

A photograph of a woman with long brown hair, wearing a white t-shirt with small red floral patterns, sitting in bed and reading a large green children's book. Two young girls are lying on either side of her, looking at the book. The girl on the left is wearing a blue dress with white floral patterns and has her chin resting on her hand. The girl on the right is wearing a white shirt with a red collar. They are all smiling and appear to be enjoying the reading time. The background is a plain white wall.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR FLORIDA'S YOUTH

*A fiscal and economic analysis of the
Teen Trendsetters™ program*

MARCH 2017



106 North Bronough Street, Tallahassee, FL 32301 floridataxwatch.org o: 850.222.5052 f: 850.222.7476

David Mann
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

Dominic M. Calabro
President & Chief Executive Officer

Dear Fellow Taxpayer,

Poor health, high school dropout, crime, and poverty are all unequivocally linked to a failure to achieve in school. Ever-tightening budgets are straining our education, justice, and health systems. With limited dollars, we must continually look for cost-effective programs to improve educational outcomes, particularly for high-risk youth.

Well designed mentor programs are one worthwhile option for addressing educational gaps that can save taxpayers significantly. A wealth of data conducted over many years shows that high-quality mentor programs are associated with positive social, behavior, and academic outcomes. When a child succeeds in school and graduates, society and the individual benefit via an increase in personal income and the cost-savings associated with avoidance of social program use.

The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy's Teen Trendsetters™ program is one example of a high-quality mentor initiative. This Florida TaxWatch fiscal and economic analysis quantifies the value of the increases in reading scores and positive social impacts of the program. I hope that this info will be helpful to stakeholders, policymakers, and taxpayers throughout Florida. We all know that investing in our children now will help create a more qualified future workforce while simultaneously reducing taxpayer burden, and this analysis shows the direct benefits of such involvement and intervention.

Sincerely,

Dominic M. Calabro
President & CEO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Teen Trendsetters™ of Florida was initiated by the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy in 2002 in response to legislation mandating that every child in the third grade must show minimal reading proficiency for grade promotion. The program pairs 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade students that are, on average, a half year behind grade level in reading skills with teenage mentors between the 6th and 12th grades, and has grown tremendously since inception, serving 1,750 mentors and 1,740 mentees during the 2015-2016 program year (PY) (September 2015 – April 2016).

Florida TaxWatch conducted a fiscal and economic analysis (including the return-on-investment for state taxpayers) of the Teen Trendsetters™ (TT) program. In doing so, TaxWatch also evaluated the program design, comparing TT program specifics to evidence-based best practices for mentoring programs. Carefully scrutinized program evaluation data indicate that the TT program has a positive impact on the academic, behavioral, and social skills of both the mentors and the mentees, demonstrating the following results for PY2015-2016:

- 92 percent of senior mentors report graduating, with 79 percent indicating that they plan to attend college;
- 97 percent of mentees report that their mentor helped them become a better reader;
- 43 percent of mentees improved their reading skills to grade-level or above by the end of the seven month program;
- 92 percent of parents reported that their child's attendance was average or better; and
- 92 percent of parents reported that their child's school behavior was average or better.

Florida TaxWatch's fiscal and economic impact analysis finds that participation in the TT program results in:

- for senior mentors:
 - \$28,330,848 in collective additional lifetime income;
 - \$1,054,680 in avoided welfare, prison, and health benefits paid for by the taxpayers;
- for mentees who achieve at least grade-level reading by the end of the program:
 - \$53,804,660 in collective additional lifetime income; and
 - \$7,382,760 in avoided welfare, prison, and health benefits paid for by the taxpayers.

In 2015-2016, the TT program received \$300,000 in state funding and \$776,910 in private funding. For each dollar invested (public and private) into the TT program in FY2015-16, a fiscal return on investment of \$7.83 in avoided social program costs for the taxpayers is realized.

INTRODUCTION

Teen Trendsetters™ (TT) is a weekly cross-age mentoring program that promotes mentor and mentee achievement as well as parent involvement. The program is described by the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy as such:

Teen Trendsetters™ reading mentors is an intensive reading program for 1st and 2nd graders (mentees) reading half a year or more behind their grade level. Students who enter the program sign a contract with their parents to read to them at least twice a week. Mentees are assigned a teen mentor who meets with them weekly, working together to improve reading. Mentees also receive a home library over the course of the school year.¹

Teen Trendsetters™ of Florida was initiated in 2002 in response to legislation mandating that every child in the third grade must show minimal reading proficiency for grade promotion.^{2,3}

The FY2015-16 and FY2016-17 state budgets appropriated \$300,000 in funding for the Teen Trendsetters™ program, under Special Categories Grants and Aids: Mentoring/Student Assistance Initiatives.⁴ In short, the purpose of this initiative is to support programs that improve academic and behavioral performance for at risk, low-performing students.⁵ The TT program also received approximately \$800,000 in private funding for PY2015-2016 (August 2015 – May 2016).⁶

The purpose of this report is to review the TT program evaluation methodology and to provide estimates of the individual economic benefits for participants (mentors and mentees) and total fiscal benefits of, as well as the return-on-investment for the program. The analysis is based on 2015-2016 program year data as well as information culled from government reports and academic sources.

1 Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy. <http://barbarabush.org/our-solutions/teen-trendsetters-reading-mentors/>

2 Florida law [section 1008.25(5), Florida Statutes (F.S.)]

3 BETR Group (2016). Summative evaluation of the Teen Trendsetters™ Florida Program 2015-2016

4 Funding in Senate Bill 5001, Education (all other funds), Section 2, line item 98 for Special Categories Grants & Aids – Mentoring/Student Assistance Initiatives from the General Revenue Fund in the amount of \$300,000.

5 Florida Department of Education (FLDOE; 2017). Mentoring/Student Assistance Initiative. http://www.fldoe.org/schools/family-community/activities-programs/mentoring_student_assistance.shtml

6 Personal Communication with Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy.

TEEN TRENDSETTERS™ OVERVIEW

Since its inception in 2002, the TT program has grown from a few schools in 3 counties to 81 schools across 16 Florida counties. During the 2015-2016 school year, 1,750 mentors and 1,740 mentees participated in the TT program.⁷ Pairs meet weekly to read together and discuss topics. Interactions are structured via the use of the *Brainstorm* program, a science-based reading curriculum developed in partnership with Scholastic, Inc.⁸

The TT program serves a diverse population of both mentors and mentees; Figures 1, 2, and 3 present demographic information for both populations and the state overall.⁹ Regarding gender, 52 percent of the mentees are male and 48 percent are female while 25 percent of the mentors are male and 75 percent female.¹⁰ While individual socio-economic information is not publicly available for the 2015-2016 population, more than half of the schools involved in the TT program are Title I schools, which have a high percentage of children from low-income families and receive additional funding to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards.¹¹

FIGURE 1 – MENTORS BY RACE

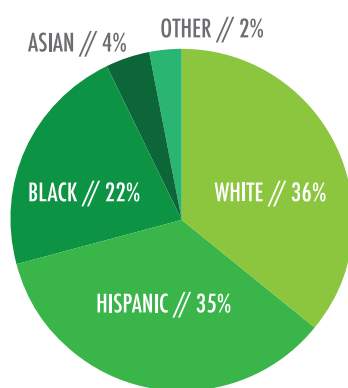


FIGURE 2 – MENTEES BY RACE

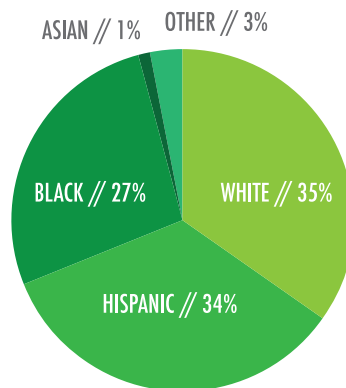
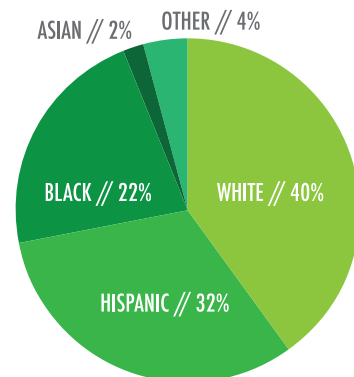


FIGURE 3 – ALL K-12 STUDENTS



In order to successfully fulfill the purpose of the Mentoring/Student Assistance Initiative, mentor programs must be carefully designed and continually evaluated. Over the past 30 years, there has been substantial research on the design and implementation of mentor programs. The body of evidence indicates that positive outcomes are associated with programs that include five overarching elements.¹² Table 1 presents these evidence-based elements along with the corresponding TT program component.

7 BETR Group (2016). Summative evaluation of the Teen Trendsetters™ Florida Program 2015-2016. Some mentors do not serve for the entire school year.

8 Ibid.

9 The methodology employed compares mentor population with the general population in determining graduation rates. There is little reason to believe the TT mentor population is inherently much more likely to graduate than the general public given the number of Title-1 schools in the program. K-12 overall data from Florida Department of Education (2017). Enrollment accessibility. <https://edstats.fldoe.org/SASWebReportStudio/gotoReportSection.do?sectionNumber=1>

10 BETR Group (2016). Summative evaluation of the Teen Trendsetters™ Florida Program 2015-2016.

11 Florida TaxWatch analysis of participating schools provided by Barbara Bush Foundation and Department of Education data.

12 DuBois, David L., et al. "Effectiveness of mentoring programs for youth: A meta-analytic review." *American journal of community psychology* 30.2 (2002): 157-197.

TABLE 1: ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL MENTORING PROGRAMS

Program Element ^A	Teen Trendsetters™ Program Design ^B
Monitor program implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key stakeholders and participants are interviewed throughout the year and their feedback is used to make program improvements. • Program evaluation includes academic performance of mentees and survey results from mentees, mentors, parents, and advisors.
Provide ongoing training for mentors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TT mentors are overseen by Program Advisors at each location. • Both mentors and program advisors receive support throughout the program year from the Barbara Bush Foundation. • Survey results indicate that 98 percent of mentors understand their role as a teen mentor and 93 percent feel confident that training prepared them to be a mentor.
Involve parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentee parents sign a contract agreeing to reinforce learning by listening to their child read and reading to their child. • Parents are surveyed three times throughout the program to ascertain the impact of the program on their children. • Parents provide overwhelmingly positive feedback, with 86 percent reporting good or excellent enthusiasm for their child's participation. • Children are given books to facilitate home reading.
Structure activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction time is structured. Pairs follow lesson plans outlined in the <i>Brainstorm</i> curriculum.
Set attendance requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentees and mentors had an average of more than 19.5 contacts throughout PY2015-2016. • Expectations for attendance are clearly set forth during training and initial program launch.^C
<p>A DuBois, David L., et al. "Effectiveness of mentoring programs for youth: A meta-analytic review." <i>American journal of community psychology</i> 30.2 (2002): 157-197.</p> <p>B BETR Group (2016). <i>Summative evaluation of the Teen Trendsetters™ Florida Program 2015-2016</i></p> <p>C Personal communication with the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy.</p>	

In addition to careful incorporation of all successful program elements, the Teen Trendsetters™ program conducts rigorous evaluations at the onset of the program, mid-year, and at the end of the year.

Florida TaxWatch conducted a review of the TT program evaluation approach. Based on reading score evaluations, survey methodology, and the use of feedback to improve the program, Florida TaxWatch finds the TT program evaluation to be sound. The Florida TaxWatch analysis supports TT program findings; specifically, that the program is having a positive impact on the academic, behavioral, and social skills of both the mentors and the mentees.

While the TT yearly reports provide an excellent overview of mentee and mentor progress, these evaluations do not include an economic and fiscal benefit analysis of the program. This independent research study presents this additional information, allowing stakeholders to evaluate the economic and fiscal impact of the program.

BENEFITS TO MENTORS

High school graduation and attainment of a post-secondary degree has an enormous impact on personal income as well as a societal impact, as graduates are less likely to utilize public assistance, have lower healthcare costs, and are less likely to come into contact with the justice system. In addition, mentor programs foster the development of skills needed to succeed in post-secondary education and beyond.

PERSONAL INCOME BENEFITS

The TT program has proven to be successful in supporting mentors as they matriculate through the school system. Post-program mentor survey results from PY2015-2016 indicate that 79 percent of mentors believe that their mentoring experience “will keep me on track for graduation” while 82 percent of mentors indicated that the experience will “assist me with my college application.”¹³

Programs that support college matriculation are exceedingly important as success in high school and college leads to greater personal income. Median weekly income for those with less than a high school education is \$493. This income increases to \$678 weekly for those with a high school diploma and \$1,137 weekly for those with a bachelor’s degree (see Table 2).¹⁴

In 2016, the overall graduation rate in Florida was 80.7 percent, with 65 percent of graduating seniors seeking post-secondary education.^{15,16} Of the senior mentors from the PY2015-2016 TT program, 92 percent self-reported that they would be graduating and 79 percent indicated they were college bound.¹⁷

13 BETR Group (2016). Summative evaluation of the Teen Trendsetters™ Florida Program 2015-2016

14 Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016). Education matters. <https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2016/data-on-display/education-matters.htm>

15 FLDOE (2016). Florida’s High School Cohort Graduation Rate 2015-16. <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7584/urlt/GraduationRates1516Final.pdf>. Graduation rates are lower for Black students (72.3 percent) and Hispanic students (79.5 percent).

16 FLDOE (2016) Division of Florida Colleges. <http://www.fldoe.org/schools/higher-ed/fl-college-system/>

17 BETR Group (2016). Summative evaluation of the Teen Trendsetters™ Florida Program 2015-2016

Using income projections for high school graduation and college matriculation rates, personal income attributable to the TT program is calculated and presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2: LIFETIME INCOME BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT – TT MENTORS

Education Level	Nationwide, base weekly individual median earnings (yearly) ^A	Projected additional lifetime earnings (individual) ^B	Additional total lifetime income ^C
No High School Diploma	\$493 (\$25,636)	--	--
High School Diploma	\$678 (\$35,256)	\$452,140	\$7,686,380 ^D
Some College, no degree	\$738 (\$38,376)	\$598,780	\$18,562,180 ^E
Bachelor's Degree	\$1,137 (\$59,124)	\$1,573,936	\$28,330,848 ^F

A Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016). Education matters. <https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2016/data-on-display/education-matters.htm>.

*B Lifetime earnings are estimated assuming an individual works 52 weeks per year for 47 years (from age 18 to 65). For example, the base weekly individual median earnings for those without a high school diploma is \$493 * 52 weeks/year * 47 years = \$1,204,892 in lifetime earnings. This step is repeated for each education level and used to calculate lifetime earnings from which the estimated lifetime earnings for no high school diploma is subtracted to project additional lifetime earnings for an individual.*

C While self-selection into the mentor program and other externalities which cannot be accounted for likely have some influence, the impact of the program on graduation rates and subsequent income projections can not be discounted. To account for these externalities, the estimates in this table are calculated based on half of the potential students influenced by the program.

D Survey evaluations show that 92% of TT program mentors graduate high school versus an 80.7% average graduation rate for all Florida Schools. There are 308 seniors in the program, 283 graduated (92%) versus 248 (80.7%) that would be expected to graduated based on general K-12 population data. Because other factors may have influenced the increase in graduation rate, this estimate uses half of the possible increase. Thus, the value is estimated based on 17 additional high school graduates. $(283 - 248) = 35 (.5) = 17$; $17 (\$452,140) = \$7,686,380$.

E Survey evaluations show that 79% of TT program mentors that graduate high school matriculate to college versus a 65% matriculation rate in the general high school graduate population. Of the 283 TT mentors that graduated in PY2015-2016, 223 (79% of 283) report going on to college (and this analysis assumes their college graduation). In the general population, the number of expected college graduates would be approximately 161 (65% of 248). Using the same 50% estimate as above, approximately 31 additional college graduates can be reasonably attributed to the program. $(223 - 161) = 62 (.5) = 31$; $31 (\$598,780) = \$18,562,180$.

F Calculations based on the same equation as footnote E. \$28,330,848 represents the total lifetime income of 60% of the 31 additional high school graduates matriculating to college (i.e. 18 students) referenced above to reflect the national average of 60% completion of all first-time, full-time undergraduate students pursuing Bachelor's degrees, as reported by the National Center for Education Statistics, 2016. <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=40>

FISCAL BENEFITS TO THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Higher rates of high school graduation and post-secondary education benefits individuals directly but also translates into indirect benefits to the entire economy by increased discretionary spending capacity, higher tax collections, and lower social program, healthcare, and criminal justice expenditures. Table 3 presents unemployment rates, Temporary Assistance to Needy Family (TANF) welfare benefit receipts, percent of those below the poverty rates, and incarceration rates by educational level for the general population. When comparing the information in Table 3, it is apparent that programs that encourage education have a tremendous impact.

TABLE 3: EDUCATION LEVEL AND SOCIAL INDICATORS – GENERAL POPULATION

Education Level	National Unemployment Rate ^A	Percent of those receiving TANF Assistance (Florida) ^B	Percent of those below Poverty (Florida) ^C	National Percent of those Incarcerated ^D
Less than 12 Years	8	27.8	26.4	39.9
High School Diploma	5.4	47.9	34.1	17.4 ^E
Some College, No Degree	5.0	Data not reported	28.8	23.0
Bachelor's Degree	2.8	4.2	10.7	Data not reported
<p>A Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016). Education matters. https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2016/data-on-display/education-matters.htm</p> <p>B U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2010). Temporary Assistance for Needy Families - Active Cases Percent Distribution of TANF Adult Recipients by Educational Level (Table 25). https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ofa/appendix_ys_final.pdf. Educational level was not reported for 20.1% of TANF recipients, thus the percentages presented in the table does not equate to 100%.</p> <p>C EDR (2016). Florida's families and children below the Federal poverty level. http://edr.state.fl.us/Content/presentations/social-services/PovertyDemographicsPresentation.pdf</p> <p>D Ewert, S., & Wildhagen, T. (2011). Educational characteristics of prisoners: Data from the ACS. Presentation at the Population Association of America.</p> <p>E An additional 19.5% of inmates earn their GED before or during prison.</p>				

Several studies have been conducted to evaluate the fiscal savings associated with an increase in graduation rates. A Columbia University study evaluates the economic losses attributable to each additional child that drops out of high school.¹⁸ To do this, researchers quantified the amount of spending on various services, including health, crime, and welfare and then assessed the impact of graduating from high school and college on spending. Health costs are based on reduced Medicaid enrollment and reduced disability costs. Crime costs are based on criminal justice system costs, incarceration costs, state-victim costs, and expenditures of government crime prevention agencies. Welfare savings are based on lower receipt of public assistance payments and subsidies. A study conducted by the California Dropout Research Project uses similar methodologies to evaluate the California specific costs in the areas of health, crime, and welfare.¹⁹

Table 4 presents the estimated cost savings per each additional high school graduate, the average savings between studies, and the total savings estimated from the increase in graduation rates related to participation in the TT program. Each study presented cost savings by gender and race. The cost savings calculated on the next page are based on the average of both genders and all races, which likely greatly underestimates the savings for some specific groups.

18 Levin, H., Belfield, C., Muennig, P., & Rouse, C. (2007). The costs and benefits of an excellent education for all of America's children (Vol. 9). New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

19 Belfield, C. R., & Levin, H. M. (2007). The economic losses from high school dropouts in California. University of California, Santa Barbara.

TABLE 4: COST AVOIDANCE PER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE – TT MENTORS

Metric	Columbia Study ^A	University of California Study ^B	Average between Studies	Total Cost-Avoidance for 2015-2016 Mentors ^C
Health Costs	\$40,500	\$29,510	\$35,005	\$595,085
Justice System	\$26,000	\$21,370	\$23,685	\$402,645
Welfare System	\$3,000	\$3,700	\$3,350	\$56,950
Total:				\$1,054,680
<p>A Levin, H., Belfield, C., Muennig, P., & Rouse, C. (2007). <i>The costs and benefits of an excellent education for all of America's children</i> (Vol. 9). New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.</p> <p>B Belfield, C. R., & Levin, H. M. (2007). <i>The economic losses from high school dropouts in California</i>. University of California, Santa Barbara.</p> <p>C Survey evaluations show that 92% of TT program mentors graduate high school versus an 80.7% average graduation rate for all Florida Schools. There are 308 seniors in the program, 283 graduated (92%) versus 248 (80.7%) that would be expected to graduated based on general population data. Because other factors may have influenced the increase in graduation rate, this estimate uses half of the possible increase. Thus, the value is estimated based on 17 additional high school graduates. $(283 - 248) = 35$ $(.5) = 17$.</p>				

SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY

Workforce readiness studies and employer surveys indicate that managers consider both hard skills and soft skills when evaluating employees.²⁰ Hard skills include reading comprehension, applied mathematics, and problem solving, while soft skills are “personal characteristics and behavioral skills that enhance an individual’s interactions, job performance, and career prospects across a broad range of settings.”²¹ Examples of soft skills include communication skills, adaptability, integrity, leadership, communication, patience, time management, and discipline.^{22,23}

Evidence of the importance of soft skills to employers is plentiful. A recent employer survey found that 77 percent of employers believed that soft skills are as important as hard skills and 16 percent believe soft skills are more important.²⁴ Other studies have found “soft skills are connected with significant wage returns and contribute to the closing of the gender wage gap.”²⁵ In response to a growing lack of soft skills among young employees, the U.S. Department of Labor has developed programs to cultivate soft skills in youth aged 14 to 21.²⁶

Unfortunately, studies have found that disadvantaged children possess lower levels of soft skills.²⁷ The evidence that TT facilitates soft skill development is substantial. Post-program mentor survey results from PY2015-2016 indicate that 95 percent of mentors believe that program participation “will help me with my leadership skills.”

20 Adecco (2014). Mind the skills gap. <http://pages.adeccousa.com/rs/adeccousa/images/2014-mind-the-skills-gap.pdf>

21 ACT (2013). Work Readiness Standards and Benchmarks.

22 Stajkovic, A. D., & Luthans, F. (1998). Self-efficacy and work-related performance: A meta-analysis. *Psychological bulletin*, 124(2), 240.

23 ACT (2013). Work Readiness Standards and Benchmarks. <http://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/Work-Readiness-Standards-and-Benchmarks.pdf>

24 CareerBuilders (2014). Overwhelming Majority of Companies Say Soft Skills Are Just as Important as Hard Skills. <http://www.careerbuilder.com/share/aboutus/pressreleasesdetail.aspx?ed=12/31/2014&id=pr817&sd=4/10/2014>

25 Balcar, J. (2014). Soft skills and their wage returns: Overview of empirical literature. *Review of Economic Perspectives*, 14(1), 3-15.

26 Soft Skills to Pay the Bills — Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success

27 Heckman, J. J. (2011). The American Family in Black & White: A Post-Racial Strategy for Improving Skills to Promote Equality. *Daedalus*, 140(2), 70-89.

Likewise, 95 percent report feeling confident in their ability to solve difficult problems and 93 percent are confident in their abilities to stick with their goals. The majority of TT mentors are female and many are minorities; thus, the soft skill development opportunities afforded by participation in the TT program is of particular importance in preparing these populations for a successful future.

BENEFITS TO MENTEES

Difficulties in attendance, behavior issues, and poor academic performance in elementary school are strong predictors of a student's likelihood to graduate from high school.²⁸ Children that miss 10 percent of kindergarten and first grade score significantly lower on third-grade reading tests than students with regular attendance.²⁹ Regarding behavior, studies have found that unsatisfactory marks in conduct and disciplinary referrals in the early grades are correlated with an increased likelihood of dropout.³⁰ Conversely, student engagement is considered one of the most instrumental factors in encouraging success and preventing student dropout.³¹

Mentoring programs, including the TT program, can have significant positive impacts on attendance, behavior, and academic performance. TT program mentees all begin the program, on average, at least one half year behind grade level in reading, and in the most recent TT mentee survey, report significant progress in each of these areas:³²

- 84 percent of mentees reported going to school every day unless they are sick;
- Only 3 percent of mentees surveyed stated that they "never" or "seldom" behave well in school;
- 96 percent of mentees agreed that "my mentor makes me feel important;"
- 89 percent of mentees stated that they "work very hard on my school work" "a lot" or "almost always;"
- 97 percent of mentees report that their mentor helped them become a better reader;
- 43 percent of mentees improved their reading skills to grade-level or above by the end of the seven month program;
- 92 percent of parents reported that their child's attendance was average or better; and
- 92 percent of parents reported that their child's school behavior was average or better.

28 Bruce, M., Bridgeland, J. M., Fox, J. H., & Balfanz, R. (2011). On Track for Success: The Use of Early Warning Indicator and Intervention Systems to Build a Grad Nation. Civic Enterprises and The Johns Hopkins University Everyone Graduates Center.

29 Applied Survey Research. (2011, July). Attendance in early elementary grades: Associations with student characteristics, school readiness, and third grade outcomes.

30 Bruce, M., Bridgeland, J. M., Fox, J. H., & Balfanz, R. (2011). On Track for Success: The Use of Early Warning Indicator and Intervention Systems to Build a Grad Nation. Civic Enterprises and The Johns Hopkins University Everyone Graduates Center. Available at http://new.every1graduates.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/on_track_for_success.pdf.

31 Fall, A., & Roberts, G. (2012). High school dropouts: Interactions between social context, self perceptions, school engagement, and student dropout. *Journal of Adolescence*, 35, 787-798. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2011.11.004

32 BETR Group (2016). Summative evaluation of the Teen Trendsetters™ Florida Program 2015-2016

Another important factor in student success is parent involvement and family literacy.³³ Children with continually involved parents have a 96 percent greater likelihood of graduating from high school.³⁴ The TT program encourages parent involvement and provides materials for home reading, and an overwhelming majority of mentees' parents are highly engaged in the program. Survey data show that 89 percent of TT parents surveyed indicate that they "read to or listen to my child read at least twice a week."³⁵

PERSONAL INCOME BENEFITS

Third grade is a particularly pivotal year as students are expected to gain mastery of skills that transition them from learning to read to reading to learn.³⁶ Failure to achieve reading proficiency by the end of the third grade can have a major impact on a child's future, including their earning potential.³⁷ National research shows that 16 percent of children that fail to read proficiently by the end of the third grade do not graduate from high school by 19-years of age.³⁸ Table 5 shows the contribution of the TT program to the lifetime income potential of PY2015-2016 mentees.

TABLE 5: LIFETIME INCOME BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT – TT MENTEES

Education Level	Nationwide, base weekly individual median earnings (yearly) ^A	Projected additional lifetime earnings (individual) ^B	Additional total lifetime income ^C
No High School Diploma	\$493 (\$25,636)	--	--
High School Diploma	\$678 (\$35,256)	\$452,140	\$53,804,660
<p>A Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016). Education matters. https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2016/data-on-display/education-matters.htm.</p> <p>B Lifetime earnings are estimated assuming an individual works 52 weeks per year for 47 years (from age 18 to 65). For example, the base weekly individual median earnings for those without a high school diploma is \$493 * 52 weeks/year * 47 years = \$1,204,892 in lifetime earnings. This step is repeated for each education level and used to calculate lifetime earnings from which the estimated lifetime earnings for no high school diploma is subtracted to project additional lifetime earnings for an individual.</p> <p>C The TT program in 2015-2016 included 1740 mentees, all of whom were reading below grade level. Statistically, 16 percent (278) of those students would not be expected to graduate (based on reading proficiency alone). Post-program reading assessments show that 43 percent of participants were reading at or above grade level by the end of the program year. This improvement means that approximately 119 students are likely to graduate in part due to the contributions of the TT program.</p>			

33 Lin, Q. (2003). Parent involvement and early literacy. Harvard Family Research Project.

34 Barnard, W. M. (2004). Parent involvement in elementary school and educational attainment. Children and youth services review, 26(1), 39-62.

35 BETR Group (2016). Summative evaluation of the Teen Trendsetters™ Florida Program 2015-2016

36 Hernandez, D. (2011). Double jeopardy: How third-grade reading skills and poverty influence high school graduation. Baltimore: The Annie E. Casey Foundation. <http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-DoubleJeopardy-2012-Full.pdf#page=4>

37 National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP; 2016). Glossary of terms. <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/glossary.aspx#proficient>; The NAEP test is administered at the beginning of the 4th grade. There are three achievement levels (basic, proficient, and advanced). "Students reaching [proficiency] level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter."

38 Hernandez, D. (2011). Double jeopardy: How third-grade reading skills and poverty influence high school graduation. Baltimore: The Annie E. Casey Foundation. <http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-DoubleJeopardy-2012-Full.pdf#page=4>

FISCAL BENEFITS TO THE STATE OF FLORIDA

High school graduation results in lower use of social programs and thus, lower social program costs. Table 6 represents the costs savings associated with each additional high school graduate among the PY2015-2016 program mentees.

TABLE 6: COST AVOIDANCE PER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE – TT MENTEES

Metric	Average between Studies ^{A,B}	Total Cost-Avoidance for 2015-2016 Mentees ^C
Health Costs	\$35,005	\$4,165,595
Justice System	\$23,685	\$2,818,515
Welfare System	\$3,350	\$398,650
Total:		\$7,382,760
^A Belfield, C. R., & Levin, H. M. (2007). <i>The economic losses from high school dropouts in California</i> . University of California, Santa Barbara.		
^B Levin, H., Belfield, C., Muennig, P., & Rouse, C. (2007). <i>The costs and benefits of an excellent education for all of America's children</i> (Vol. 9). New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.		
^C Calculated based on 119 mentees graduating due to participation in the TT program (see Table 5, footnote C)		

CONCLUSION

Florida TaxWatch concludes that the TT program is a well-designed, continually evaluated, effective mentor program that successfully meets the funding mandate set forth in the Mentoring/Student Assistance Initiatives. In addition, the program results in a substantial personal economic benefit (see Tables 2 and 5) and a substantial savings to taxpayers via avoidance in social program costs (see Tables 4 and 6).

For PY2015-2016, it is estimated that the TT program will result in \$53,804,660 in collective additional lifetime income for mentees that attain on-grade level reading skills. Avoided welfare, prison, and health costs result in an estimated cost-avoidance of \$7,382,760. Together, additional income and cost avoidance results in a total impact of \$61,187,420 for PY2015-2016 mentees that achieve grade-level reading.

For PY2015-2016 senior mentors, the program will results \$28,330,848 in collective additional lifetime income and \$1,054,680 social program cost avoidance, for a total impact of \$29,385,528.

The TT program received \$300,000 in state funding and \$776,910 in private funding, therefore for each dollar invested into the TT program, a return of \$7.83 may be realized in the form of cost avoidance for the taxpayers. This fiscal impact estimate is likely conservative, as only senior mentors are considered and mentees evaluation assumes only attainment of a high school diploma, secondary education is not considered. Additionally, this estimate does not include the lifetime increase in wages and other economic benefits realized by program graduates, thus the total impact is likely much greater.

MARCH 2017

As an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit taxpayer research institute and government watchdog, it is the mission of Florida TaxWatch to provide the citizens of Florida and public officials with high quality, independent research and analysis of issues related to state and local government taxation, expenditures, policies, and programs. Florida TaxWatch works to improve the productivity and accountability of Florida government. Its research recommends productivity enhancements and explains the statewide impact of fiscal and economic policies and practices on citizens and businesses.

Florida TaxWatch is supported by voluntary, tax-deductible donations and private grants, and does not accept government funding. Donations provide a solid, lasting foundation that has enabled Florida TaxWatch to bring about a more effective, responsive government that is accountable to the citizens it serves since 1979.

VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP

David Mann	<i>Board of Trustees Chairman</i>	Senator Pat Neal	<i>Chairman-Elect</i>
Senator George LeMieux	<i>Treasurer</i>	Piyush Patel	<i>Secretary</i>
Steve Evans	<i>Senior Advisor</i>		

RESEARCH TEAM

LEADERSHIP

Dominic M. Calabro
Robert E. Weissert, Esq.

PROJECT TEAM

Allison Wiman (Lead author)
Bob Nave
Chris Barry

CONTRIBUTORS

Kyle Baltuch
Elle Piloseno
Patrick Mas
Alex Foster

TaxWatch research is done under the direction of Dominic M. Calabro, President, CEO, Publisher & Editor.

The findings in this Report are based on the data and sources referenced. Florida TaxWatch research is conducted with every reasonable attempt to verify the accuracy and reliability of the data, and the calculations and assumptions made herein. Please feel free to contact us if you feel that this paper is factually inaccurate.

The research findings and recommendations of Florida TaxWatch do not necessarily reflect the view of its donors, staff, Executive Committee, or Board of Trustees; and are not influenced by the individuals or organizations who may have contributed to the research, in accordance with the Florida TaxWatch Research Policies and Procedures to Maintain the High Quality, Integrity, and Independence of the Research Conducted by Florida TaxWatch and its Centers of Excellence and Task Forces.

This Report is intended for educational and informational purposes. If they appear, references to specific policy makers or private companies have been included solely to advance these purposes, and do not constitute an endorsement, sponsorship, or recommendation of or by the Florida TaxWatch Research Institute, Inc.

This report was made possible in part by a grant from the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, and the annual contributions of Florida TaxWatch members.



Stay Informed:



www.floridataxwatch.org



facebook.com/floridataxwatch



[@floridataxwatch](https://twitter.com/floridataxwatch)



youtube.com/floridataxwatch

106 N. BRONOUGH ST., TALLAHASSEE, FL 32301 O: 850.222.5052 F: 850.222.7476

COPYRIGHT © MARCH 2017, FLORIDA TAXWATCH RESEARCH INSTITUTE, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.