these three areas, I feel that I was closed to exploring any additional areas.

I did surprise myself a little bit during data analysis. I was able to see some themes emerge that were relevant to the implementation process, but that were outside of the framework from which I had first approached the data. Perhaps this means that I was more open than I thought? Or perhaps my academic knowledge of implementation left me open to exploring other factors relevant to the process, even though I did not explicitly intend for this to happen.

With this being the first qualitative study I have conducted, I don't think that I was quite prepared for the 'messiness' of the data. I think that I embraced the process and felt that the structured analysis that I engaged in kept me on track to answer my research questions without becoming totally lost and veering away from the intended purpose of the study. I feel that trying to maintain this control may have helped me overall in the data analysis process, as I did not become too overwhelmed in sifting through all of the data – staying focused on the research questions.

In this study, credibility is assessed through methodological triangulation with multiple interviews, Program Survey data, and phone call notes all being analyzed (Denzin, 1978). Additionally, after participant interviews were transcribed, credibility was also assessed through an early form of member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transcripts from each implementer interview were shared with each participant (via email), thereby giving them the chance to review what was said during the interview, and offering them a chance for any clarification, or follow up with the researcher. The participants are the experts on implementation of the ESBM program at their agency, so it was important to check in with them at this stage of the process. All participants had the option of corresponding with the researcher via email or telephone about their

thoughts and reactions to the transcript. Feedback was obtained from six interviewees, others either did not reply to the request for feedback, or simply replied that the transcript looked alright. All feedback from participants was incorporated into their transcripts before analysis proceeded.

Dependability of the findings will be assessed through an audit (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Though it was the intention to have a dependability audit conducted at the conclusion of the entire data analysis process, due to time constraints, an audit has not yet been conducted, but will be completed before there is any further publication of this research. The researcher has maintained an audit trail to the best of her ability throughout the research process so that an auditor may assess the process and products of analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1982). All original data, researcher memos, and reports from the TAMS Analyzer software will serve as information from which an auditor can conduct the audit. An external auditor who is familiar with the subject matter (i.e., mentoring, implementation) and who is also versed in qualitative methods will review a sample of research findings from two research questions (out of seven, total) and trace these findings back through to the raw data from which they originated.

To serve as a final member check, the findings from this study were shared via email with each of implementers interviewed, and with the Director of Research and Evaluation at BBBSA. This step presented an opportunity for all parties involved in the research to offer their feedback and participants were given approximately one month to examine the findings. Five participants responded to the findings they were sent. One participant asked if they would see anything further on the project, another stated that they were still implementing ‘the core of ESBM’, but that their agency struggles with

keeping the number of matches between mentors and mentees up. The other three participant's simply stated that they felt the findings 'looked good', and one participant stated that they felt that their story was represented in the findings.

While the researcher cannot assert the extent to which findings are transferable to other settings, White and Marsh (2006) have suggested that interviewing many participants may allow for increased transferability to other similar contexts. Here, 15 implementers from different agencies were interviewed and the context within which each of these agencies operates is detailed in individual agency vignettes (See Chapter 6: Findings)

The lead implementers who participated in interviews and in the ESBM pilot are a small subset of all agencies within the larger BBBSA network. The descriptions offered about agency context and the research process in the current research should allow those within BBBSA and in other mentoring organizations to make an assessment about the transferability of findings from this research to their own context. As "…the applicability of research results in other settings depends on the degree of similarity between the research setting in which the phenomenon studied occurs and the settings in which the results are expected to be transferable" (Rodon & Sesé, 2008) it is likely that BBBSA will see the potential for transferability of these findings to other agencies operating under the BBBSA umbrella.

Human Subjects Protection

All participants in this study have their confidentiality respected. Approval for research was obtained through Portland State University's Human Subjects Research

Review Committee before interviews were conducted. Precautions were taken with all original data as well as all secondary data that was compiled. All interview participants were informed of the potential, though minimal, risks associated with participating in this research project. This project received support from the Director of Research and Evaluation at BBBSA, which has been a continued facilitator in gaining buy-in from participants.

There is no way to ensure total confidentiality for those participating in interviews due to the very small population of participants from which the sample was drawn. All efforts have been made by the researcher to protect participant confidentiality. All data was de-identified, and participant names or names of agencies were replaced with numbers during transcription of the data, with these numbers being used throughout data analysis and the write-up of findings. A separate list of agency and participant names linking them to their pseudonym has been kept in a locked file cabinet.

In regards to secondary data collected, phone call notes were de-identified upon receipt of the documents, and all files were kept in a password protected file on the Portland State University computer network. Print outs of data have been kept in a locked file cabinet. Program Survey data received from BBBSA linked data to specific sites or schools for each agency. This sensitive data was also housed in a password protected filed on the Portland State University computer network.

Chapter 6

Findings

Presented here are findings pertaining to each research question posed in this dissertation. First, vignettes describing the context of each of the 15 pilot agencies participating in this study are offered. Findings from research question one are then presented and describe the challenges and strategies to overcome challenges to implementation as experienced by lead implementers in agencies piloting the enhanced school-based mentoring (ESBM) program. These findings were derived from both phone call notes and lead implementer interviews, though the bulk of data originated from phone call notes and thus the use of direct quotes from interviews is limited.

Next, findings from research question two are presented and focus on describing the implementation strategies identified by lead implementers in both phone call notes and during implementer interviews. Implementation strategies are described using Klein et al.'s (2001) framework and the Fixsen et al. (2005) model as main points from which to anchor findings. These findings also serve to partially answer research question three as each implementation strategy identified is also discussed in terms of how it aligns, misaligns, or may add to Klein et al.'s (2001) implementation framework.

The remainder of research question three is then explored through implementer perceptions of the biggest contributors to implementation effectiveness. A discussion of actual and perceived outcomes of the ESBM follows. Lastly, the theme of organizational readiness for change is described. Though not a component of Klein et al.'s (2001) implementation framework, this theme emerged through data analysis and is thus presented here.

Describing the Sample

Agency vignettes are detailed here as a way to demonstrate the context in which each agency operates and the ways in which agency implementers perceived the effectiveness of implementation of the ESBM. In Klein's implementation framework, implementation effectiveness (i.e., program fidelity) is demonstrated through the "…consistency and quality of targeted organizational members' use of a specific innovation" (Klein & Sorra, 1996, p. 1058). Thus innovation use can range from nonuse, to compliant use, to committed use (Klein & Sorra, 1996).

Following the vignettes is a table of agency characteristics (see Table 4). It should be noted that not all agencies were operating the exact same school or site-based mentoring program before the ESBM was implemented. Some agencies reported implementing various ESBM practices at sites before the ESBM was implemented (agency made minor changes), while others reported that they had not been implementing any of these practices (agency made major changes).

Agency one. This agency is located in a metropolitan area of over 3 million and served about 2000 children in 2010 across 5 counties. The lead implementer interviewed had been with the agency for approximately 5 years and noted that during the pilot the agency was in a time of transition. This agency designated about 75% of their sites for the ESBM, with specific sites being chosen because they were top programs. Through brief analysis of Program Survey data this agency was identified as one that made major program changes, meaning that they had been implementing few of the ESBM components pre-implementation, though was characterized by a representative from

BBBSA as an agency that struggled with implemenation during the pilot. This agency was not involved with the task force that led development efforts for the ESBM.

During implementation there was staff buy-in, good consistency of implementation, and widespread implementation across sites early on in the pilot. The respondent described ESBM to be 'the way things are done' in the agency now. During implementation there was a felt lack of commitment by BBBSA and it was described that more effort should have been put forth to strengthen the training component of the ESBM (for volunteers). The interviewee noted that the timing was right for the ESBM pilot and that the agency had been "heading in that direction" before the pilot began.

Agency two. This agency serves a whole state through multiple offices, with the main office being located in a city with a population of just under two million. In 2010, almost 700 youth were served through their site-based programs, and almost 1800 youth were served overall. The lead implementer had been with the agency for less than 5 years, and began working with the pilot after it had already begun. During the pilot, this agency was operating about 30 school-based programs with 8 new sites being designated as pilot sites and three staff members working on the ESBM in addition to their other non-ESBM matches. Through brief analysis of Program Survey data this agency was identified as one that made major program changes, though was characterized by a representative from National as an agency that was average in implementing the pilot.

The agency felt a lack of commitment from BBBSA as they did not offer a standard volunteer training or template for a curriculum for agencies to utilize during the pilot. Even so, it was expressed that BBBSA was committed to the implementation and wanted match lengths to do well. In year one of the pilot, the agency was not consistent

in offering volunteer trainings and was unsure of how to schedule the trainings to gain attendance. Consistency increased in year two when volunteers were required to attend training. At the time of the interview, most ESBM components were rolled out to all sites, except for the monthly match support and parent contacts.

Agency three. This agency serves one county that has a population of just under 400,000. In 2010, almost 850 youth were served. The lead implementer interviewed had been with the agency for over 10 years. This agency conducted the pilot in only a few of their school-based sites with operation of the ESBM being supported by all staff members at the agency. Through brief analysis of Program Survey data this agency was identified as one that made minor program changes, and was characterized by a representative from BBBSA as an agency that was average in their implementation of the pilot. This agency was not involved with the task force for the ESBM. The lead implementer perceived that their agency was selected for the pilot because of their strong program and shorter match lengths. The agency had already been working on improving their site-based program's match support and felt "poised and ready" for the ESBM.

Local agency leadership became committed to the ESBM over time and from the start of the pilot staff were ready to embrace a greater focus on program quality. After just a few months, the 'heart of the model' (i.e., 12 month commitment, pre-match training, a focus on more socio-emotional over group games) was implemented consistently throughout the agency. Components not sustained were the more frequent match support and the match support out of program time.

Agency four. This agency serves 11 counties and is located in a city with a metro population of just over 2 million. In 2010, over 1200 youth were served by this agency.

The lead implementer had been with the agency for over 10 years. During the pilot, this agency had 18 SBM sites in operation with more than three-quarters of these being designated as pilot sites. Through brief analysis of Program Survey data this agency was identified as one that made minor program changes, and was characterized by a representative from BBBSA as an agency that was average in their implementation of the pilot. Being an agency that made minor programmatic changes implies that the agency perceived that they were already implementing most of the ESBM components before the pilot began and thus may have engaged in fewer implementation strategies during implementation. The fact that a representative from BBBSA thinks the agency struggled with implementation may be at odds with Program Survey findings. The interviewee noted that the agency had already begun to make changes to their site-based program before the pilot and "when this came along we're like this is perfect because we want to do better with it."

Overall, the implementation of the pilot was consistent across sites at this agency, with one specific consistency being that all matches were not allowed contact outside of the program. Locally, there was a strong commitment to quality improvement even though there were challenges. The main reason for the agency's success with the pilot was their perception of total buy-in to the ESBM.

Agency five. This agency serves 4 counties and is located in a city with a population of under 100,000. In 2010, over 1000 youth were served by the agency. The lead implementer had been with the agency for approximately 5 years and had not participated in support conference calls with BBBSA. During the pilot, this agency had 16 SBM sites in operation with about a third being designated as pilot sites. All pilot

sites were ones that worked only with high school mentors and these sites had a total of 4 staff working with them. Through brief analysis of Program Survey data this agency was identified as one that made major changes to their school-based program, and was characterized by a representative from National as an agency that was average in their implementation of the pilot. During the ESBM pilot the staff turned over almost completely. This agency had been moving towards ESBM components pre-ESBM.

The lead implementer was not fully on board with conducting match support out of program time, and thus there was some level of a lack of commitment locally to supporting this pilot. There was likely consistency across the agency in how the pilot was implemented – though it was perceived that there was no way to be certain. It was felt that the ESBM was worth the work that went into implementing it.

Agency six. This agency serves 7 counties and is located in a city with a metro population of just under 1 million. In 2010, almost 1500 youth were served by this agency. The lead implementer had been with the agency for less than 5 years, had moved up to a senior position very quickly and was not the initial lead implementer on the ESBM. During the pilot, this agency had 9 SBM sites in operation that were supported by 2 staff members, and ESBM changes (though not surveys) were also rolled out to all sites. Through brief analysis of Program Survey data this agency was identified as one that made major changes to their program during ESBM implementation, though was characterized by a representative from BBBSA as an agency that struggled with the implementation. All staff working with site-based mentoring matches during ESBM were hired after ESBM had been implemented. This was due to a whole staff turnover. The agency has had problems with some of their sites being cooperative with the

program. Due to this, there was a lot of 'catch up' in year one of the pilot. Before the ESBM was implemented, the agency had begun to increase the length of commitment that they ask of mentors, and had begun a summer pen-pal program, though did not allow matches to communicate via telephone.

The lead implementer was committed to the school-based mentoring program generally, and to collecting data to demonstrate its effectiveness. The lead implementer was not a part of the pilot from the outset, and it was expressed that if she would have been, it may have been a better overall experience for the agency. The lead implementer felt that the ESBM was implemented consistently across sites and it was perceived that all ESBM changes have been sustained post-pilot.

Agency seven. This agency serves 3 counties and is located in a city with a population of under half a million. In 2010, over 1000 youth were served by this agency. The lead implementer had been with the agency for less than 5 years and started working at the agency after the ESBM had started to be implemented. During the pilot, this agency had 22 SBM sites in operation with almost a third being designated as pilot sites. Some of the ESBM sites were established just before the pilot began, and 3 staff members supported them all. Through brief analysis of Program Survey data this agency was identified as one that made minor changes to their program, and was characterized by a representative from BBBSA as an agency that was average in their implementation.

Post-pilot, ESBM components have been implemented in all site-based programs and local leadership is committed to the ESBM model. The pilot was consistently implemented across ESBM sites. A main reason for success of the pilot was the suburban location of the high schools in which the program was implemented.

Agency eight. This agency serves 3 counties and is located in a city with a population of just under 100,000. In 2010, almost 700 youth were served through the site-based program, and a total of nearly 1,400 youth were served by the agency as a whole. The lead implementer had been with the agency for approximately 5 years. During the pilot, this agency implemented ESBM changes at approximately half of their SBM sites. Through brief analysis of Program Survey data this agency was identified as one that made minor changes to their program, and was characterized by a representative from BBBSA as an agency that did great implementing the pilot. During the ESBM, this agency had a lot of turnover in staff and in leadership. Pre-pilot, the agency's site-based program was in the process of phasing out high school mentors, transitioning to more adult and corporate mentors, and had been conducting monthly match support.

In terms of implementation effectiveness, there was a local perception that the ESBM was important and valued – the lead implementer was committed to its success. It was unclear if the ESBM was consistently implemented across agencies.

Agency nine. This agency serves a whole state and is located in a city with a population of just under half a million. The lead implementer had been with the agency for almost 10 years and was a member of the ESBM task force. During the pilot, this agency had 50 SBM sites in operation with all sites being involved in the ESBM pilot to some extent. Many of the schools the agency works with have a lot of mobility within them. Through brief analysis of Program Survey data this agency was identified as one that made minor changes during ESBM implementation, and was characterized by a representative from BBBSA as an agency that was average in their implementation of the pilot. The agency had been conducting monthly match support before the ESBM was

implemented. Before and during the ESBM, economic problems and a lack of external funding had led to a reduction in summer activities. Due to this, the summer activities ESBM component was not implemented.

In describing implementation effectiveness, the interviewee depicted the ESBM as being consistently implemented across sites, and post-pilot the ESBM was described as "…practice, it's what we do, it's how we run the agency." Local staff were committed to the ESBM and saw the benefit in being a progressive agency, making changes ahead of the curve.

Agency ten. This agency is located in a city with a population of over half a million. In 2010, the agency served over 1,500 youth through both community-based and school-based mentoring programs. The lead implementer had been with the agency for almost 10 years and was self-described as the one who had to "figure it [the ESBM] out and make it happen." During the pilot this agency had 25 SBM sites in operation, with 3 of these being designated as pilot sites with support from 6 staff members. Through brief analysis of Program Survey data this agency was identified as one that made minor program changes, and was characterized by a representative from BBBSA as an agency that did great with the pilot. At the outset of the pilot there was a feeling within the agency that changes to the site-based program were needed, that staff received the pilot well, and that staff were interested in it.

Despite a lack of local fidelity measures – "I don't know that we had a really clear way to like gauge individual performance like that", it was perceived that the ESBM was consistently implemented across sites and that staff were committed to the pilot's success. After the first year of pilot implementation, changes were rolled out

across all sites. The reason given for this was that it seemed like "a lot of those extra steps were worth while in making a difference with the matches."

Agency eleven. This agency is located in a city with a population of just under half a million and is situated in an urban area with a great deal of poverty. In 2010, the agency served about 2,000 youth. The lead implementer had been with the agency for more than 10 years. About 6 months into the pilot the lead implementer moved jobs within the agency and had less time to devote to the pilot. During the pilot, this agency had 30 SBM sites in operation with 6 being designated as pilot sites. Pilot sites were chosen based on their past success and the quality of the staff at the sites. Through brief analysis of Program Survey data this agency was identified as a "non-implementer", and was characterized by a representative from National as an agency that struggled in implementing the pilot. The agency was involved in the task force that aided in formulating the ESBM pilot program. Before the pilot began, the agency was already conducting match support out of program time and utilizing behavioral interviewing in their hiring process.

There was buy-in and commitment from agency leadership for the pilot, but even so, some pieces of the ESBM were not implemented outside of ESBM sites (i.e., pieces of match support and parent contacts). Some ESBM components were implemented across all sites, including the 12 month commitment, summer communication between matches, parent summer contacts, and summer match support. The culture of the agency is geared towards ESBM now. Parent contacts were not tracked in the agency, and it was the responsibility of managers to track staff implementation of the ESBM – "it was pretty difficult to monitor things across the board."

Agency twelve. This agency serves an entire state and is located in a city with a population of under half a million. The lead implementer had been with the agency for more than 5 years. During the pilot, the agency experienced a major restructure, with much stress and change associated with it. During the pilot, this agency had 8 ESBM pilot sites that were selected based on the responsiveness of the staff and the quality of the relationship that the agency had with the sites. Through brief analysis of Program Survey data this agency was identified as a "non-implementer", and was characterized by National as an agency that did alright with implementing the pilot. There was someone from the agency who was involved in the task force, but who is no longer with the agency. Before the pilot, the agency had begun to make changes based on the Herrera (2007) study – not accepting seniors, having summer contact, making a 12 month commitment, and having some pre-match training for mentors.

Overall, it was felt that the ESBM was "an improvement and an enhancement of the quality of the program." There was little staff buy-in from the start due to the tumultuous times that the agency was facing. Though the program was perceived as being consistently implemented, it was also described that it was not well implemented. Some components, like monthly match support, could not be tracked and it's "the downside of a pilot like this where you are requiring extra contacts, but you have no real way of tracking it, you know that definitely made it difficult because to me that was a big component of the pilot and being able to know whether it was really effective."

Agency thirteen. This agency serves 7 counties and is located in a metro area with a population of just under 3 million. In 2010, the agency served over 2,500 youth through both their community-based and school-based mentoring programs. The lead

implementer had been with the agency for approximately 10 years. During the pilot, this agency had 18 SBM sites in operation with 3 being designated as pilot sites. This agency has a very strong internal culture and takes pride in their work. Through brief analysis of Program Survey data, this agency was identified as a "non-implementer", though was characterized by a representative from BBBSA as an agency that did great implementing the pilot. Three years before the pilot began, the agency had been improving their site-based program and moved towards having greater impact at fewer sites. Incremental changes towards ESBM included movement towards implementing summer contacts, parental involvement, and not matching high school seniors.

Locally, there is a strong quality improvement attitude. Before the ESBM, the agency thought they weren't "doing anything bad, it's just we had to really think about it" – they wanted to improve their program, and had been very focused on monitoring metrics and staff performance. One challenge they experienced was in how to go about deepening corporate partnerships. Overall, the pilot implementation was consistent across sites at the agency. Local leadership was committed to the pilot – "…we really believed in it, really wanted to see it be successful, so I think that's important, who the implementers are going to be on board with it all along." One perceived reason for their success with the pilot was that agency leadership had been on the task force and was bought into the idea before the pilot began. Though some components were tracked in the Agency Information Management (AIM) database, others could only be tracked and followed up on by staff (The AIM database was built by BBBSA specifically for agency use and is programmed to align with the most current service delivery model sanctioned by BBBSA).

Agency fourteen. The agency serves many counties in a wide geographic area and is located in a city with a population of under 100,000. The lead implementer interviewed had been with the agency for less than 5 years, with the lead implementer position experiencing much transition at the agency. The participant had started at the agency about 7 months after the ESBM had begun. During the pilot, this agency had 31 SBM sites in operation and 7 ESBM pilot sites, which were supported by 1 staff member. The pilot sites were mostly concentrated in one location and were chosen based on their proximity to the central office, adequacy of staffing, and the length of time that the site had been in operation. Through brief analysis of Program Survey data this agency was identified as a "non-implementer", and was characterized by a representative from BBBSA as an agency that struggled with the implementation.

There was consistency in how the pilot was implemented as only one staff member worked with all ESBM matches. The agency did feel a lack of commitment from BBBSA – such an involved pilot needed more resources, preparation, and support. Locally, the agency expressed care about the quality of matches, not just the quantity.

Agency fifteen. This agency serves 7 counties and is located in a city with a population of just under 1 million. The lead implementer had been with the agency for just under 10 years. During the pilot, this agency had 27 SBM sites in operation with 16 being designated as pilot sites. Three staff members supported the ESBM sites, and sites were selected because the agency had established good relationships with them. School based mentoring sites were mainly run with high school aged Bigs. Through brief analysis of Program Survey data this agency was identified as a "non-implementer", though was characterized by a representative from BBBSA as an agency that was average

with their implementation. This agency was not involved with the task force for the ESBM. The agency had been moving toward bridging the summer gap with matches pre-ESBM, and expressed that they were ready for change and ready to "dive into the ESBM model". At the conclusion of the ESBM pilot this agency closed their site-based program.

The local agency felt that there was commitment to see the ESBM succeed coming from National and from local leadership. There was a high level of local commitment for the ESBM as well as for improving the program generally. A lack of consistency across sites was described and momentum for implementation was lost in working with school contacts to get child referrals. However, during the pilot the changes were rolled out to all sites.

Agency characteristics. Table 4 offers a quick look at each of the 15 agencies that participated in lead implementer interviews. The headings in the table offer information about each agency in relation to the ESBM and include, from left to right, information about the location of the agency, whether or not they had a staff member on the task force that helped to create the ESBM program, the length of time the lead implementer had worked for Big Brothers Big Sisters, the number of regular school-based sites and pilot sites, and the number of staff working with the ESBM program. Additionally, implementation at each agency was characterized based on Program Survey data, the extent to which each agency participated in BBBSA hosted implementation supports (i.e., meetings and phone calls), and the way in which BBBSA characterized each agency in relation to the ESBM pilot, are included. There are some cells in the table

that are not filled in which is due to lead implementers not mentioning these specific agency characteristics during semi-structured interviews.

Table 4.

Agency Characteristics

Agency	In area with population of more than 1 million	On the task force	Lead implementer with BBBS at least 5 years	# of SBM sites	# of ESBM sites	Number of staff working on ESBM	Program Survey	BBBSA opinion of participation and of implementation
1	Yes	No	Yes	-	75%	-	Major changes	Average/ Struggled
2	Yes	-	No	30	8	3	Major changes	Average/ Average
3	No	No	Yes	-	Few	All staff	Minor changes	High/ Average
4	Yes	-	Yes	18	13	-	Minor changes	High/ Average
5	No	No	Yes	16	4	4	Major changes	Average/ Average
6	Yes	-	No	9	9	2	Major changes	Below Average/ Struggled
7	No	-	No	22	7	3	Minor changes	Average/ Average
8	No	No	Yes	-	50%	-	Minor changes	High/ Great
9	No	Yes	Yes	50	50	-	Minor changes	Below Average/ Average
10	No	-	Yes	25	3	6	Minor changes	High/ Great
11	No	Yes	Yes	30	6	-	Non-implementer	Below Average/ Struggled
12	No	Yes	Yes	-	8	-	Non-implementer	Average/ Alright
13	Yes	Yes	Yes	18	3	-	Non-implementer	High/ Great
14	No	No	No	31	7	1	Non-implementer	Below Average/ Struggled
15	Yes	No	Yes	27	16	3	Non-implementer	Average/ Average

Research Question One: Challenges and Strategies to Address Challenges

The following findings respond to research question one: What program challenges and strategies to address these challenges were identified during the pilot

implementation of the ESBM? Challenges during implementation of the ESBM pilot and strategies to address these challenges were identified through analysis of phone call notes and semi-structured interviews with 15 agency-level lead implementers. While some implementers described only challenges, others also described suggested strategies to address the challenges. Generally, implementer suggested strategies were most discussed during pilot agency conference calls with BBBSA, and thus the extent to which strategies were employed could not be ascertained. Challenges identified with at least one accompanying strategy were categorized into four groups – ESBM component challenges, agency-level challenges, general challenges faced when running a site-based program, and research challenges. These four groups of challenges are presented first with a brief description of challenges that had no accompanying strategies following.

ESBM component challenges. Some challenges were described that pertained to the ESBM program components. These include challenges with parental involvement, mentor training, bridging the summer gap, increasing the frequency of match support, and the 12 month commitment. Additionally, there were technological issues associated with implementing some ESBM components. Overall, staff felt confused at times about some components of the ESBM. It was suggested that a summary and flow chart of the pilot and the elements of the ESBM would have aided in the overall understanding of the program as a whole.

Parental involvement. This component involves including parents/guardians in activities and discussions, informing the parent when their child has been matched with a mentor, and having staff contact the parent at least twice each year.

> But one of the most difficult pieces was the parent contact piece. That was probably the most difficult for us. We think it has value, and we've talked about trying to expand doing that to other school-based matches because it seems to have an impact in, you know, the whole relationship.

In implementing this component, challenges identified were that parents were difficult to reach, didn't always want to be involved, spoke mainly Spanish while agency staff spoke only English, that there was an increase in staff time, and that contact with parents was not easily tracked in the AIM database. Strategies suggested to address this challenge centered on how to make contact with the parent. These include, agency staff receiving training on how to make contacts, staff going to the parent to make the contact, inviting the parent to the initial match meeting to meet the Big, or utilizing the youth to translate for their parents. Additionally, to increase parent involvement in the mentoring relationship agencies could establish parent groups or gatherings.

Mentor training. The next ESBM component, mentor training, involves providing all volunteer mentors with various training opportunities throughout the year, ensuring that adult Bigs receive at least one hour of pre-match training and high-school Bigs receive at least 2 hours of more targeted pre-match training, and providing Bigs with a pre-match orientation guide. Mentor training was a challenge during implementation due to the difficulty of developing trainings, getting mentors to attend trainings, keeping mentors engaged during trainings, and in finding times at the agency to offer training. One lead implementer felt that,

> …the training piece in and of itself has been so much work for me. It's been frustrating because the national doesn't have a standard training, so we had to put our own trainings together and research and put these powerpoints, and you know, finalize things.

To address this challenge, suggestions centered on how to engage mentors in the training: offering trainings at various times or locations, informing mentors about training in various ways, having a prepared schedule of trainings well in advance, and making the training mandatory. Additionally, a general message conveyed through lead implementer interviews was that in order for trainings to be implemented well and to be effective, BBBSA must create an outline of what to cover in the training, or set a curriculum for all agencies to use.

Bridging the summer gap. Bridging the summer gap also presented a challenge during implementation. This ESBM component involves agency staff encouraging mentors to communicate with mentees over the summer and other school breaks. Matches are encouraged to attend activities sponsored by the agency, or to write letters and talk on the phone over the summer. When appropriate, matches can be screened for community-based mentoring to enable further interaction during school breaks. Across pilot agencies there was great variability in the percent of matches communicating over school breaks – from 0% to 80%. Some challenges to bridging the summer gap include: the reluctance of matches to exchange contact and other information, an increase in staff time to process matches to meet outside of schools, and the generally low turnout of matches attending summer events hosted by agencies.

> …generally school-based matches don't come [to summer events] just because we don't allow the bigs to transport the littles, which means parents, or somebody on the littles' side has to be responsible for bringing them to and from, and that's usually not going to happen.

Strategies suggested to increase match communication over school breaks were to have the agency offer more support to matches, and to have staff offer multiple

suggestions to matches as to how to communicate. There were also strategies that were described by many agencies as being ineffective - matches sending cards to one another, and phone communication were both described as being potentially awkward and uncomfortable for matches. Additionally, agency staff felt that conducting match support over the summer was challenging:

> I think there was some frustration in, well, why do we need summer [match] contacts? They're [the match] not talking to each other over the summer, so why are we talking to them? [That] was a lot of the argument we heard, even though there were summer activities.

One strategy to overcome this challenge was to have agency leaders communicate a strong rationale to staff – offering match support in the summer months helps to ensure that safe communication occurs between mentors and mentees.

Match support. Enhancing match support was another challenge during implementation. This component is composed of two parts; an increase in the frequency of match support and a change in where match support interactions should be occurring. The ESBM prescribes that match support is to be conducted monthly, and outside of the time that matches meet. The challenge here centered solely on increasing the frequency of match support. Specifically, this involves conducting match support monthly with the Big (mentor) during the first year of the match, and monthly with the Little (mentee) for the first three months. Reasons described for the challenge of increasing the frequency of match support were: Bigs not understanding why they are being contacted so frequently, having to get a new staff member on board with the increase in frequency when turnover occurred, the repetitiveness of the match support form that is completed during each contact, and the overall increase in staff time.

> …match support out of program time made it really difficult because normally we do it during program time, or before, or after, you know, when we see them. But requiring it to be outside of program time all of a sudden you're trying to call, trying to email, people aren't getting back to you, instead of just walking up to them and asking them questions, now you're leaving several messages, you're emailing them several times and it adds on 20-30 minutes to that one match contact, just to try to get a hold of them outside of program time.

Strategies to overcome these challenges include: employing full-time match support staff, conducting match support immediately after match meeting time, and having staff offer Bigs an explanation of the increased match support so that they might be more willing to engage with agency staff. In regards to the repetitiveness of the match support form, suggested ways to address this were to frame questions based on seasonal activities, to utilize information in the AIM database to think of new questions, to ask some child safety questions, to develop a list of many questions across set themes and rotate through them, and to use the time to address any issues or positives that staff may have observed during program time.

Conducting monthly match support without the support of the AIM database was another challenge and was perceived to result in a low level of implementation of the component for some lead implementers.

> Well I think the idea of increased frequency of contacts [with mentors] was a really good thing, but you know, with the difficulty of tracking and just having staff knowing when to make them, I don't really think it was strongly implemented.

Many agencies suggested that developing the capability within AIM to track monthly match support would solve this challenge, "It would have been better [if AIM supported monthly tracking], match support would have been done more frequently I

think". In fact, when ESBM changes are rolled out nationwide, AIM 2.0 will also be rolled out. AIM 2.0 will include monthly match support tracking capabilities.

Twelve month commitment. The final ESBM component challenge is the 12 month commitment. At the crux of this component is the messaging from agency staff to mentors during recruitment - mentors must be willing to make at least a 12 month mentoring commitment. Agencies found it challenging to find and enroll volunteers who were willing to make this commitment up front.

> It takes more staff time to recruit because you're asking for a 12 month commitment, you're not getting as many people that say they can do it because they can only do it for the school year, so you have to do more presentations, you have to go to more places, so you're going more recruiting.

This challenge was amplified when working with high school and university students as high school and college seniors, historically, have represented a large pool of mentors. The 12 month commitment component suggested that 'seniors' should not, generally, be permitted to be mentors. One suggested solution for working with this population of Bigs was simply to shift the focus of mentor recruitment to earlier years of students.

Technological issues. The last challenge related to ESBM components has to do with technological issues. The AIM database, which all pilot agencies utilized on a day-to-day basis, was not compatible with the ESBM component of monthly match support. Many agencies did not implement this ESBM component as AIM did not allow for monthly match support contacts to be scheduled.

Agency level challenges. Agency level challenges faced during ESBM implementation were identified *solely* through lead implementer interviews. Phone call

notes did not yield information about agency level challenges. Challenges identified were, changing agency culture and an increase in staff work.

Changing agency culture. Implementers found it challenging to shift their agency's culture to support ESBM with some 'push back' from staff being described. One lead implementer stated that "…you get a little bit of resistance from the people who are used to doing things a certain way". The challenge in shifting agency culture to support the ESBM, for some, was due to unique agency circumstances such as agency restructuring during the pilot, or to a strong agency focus on growth over high quality matches. One lead implementer stated that "…probably, looking back, I would also say it would have been better for us just to not do the pilot, purely because the restructure was going on". Additionally, one implementer pointed to the challenges in measuring the shift to more one-to-one interactions during match meetings:

> I will say there's been a lot more subtle cultural, I call them cultural changes. I really do think that they are. The more emphasis on the socio-emotional and the more emphasis on, you know, I'm not going to play these big group activities for all of you guys to do, but you're going to go hang out on your own, one on one, it's also a very important cultural shift. That's happened, but it's not as easy to measure, you know?

No concrete strategies for overcoming these challenges were suggested.

Increase in staff work. The other agency level challenge described during implementer interviews was an increase in staff work. Implementers found it difficult to roll out the ESBM, or components of the ESBM, to sites beyond those involved in the research aspect of the pilot because of the significantly increased amount of work it would require. One lead implementer stated that "…each year we're adding something that makes the program better and that's going to make our matches better, but it's just

impossible to do it all at the same time because of staffing and resources." Staff also generally took on more work due to the ESBM, though overall it was perceived that "…a lot of those extra steps were worth while in making a difference with the matches". The increase in staff work did, at times, result in staff turnover for some agencies or in the perception that the ESBM was not implemented as well as it could have been. One implementer experienced a great deal of turnover throughout the pilot, "…we had some turnover, some terminations, it was kind of rough because we had such an unstable staffing model already, and after the pilot ended I had no staff that were the same. I turned over my staff twice during the model". One suggestion offered for future pilot programs to circumvent this challenge was to establish a memorandum of understanding between BBBSA and pilot agencies beforehand in order to address and allay concerns about what exactly an agency is agreeing to take on.

General challenges. Seven general challenges were identified through phone call notes and implementer interviews. These challenges are representative of day-to-day site based work and are not solely specific to the ESBM pilot. First, it was a challenge for staff to identify activities that work for matches with high school Bigs. It was suggested that staff create a list of structured activities to aid the match in choosing an activity. Second, there were some challenges presented in working with parents when a site-based mentor wished to transition their match into a community-based match. It was a challenge for staff to try to work with parents when their mentor preference for a community-based mentor did not match the site-based mentor that was already working with their child. A suggestion to overcome this was to have staff better communicate to

the site-based mentor that the parent has to agree that they can become a community-based mentor before the transition can take place.

Third, it was a challenge when a Big failed to attend a match meeting without notice. Suggestions centered on what to then do with the Little (i.e., go home, hang out with staff, etc.). To prevent the absence of the mentor it was suggested that staff call the Big before match meeting time and to have staff communicate the importance of showing up or calling if they will not make it. Fourth, when the Little failed to attend a match meeting there were many suggestions as to what to do with the Big (i.e., go home, help out with the program, etc.). Additionally, it was suggested that the Big should communicate with the Little at the next match meeting about why they did not attend. Fifth, developing a high quality match was described as a challenge, though specific reasons for this were not detailed. Many strategies were discussed as to how to increase the quality of the match, with most focusing on emphasizing one-to-one time between the Big and Little during the match meeting, and having spread out, but organized activities during match time.

Lastly, there was the challenge of recruiting Littles through the school. Some strategies to address this challenge were to have agency staff hold office hours at the school, to set up information tables at school events, and to send flyers about the program home with children.

Research challenges. Many lead implementers identified the research component of the pilot to be very challenging for their agency during implementation of the ESBM program. Research challenges included, obtaining consent, getting surveys filled out and returned, Bigs utilizing activity logs properly, and agencies receiving

materials pertaining to the ESBM in an untimely manner from BBBSA – such as surveys and consent forms.

Obtaining consent. Challenges to obtaining consent were perceived to be due to an overload on parents and schools, as well as worry from schools that the consents may scare parents away. One lead implementer felt that there was a "paperwork overload" with so many consent forms "…that wouldn't be in a normal model, but just for the pilot…[it] was hard for staff that were having to deal with all of that". Strategies to overcome this centered on how to get consents home and completed; including mailing them out, going to homes, and finding a time when a parent would be at school so that their consent could be obtained.

Surveys. Challenges to having participants complete surveys stemmed from a lack of teacher time, the length of the survey, and youth reading comprehension levels. Strategies to overcome these challenges centered on when and how to get the survey to various recipients and the idea of breaking the survey up into segments to aid with youth comprehension. One lead implementer stated that "…there was a lot of surveying. It took forever. So that was just a lot of extra work and time, and redundancy with some of the other surveys we were doing".

Activity logs. It was perceived that having Bigs utilize activity logs properly was a challenge. The activity logs were a part of the ESBM program, but BBBSA's Director of Research and Evaluation stated that these logs were used mostly for research purposes. Strategies to address the challenge pertained to changing the location of the log, giving the log a dual function as a sign in sheet, as well as communicating the importance of the log at the outset of the match.

Receiving ESBM materials. Almost all agencies felt that materials from BBBSA were receive in an untimely manner. This was perceived to be a challenge in implementing the ESBM pilot. One lead implementer remembered

> …that we did not have any of the materials from national, like the forms and what not, until school was definitely underway. We were like, we want to start making matches, but we need all the new materials, so we know that we're doing this correctly. So it was definitely, it felt like we were doing things a little backwards…and I kind of feel like we were a little late to the game.

One suggestion offered was that BBBSA could have distributed all documents during the summer before the pilot began. Another strategy suggested, perhaps for future pilot efforts, was that BBBSA could extend the time that pilot agencies have to implement a pilot based on how late they are in getting materials to them.

Challenges with no accompanying strategies. Several challenges were described through implementer interviews and phone call notes that did not have accompanying strategies. The lack of strategies may have been due to them not being recorded in phone call notes, not being discussed during interviews, or it may indeed be due to the fact that these challenges were never formally addressed. Challenges with no accompanying strategies are briefly described here.

Challenges pertaining to the ESBM pilot centered on enrollment and getting criminal background checks completed in a timely manner. Additionally, some agencies struggled with how to increase and bolster corporate partnerships, with staff generally finding it difficult to establish these partnerships.

The economy and other external factors were described as challenges for agencies. With this, the geography of a city or state that an agency works within was cited as a challenge – with staff spread thin. Additionally, some sites that agencies

worked in closed during the pilot, or other unexpected site changes occurred. Another area of challenges consisted of internal factors. Some agencies experienced restructuring, staff turnover, and/or leadership changes during the pilot, which, in some cases, led to miscommunication or misunderstandings among staff. There were issues involved in coordinating and managing staff with the workload increases that the ESBM pilot presented. Questions arose as to how staffing should be done and what number of staff should be assigned what amount of work for the pilot. Answers from BBBSA as to how to deal with issues during the pilot were slow to come, if at all, for some agencies.

In sum, challenges were perceived to originate from components of the ESBM itself, agency processes, general program processes, and ESBM research protocol. Additionally, there were challenges for which strategies were not presented. Overall, perceived challenges pertained to ESBM practices or actual components of the ESBM. Even within lead implementer interviews and phone call notes there was some discussion of general challenges to running a school-based mentoring program. These may have been present even without the ESBM program being piloted in agencies.

Research Question Two and Three: Implementation Strategies

These findings focus on identifying the implementation strategies that lead implementers perceived were used during the pilot implementation of the ESBM (RQ2). In addition, the ways in which these implementation strategies align, misalign, or add to the Klein et al. (2001) implementation framework are explored (RQ3). During analysis of phone call notes and implementer interviews, implementation strategies outlined by Klein et al. (2001) and Fixsen et al. (2005) were explored using a primarily deductive

method of inquiry. When evidence of an implementation strategy was identified, inductive approaches were used to explore the aspects of that strategy more in depth. In these findings, implementation strategies identified are linked to how Klein et al. (2001) and Fixsen et al. (2005) have defined them.

Financial resource availability. Financial resource availability is defined as a cushion of resources, which allow an organization to adapt successfully to internal pressures for adjustment or to external pressures for change in policy as well as to initiate changes in strategy with respect to the external environment (Klein et al., 2001). While there were many indicators that the financial resources available to local agencies to support implementation of the pilot were adequate, there were also indicators to the contrary. A principal sentiment from implementers was that additional funding would have aided the implementation of the ESBM.

> …I just think they [BBBSA] could have supported it with staff, or funding or resources or whatever. I think it could have had more support, so…I think they did what they could with what they had, as far as hours and people and funding, and whatever, but…you know, 20/20 vision now, to do this successfully, better, it probably would have taken significantly improved research department involvement. People, resources, you know.

BBBSA did fund supports that would have otherwise been an expense to agencies. These consisted of access to Survey Monkey, travel for local agency implementers to attend a BBBSA conference, and the provision of a training (Making Connections) for Bigs in the pilot.

When a lack of finances to support the ESBM was specifically mentioned, general statements focused on issues with finances due to the economy, and staff being unable to dedicate the kind of time to the ESBM that they needed to during the first year of

implementation. "…when it comes to having the time and capacity internally…I mean, I've cut half my program staff in the past two years…there's no time left to do anything but bare bones anything". This second issue is indicative of a lack of finances to support staff overtime, or to support the hiring of additional staff members.

Hiring additional staff was frequently described as a way in which implementation could have been aided. One implementer stated, "I mean we got [money], we didn't get enough to hire someone, like we got enough to supplement someone's pay…", while another thought that if they would have "…had maybe enough money in the beginning to hire somebody on a grant based position, to coordinate all of it…that may have been helpful…". Additionally, a lead implementer felt that external grant funding during the pilot served to aid the implementation of the ESBM.

Others explicitly expressed that there was limited funding from BBBSA to implement the pilot:

> …to be honest, it felt like there wasn't a lot of money given to agencies, given to us, to support that much surveying and paperwork and stuff like that. The money was really for the paperwork side, and they said you know, we know this is going to be a lot of paperwork and we know that this is going to be a lot of surveys so here is this money to help you out.

Some lead implementers felt that obtaining additional resources to implement the ESBM pilot would not have helped. "No, not money, no, no, no. Not money. I don't think there's any, as far as implementation, no I don't think there's any money that could have helped us". Most implementers expressing this view also had perceptions that were somewhat contradictory. Several lead implementers described that additional staff or funding for specific ESBM components *would have aided* implementation of the pilot,

even though they also stated that additional funding *would not have aided* implementation.

For example, in response to the question of whether more funding would have helped implementation, one implementer stated: “No, but I don’t think money really would have made that big of a difference for that getting off the ground piece….” yet also stated: “Well, I think if there would have been money that would have been dedicated to the implementation director, or director of implementation, that would have been really a great, a great thing to do….”

Alignment with implementation framework. From these findings, it can be inferred that agency implementers’ perception of financial resources does align with that presented by Klein et al. (2001). While about a quarter of agency implementers described an explicit need for financial resources to support the implementation of the ESBM, the remaining participants felt that there was no need for additional funding, or that there was no need for additional funding *but* there was a need for more staff to support the implementation. Thus, the majority felt that additional funding would have helped in some way – even if just to hire more staff. Comments from implementers expressing a need for additional staff demonstrate Klein et al.’s (2001) conceptual link from financial resource availability to more, or higher quality implementation policies and practices. Thus, if there had been more funding available for implementation, more staff could have been hired to support the ESBM.

Implementation policies and practices. Though this entire section of findings pertains to implementation strategies, there is one specific implementation driver in Klein et al.’s (2001) framework called ‘implementation policies and practices’. Implementation

policies and practices are the "…organizational policies and practices that may influence an organization's implementation effectiveness" (Klein et al., 2001, p. 813). Based on a review of case studies of technology implementation, Klein et al. (2001) identified a set of organizational policies and practices that may influence the effectiveness of program implementation. As noted in previous chapters, implementation policies and practices can be "compensatory", with some high quality strategies compensating for low quality or a lack of other strategies (Klein et al., 2001). Also, these implementation strategies are "cumulative" in that utilizing more implementation policies and practices is usually better. In Klein et al.'s (2001) implementation framework the policies and practices used, as well as the quality of these, is influenced by the availability of financial resources.

As Klein et al.'s (2001) framework was conceived of in a business or manufacturing setting, their implementation policies and practices are supplemented with those identified by Fixsen et al. (2005) in their review of the implementation literature (For a comprehensive review of implementation strategies identified across many frameworks, see Sanetti & Kratochwill, 2009). Fixsen et al. (2005) focus on the applicability of implementation research in more human service settings and identify implementation policies and practices that may be quite relevant for a mentoring setting.

Many themes identified through the analysis of phone call notes and implementer interviews were indicative of implementation policies being put into practice during ESBM implementation. One simple example of a policy influencing practice was discussed in conference calls, with notes showing that if staff members could keep information about Bigs and Littles up-to-date, then the 'summer gap' may be better bridged. In this way, a formal policy; 'all agencies should keep contact information up to

date', could lead to the practice of staff keeping the information up to date, and then lead to contacts being more easily made in order to get Bigs and Littles together in the summer. This policy could bolster the ESBM practice of increasing the communication between Bigs and Littles over summer breaks.

As evidenced by phone call notes, the general way in which BBBSA put into place formal implementation strategies was through offering resources to agencies; BBBSA promoted the use of Survey Monkey to the pilot agencies and provided a summer activities booklet on a website for the pilot agencies. Both BBBSA and local agencies seemed to welcome communication and feedback, and during phone conferences local agencies expressed a need for BBBSA to create a timeline for them to follow in the implementation of the ESBM pilot. In this forum, BBBSA also asked local agencies for their input as to strategies for training high school Bigs.

The policies and practices that impact implementation from both Klein et al. (2001) and Fixsen et al. (2005) are identified in the following findings. The extent to which agency implementers describe these strategies as aligning with what occurred in the agency are discussed. Here, main themes are first described, followed by a short description of less prominent themes. Less prominent themes described by lead implementers include policy changes, logistics of the implementation process, and other strategies for implementation. Figure 2 offers the reader a roadmap for this section of findings.

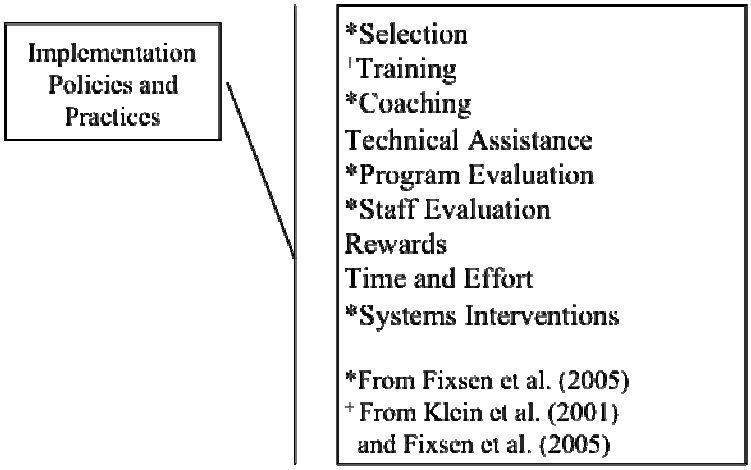

Figure 2. Implementation Policies and Practices from Klein et al. (2001) and Fixsen et al. (2005)

Staff selection. Fixsen et al. (2005) describe selection as a core implementation component. The establishment of clear criteria to aid in the selection of agencies and staff is important at both the local agency, as well as the larger organizational level. Thus, both the selection of pilot sites or schools within agencies, hiring of staff at the agency level, and the selection of agencies for participation in the ESBM pilot are explored here.

At pilot agencies, the local schools and sites in which the ESBM pilot was implemented were chosen based on how cooperative they were with the agency and their geographic location. "…we pretty much just picked their whatever top programs and said let's do ESBM here…". Staff selection at the agency level, specifically in relation to the ESBM program, was also described. There was discussion in phone call notes that some staff positions could not be filled due to the economy, and thus some staff members were to work half-time on the ESBM project, and half-time with the regular service delivery model. There was brief mention of hiring new staff generally, with BBBSA sending the new employee a letter orienting them to the ESBM.

During one phone call meeting, specific criteria were described for selecting staff to work on the ESBM pilot. One implementer described choosing strong match support specialists. Overall, the way in which agencies staffed the pilot and the number of staff working with ESBM matches varied substantially across agencies. For example, the number of staff working on the pilot varied from 3 to 8 (as reported by lead implementers during interviews), with some agencies describing that their whole staff was involved to some extent. In some agencies staff were moved into ESBM sites, while in other cases staff were left working where they were prior to the pilot. For some staff, ESBM was their entire job, while for others it was only one facet.

While there were no new hires specifically due to the implementation of the pilot program, staff were hired during the pilot due to turnover or expansion: "…no, it [hiring] was because of turnover. I mean, you know, I wish we could say that yes, we had all this money and we could hire. It was because of turnover that we had new staff in place." Some implementers felt that the ESBM helped their agency better identify what they were looking for in new hires: "I think the model did help us define a little bit more what we were looking for in a school-based person."

When new hires were made, many described that it was desirable for candidates to be skilled at developing partnerships:

> …it was, are [potential new hires] good at site-based and all of it, not just the contacting of matches, it was, can they develop partnerships and relationships with the school, because that's the critical piece of site-based that's very different from community-based…

Behavioral interviewing techniques were utilized by some, with one agency using these techniques before the ESBM began, while another began to do so during the pilot. In the

ESBM program, behavioral interviewing was one element of the component of 'enhancing the development of staff'.

The selection of agencies for participation in the pilot was explored during the semi-structured interview with BBBSA's Director for Research and Evaluation. Criteria for agency inclusion in the pilot study were that an agency was already using the AIM database system and that they had school-based mentoring match lengths above the national average. Additionally, there was attention to choosing agencies across all regions of the United States, and including agencies that were both high and low performing. Once criteria were established, regional agency development staff were contacted by BBBSA and were asked to identify agencies that may be interested in the pilot and also capable of supporting the research project. The Director perceived that:

> …probably one of the reasons so many of the agencies were willing to participate also could be that they were getting pressure from their funders and their communities to provide that they [SBM programs] work, so they wanted to be a part of this [pilot] process.

Alignment with framework. From BBBSA it was conveyed that there were specific criteria utilized in selecting agencies for the ESBM pilot. There was a very scant mention of how sites or schools within each pilot agency were chosen to be a part of the pilot, and even less about selection criteria for staff working with the pilot. Some agencies did describe, via phone call notes, that they selected certain staff to work on the ESBM because of qualities they possessed.

While there were no new hires for the ESBM at the agency level, there was some influence of the ESBM program on hiring criteria for staff that were hired due to turnover. Only one agency described implementing behavioral interviewing, which was

a part of the ESBM program. A lack of hiring new staff is not surprising; as this was only a pilot and funding for mentoring programs are tight. So, while this organizational strategy of staff selection was not enacted across agencies, it was enacted on a broader scale by BBBSA when agencies were selected for the pilot. Still, there are many other implementation strategies that may be employed to support program implementation when staff cannot be hired who are particularly qualified to work within a specific program. One such strategy is staff training.

Staff training. Though staff training alone may be "…an ineffective approach to implementation" (Fixsen et al., 2005, p. 43), training is only one of many implementation policies and practices that can improve implementation outcomes (Fixsen et al., 2005; Klein et al., 2001). Klein et al. (2001) emphasize the quality and quantity of training while Fixsen et al. (2005) define training through three functional components: "…knowledge of the program and practices, demonstrations of key skills, and practice to criterion of key skills." (p. 43). Training may be an integral strategy in supporting the implementation of the ESBM program as new staff with skills specific to the ESBM could not be hired. As was discussed above, there was some evidence that within each agency an effort was made to choose staff to work with the ESBM based on some specific skills, and BBBSA selected agencies for the pilot using specific criteria.

Staff training for the ESBM pilot originated from the National and the local level. Though not elucidated, job aids were described in phone call notes as being available from BBBSA to help staff conduct match support and to provide direction in how to use the AIM database during the ESBM pilot. BBBSA also described holding phone call trainings about topics such as surveying, though one such training was described by

agencies as being not specific enough to the ESBM. In this section, a discussion of pre-ESBM staff training and the lack of training that was received from BBBSA are first presented. Other less aspects of this theme that were less represented by lead implementers are then explored and include, training received during ESBM, training lead implementers specifically, and other non-ESBM training engaged in at the agency level.

A great majority of lead implementers perceived that pre-ESBM training consisted of a meeting for lead implementers hosted by BBBSA, and then at the local agency level, a visit from a BBBSA representative to meet with staff. "…[someone from BBBSA] did come here in the summer and talk with everyone so that was kind of the base training that everyone got.…" Following these broad trainings, local managers and lead implementers held internal meetings with staff about the pilot.

> …we did a training in our program staff meeting to go over what are the major pieces you know um, what are the things that are going to be major steps for us as an agency because some of them we were already doing and some of them were going to be major pieces, because I wanted the staff to have time to discuss them as well, not just say, okay this is what we're doing now.

Through phone call notes it was found that other local agency level training topics included training staff to train Bigs to use the activity log correctly, utilizing different training for school-based staff as compared to community-based staff, as well as training staff on mid-year mentor surveys a few months prior to staff administering them.

A majority of lead implementers did feel that there was a lack of structured training on the ESBM program coming from BBBSA. Lead implementers felt as though they were attending information sessions more so than trainings about the ESBM.

> …I remember there were some power-points. I think it was really kind of a, like

> a brief overview of the pilot, not that it was brief, but an overview of the pilot, but like the main, how it would work, and then giving staff the ability to ask questions. I don't know if I would call it a training per se.

Perhaps the biggest gap in training was for local agency program staff, with implementers repeatedly describing a lack of set training for this group.

> Training was a little tricky with staff. I mean, I brought back what I could [from national level meetings] and passed that onto the staff, but if they had other questions that I couldn't answer, then that's when I would do the calls or emails to [BBBSA] or another site that was on the ESBM. So there wasn't a lot of training provided for the direct staff, that would have probably been much more helpful.

A need for more specific training in areas was also discussed, with one implementer perceiving that "…there doesn't seem to be a piece to catch people up…" when new ESBM staff had to be trained. Other lead implementers felt that training for staff who work with high school Bigs, training for staff who enroll matches on how to train ESBM Bigs differently, and the potential need for training staff on conducting parental contacts were all needed, or could have been helpful. While these training needs were identified, there was no discussion of implementing such trainings.

Though not prominently discussed, training *during* ESBM was mentioned by lead implementers as consisting of local training of new staff members, and a local follow up training for staff a few months into the pilot. Staff "…had another training after that, 2 months later, just how was it going, reviewing some of the practices…". On the job training was described as being useful in resolving issues around staff training Bigs. Training during ESBM that originated from BBBSA consisted of helping to get a new manager on board during the pilot, local staff utilization of the website that BBBSA had set up, and staff engaging in conference calls with BBBSA.

Alignment with framework. Informational or planning sessions with BBBSA to get agencies ready for the ESBM pilot were perceived as training by lead implementers, though they were not often perceived as strong forms of training. Beyond this, there was a perceived lack of training for the ESBM pilot, especially for program staff who implemented the ESBM components on a day-to-day basis. This lack of training may be because ESBM practices were not too disparate from the standard SBM service delivery model. Based on these comments it seems as though training was not perceived as being of high quality. Klein and Knight (2005) note that training must be of both sufficient quantity and quality for it to be effective in supporting implementation. Additionally, the training described by lead implementers does not go beyond acquiring "…knowledge of the program and practices…" (Fixsen et al., 2005, p. 43) and thus is not in alignment with Fixsen et al.'s (2005) definition of training.

Coaching. Coaching is one of the "…principle ways in which behavior change is brought about for carefully selected staff in the beginning stages of implementation…." (Fixsen et al., 2005). Fixsen et al. (2005) utilize Spouse's (2001) definition of coaching, and describe that a coach serves four main roles; supervision, teaching while engaged in practice activities, assessment and feedback, and emotional support. Fixsen et al. (2005) describe the core of coaching to be "…teaching and reinforcing evidence-based skill development and adaptations of skills and craft knowledge to fit the personal styles of the practitioners" (p. 47).

Local coaching practices were most detailed by lead implementers, while BBBSA practices, and concerns about lack of coaching were not discussed. Lead implementers

interviewed described coaching in their agency either generally, or specifically for ESBM, with most implementers describing both to a similar degree.

Most local coaching pertained to meeting with staff to discuss the research side of the pilot, or to engage in troubleshooting ESBM program practices.

> I met with my staff on a weekly basis too, just to see how things are going, see if they had any questions, or um you know, what they needed help with, if there was any, you know, additional support that they needed that we could, that I could help out with or find.

> …what I did was I met with the match support staff for those sites and the enrollment staff for those sites. I think it started as every other week we'd get together and I'd just go over with them the changes and what forms they needed and what questions they had so that was helpful to kind of get together twice a month and talk about what they needed to do and when and how and um, it was a little rocky starting out, for sure.

In many agencies, coaching geared specifically towards the ESBM was conducted at intervals of approximately 2 weeks, and occurred most often in groups,

> …we had full school-based team meetings every other week on Tuesday mornings for about two hours where we would talk openly as a group, and then in addition to that I had one on ones with my staff every week to kind of sit down, regroup, where're we at, how's it going [with the pilot], what are your challenges, what can I help you with...

Additionally, some implementers described coaching practices separate from ESBM as occurring one-to-one with staff, approximately every month, "…all of our staff have a monthly one on one with their supervisor." It is interesting that coaching geared specifically toward ESBM seemed to occur in groups, though this was not exclusively the case, while other general coaching was only described as being one-to-one.

While not frequently identified by lead implementers as coaching, the conference calls hosted by BBBSA can be considered instances of coaching, and lead implementers did discuss the calls during interviews.

> …we did have conference calls every two weeks in small groups so there was probably four – three or four – sites that would get on a conference call and we'd just have different things that we'd discuss or different problems or challenges that we could discuss and I guess you can consider that some type of coaching…"

The frequency of local ESBM coaching may have been established to match the frequency of coaching coming from BBBSA as conference calls occurred approximately every 2 weeks. When conference calls were described as instances of coaching, lead implementers also reported that they were not a strong source of coaching, "…and then you know, sometimes the conference calls were canceled, they were canceled pretty frequently so, the coaching and the training and kind of that support wasn't really strong to be honest…"

Alignment with framework. Coaching from BBBSA and at local agencies most often occurred in groups and at an interval of every 2 weeks. From BBBSA, group conference calls were the only source of coaching, while locally lead implementers or other supervisors met with ESBM staff in person. While lead implementers perceived that coaching occurred at their agencies for the most part, it was not clear exactly what each agency's definition of coaching was due to a lack of detail. As defined by Spouse (2001) and Fixsen, et al. (2005) the strategy of coaching did not appear to be fully implemented in the pilot agencies. Coaches seemed to engage most in supervision and emotional support, while the other 2 components of coaching; teaching while engaged in practice, and assessment and feedback, did not appear to be strongly in place.

Technical assistance. Another of Klein et al.'s (2001) implementation policies and practices is technical assistance, and is defined as help that is provided on an as needed basis (p. 813). During interviews, lead implementers did not utilize the term

'technical assistance', but did discuss receiving 'help' in the form of access to assistance when questions or problems arose with the ESBM. Lead implementers most often discussed help as originating from BBBSA. To a lesser extent, it was also perceived as being accessed from other agencies and from within the agency. In receiving help from BBBSA, agency implementers felt as though there were many avenues from which to do so.

> They had the initial just kind of manual when they rolled it out, of the essential elements and recommendations, so I would go back to that several times a week um, and they also had resources online and they had a website that was like on our agency connection that was dedicated to the forms, like here's the forms that you need

Implementers could call or email BBBSA representatives at any time with questions, they could access help via conference calls, and from other resources provided by BBBSA. These resources consisted of tools such as an excel sheet to track matches and an online Bigs training. Additionally, a website and manual were available to agencies as reference materials when questions arose. On occasion, a few implementers felt as though help was slow to come from BBBSA when they had specific questions,

> …typically you know, you raise these questions like, okay, I don't know what to do about this, this is a problem, this is a challenge, and there wasn't a lot of like alright, this is how you need to handle that, or this is the answer to that. It was kind of like, well, we'll get back to you and then not really get any answers or feedback to it.

Though not prominently described by lead implementers, some perceived that help was accessed from other agencies via conference calls,

> …they [BBBSA] offered tools, monthly or every other week calls, and those were really, that was helpful for the staff that was implementing it, to get on the phone with their peers who are all across the country that are doing the same thing to kind of talk about things.

and, generally, help could be accessed from within the agency itself, "…from a staff perspective, they could always come to me."

Alignment with framework. While implementers who discussed help felt as though they had adequate access, some felt that help was slow to come at times from BBBSA. Overall, lead implementers felt they could access help from BBBSA, other agencies, and from within their own agency when needed.

Program evaluation. Program evaluation seeks to assess "…key aspects of the overall performance of the organization to help assure continuing implementation of the core intervention components over time" (Fixsen et al., 2005, p. 29). During one phone call meeting, BBBSA acknowledged that the transition from research to practice was not smooth and mentioned that looking at program fidelity was important in relation to being able to assess ESBM goals of the number of ESBM matches, and the number of matches carrying over into the second year. Through implementer interviews, program evaluation, or a lack thereof, as it pertained to the ESBM was described. Locally, program evaluation systems were perceived to stay the same throughout the implementation of the ESBM, "I know the program evaluation really didn't change, as long as, you know, the people were doing their job and doing it effectively, I don't think there was anything."

Some lead implementers perceived that reporting data to BBBSA, such as that resulting from the Program Survey, was a part of program evaluation and it was described that "…once evaluation is done, that won't be a part of the model, but it has to be taken into consideration for now." It was stated in phone call notes that agency reporting about experiences with implementing the ESBM model would be valuable data.

One agency with turnover of staff working on the ESBM had a lead implementers that perceived Program Survey data to be unreliable,

> …each staff member filled it [program survey] out for their site. Although then, because we had turnover going on, there was definitely surveys that were then less useful because, well, [the staff member has] had this school for three months and [they] don't really know, but [just write] what they think kind of answers.

In phone call notes, it was mentioned that there was a desire to meet program standards, such as reaching a target number of ESBM matches and maintaining fidelity to the model.

One agency described that the ESBM pilot made them examine their existing program more closely,

> …it [the ESBM] didn't actually change the methods that we use to evaluate our programs…we still use the same methods…but ESBM made us look at our material a little bit differently, and make sure that we were kind of connecting the dots back together.

Further, this spurred internal discussion with staff as to how ESBM practices may influence metrics,

> I think that, what ESBM did is it kind of gave up the case for tracking it (metrics) more and saying we've implemented these new procedures, we are, you know, are we seeing an increase in retention rates and things like that. And can we take that back to the reason is because we have changed our standards so to speak.

Many program evaluation practices not specific to the ESBM were described by lead implementers and centered on surveying school and corporate partners for feedback, as well as examining various match outcomes. The Youth Outcome Survey, the Strength of Relationship assessment, as well as match retention and match length were all described to be a part of general program evaluation.

Alignment with framework. In the context of the ESBM pilot, agencies evaluated the program by filling out a Program Survey provided to them by BBBSA, and also tracked outcomes within their agency. Overall, no changes to ongoing program evaluation were made based on the ESBM pilot. Another aspect of program evaluation is program fidelity. Assessing the outcomes of a program is important, as is assessing whether or not the program components are being implemented in an agency. Though existing outcomes and metrics were tracked for ESBM matches in most cases, the Program Survey that was to yield program fidelity data on a yearly basis for research purposes was perceived by some lead implementers to be an inaccurate reflection of actual site or agency practices in regards to the ESBM pilot.

Staff evaluation. Staff evaluation, as with program evaluation, is a core component of implementation (Fixsen et al., 2005). Evaluation of both staff and program are important and "…assessments of performance are a critical component of implementation." (Fixsen, et al., 2005, p. 55). Ideally, staff evaluations are based on practices that have been learned during training and further reinforced across coaching sessions. The perception of the importance of staff evaluation is bolstered via studies demonstrating a link between high practitioner fidelity to program practices and better outcomes for the consumer (Fixsen, et al., 2005). No agencies in this study altered their staff evaluation systems to align with new pilot practices. The potential ramifications for this are, not knowing with certainty which, and to what extent, staff members engaged in implementing the core components of the ESBM throughout the life of the pilot.

As evidenced by phone call notes, the methods by which staff were to be evaluated by BBBSA in regards to the ESBM pilot were qualitative. In phone call notes

there was also acknowledgement by BBBSA that monitoring staff adherence to the pilot would be difficult. Staff evaluation was described as being in the form of conversation with staff as well as through random checks.

Locally, staff evaluation pertaining to ESBM practices did not consist of any formal measures, "…there was no specific metric based on ESBM alone". Though some lead implementers did describe that the staff evaluation had changed, these changes did not occur because of the ESBM, but were concurrent with the implementation of the ESBM.

Work on the ESBM was perceived as 'extra' and would be, or could have been, factored into assessments of staff performance at some agencies,

> …the annual evaluations reflect the productivity over the year and they also reflect any sort of extra things so I would assume that they included thinks like this staff person was in charge of an ESBM site, and you know, the quality of their work".

A method of evaluating staff work on the ESBM was to examine the AIM database closely to see how the staff member's work aligned with the ESBM program. Many times reports could not be pulled directly from AIM, so, as described by one implementer, extra work had to go into reviewing AIM to see if staff were complying with the ESBM. For example, one implementer stated that "You had to actually dig and you know, do research on the matches to see if it (the ESBM) was being followed". Overall, any change to staff evaluations consisted of only surface level considerations, not actual metrics, or changes to metrics.

Lead implementers frequently described how staff evaluations were conducted in general. Staff evaluations occurred at regular intervals, with more frequent evaluation

during the first year of a staff member's employment, "…you have a 3-month, and you have a 6-month, and an annual your first year, and then ongoing you have a 6-month and an annual every year". Staff evaluation tended to mainly consist of examining match metrics (i.e., match retention, recruitment) as they pertained to the caseload of each staff member. The AIM database was the mode by which these metrics could be tied back to individual staff members. Some innovative methods of evaluating staff were described that did not directly tie to the ESBM.

One was to evaluate staff on several levels – For example, one lead implementer described that,

> …we started something new just past year where we do assessments twice a year…they are in three different tiers and the first tier is essential duties, and then the second…is above and beyond…and the third tier is an agency goal.

Another innovation was to evaluate staff based on cultural competencies in addition to the duties outlined for their position: "…we have all of our job competencies and then our cultural competencies…how are you going to expect someone to be living within your culture and your brand and everything if it is nowhere ever evaluated."

Alignment with framework. Staff evaluation of those engaged in implementing the ESBM, as defined in this dissertation, did not appear to occur. For some agencies the ESBM was only one part of an employee's job, so it is understandable that an agency's whole evaluation system could not change due to a pilot being implemented. Even given this, staff working on the ESBM could have been evaluated while an agency's staff evaluation system remained the same, and yet this did not occur. In phone call notes, BBBSA representatives made reference to staff being assessed qualitatively, though agency implementers presented no further evidence of this.

Rewards. Rewards, as characterized by Klein et al. (2001), consist of "…promotions, praise from supervisors, or improved working conditions, for [innovation] use". In Sanetti and Kratochwill's (2009) review of implementation variables across implementation frameworks, increasing practitioner motivation to implement was cited by 3 different frameworks as being central to implementation.

Implementers perceived rewards as originating from both the local and BBBSA level. At the local level, verbal praise served as a staff reward: "…I tried to, you know, praise the staff that were working on the pilot a lot…that them for all their hard work and the paperwork…", while rewards from BBBSA were both tangible and more intrinsic. BBBSA rewards included recognition for participation in the pilot and being chosen to represent the ESBM program at BBBSA conferences:

> I feel very honored, I mean they asked me to present on what our agency is doing with the ESBM at the national conference, and…at the state level to present what we learned from the ESBM model…so that was a recognition in and of itself.

In addition, chocolates were received from BBBSA, "Tanya [from BBBSA] sent us, I think, mugs with chocolate in them", and conference fees for local staff were paid in some instances. There were also some lead implementers who felt they had not received recognition for their agency's participation in the ESBM pilot. For example,

> …I racked my brain about it and just can't really think of anything…the actual report from the ESBM pilot study hasn't come out so I don't even know what type of recognition our agency will get for participating in that…you know they thanked us, but there was really not much.

Alignment with framework. As defined by Klein et al. (2001), agencies and those who worked with the ESBM did not receive rewards in the form of promotion, or improved working conditions. They did however receive praise from supervisors in

various ways. There seemed to be motivation to implement the ESBM but it did not seem to originate from the kinds of external rewards described by Klein et al. (2001).

Time and effort. Klein et al. (2001) describe "…the quality, accessibility, and user-friendliness of the new technology [innovation] itself", which ties into implementation policies and practices. The amount of time and effort perceived to be expended during program implementation reflects the extent to which the innovation was designed to be accessible to implementers. Additionally, Klein et al. (2001) describe 'extra time in the workday' to be an implementation strategy. There are 3 items that Klein et al. (2001) have used in their quantitative study of implementation to examine this implementation strategy. In their MRPTOO Survey (a pseudonym for a company's manufacturing resource-planning package), program users were asked if they felt as if they had enough time to do their work and to learn new skills necessary for the program, if they had enough time to devote to the implementation, and if they were encouraged to take time off from regular tasks to be involved in the implementation of the program (Klein, 2001, MRPTOO Survey Measures: Items).

Additionally, if time and effort to implement a program are perceived to be high, then the program may be perceived as complex and this may slow the rate of adoption (Rogers, 1995). While, overwhelmingly, lead implementers characterized the ESBM pilot as requiring a large amount of time and effort, it was also expressed by some that the transition was easy or took little additional time and effort.

When it was expressed that much time and effort was required, lead implementer perceptions of what that meant mainly centered on the increase in staff time to run the program,

> Oh, I think it took a lot more effort, the ones that were working in the sites especially. The surveys took a lot of extra time, the contacts that they were expected to do with the parents, the extra contacts with the volunteers took a lot more time as well."

Fewer implementers made specific comments about which parts of the ESBM pilot required more time and effort. Some felt that increasing their program's focus on match quality over growth was difficult and required more effort "…it was really a big transition for our agency, an agency that is really driven on growth goals to kind of put the brakes on and focus on quality by implementing some of these changes", while others felt that the move to not accept high school seniors was a big step that required effort, "…it was difficult with the high schools…to not be able to match seniors in high school…it was mostly difficult for our staff I think, honestly, and out partners really didn't say anything to us at all".

It was also perceived that running the ESBM program was somewhat easier with high school mentors than with adults,

> …it was definitely a little bit easier I would say to implement some of these requirements with the high school group…high school students have a little bit more time on their hands…and they kind of went with the flow more than the adults did.

Other lead implementers perceived that conducting surveys for the research side of the pilot took a lot of time and effort, "The surveys was the biggest part, there was a lot of surveying. It took forever. So that was just a lot of extra work and time, you know and redundancy with some of the other surveys we were doing…"

A small number of all lead implementers interviewed perceived the ESBM to take little time or effort to implement. One implementer stated,

> …we implemented most of the changes for all of the matches whether we were

> tracking them as ESBM or not, so I feel like it's something we were doing anyways, so I don't feel like it was troublesome at all,

while another felt that the changes made for the ESBM were "…subtle things…more surveying, more match support, but really it wasn't anything that I didn't know coming in that was just what was expected".

Alignment with framework. Most implementers perceived that the ESBM required more time and effort to implement than the regular school based service delivery model. This characterization of difficulty with implementing the pilot is mirrored in Klein et al.'s (2001) discussion of the quality, accessibility, and user friendliness of the innovation and having extra time in the workday to work with the innovation. Implementer perception of the ESBM taking more time and effort may not be due so much to the ESBM itself being hard to use, but may just be that the ESBM was perceived to be more complex, and thus perceived to take more time and effort to implement over old practices.

Systems interventions. As defined by Fixsen et al. (2005) the system is the "…shifting ecology of agency, community, state and federal, social, economic, cultural, political, and policy environments." The system can be leveraged to support the implementation of a program. The way that the system may exert influence on the process of implementation of the ESBM was represented in discussions pertaining to planning mentor training and also to placing the implementation of the ESBM within a larger context of the federal Department of Education. Agencies described working with some outside sources (health department, partners for youth with disabilities, etc.) in order to be able to offer effective training to their volunteers. A phone call between

BBBSA and the Department of Education was mentioned in phone call notes and it was alluded to that it was important for BBBSA to gain buy-in from them.

The economy was often mentioned as being an inhibiting factor during the implementation of the ESBM program, "…I think the economy hit us really hard, which caused a drop in our service numbers…". This larger external issue was described by one agency as influencing the implementation of the ESBM program when local school districts cut their budgets. Another lead implementer pointed to losing a school where the ESBM program had been implemented as an inhibiting factor and that "…it actually skewed our numbers pretty badly in the pilot because we had to close a large amount of ESBM matches". Within local agencies, factors inhibiting implementation were stated to be transitions within agencies – one agency had just undergone a "…statewide merger…" that resulted in a whole agency restructure; and another lead implementer felt that difficulties in communication with BBBSA inhibited implementation. For example, one lead implementer stated that "…there were some occasional frustrations just with communication and not, not maybe having as good of communication as we could have had between the sites and the national office."

Alignment with framework. Based on phone call notes and discussions of a conversation with the Federal Department of Education, there is some evidence found here to support the implementation strategy of systems interventions as defined by Fixsen et al. (2005) – "…strategies to work with external systems to ensure the availability of the financial, organizational, and human resources required to support the work of the practitioners." (p. 29). Though not leveraged, there was at least some mention of

attending to outside systems that may influence the implementation of the ESBM on a broad scale.

Less prominent themes. Though less prominent, these areas were described by some lead implementers. First, policy changes were described by some and were perceived to occur either through rewriting agency language, or through a staff member's specific role in ensuring that ESBM policies were being implemented. Second, a few lead implementers described their thought process around implementation during interviews. For example, one implementer stated

> …my staff, with my guidance, created their own way to implement it, I really didn't say, this is how we're going to do this. I mean, this is what the model says, how we are going to do it, and they kind of came up with ways to do it",

while another lead implementer who was on the task force that developed the ESBM model said that they went through a "…progressive process, because I kind of knew what was coming as we were developing it, I would present at our staff meetings, at our program meetings, you know, kind of overviews of bits and pieces here and there".

Third, other miscellaneous strategies for implementation centered on how specific ESBM program practices were implemented. One agency described how they tried to ensure that Bigs attended training, "…we do it during program time…after the programs have been meeting for a few weeks…and we know they're there, otherwise getting them there on another day would be virtually impossible". Another agency had developed a flow chart for staff as to how to process an ESBM match, "…we ended up kind of creating a flow chart of you know, what the steps are for a non-pilot youth versus a pilot youth…because you had to treat them differently". Lastly, one lead implementer utilized a strong rationale to staff in order to gain buy-in,

> …I really felt like having that research basis for the development of most of, if not all of the pieces of the model, essential practices, was huge for me, especially to be able to come back to my agency and say, look, this is why we're doing this, because this was a piece of research, or whatever.

Implementation policies and practices – Alignment with framework. Overall, only some of the organizational policies and practices identified by Klein et al. (2001) or Fixsen et al. (2005) were strongly utilized by lead implementers during the implementation of the ESBM. By far the strongest of these utilized was technical assistance. Implementers perceived that help during implementation of the ESBM was always available to them from BBBSA, and through many channels. Fixsen et al.'s (2005) core components were not widely represented during ESBM program implementation. Staff and program evaluation systems were perceived by implementers as remaining largely unchanged even though program practices had changed, at least as they pertained to matches in the pilot.

Coaching and staff training for ESBM specifically were conducted to some extent across agencies. Coaching occurred frequently from both local and BBBSA leadership and served program staff by offering emotional support and supervision. Staff training was strongest from BBBSA to lead implementers, with much to be desired in local agency-level program staff training. Established criteria for staff or agency selection for the pilot was strongest at the level of BBBSA selecting agencies for participation in the pilot. Rewards for engaging in the implementation of the ESBM consisted mainly of praise from local leaders or BBBSA staff. The extent to which lead implementers felt that the ESBM took more time and effort may be due to a perception that the ESBM

added more complexity to the school-based program as compared to the old service delivery model, though that is speculative.

The strength of these organizational policies and practices for implementation, as suggested by Klein et al. (2001), may be impacted by the perception of the adequacy of financial resources available to support the pilot. Technical assistance may have been perceived to be strong by implementers because it was one consistent area in which BBBSA provided many resources for local agencies and an extra local investment didn't have to be made.

Management support. The next implementation driver in Klein's framework is management support. Management support is defined here as managers' commitment to transform practices within the organization and to invest in quality program use to support the implementation of the innovation (Klein et al., 2001). As described by Klein et al. (2001), the extent to which management supports the implementation of a program helps to shape an organization's climate for implementation. As managers offer personal reflections and statements about a program being implemented, staff then utilize these to develop their own judgment of the merits of implementing the program.

While all reference to management support in phone call notes pertained to representatives from BBBSA being supportive of local agencies during the pilot, implementer interviews showed that local agency management was also supportive. These two sources of management support – BBBSA and local agencies – are described here.

Local agency implementers perceived, on the whole, that BBBSA leadership was supportive of the ESBM during implementation. One lead implementer felt that BBBSA

wanted them "…to be successful...to give resources [needed]…give support". Support was perceived as coming from an ESBM manual, a website developed specifically for the ESBM, through interactions with the conference call facilitators, and the conference calls themselves. One implementer stated "…they're very supportive [the BBBSA call facilitators] beyond just ESBM. If I have any research-based questions or anything like that they're always willing to help". From the outset of the conference calls, representatives from BBBSA acted as facilitators to support the group process. Each phone call involved several agencies, yet phone call groups were small enough for facilitators to build a productive environment. BBBSA support is evidenced by the willingness of call facilitators to bring up that they had not been clear in their communication about certain aspects of the pilot, such as the number of matches required to be made, and that they would be clarifying other aspects.

As evidenced by phone call notes, representatives from BBBSA facilitating the conference calls were also open to feedback as to how to make phone meetings more effective, how to be more helpful with the overall pilot process, and how to bolster staff morale across agencies. Concrete ways in which BBBSA was supportive of the pilot include giving prizes to agencies having the best phone call meeting attendance, supporting and encouraging attendance at the national BBBSA conference, and having BBBSA staff conduct site visits pre-implementation. One implementer described the BBBSA staff visit to their agency as consisting of a meeting with "…all the staff that wanted to come and [she] kind of told them about all the elements of the pilot, answered questions, and we had lunch brought in and all that".

While the feeling of management support was quite widespread, there were several agencies that perceived a lack of support from BBBSA. Some struggled with "…the timeframe of them [BBBSA] rolling stuff out that they wanted implemented", others felt that there was a lack of responsiveness to questions that they had posed to representatives from BBBSA, or a lack of support when it was felt that more staff and funding were needed to support the ESBM. One implementer felt that BBBSA "…could have supported it [ESBM] with staff, or funding or resources…but to do this better it probably would have taken significantly improved research department involvement".

Somewhat more concretely, it was discussed that there was a need for BBBSA to have supported the ESBM by offering agencies "…a more standard volunteer training class…", and easier access to information on the website that BBBSA housed pilot information. For example, one implementer felt that the website should have "…had everything ready to go, where you could easily access this form for this situation, and maybe a FAQ section to look up maybe topics that other people have asked about." Another lead implementer felt that BBBSA could have been more supportive if they had checked-in post-pilot,

> …I would have appreciated…maybe some monitoring, I just think that…it probably would have been better to have somebody kind of touching base, you know, how's the school year, remember this, how you doing with that, you know I'm here if you need me, that kind of thing.

As with the perception of BBBSA support, local agency management was perceived as being generally supportive during the ESBM implementation:

> …I mean they were all very supportive and my CEO would often ask at meetings for me to clarify what are the major pieces of ESBM, how are they working and things like that so they definitely followed our progress and were very supportive.

Additionally, as lead implementers were in managerial roles themselves, some described how they were supportive of the ESBM pilot. One lead implementer described how she made a case for the ESBM to her agency leadership: "…my argument [for] the entire two years [was]…like well, look at the quality, like our quality is improving, but the total youth served is going down, so that was a constant topic of discussion…".

There were some lead implementers who did not move further into describing how local management was supportive, but who just made a blanket statement about support – "Yeah…I think they [local management] were.", or "…well, our executive director has been supportive." These general perceptions may have stemmed from local management being more hands off during ESBM implementation – "…[local management] is kind of hands off in the program department for the most part, so you know if I needed them to sign anything or had any questions then I would talk to them." It may also be, as some agency implementers described, that local leadership was focused on the quantity of matches, and thus were less supportive when increasing quality meant sacrificing some numbers –

> I definitely felt a lot of pressure from agency leadership to just make matches even though we were part of this two-year pilot, even though you know, even though we were really scaling back and trying to make the best matches possible.

There were two lead implementers who felt that their local board and CEO was unsupportive at times. One lead implementer

> …felt a lot of pressure from my CEO and from our board to just make matches even though we were part of this two-year pilot, even though, you know, we were really scaling back and trying to make the best matches possible.

The other lead implementer perceived that

> …there really was a part of our agency leadership who was like, we don't know if

> we want to go in that direction, like our kids are doing well in this program, the outcomes are really doing well, do we care if we have volunteers going through the door very quickly?

Alignment with framework. Agency implementers discussed management support, though the perception of the extent to which management was supportive varied. From these findings, it can be inferred that agency implementers did, on most occasions perceive there to be management support as defined by Klein et al. (2001). As management support is an antecedent to organizational climate for implementation it is important that implementers perceive there to be support in order for the ultimate goal of implementation effectiveness to be realized.

Implementation climate. Klein and Knight (2005) define organizational climate for implementation as: "…employees' shared perception of the importance of innovation implementation within the team or organization" (p. 245). A strong, or positive, implementation climate is one in which employees perceive implementation to be a major organizational priority, promoted, supported, and rewarded by the organization. Additionally, a strong implementation climate may also be evidenced by BBBSA representatives ensuring that staff are adequately skilled to implement the program and that obstacles are removed when implementers are faced with them – meaning that there is some flexibility during implementation (Klein & Sorra, 1996).

During semi-structured interviews, the ways in which lead implementers perceived the implementation of the ESBM program to be supported, promoted, and rewarded were mainly captured as implementers described quality improvement either locally in their agency, or from BBBSA. Though somewhat at odds with Klein et al.'s (2001) definition of implementation climate, a general attitude toward quality

improvement seemed to be an understandable indicator for agency implementers interviewed and thus is included here. Klein and colleagues may likely argue that the construct of implementation climate pertains only to the climate surrounding the implementation of one particular innovation – in this case the ESBM. Thus, some implementer descriptions of the strategic implementation climate may have really been descriptions of the general organizational climate (Aarons et al., 2012).

It was found that some comments referencing climate solely pertained to the climate around the ESBM program, though others referenced an agency's general receptiveness to new innovations and to continuously increasing quality. For example, one lead implementer described that their agency utilizes scorecards and that they are "…really performance driven…you know that scorecard is coming out each month, you know that's going to our board, you know staff is going to see it, and people aren't really afraid of it…". Additionally, as evidenced by phone call notes, agency level implementers seemed to be forthcoming in expressing their concern to BBBSA about the short timeline in obtaining school and district buy-in to the ESBM pilot. This level of comfort expressing concern may indicate that BBBSA had set up a general organizational climate in which agencies felt the strategic climate for implementation was strong.

Many agencies felt that there was a local commitment to quality improvement and to having a good site-based program, though not necessarily in direct relation to the ESBM – "I think we've been going through a process internally with all levels of staff that has basically said it's not good enough, so what if we're meeting national averages, it's not good enough." One lead implementer described that the ESBM program spawned a cultural shift within the agency – "…and what started as oh let's do this [ESBM] at 3

after school programs quickly became an agency cultural shift", and another lead implementer expressed their commitment to the ESBM practices in that they felt their agency was "…still trying to see [what] is not working, [if] this is working…[the] bugs are still being worked out."

The majority of agencies described the ESBM as being an improvement over old practices, and one lead implementer stated that,

> …for the most part I feel much better about where our program is headed then previously when we kind of cattle herded them through this process and you know, didn't feel like the safety was as important, I didn't feel like the training pieces and the commitment level…and now the quality of of our volunteers seems to be much better.

Statements from lead implementers as to their perception of the ESBM being better than the typical service delivery model may also mean that the ESBM was promoted and supported within the agency – "…it just felt better, the way it wasn't so rushed through, it was a lot more quality matches, we kind of slowed down the process…"

Implementers described that the typical service delivery model was, at times, compromising the quality of matches. "…those outcomes are really at the end of the day why we do what we do and they weren't there before when we weren't focusing on making good matches. So to me, that's invaluable." Additionally, there was a general sentiment that the ESBM "…is an improvement and an enhancement to the quality of the program", that the match relationship now led to a stronger match, and that the ESBM led to agencies being more selective during mentor recruitment. One lead implementer felt that school-based mentoring didn't need to be the

> …place to put the volunteers that you didn't think were good enough for community-based. I think it [ESBM] did force us to think a little dit more about maybe we should reject some of these folks who are applying for school-based

> mentoring, and so I think in that sense, you know, we didn't just take everybody who came, and we became a little bit more selective"

The incentives for implementing the ESBM seemed to be perceived as stemming from a desire to see improvements to the school-based program – "…you want quality matches and stronger relationships, and you want to really help the kids and that's an incentive to use the program and to make the changes", and also the benefit of having "…two extra years to start implementing those changes because they're real significant". One lead implementer also discussed flexibility in how mentor training was offered at the agency level:

> It didn't have to be an in person training, it could be an online training, in the form of an orientation, it could be in person. So those were kind of ways that it was flexible where you could work it into what you know works best with your agency.

Other lead implementers perceived that BBBSA was flexible in how the summer contact component of the ESBM could be implemented, with an accommodation for some sites or agencies that did not allow matches to have in-person summer contact. In phone call notes there was also acknowledgement by BBBSA that a dip in enrollment numbers for matches may occur during ESBM implementation, but that the numbers should recover.

Alignment with framework. The discussion of organizational climate here has centered on the incentives for ESBM use, a quality improvement 'attitude' at the agency level, the perception that the ESBM was better than the old service delivery model, and the level of flexibility during implementation of the ESBM. Though organizational climate is defined primarily by Klein et al. (2001) in this dissertation to mean the strategic climate around implementation, climate has also been described by other implementation scholars (Aarons, et al., 2012; Greenhalgh, et al., 2004; Rogers, 2003) to

be the more general organizational climate. The fact that so many agencies perceived the ESBM to have merits beyond the old service delivery model, and that quality improvement was described to be a part of the general agency culture for some, suggests that there was a strong climate for implementation.

As management support is posited to affect the organizational climate for implementation (Klein et al., 2001), implementer description of an agency's penchants for improving the quality of their site-based program through the ESBM may have been bolstered by management support during implementation.

Summary. In the preceding findings, the implementation strategies perceived to be utilized during implementation of the ESBM were described. These findings drew from both implementer interviews and phone call notes and highlight the way in which implementation strategies align with those described by Klein et al. (2001), Fixsen et al. (2005) and others. Financial resource availability, implementation policies and practices, management support, and implementation climate were all explored, with the bulk of the implementation strategies being categorized within the 'implementation policies and practices' driver. The implementation strategies that fall into the driver of implementation policies and practices demonstrate that while an implementation framework can have applicability across disciplines, the use of more finite strategies for implementation – implementation policies and practices – may be more innovation or organization specific (Weiner, Lewis, & Linnan, 2009).

Financial resources were perceived to be somewhat lacking, though most implementers perceived the small amount of funding from BBBSA was adequate for implementation. Even with this perception of adequacy, it was still expressed that there

was a high need for an increase in funding to hire more staff members. The implementation policies and practices utilized during ESBM implementation were numerous and included many of those outlined by Klein et al. (2001) and Fixsen et al. (2005). Technical assistance from BBBSA was perceived to be strong at the agency level, as was lead implementer training from BBBSA for lead implementers and coaching locally. Program staff training for the ESBM was lacking in most agencies and staff and program evaluation systems at agencies remained wholly unchanged.

Management support from BBBSA and from local leadership was, on the whole, perceived to be in place. The strength of that support varied across agencies, and many lead implementers said little more than 'yes' when asked if they felt supported locally or from BBBSA. Lastly, implementation climate was explored. Making a conclusion as to the strength of implementation climate across agencies with only qualitative data is difficult as there are many facets to implementation climate that were not necessarily explored across all interviews. On the whole it does seem as though the implementation climate was strong. This is based mainly on the fact that so many implementers described the ESBM to have merits beyond the regular school-based mentoring program.

Research Question Three: Implementation Effectiveness

These findings focus on answering research question 3e: What implementation strategies did implementers perceive to be the most influential on the effectiveness of implementation? As previously described, implementation effectiveness is a construct that describes the "…consistency and quality of targeted organizational members' use of an innovative technology or practice." (Klein et al., 2001). Essentially, implementation

effectiveness here is the fidelity with which the innovation is used. While in this study we can speak to implementer perception of the *implementation effectiveness*, we do not have reliable program fidelity data from the Program Survey.

Through the course of conducting implementer interviews it became clear that when asking implementers what they found to have the most influence on the effectiveness of the implementation of the ESBM pilot, they did not necessarily point to internal agency processes or implementation strategies as they are defined in this dissertation. There were three main ways in which implementers characterized the determinants of their success. Success was perceived to be due to internal agency factors (buy-in and agency moving in direction of ESBM pre-implementation), ESBM factors (specific components and flexibility in how components are implemented) and, external factors (leveraging external resources). These three categories are explored here.

Internal agency factors. One lead implementer perceived that success with implementation was due to the fact that "…we were already heading in that direction, it was just kind of affirmation that we were on the right path". Agency buy-in was also perceived to influence implementation effectiveness. Obtaining buy-in from agency leadership was a key to implementation effectiveness for a few agencies. In one agency upper management had to be persuaded to see the benefit of implementing the ESBM and in working to keep volunteers longer –

> …when they [staff] were able to say, but look at the fiscal side of enrolling volunteers over and over and over again, it would be so much cheaper to have them last. And so when we put it that way, it was like okay, let's go ahead and try this.

Another lead implementer felt that having a a staff member consistently on board throughout the pilot was a key to implementation effectiveness:

> …I think that's been the other important thing, really having both of us really partners in crime with this, because we both really believed in it, really wanted to see it be successful. So I think that's important, who the implementers are going to be on board with it all along.

ESBM factors. Some implementers perceived the greatest influence on the effectiveness of the implementation to be a component of the ESBM program itself. The agency's enforcement of the 12 month commitment and the clarity of this expectation inherent in the component were described as influencing the effectiveness of the ESBM. One agency had already begun to strengthen their match support before the ESBM was implemented, and felt like the 12 month commitment component built on their prior work – "…so this was a perfect thing to follow, to say, okay, now volunteers this is your clearly stated expectation". Additionally, continuing match support over the summer months and having staff on site during match meetings were described as influencing implementation effectiveness. One lead implementer felt that

> …monthly contacts [with mentors] aren't as difficult because you're not having to rely on people returning your phone calls or emails, you're actually seeing the matches in person, and so for us, that component was a little bit easier to manage, because the staff is onsite every week.

Flexibility was another factor perceived to influence implementation effectiveness. With an outline of the ESBM program developed by BBBSA, agencies were left with some flexibility in how to implement each component.

> So for example, one of the components was enhanced parental contact. And so they [BBBSA] gave you suggestions of ways to do that, it could be in the form of a letter, it could be in the form of a phone call, it could be incorporated into the match meeting, whatever works for your agency.

For another lead implementer, the flexibility as to when matches could meet led to a perceived increase in match retention. Also, each agency could choose the sites or schools that would participate in the pilot and decide how to staff these sites. One lead implementer stated that implementing the ESBM pilot "…in suburban neighborhoods compared to the city groups…" led to the implementation being effective. While there were several comments from lead implementers that focused on the benefits of flexibility, one lead implementer felt that flexibility in the ESBM pilot was a concern – "…and I kept thinking from a research perspective, well, which intervention are we testing here? Because this has changed from what we started with…"

External factors. Lastly, external factors were perceived to influence the effectiveness of implementation. One lead implementer felt that they were able to "…kind of lean on some other partners that may already be able to provide…" training for mentors, thereby lessening the amount of work given to agency staff to develop mentor training.

Perceived Outcomes

While probing for information as to why lead implementers felt that implementation of the ESBM pilot was successful in their agency, other responses were elicited. One emergent theme was that of ESBM outcomes. In Klein et al.'s (2001) model, implementation effectiveness is posited to influence innovation effectiveness. *Implementation* effectiveness is essentially the extent to which the innovation was implemented (program fidelity), while *innovation* effectiveness is "…an organization's

realization of the intended benefits of a given innovation." (p. 812). Basically, innovation effectiveness is the outcome(s) and/or benefit to the organization or consumer. In this study we rely on implementer perceptions of innovation effectiveness to paint a picture of what happened when the ESBM was implemented – even with the absence of reliable program fidelity (i.e., Program Survey) data.

Even though the extent to which ESBM components were implemented is unknown, implementer perceptions about outcomes resulting from the ESBM are valuable. In this study, lead implementers discussed three main outcomes of the ESBM - a decrease in the number of matches at their agencies, an increase in the match length, and other various general positive outcomes.

For about half of the lead implementers, a decrease in the number of matches was perceived to have resulted from ESBM implementation. For one agency this meant that staff were going back to "…more of our old casework quality", which took more time per match and thus resulted in a decrease in matches. For others, a decline in the number of matches was perceived to be wholly negative – "…the biggest downfall of the whole thing [ESBM] was that a lot of agencies had no positive growth…we served less kids". Many implementers describing a decrease in the number of matches mirrored one another's sentiments. One lead implementer described what happened in their agency, "…our numbers went, I mean they tanked, and it was really at the beginning of the second year we were down [more than 40%] in our matches", and another lead implementer stated that "…it's definitely hard, it's a tough pill to swallow for our CEO and for our board to see negative growth numbers". For some implementers, a decrease in matches was due to unique agency circumstances such as a site closing and having to

relocate volunteers; or due to not utilizing high school seniors as mentors – "…we had a huge drop in numbers because we stopped matching seniors…".

Lead implementers also perceived that ESBM implementation resulted in an increase in match length or retention – "…we are seeing an increase in retention rates and things like that and can we take that back to the reason is because we have upped our standards so to speak, we've changed our standards." Other reasons for the increase in match length were rooted in specific ESBM components such as matches having summer contact or staff emphasis on mentors making at least a 12 month commitment –

> I definitely think it has. Some of the [ESBM components], as far as summer contacts, I think that helped [with match length], you know, where in the past it was like a hiatus after April, May until September, October, so having at least one or two contacts over the summer has been helpful for the matches.

Other positive outcomes perceived were a general increase in quality metrics, and higher quality volunteers and matches. One lead implementer felt that "…the entire process helped our staff see that school-based mentoring needed to have the same type of commitment and quality as community-based."

Actual outcomes. A report from Big Brothers Big Sisters of America released in September 2011 details some outcomes from the ESBM pilot study. While a 2007 study of school-based mentoring demonstrated that 40% of matches continued into a second year, the ESBM pilot found that 56% of matches carried over into a second year. These data mirror lead implementer perceptions that match length had increased at least in part because of ESBM program practices. Along with these statistics, the average 12 month match retention rate for ESBM pilot agencies was recorded to be 48.2%, while the BBBSA network average was 35.8% during the same timeframe. These results, even

without reliable program fidelity data, do suggest that the ESBM program components had a positive effect on some program outcomes (The full report on the ESBM pilot can be accessed here: http://www.bbbs.org/MentoringSummit2012).

Organizational Readiness for Change

Organizational readiness for change is one theme that emerged during data analysis. This theme, though not a component of the implementation model put forth by Klein et al. (2001), or a core implementation component conceived of by Fixsen et al. (2005), is "…regarded as an essential antecedent to successful implementation of change…" (Aarons, et al., 2012, p. 137). The definition of organizational readiness for change used here is: "…the extent to which organizational members are psychologically and behaviorally prepared to implement a new innovation, technology, or evidence-based practice" (Aarons, 2012).

The majority of lead implementers perceived that their agency had, to some extent, been moving towards ESBM practices before the ESBM had been implemented. Some described certain ESBM components that had been implemented in their agency before the ESBM pilot began. These components include, monthly match support, match support out of program time, not accepting seniors, asking for at least a 12 month commitment from volunteers, or having matches stay in contact through the summer months – "We always had contact throughout the summer, even before the ESBM program". Based on findings from implementer interviews, most agencies had begun to implement one or two practices before the ESBM was implemented.

For some, implementing the ESBM pilot after already having put into place some of the components felt like "…an affirmation that we were on the right path." Many lead implementers described feeling as though their agency was ready for change when the ESBM was implemented – "…it was something that we were ready to do, and we put the effort into it and we were happy that we did". Additionally, some agency implementers described how they would not have gone on to implement many of the ESBM components, such as summer phone contact between matches or not using seniors, without the push of the pilot – "…I don't know if we would have decided to stop using seniors. I don't know when that would have come about".

Chapter 7

Discussion

The main purpose of this study is to explore implementation strategies perceived to be utilized during the implementation of a school-based mentoring pilot (ESBM) at 23 Big Brothers Big Sisters of America agencies. Implementation strategies (Fixsen et al., 2005; Klein et al., 2001) are contextualized within implementation drivers (Klein et al., 2001), and the implementation science literature generally. This study is the first of its kind for school-based mentoring, and describes implementation strategies within an implementation framework. Findings from this study point to the utility of understanding implementation strategies for both research and practice. If applied in an active and planned way, implementation strategies may have utility in supporting the growing movement of implementation of evidence-based practices and empirically supported interventions in human service settings.

As evidence-based practices (EBPs) become increasingly important as a main avenue by which to serve consumers of human service programs (i.e., Oregon Legislature passing Senate Bill 267 in 2003), it is important that there be a guiding process with specific strategies for implementing effective programs to affect a consumers in a more comprehensive manner (Miller et al., 2006). With EBPs and other programs that have proven effectiveness in the human services, questions remain as to how these programs are to achieve effective, and sustained implementation. Mildron and Shlonsky (2011) discuss how implementation science can facilitate effective services in child welfare, and state “The delivery of complex social interventions requires carrying out a comprehensive implementation strategy, including specific actions (core components)

carried out within a planned, long-term implementation and maintenance process" (p. 755). Outside of the Klein et al. (2001) and Fixsen et al. (2005) implementation frameworks, there have been upward of 300 implementation strategies identified across various disciplines (Sanetti & Kratochwill, 2009).

In order to develop an understanding of the specific strategies that support the implementation of a school-based mentoring program, this study explores three research questions. Research question one examines the challenges and strategies to address these challenges during program implementation. Since the "…effectiveness of mentoring…depends on the quality of the mentoring relationship" (Borden, 2010, pg. 2), the barriers to implementation of practices that are designed to support high quality matches (i.e., ESBM) must be addressed. While the empirical success of strategies described by lead implementers could not be determined, challenges and strategies were identified for the ESBM pilot specifically and for the agency's general school-based mentoring program.

Challenges implementing ESBM components centered mainly on how to engage various parties: Engaging parents in order to make contacts, engaging mentors in training, and engaging matches during the summer were all described. Agency-level and research challenges were indicative of the need for organizational support and planning to facilitate the timely disbursement of research materials from BBBSA to agencies, a change in local agency culture, and the alleviation of strain on staff time. These agency and research challenges may be those that are faced during any new program implementation or pilot, and may not be specific to the ESBM. General challenges to

running school-based programs were also described by lead implementers and include, for example, how to engage Bigs and/or Littles who do not attending match meetings.

Research question two explores the implementation drivers utilized by agencies during the implementation of the ESBM program. Klein et al.'s (2001) implementation framework was the base from which to explore implementation strategies in each of the four implementation drivers. Research question three highlights the extent to which implementation strategies described align with those identified by Klein et al. (2001) and Fixsen et al. (2005). From the four main implementation drivers, three aligned, to some extent, with how Klein et al. (2001) has depicted them. These are, financial resource availability, management support, and organizational climate for implementation. The fourth implementation driver, implementation policies and practices, as described by Klein et al. (2001) and Fixsen et al. (2005), aligned partially. There were some implementation policies and practices from the framework that were not perceived to be enacted during the ESBM implementation.

Also a part of research question three, the implementation strategies that were perceived to be most influential on implementation effectiveness (innovation use) were explored. A main reason for success perceived by implementers was that their agency was ready for change. Some implementers felt it was the ESBM program components themselves, or that it was the flexibility in how program components could be implemented that led to the success of the program.

Putting It All Together

Klein et al.'s (2001) implementation framework posits relationships between the four main implementation drivers – financial resource availability influences

implementation policies and practices, management support influences implementation climate, and implementation policies and practices and implementation climate feed into the implementation effectiveness. These relationships are explored here.

For school-based mentoring programs in particular, a lack of adequate resources has been identified as a specific obstacle to implementation of new programs: “With resources of all kinds – money, staff time, space, and equipment – already stretched to the limit, adding another program without careful identification of resources could be a recipe for disaster” (Borden, 2010, pg. 8). Additionally, Sanetti & Kratochwill (2009) identify adequate funding to be one variable that has been posited to influence higher quality program implementation across a range of implementation frameworks.

While implementer perception of the adequacy of financial resources was mixed, it was expressed by most lead implementers that there was a need for funding and/or more funding for staff specifically to support implementation. Given this, agencies looking to implement a new mentoring program may benefit from careful financial planning before implementation, as well as careful monitoring of how implementation may be affecting funding sources during implementation. As financial resource availability is an important pre-condition or antecedent to providing high quality implementation policies and practices to support the implementation of a program (Klein et al., 2001), one can then posit that with a lack of adequate funding the amount and/or quality of implementation policies and practices may be negatively impacted.

From the 10 implementation strategies explored within the driver of implementation policies and practices, only four were strongly and consistently described by most or all lead implementers. Selection criteria for agency inclusion in the pilot were

considered to be a strength, as was technical assistance. In a review on implementation research of community cancer prevention studies Rabin, Glasgow, Kerner, Klump, and Brownson (2010) found that the most frequently described implementation strategy was training "…which was commonly supplemented with technical assistance" (p. 447). Lead implementers consistently described staff training originating from BBBSA, and coaching at both the BBBSA and local agency level to be strong. These four implementation policies and practices were, generally, at the BBBSA level. Though other implementation strategies were described, none were as uniformly represented as those mentioned above.

As it was described here, the implementation policies and practices that were most consistently described by lead implementers originated at the national level. In future implementation of new program models BBBSA may want to develop a comprehensive implementation plan that explicitly addresses both national and local level implementation policies and practices. Local agency resources and management experience could be leveraged through BBBSA requiring that agencies coach their staff in a certain way, provide specific training for staff on new program practices, or outline criteria for selecting staff members to work with a new program.

While often lacking depth in describing how management was supportive of the ESBM implementation, BBBSA and local management were both perceived to be supportive. There were some specific areas in which lead implementers felt a lack of support from BBBSA (i.e., lack of standard volunteer training curriculum, lack of general information about the pilot), and local leadership was often perceived to be supportive, though hands off during implementation. With lead implementers feeling supported by

management, it is posited that the organizational climate for implementation is positively influenced. From the findings here, it is clear that the role of management in the implementation process should be better defined from the start. Organizations implementing mentoring programs may want to pay close attention to the messages that they are sending to their program staff about new program practices both before and during implementation.

The strategic climate for implementation and the general organizational climate were both described, overall, to be positive. While Klein et al.'s (2001) model only includes the organizational climate for implementation, both the strategic and general climate are included here. Overwhelmingly, lead implementers felt that the ESBM was an improvement over regular program practices. Greenhalgh et al. (2004) has described that the implementation climate may be positively influenced when staff perceive a relative advantage of an innovation. Some lead implementers felt that their agency supported a climate of quality improvement and others felt that there was flexibility in implementing some ESBM components.

As BBBSA continues to implement refinements to its mentoring programs there should be attention given to preparing agencies for implementation through assessment of organizational climate. The assessment could be as simple as asking how open the agency is to change, or as complex as conducting a more comprehensive climate survey. Based on results of assessment, it may be wise to first work towards building a supportive organizational climate before new program practices are implemented.

As explained, implementation climate as well as implementation policies and practices are posited to influence implementation effectiveness (Klein et al., 2001). The

extent to which a program is implemented as intended will result in varying degrees of implementation effectiveness. Lead implementers described both flexibility and organizational readiness for change as being the most influential on implementation effectiveness. Flexibility in implementing components of the ESBM reflects the influence of implementation climate on innovation use. Of those agency implementers that had been moving towards utilizing, or who had been utilizing, ESBM program components before the pilot there was a great majority who felt that this had the greatest impact on implementation effectiveness.

Though the construct of organizational readiness for change does not appear in Klein et al.'s (2001) implementation framework, an article from Weiner (2009) puts forth a theory of organizational readiness for change and states "…I suspect that the construct of implementation climate [from Klein, et al., 2001] has much in common with organizational readiness for change, the principal difference being that one construct applies in the 'pre-implementation' period while the other applies once implementation has begun." Thus, it seems that Klein et al.'s (2001) implementation framework could be expanded upon to include organizational readiness for change and the general organizational climate. See Figure 3 for a look at how the Klein framework could be revised. Here, pre-implementation represents a time in which the organization is exploring an innovation, garnering support for it, and devising a plan for adopting an innovation. Fixsen et al. (2005) call this the Exploration and Adoption stage of implementation, while others simply call this Pre-Implementation (Paré, Sicotte, Poba-Nzaou, & Balouzakis, 2011). Both organizational readiness for change and organizational climate are attended to pre-implementation. Then, after the decision to

implement, represented by the large black arrow, the four implementation drivers in Klein et al.'s (2001) model are attended to throughout all stages of implementation. The implementation process results in implementation effectiveness, which is measured through examining program fidelity.

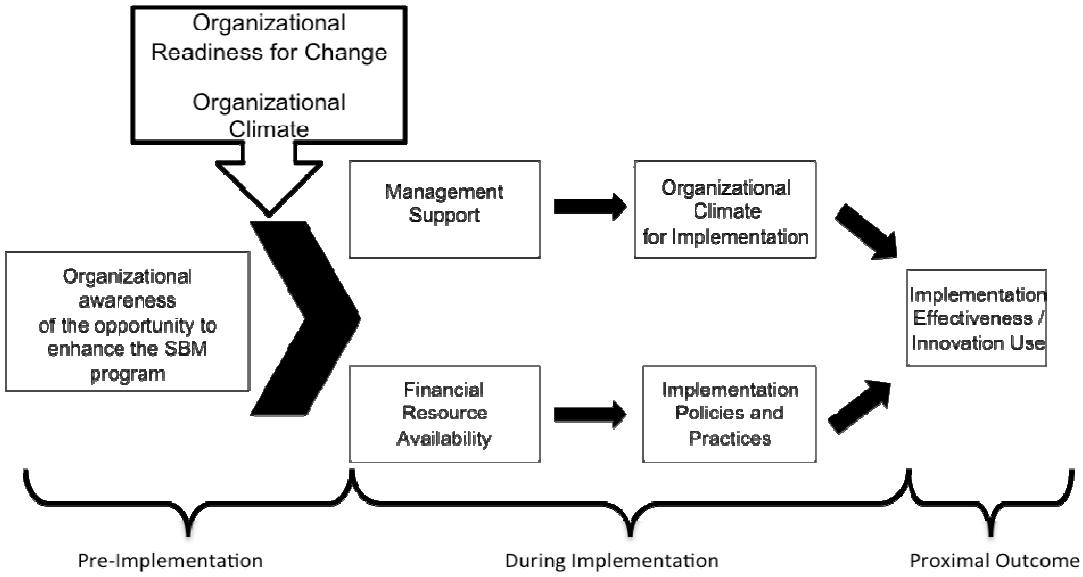

Figure 3. A revised implementation framework

While this dissertation research has explored the ways in which implementation strategies from Klein et al. (2001) and Fixsen et al. (2005) have been enacted during the ESBM pilot, the findings from this study do not change the way in which the 'during implementation', the heart, of the Klein et al. (2001) framework is presented. The reason for this is that while varying degrees of each of these four implementation drivers were found across agencies piloting the ESBM program, the framework itself provides a grounding in how implementation can be facilitated and supported across a range of settings. Mentoring agencies or organizations may, in the future, draw on this framework to guide their implementation process.

Climate and Organizational Readiness for Change

As it has been described several times, Klein et al.'s (2001) implementation framework includes only the strategic climate for implementation and does not attend to the general organizational climate or to organizational readiness for change. As the latter two constructs were identified by lead implementers to have bearing on implementation effectiveness it is important here to describe the linkages between these three constructs. Three different studies are used as illustrations (see Figure 4).

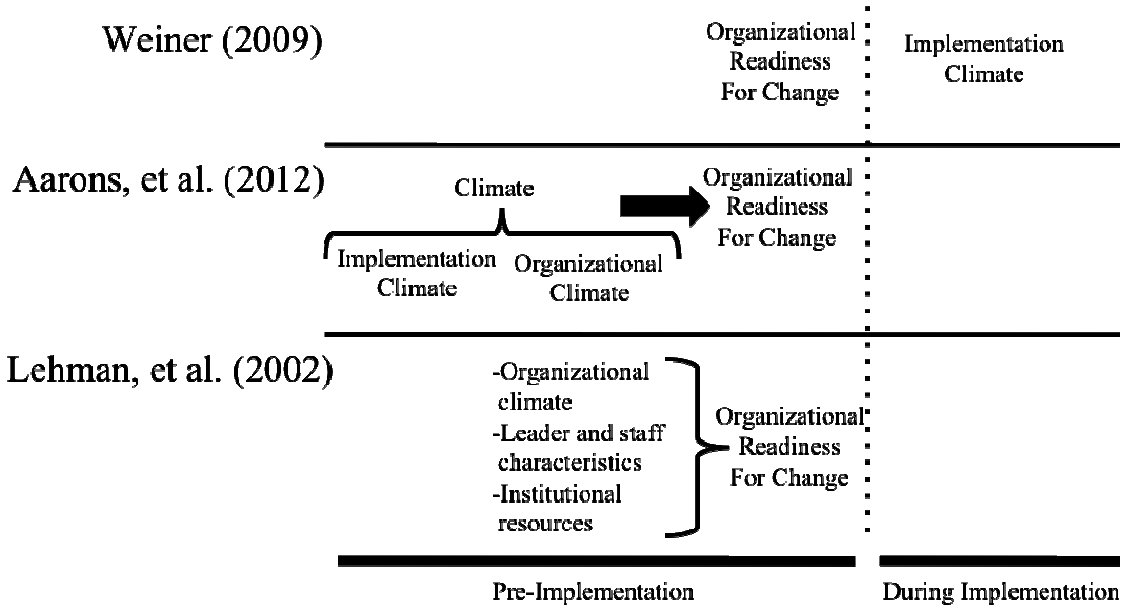

Figure 4. Linking organizational climate and readiness

In his conceptualization of a theory of organizational readiness for change, Weiner (2009) posits that organizational readiness for change and implementation climate are similar, though temporally different. Organizational readiness must be assessed and bolstered, if necessary, before program implementation. Implementation climate then "…applies once implementation has begun" (Weiner, 2009).

In their chapter entitled 'The role of organizational processes in dissemination and implementation research', Aarons et al. (2012) define climate as consisting of two

separate constructs – organizational climate and implementation climate. Klein et al.'s (2001) definition of implementation climate is utilized, and they state "Implementation climate focuses specifically on creating a fertile organizational context for putting a new innovation into practice" (p. 134). They also define organizational climate and state that it is "…the perceived meaning inferred by employees through management practices and procedures…" (p. 133).

In the chapter, climate is also linked to organizational readiness for change. Implementation climate and organizational climate (along with organizational characteristics of culture and leadership) are perceived to feed into readiness for change, which in turn sets "…the stage for the implementation…" (p. 139). While Aarons et al. (2012) attends to organizational climate, implementation climate, and readiness for change *before* the implementation of a program, Weiner (2009) conceptualizes that implementation climate is attended to *during* implementation.

Lastly, we look at the development of an assessment instrument (ORC) for organizational readiness for change that includes organizational climate as one aspect of readiness (Lehman, Greener, & Simpson, 2002). The ORC "…is a set of general factors that may be necessary but are not always sufficient for change to occur" (p. 198) with the instrument representing "…motivation and personality attributes of program leaders and staff, institutional resources, and organizational climate" (p. 197). Unlike Aarons et al. (2012), Lehman et al. (2002) posits that organizational climate is an aspect of organizational readiness for change. However, Aarons et al. (2012) and Lehman et al. (2002) theorize that these two constructs should be attended to *before* the implementation of a program.

From this discussion of climate and readiness it can be inferred that, as shown in Figure 3, organizational climate and organizational readiness for change should be attended to before implementation of a program, and that the implementation climate should be, as posited by Klein et al. (2011) and Weiner (2009), attended to during implementation.

Outcomes – In the Eye of the Beholder

In addition to discussing implementation effectiveness (the innovation use), lead implementers also described two main outcomes of the ESBM; a decrease in the number of matches that were made, and an increase in the quality of matches being made. The perceived increase in quality is mirrored in data provided by BBBSA. During the ESBM pilot there was an increase in the percent of matches carrying over into a second year for pilot agencies (56%) as compared to a 2007 study (40%). Additionally, the average 12 month match retention rate was higher (48.2%) for pilot agencies than for the rest of the BBBSA agencies (35.8%) during the pilot.

While these outcomes suggest that the program had a positive effect, the extent to which each of the ESBM components was implemented in each pilot agency is not known. Without reliable program fidelity data, it is difficult to conclude that outcomes were a result of the ESBM pilot and not due to other co-occurring events. In their article on research methodology and youth mentoring, DuBois, et al. (2006) point out that "…for piloting efforts to be of maximal usefulness…it is essential that all aspects of the implementation process be evaluated" (p. 663). Additionally, DuBois, et al. (2006) note that there has been a dearth of studies on program level factors, such as training, as they

relate to youth outcomes. With this, it seems even more important that program level factors – such as those focused on in ESBM components – are monitored.

In addition to relying on implementer perceptions of the implementation process and implementation effectiveness, Program Survey data and the perceptions of BBBSA management were examined. As described in Chapter 5, there was incongruence in how Program Survey data characterized agency implementation and how BBBSA perceived implementation in these agencies. Agencies that were defined through Program Survey data as being more ready for change (who had implemented some components pre-ESBM, and who had implemented most components one year into implementation), were perceived by BBBSA as doing *better* with ESBM pilot implementation than those who were defined as being less ready for change (who had implemented few to none components pre-ESBM, and who had implemented most components one year into implementation).

Though the reliability of Program Survey data was called into question during this research, the contrast in how a representative from BBBSA viewed these two 'groups' of agencies suggests that organizational readiness for change, or the perception of it, may have bearing on the success, or perceived success, of a program's implementation. This relationship is mirrored in much of the implementation literature (Aarons, et al., 2012; Kotter, 1996; Lewin, 1947).

Keys to Success

As discussed, organizational readiness for change is an important antecedent to implementation effectiveness. Other key strategies and factors related to perceived success of the implementation of the ESBM pilot are the way in which the ESBM

program was developed, as well as the role of organizational climate as a separate implementation driver from organizational climate for implementation.

Even from the start of the development of the ESBM program, it seems that Big Brothers Big Sisters had successful implementation in mind. The ESBM program was developed through a collaboration of two mentoring researchers, BBBS staff from six agencies, and other key BBBSA staff. As described by the research advisors – "Participation from chapter representatives was an important ingredient in ensuring the relevance, feasibility, and credibility of the model that emerged." (Hansen, Romens, & LaFleur, 2011, p. 33). This attention to agency-level participation and buy-in even in the development stage of the program demonstrates the benefits of "…include[ing] employees in change efforts, as this has been shown to also increase motivation for organizational change (Aarons et al., 2012, p. 139). There are six aspects of a program or innovation that have bearing on the rate of program adoption. These were explored on page 24 of this dissertation (Rogers, 2003). In relating the ESBM back to these 6 aspects, it can be described that the ESBM program was developed at the organization, was perceived to be better than old practices, was not perceived to be complex in and of itself, was first implemented on a pilot basis, resulted in observable changes in program metrics, and that there was some flexibility in implementation. As described by Rogers (2003), all of these innovation characteristics are posited to lead to an increase in the rate of program adoption.

Also supporting ESBM implementation and organizational change is the general 'quality improvement attitude' that was described by some agencies. The theme of quality improvement and general organizational climate emerged during data analysis

and is not a driver or strategy included by Klein et al. (2001) or Fixsen et al. (2005) in their implementation models. As supported by extant implementation literature, it is critical to understand the organizational context in which the implementation is occurring *in addition* to focusing on implementation strategies and processes (Aarons, et al., 2012). In this research, some agencies valued quality improvement, as did the larger BBBSA organization. BBBSA has been described as embracing an "evidence-driven approach to program improvement" (Hansen et al., 2011, p. 35) which may have set the climate for individual agencies to pursue quality improvement in their own way.

Room for Improvement

As mentioned, there were implementation policies and practices identified by Klein et al. (2001) and Fixsen et al. (2005) that were not described by many implementers. Staff evaluation is used here as an example of an implementation strategy that was not utilized by lead implementers in this study.

From an implementation standpoint, it was intriguing that most agencies indicated that staff evaluation had not changed, even for those staff members working on the ESBM over a two-year time span. Implementation policies and practices are, by definition, supports for high fidelity implementation (Fixsen, et al., 2005). The fact that lead implementers did not perceive staff evaluation to be aligned to assess new ESBM program practices certainly indicates a gap in implementation supports. For instance, one lead implementer stated: "It wasn't counting against them [staff] if they didn't get it [match support] done monthly, so as long as they were getting it done every other month...". This is one example of how an implementation strategy was not used to support a program practice. If staff evaluations (the implementation strategy) had been

aligned with program practices, such as monthly match support, there may have been more of an investment by staff in implementing that practice. This example highlights the utility of evaluation, especially during the early stages of implementation. If, in addition to assessing program outcomes, both the program and staff had been evaluated to assess fidelity during the ESBM pilot, the pilot could have provided much more targeted feedback for BBBSA as they move forward in refining the ESBM and rolling it out across the United States. Establishing a plan for assessing fidelity before program implementation is highly recommended.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this research: the use of the semi-structured interview, the way in which phone call notes were recorded, the researcher's lack of direct involvement in the ESBM pilot agencies, and the small and non-random sample of participants. First, the semi-structured interview, while chosen for this research, did not allow for cross-agency comparisons to be directly made as each implementer interview focused on slightly different aspects of the implementation. Additionally, due to the breadth of implementation drivers and implementation strategies that were explored, there were times at which the researcher did not probe deeper with interviewees in order to obtain a complete, though somewhat less extensive, picture of each implementation strategy explored. The next limitation pertains to the phone call notes. An assistant from BBBSA took notes during each conference call between BBBSA representatives and the agencies piloting the ESBM. These notes were not recorded for the purpose of data collection on implementation strategies as they are defined in this dissertation, and phone call notes had already been 'processed' through the lens of the assistant.

Third, the researcher did not have direct involvement with the agencies piloting the ESBM. The researcher became aware of the ESBM pilot and the potential for exploring implementation processes through an adviser, and then began to delve into the school-based mentoring literature and understanding the structure of BBBSA. In addition, the researcher did not visit any of the agencies that participated in semi-structured interviews, nor did she meet any of the lead implementers in person. This spatial disconnect between the researcher and the participants may have hindered the extent to which participants opened up about the ESBM pilot, as well as the full exploration of organizational influences on the implementation.

Lastly, this study draws from a small, non-random sample of participants. The total population of agencies that could have been interviewed for this study is 23. These 23 agencies were chosen, in many cases, because they were willing and able to support the pilot. Agencies had to have the Agency Information Management (AIM) database system in operation, and thus, tended to be somewhat larger with a good deal of capacity built. With the already small population of agencies to draw from, the number of interviews that could be conducted was limited from the start. Even within the sample of agencies there may have been some bias as to the location of the schools in which the ESBM was implemented. One lead implementer described greater success with suburban schools and only implemented the ESBM pilot in this geographic area. Thus, findings from this study serve to represent the perceptions of 15 individuals at 15 Big Brother Big Sisters agencies that may have only implemented the ESBM pilot at select schools or sites. While findings from this research serve to detail strengths and challenges of the

implementation process and implementation strategies, the claims made are somewhat limited.

Social Work Implications

With growing expectations that practice be research based, evidence-based practice (EBP) and empirically supported interventions (ESI) have been the source of much debate in social work. Whether working in a mentoring organization, in a school, or any other setting, social workers are expected to implement evidence-based practices and interventions, and need the tools to do just that. Implementation strategies and frameworks may be appropriate tools to offer supervisors when they are faced with a sudden mandate to implement a new practice. The research presented in this dissertation offers some jumping off points for discussion that practitioners could utilize with their agency leadership before a new program or intervention is implemented: How has this innovation been developed? Do we have staff buy-in? Are we ready to implement this? Do we have the financial resources necessary, etc. Such 'checklists' for implementation may be useful when working with staff in implementing a new program.

Social work researchers too may benefit from this research. Rubin and Babbie (2008), in their discussion of program evaluation, point out two main uses of examining implementation in addition to outcomes. First, implementation data can serve as feedback to policy makers about what may have gone wrong or right during implementation. Second, monitoring implementation may also keep an agency accountable to funders. While these aspects of implementation focus solely on program fidelity, the dissertation research presented here has gone beyond this to develop an understanding of the strategies that can be used to implement the program successfully.

While monitoring program fidelity is necessary, feedback derived from fidelity measures may be slow to change a system. Implementing a program with strategies in mind to actively facilitate its use may strengthen and quicken the uptake of that program. While health researchers have been studying implementation strategies and developing frameworks for some time, social work and other social science researchers have only just begun to brush the surface of understanding implementation strategies in non-health contexts and in applying these strategies in a manner such that they can be assessed for their utility.

Conclusion

This research demonstrates that a framework developed in another discipline can be useful as a structure for examining the implementation of enhancements to a school-based mentoring program. This work serves to extend Klein's model by adding the constructs of Organizational Readiness for Change and Organizational Climate to the pre-implementation stage of implementation. From the findings presented in this research it is clear that the organizational context should not be ignored during implementation.

Additionally, while Klein et al.'s (2001) four implementation drivers support implementation, the specific strategies within the implementation policies and practices identified in the Klein et al. (2001) and Fixsen et al. (2005) frameworks may not be widely representative of those strategies that may actually be of greatest use when implementing changes to an established school-based mentoring program. Some strategies may be more or less effective or appropriate depending on the organizational context or the innovation.

Thus, additional research is necessary to determine the extent to which implementation policies and practices identified in the implementation literature are representative of those that are useful in implementing mentoring programs or enhancements of mentoring programs. There is also a need to move beyond examining the alignment between implementation strategies found in extant literature and those identified by implementers of mentoring programs. While gaining an understanding from mentoring practitioners as to the strategies that aid program implementation is a first step, researchers need to then actively apply implementation strategies found in the implementation literature in order to study the effects.

In future research, it may be ideal for implementation researchers to team up with those conducting studies evaluating new mentoring programs or examining innovation within mentoring programs so that implementation strategies can be applied, perhaps even in a randomized fashion, in order to assess the effects of implementation strategies on program use and youth outcomes. It is suggested that future research apply mixed methods in order to both quantitatively assess the use of implementation strategies and qualitatively assess practitioner perceptions of the utility of the strategies. Additionally, it is recommended that a more in-depth case study approach be taken. Engaging in multiple interviews across fewer agencies will likely yield a more comprehensive picture of implementation and organizational factors that may be influencing implementation.

If the goal of mentoring programs is to see better outcomes for youth, then future studies must work to a) pinpoint program practices that have been studied via efficacy or effectiveness trials and have been shown to lead to strong outcomes for youth, b) actively utilize implementation strategies to put these practices in place, c) measure the extent to

which implementation strategies are utilized, and d) measure the fidelity with which program components were implemented. Only then we will begin to understand which program practices, when supported by implementation practices, and when implemented fully, really do have the greatest impact on youth.

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Appendix A.
Components of the ESBM Model

Strategies to Strengthen School-based Mentoring

1. Set goals and monitor metrics
2. Foster longer and stronger matches through:
- **2a. Recruitment**
- **2b. Screening and matching**
- **2c. Training**
- **2d. Match meetings**
- **2e. Match support**
- **2f. Closure**

3. Bridge the summer gap and increase communication between matches
4. Encourage parental involvement
5. Deepen partnerships with schools and districts
6. Deepen partnerships within the corporate/business community
7. Enhance development of staff

1. Set goals and monitor metrics.

Successful programs feature strong performance management strategies. This section emphasizes the importance of internal efforts to achieve program objectives by organizing work efficiently and effectively.

Essential[1] elements

- Develop an integrated performance management process that includes goal-setting for both growth and quality measures.
- Develop a 3-5 year plan with goals with goals and strategies to improve:
  - SBM Average Match Length;
  - Retention rate;
  - Strength of relationships; and
  - Outcomes.
- Measure and monitor performance metrics on regular schedule
- Reconsider and revise practices as necessary based on performance indicators

Recommendations[2]

- Adopt a SBM growth framework based on an increase in match length and moderate growth in new matches.
- Determine appropriate balance between relative number served in CBM and SBM programs to achieve overall agency goals for growth, match longevity, and outcomes.
- Within the SBM program, determine the appropriate balance among corporate, college, and high school volunteers to achieve goals for growth, match longevity, and outcomes.
- Have CEO and top leadership team engage in discussion around Retention Rate/Quality Service framework. Answer self-assessment questions and build plan of action to more broadly address

[1] Essential elements are those that are required as part of the implementation project.
[2] Recommendations are not required, but strongly recommended.

and support needs for building and sustaining a mission-driven culture of quality and performance."

- Analyze premature closures and develop remedial plans to address similar situations in the future.
- Recognize staff for meeting goals.

2. Foster longer and stronger matches. Take SBM Out of the School-Year Cycle.

Professional program practices provide the foundation for successful mentoring relationships. This section presents the basic program policies and guidelines establishing a common set of expectations among all program participants as well as program staff.

2a. Recruitment

Essential elements

- Ask for a minimum of a one calendar year commitment (not just a school year).
- Recruit participants with a possibility of completing two school years of mentoring in schools served by your program (avoid high school or college seniors and children expected to transition to a non-program school.)
- Provide orientation that clearly communicates to all participants the expectation for multiple-year relationships.

Recommendations

- Work with schools to identify students in the spring prior to their participation.
- Work with partners to recruit volunteers in the spring or summer prior to their participation.
- Increase the number of "feeder-receiving" schools so matches can continue despite a move or transfer from elementary to middle school.
- When possible, recruit a pool of children larger than the number of potential Bigs to facilitate quality matchmaking.

2b. Screening and matching

Essential Elements

- Use expanded SDM interview to learn more about student (template will be provided).
- Obtain parental permission for High School volunteers under 18 years old.
- Use a formalized system for matching that incorporates information obtained from Bigs, Littles, teachers, and parents and that takes similar interests of Bigs and Littles into consideration.
- Start matches as early as possible in the school year.

Recommendations

- At the beginning of the match, or during the school year, screen matches to allow the option of off-campus involvement.
- Use the same volunteer application and interview (omitting the Home Assessment section) for both Community-Based and School-Based programs to make possible transfer to CB easier.
- Utilize the Pre-Interview Questionnaire to gain logistical/scheduling information.

- Use reference forms for HS Bigs that capture information on the applicant's past behavioral student record (we will provide template).
- Conduct the interview in a location convenient to the Big.

2c. Training

Essential elements

- Ensure each Big receives at least one hour of pre-match training, and **HS Bigs receive two hours,** which should include use of the BBBS Volunteer Training Guide or a Guide that covers program policies and procedures and other relevant topics (e.g., role of Big, school environment/culture, relationship development, expectations for summer content). The training can be carried out in groups, one-on-one, or online.
- Provide volunteers with a pre-match orientation guide to help retain information and serve as a reference.
- Provide focused training for high school Bigs to meet their special needs.
- Provide training opportunities throughout the school year so that each Big is involved in at least two training sessions (group, online, or individual format).

Recommendations

- Provide pre-match training to Littles (e.g., roles, expectations, procedures, support) (we will provide template).
- Provide a brief orientation to teachers and school personnel (e.g., discuss roles of Bigs/Littles, review logistical arrangements, etc.)

2d. Match meetings

Essential Elements

- Matches should meet a minimum of 45 minutes per meeting if meeting weekly and a minimum of 2 hours per meeting if meeting bi-weekly.
- Matches should meet at least bi-weekly.
- The majority of each match meeting should be one-on-one interaction between Big and Little.
- Match meetings should be oriented toward socio-emotional activities.
- Bigs should include Littles in selecting activities.

Recommendations

- Focus first meetings on building the relationship and setting expectations.
- Encourage a minimum of 1 hour per visit.
- Encourage at least 4 hours of contact per month.
- Provide an after-school option for match meetings.
- Establish flexible match-meeting time frames to accommodate changes in volunteer schedules.
- Encourage contact between match meetings via email, phone calls, etc. to build match relationships.
- Facilitate the opportunity for Bigs to talk with Littles' teachers on a quarterly basis.
- Offer incentives for matches to continue in the program in the second and third years, e.g., graduating up to new levels (e.g. from strivers to achievers to superstars), special recognition, special privileges, etc.

2e. Match support

Essential elements

- For college and adult volunteers provide monthly, individual match support contacts for Bigs during the first 12 months of the match. (Email should not be the only method of communicating with matches for match support, and for the first six months of the match an in-person contact should not "count for" 2 months—after the first 6 months, in person can count for 2 months, but if the contact is not in person then support needs to be monthly.) For the summer, the following rules apply for Bigs:

  If a SB match commits to staying in contact via email, phone, or mail over the summer – and/or they anticipate participating in agency-sponsored summer activities – then this match:

  - remains "active" in AIM, and
  - MS support continues with SB match support schedule

  If a SB match commits to seeing each other in-person over the summer to enjoy activities in the community, then this match:

  - remains "active" in AIM,
  - needs to be transferred into the CB program (in AIM) so as to have the volunteer re-accepted upon the completion of additional background checks and assessment,
  - needs to have the parent/guardian informed and provide approval (additional assessment), and
  - MS support continues with CB match support schedule (because of the transfer, 1st year CB match support scheduling will apply, regardless of how old the SB match is).
  - When school starts again in the fall, if the match will primarily meet as a SB match, we recommend transferring the match back to SB in AIM. If the match will continue to have regular in-person contact outside of school (more than once a month), we recommend keeping the match in CB so that the appropriate level of match support is followed.

  If a SB match commits to resuming their match in the fall but cannot stay in contact over the summer months at all, then this match:

  - is classified as "inactive" in AIM for the summer months, and
  - BBBSA strongly recommends agency staff to continue communication with both match parties over the summer to keep them engaged with the agency (in AIM, log contact with either party under the "Communication Log" tab)

  If a SB match will not be able to communicate over the summer and does not anticipate resuming in the fall, then this match:

  - gets closed (made "completed") in AIM, and
  - the child is assessed for re-matching if possible

- For matches with High School Bigs, maintain monthly contact for the first two years of the match relationship and then bi-monthly afterward (e-mail should not be the only method of communicating with matches for match support, and an in-person contact does not "count for" 2 months).
- Provide monthly contact for the youth in the first three months of the match and bimonthly afterward (if in person).
- Matches designated "yellow" in the second school year should receive monthly contact.
- Match Support contacts should take place outside of program time/match meetings.
- Use the Strength of Relationship Measure to strengthen match support.
- At least 86% of Match Support contacts should be completed on a monthly basis.

Recommendations

- Employ a "mixed" approach of in-person, phone, and email match support contacts.
- Use the Quality Assurance System to assess and strengthen match support quality.
- Establish guidelines for evaluating and addressing possible inconsistency/instability of match meetings on a quarterly basis.
- Assess continuing matches in first weeks after summer to make sure they have reunited for regular meetings (or re-match Little soon after).
- Help Bigs find the balance between fostering youth-centered choice and promoting youth development goals.
- Find ways to regularly recognize and reward volunteers and tell them they are making a difference.
- Assess the child's needs in a case plan and connect the child with other services and supports within and outside the school (e.g., counseling, tutoring, extra-curricular activities, etc.).
- Provide additional training and match support that focuses on the special needs of High School Bigs.
- Form a support group or on campus club for High School and University Bigs to provide additional training and support and give them opportunities to interact with their peers.
- Bottom line: Increase quality of match support to anticipate and resolve potential problems and provide ongoing coaching.

2f. Closure

Essential Elements

- Do not close the matches at the end of the school year if the expectation is that they will continue in the fall.
- Encourage a "farewell" meeting between Big and Little whenever possible.
- Conduct an in-person closure meeting with Big and Little present whenever possible.

- Meet with the child in person to reassure that the closure is not his/her fault and to allow time for the child to ask questions and express feelings.
- Interview/reassess child for re-matching at same time, expediting the rematch process.
- Inform the school contact/teacher about the closure.
- Call/contact the parent to notify of the closure.

Recommendations

- Encourage BBBS staff to visit children whose matches have closed when they are at the school.
- When a Little leaves a school:
  - Communicate with the new school.
  - Try to continue the relationship with the Big. If not possible, ask the Big to meet once or twice at the new school with the Little.
  - Try to transition the match to the CBM program if Big is 18 or older.

3. Bridge the summer gap and school breaks

The summer break is the greatest structural obstacle in school-based mentoring. Programs need to be creative in finding ways to support ongoing contact between Bigs and Littles that maintains the mentoring relationships.

Essential elements

- Mentors should be encouraged to communicate with their Littles at least two times a month over the summer.
- Mentors should be encouraged to communicate with their Littles during holidays and other out-of-school time.
- During the summer, match activities can include agency events, phone calls, postcards, email, or letters. Face-to-face contact is not allowed without agency or school supervision, unless the match is screened for CBM.
- When reasonable (i.e., the Big is not a HS student and parental permission is feasible), encourage matches to be screened for CBM to increase summer and holiday activities.
- See match support elements above for summer match support guidelines

Recommendations

- Organize an activity at the end of the school year for matches to discuss their summer plans and plans for contacting each other. Include an agreement for contacts which the Big and Little sign.
- Have summer support strategies in place to encourage communication in matches that have not had consistent summer communication.
- Structure Summer Contacts ensuring that parents are kept informed:
  - Telephone Contacts—Provide phone numbers for the volunteer and child, set appropriate times for calling, give guidance for the content of conversations, and determine if the parent/guardian needs to know when phone calls are being made by the volunteer or child.
  - Emails or Letters—Emails or letters should be about subjects similar to the conversations that the Big would have with the Little at the SB program. Do not allow Bigs to forward emails (unless from BBBSA) to Littles or put the Little in their mass e-mail contact list.

- In-person summer contacts—These need to be at a supervised setting like a school or agency event unless the volunteer is screened community-based. Also, Bigs cannot provide transportation for their Littles unless they are screened for CB.

- Explore alternate summer meeting locations such as Boys & Girls Clubs.
- Send out a summer newsletter or letter/email to matches to remind them to keep in touch. Highlight any BBBS summer events or new ideas for matches to use when communicating with each other.
- Invite parents to all summer activities to help the agency and mentor get to know the parent and help with transportation. Try to create family events, so that the parent can bring the child's siblings too.
- Host a school supply drive over the summer to collect school supplies for participating youth, and encourage parents to pick up their child's supplies before school starts.
- Obtain funds for creating, purchasing, or using in-kind donations to develop materials to help matches bridge the gap during the summer, holidays, and other out-of-school time. Examples of resources can be obtained through BBBSA.

4. Encourage parental involvement

Although school-based mentoring can provide valuable support to students and their families, parents/guardians remain responsible for decisions affecting the well-being of their students. Programs must honor and value the central role of the parent/guardian and seek to establish a collaborative partnership with the family. This section notes that it should be the responsibility of programs to consistently provide information to parents/guardians. To avoid penalizing any students, participation in the program should not be dependent upon parent/guardian involvement beyond the absolute essentials (i.e. completing consent forms).

Essential elements

- Honor the role of parents/guardians by involving them in activities and discussions.
- Use the parent permission form to learn about the parent's match preferences (e.g., gender, race) and to describe rules that prohibit Bigs from seeing Littles outside of the supervised location, but allow phone and e-mail contact if parent authorizes.
- During the first week of the match, inform the parent/guardian (preferably by phone) that the match has been made and describe the parent's role in supporting the match. Share the Parent Orientation Guide (template to be provided by BBBSA) with them and review key points.
- Contact the parent/guardian at least once during the school year and once during the summer by phone if possible, or by mail.
- Emphasize that this is a year -round program model in conversations with parents.

Recommendations

- Conduct a pre-match phone call with the parent prior to the match introduction.

- Attend school open houses and parent/teacher conferences as opportunities to meet with parents.
- Host a Parent Night at the program and have Littles invite parents to meet their Bigs.
- Invite parents to all Agency events.
- Encourage the match to write a letter to the parent about their match.
- Recognize and appreciate parents.
- Enlist parents as volunteers.
- Contact the parent/guardian during the enrollment process to provide orientation and encourage communication throughout the duration of the program.
    - Explain the basics of the program
    - Ask questions to learn about the Little, the Little's family, and his/her needs.
    - Answer any questions the parent/guardian might have.
    - Confirm that the parent/guardian received the Orientation Guide.
    - Ask about transportation for the Little to summer events.

5. Expand and deepen partnerships with schools and districts

As the hosting organizations for mentoring programs, schools and districts provide access to students and support to mentors. A collaborative and mutually beneficial relationship with school partners makes it possible to reach more students and serve them better.

Essential elements

- Meet with school partners each year to sign a new Memorandum of Understanding or agree to a written set of mutual expectations.
- Negotiate arrangements to follow students and preserve matches when students transfer between schools.
- Make arrangements regarding referrals (i.e., spring referrals) and access to facilities for summer.
- Share outcomes/feedback specific to the school and community at key points during the year.
- Present an evaluation report to school and district partners at the end of each school year.
- Inform school contacts/teachers about match closures.

Recommendations

- Develop an annual growth plan for partnership development.
- Develop SBM programs in schools and districts where possible to concentrate the number of matches so staff and volunteers are visibly present and can have a combined effect on classrooms, schools and community.
- Partner with elementary and middle schools in close proximity so matches in elementary schools may continue in middle schools.
- Communicate and continuously sell the program.
    - Meet regularly with principals, school liaisons, guidance counselors and teachers.

- Keep school staff informed about impacts both for individual Littles and for the entire program.
- Reinforce the message that caring relationships ("the fourth R") lead to academic gains.

- Gather feedback from schools on impacts on the children, classrooms, schools and the community.
- Recognize the contributions of your school partners; thank teachers, guidance counselors and school secretaries and feature positive stories in your newsletters.
- Administer partner satisfaction surveys and implement changes in the program to enhance satisfaction based on results.
- Develop a written partnership growth/strategic plan.
- Outline expectations with partners that the SBM program is a "year-round" program.
- Train site liaisons to make sure they understand the importance of long, strong matches and how the school environment can contribute.
- Lead the development of local partnerships with educational organizations.
- Assign dedicated match support staff that work with specific school; if possible locate staff on-site.

6. EXPAND/Deepen partnerships with the community, especially corporate/business sector

The community, particularly the corporate/business sector, provides the resources for building school-based programs. This section emphasizes developing sustainable strategies for generating consistent financial support and a steady supply of volunteers.

Essential elements

- Meet with partners each year to evaluate program satisfaction and agree to mutual expectations. Agreement may take the form of Memorandum of Understanding or a written set of expectations.
- Share outcomes/feedback specific to the partnership and community at key points during the year.
- Present an evaluation report to partners at the end of each school year.
- Request financial support.

Recommendations

- Develop an annual growth plan for partnership development.
- Develop high concentrations of Bigs from companies and organizations near schools; drive partnerships through sales skills.
- At each corporate partner site, Identify or develop an organizational "internal champion" as a proactive liaison to build and expand the BBBS/organization relationship. Also, identify a BBBS staff who will serve as the main point of contact/liaison for each partner.
- Conduct enrollment at the partner's location.
- Recognize and promote the organization's contribution to the community through their involvement as a partner in the BBBS Schools Program.

- Hold employee recognition luncheon, reception, or other event.
- Pursue opportunities to enrich the gender and ethnic diversity required to meet the needs of your community's children through strong partnership with targeted organizations (Men, African American, Hispanic, Immigrant Groups).
- Administer partner satisfaction surveys and implement changes in the program to enhance satisfaction based on results.
- Outline expectations with partners that the SBM program is a "year-round" program.
- Capitalize on existing school-corporation partnerships.
- Organize student field trips to offices of partners.

7. Enhance development of staff

Regardless of position, all program staff involved in the school-based program contribute to the successful implementation of this model. Program staff should be recognized for their commitment and expertise. They should receive thorough training, appropriate workloads, and adequate compensation. Agencies should prioritize the consistency and longevity of program staff so that they can model the attributes we wish to see in mentors: being consistent, attentive, responsive, and wise.

Essential elements

- Adopt the behavioral-interviewing process promoted by BBBSA's Learning and Development division (will provide more information in the beginning of 2009).
- Ensure all staff are certified through the new Program Certification Process starting in 2009. In the meantime, ensure high levels of staff training and require all staff to complete the on-line SDM training within 60 days of hire.
- Train existing staff and new staff on the Enhanced SBM model.
- Establish clear lines of authority and identify specific staff responsible for each function required by SDM for School-Based Mentoring.

Recommendations

- Review your SBM staffing model to assure that it is one best suited to the agency's staff size and geographical location, as well as assuring that all SDM functions are staffed.
- Adopt a staff-to-match ratio that fosters high-quality matches.
- Set goals for average tenure of program staff
- Retain staff members over the summer to continue all facets of SB program operations, including recruitment, screening, and pre-matching of program participants in preparation for early fall matching, as well as planning for summer activities and providing match support for Bigs, Littles, and families.

Appendix B.
Semi-structured interview schedule

Areas to emphasize

An effort will be made to address the research questions through the semi-structured interviews. Below are interview questions, some of which *may* be asked if the participant does not naturally bring up these topics while they are telling their story of how the ESBM program was implemented. Along with topic areas and questions, there are additional probes that may be helpful to clarify areas discussed. It is not necessary for all of these questions to be asked and answered, but each interview should yield information about each topical area, along with the implementers' general story of how the implementation of the ESBM occurred. It is important to note that as the interviews are semi-structured other areas, questions, or topics may naturally emerge during the course of the interviews. With this in mind, it may not be necessary to ask all of the questions listed below.

BEGIN INTERVIEW TALKING ABOUT BACKGROUND

1. What is your role in your agency?

2. How long have you worked for your agency?

3. Were you, or your agency part of the Task Force that developed the ESBM program?

4. How long has your agency been implementing SBM? ESBM?

5. How many schools does your agency serve with the ESBM program? the SBM program?

6. Tell me about the ESBM program.
   - How different is it from SBM?
   - Are bugs still being worked out?
   - Are program practices easy to follow?

7. Are there aspects of the ESBM program itself that makes it easier to implement in your agency?

Aspects that make it more difficult to implement?

Are there ways in which your agency has tried to overcome and challenges with the program?

TRANSITION INTO TALKING ABOUT THE WHOLE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

8. Do you think that national BBBSA management has committed to the successful implementation of the ESBM program?

9. How strongly do you think national BBBSA management takes an active interest in the ESBM program's challenges and successes?

10. Do you, or do other local agency management staff, actively push to make ESBM a success in your agency?

How?

11. How committed do you feel your local level management is to implementing the ESBM program?

Is the ESBM program important to you? Why?

FINANCIAL RESOURCE AVAILABILITY

12. Are there financial resources available to you to implement the ESBM?

What are they?

Where do they come from? (Local level, or from national level)

How readily available are they?

How do these resources compare to those available to you to run your other mentoring programs?

13. How are resources helping your agency to maintain a high level of ESBM program fidelity during these beginning stages of implementation?

14. Do you think it would be possible to implement the ESBM program in your agency with no additional resources?

IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES AND PRACTICES

15. Were new program staff members hired in your agency specifically for the ESBM program?

If so, how were they selected?

16. Has training has been offered to you or your program staff to implement the ESBM program?
    What does the training consist of, for both you and your program staff?
    What do you think of the quality of the training?
    Do you offer training within your agency to the ESBM program staff?

17. Do you or your program staff receive ongoing coaching to support the implementation of the ESBM program?
    From whom? (individuals at the local level, or from the national level)
    How often for both you, and your program staff?
    What does it consist of for both you, and your program staff?

18. Do you act as a coach for any of your ESBM program staff locally?
    If so, what is your role as a coach?
    If not, does anyone have a coaching role?

19. Have members of your ESBM program staff been evaluated?
    Was this evaluation locally? Or from the national level?
    For what?
    How?
    How often?
    Do evaluations reflect previous selection, training, and coaching processes?

20. Has the ESBM program in your agency been evaluated?
    If so, what aspects have been evaluated, by whom?
    Has the level of program fidelity been evaluated? How?

21. How often are members of your ESBM program staff praised for their use of the program?
    By whom?
    Is your agency given recognition by anyone for your use of the program?

22. If challenges arise with aspects of the ESBM program, can you or your ESBM program staff easily access help?
    From who? (local or national level?)

23. Are there program manuals to aid you or your ESBM program staff when challenges arise?

24. How much time does/has the implementation of the ESBM taken up? Are you or your ESBM program staff too busy to implement the ESBM program?

25. Are there any other strategies that the national level, or your local management team has used to implement the ESBM program?

ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

26. Do you think that the implementation of the ESBM program makes good use of funds and time for your agency?
    Do you think it is an improvement over old SBM practices? How?

27. What have been the main challenges implementing the ESBM program?
    Have you, or BBBS, been able to remove these?
    How?

28. Do you think that there are any incentives for using the ESBM program (from the national level, or the local level)

29. Are there disincentives for those who avoid using the ESBM in your agency?

30. Do you feel supported by the national level in implementing this program?
    How?
    At the local level, how do you think your employees are supported in their work with the ESBM program?

31. Are you expected to use the ESBM program by the national office?
    Do you think your employees feel like they are expected to use the program?

32. Is there anything specifically about the ESBM program that aligns with the agency's values or the values of the national office?
    Does this influence how the program is used?

IMPLEMENTATION EFFECTIVENESS (Innovation Use)

33. How consistently do you think your local agency uses the ESBM program?

34. How committed is your local agency and ESBM program staff to using the ESBM program?

35. How well do you think your local agency has implemented the ESBM program?
    Have any of the implementation practices we have talked about helped you to implement the program?

36. What do you think has had the most influence on the effectiveness of this implementation?

LINKAGES THAT MAY BE EXPLORED

Management support and the overall climate for implementation

Organizational climate for implementation and the effectiveness of implementation

Availability of financial resources for implementation and implementation policies and practices

Implementation policies and practices and the use of the program

Appendix C.
Questions #30 from the end of year Program Survey

This set of questions asks about specific enhancements; whether they were implemented pre-pilot, and whether they have been implemented during the pilot. For each practice listed in the first column, a response for each of the questions is placed in the next two columns.

	For each practice listed in the first column, please check your response for each of the following five questions.	
	1) Was your agency already doing this enhancement?	**2) To what extent were you able to implement this component this year in this school?**
a. Increased youth support (more contacts)	☐0 No ☐1 Yes	☐1 Not at all ☐2 Somewhat ☐3 Mostly ☐4 Completely
b. Increased parent support (more contacts)	☐0 No ☐1 Yes	☐1 Not at all ☐2 Somewhat ☐3 Mostly ☐4 Completely
c. Increased mentor support (more contacts)	☐0 No ☐1 Yes	☐1 Not at all ☐2 Somewhat ☐3 Mostly ☐4 Completely
d. Increased pre-match training	☐0 No ☐1 Yes	☐1 Not at all ☐2 Somewhat ☐3 Mostly ☐4 Completely

	For each practice listed in the first column, please check your response for each of the following five questions.	
	1) Was your agency already doing this enhancement?	**2) To what extent were you able to implement this component this year in this school?**
e. Increased ongoing training	☐0 No ☐1 Yes	☐1 Not at all ☐2 Somewhat ☐3 Mostly ☐4 Completely
f. Recruitment (with a 12-month commitment)	☐0 No ☐1 Yes	☐1 Not at all ☐2 Somewhat ☐3 Mostly ☐4 Completely
g. Ensuring matches communicate over the summer/on holidays	☐0 No ☐1 Yes	☐1 Not at all ☐2 Somewhat ☐3 Mostly ☐4 Completely
h. Using SOR in match support	☐0 No ☐1 Yes	☐1 Not at all ☐2 Somewhat ☐3 Mostly ☐4 Completely
i. Providing match support outside of program time	☐0 No ☐1 Yes	☐1 Not at all ☐2 Somewhat ☐3 Mostly ☐4 Completely
j. Having closure meetings with mentor and youth together	☐0 No ☐1 Yes	☐1 Not at all ☐2 Somewhat ☐3 Mostly ☐4 Completely
k. Having closure meetings with youth	☐0 No ☐1 Yes	☐1 Not at all ☐2 Somewhat ☐3 Mostly ☐4 Completely
l. Presenting evaluation report to the school at the end of year	☐0 No ☐1 Yes	☐1 Not at all ☐2 Somewhat ☐3 Mostly ☐4 Completely

	For each practice listed in the first column, please check your response for each of the following five questions.	
	1) Was your agency already doing this enhancement?	**2) To what extent were you able to implement this component this year in this school?**
m. Getting your mentors to complete activity logs	☐0 No ☐1 Yes	☐1 Not at all ☐2 Somewhat ☐3 Mostly ☐4 Completely