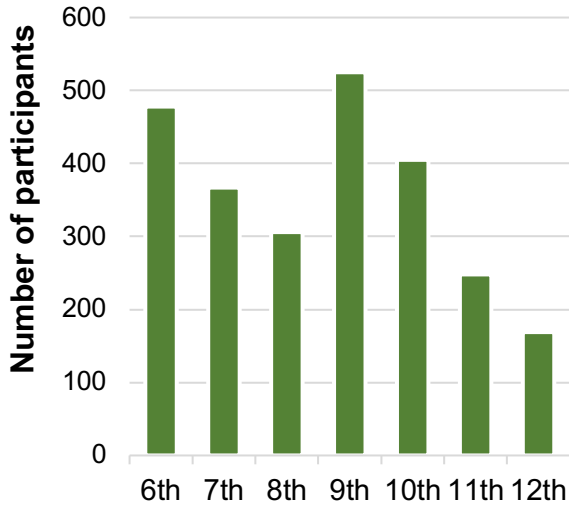


# Peer to Peer Best Practices – Data Summary

## A Study of Peer to Peer Programs in North Dakota, 2023

From the state of North Dakota, four schools deployed surveys schoolwide, one additional school also provided time for mentees to take the survey. Across the five participating schools, 2,923 students were provided the opportunity to complete our surveys during school, of which,

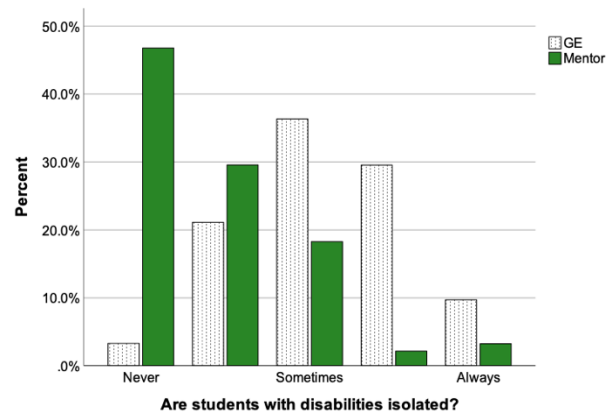


2,511 completed all or part of the surveys. Our sample was primarily composed of boys (47.2%) and girls (47.7%). Our sample mostly reported living in a big city (85%), although 7% lived in a medium sized city or smaller rural area. Many racial and ethnic groups were represented in this sample including but not limited to Asian (3%), Black (5%), Hispanic or Spanish origin (6%), Native American (13%), and White (78%). Over 10% of the sample identified more than one racial or ethnic background. Most of the sample identified at least one person in their life as having a disability (53%) and 10% identified themselves as disabled. Finally, 266 mentors and 98 mentees participated in this study.

## Key Findings

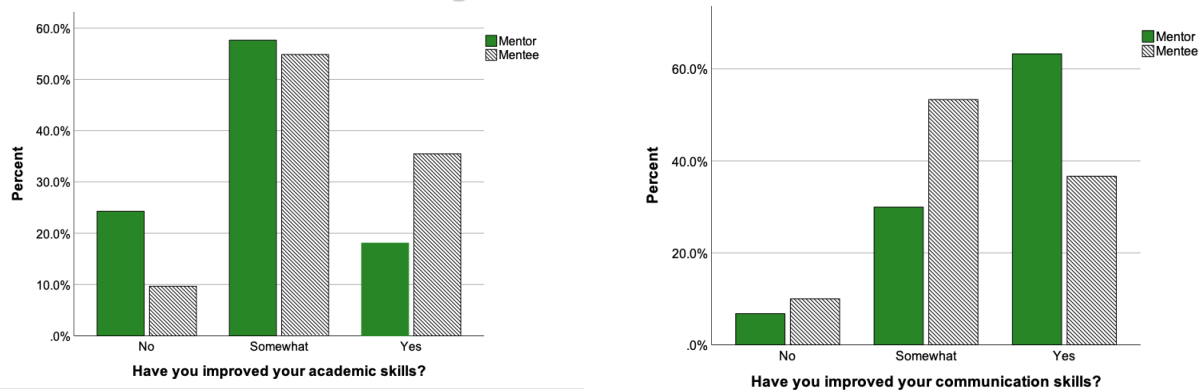
### Peer to Peer Experiences in the School Context

All general education students, including mentors, received a set of questions about inclusion at their school. All students who knew about the Peer to Peer program also answered questions about Peer to Peer. Although mentors are more likely to agree that Peer to Peer is an asset to their school compared to their peers, students largely believe that Peer to Peer is at least somewhat an asset to their school showing there is schoolwide buy in from students. Further, as shown in this figure, there were differences



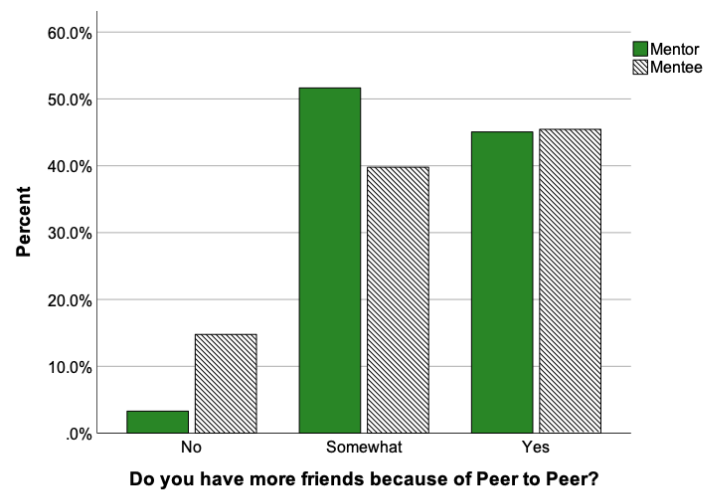
between general education students and mentors in their perceptions of whether students with disabilities are isolated at school. Mentors interact with their own and other mentees regularly which helps reduce the isolation they see for their peers with disabilities. On the other hand, general education students most often believe students with disabilities are sometimes isolated which may indicate that efforts towards reducing isolation from general education peers could enhance Peer to Peer. Compared to general education students, mentors also reported enjoying interacting with people with disabilities more and believe their school tries to include everyone at higher levels.

## Mentor and Mentee Skill Experiences in Peer to Peer



Mentors and mentees participated in Peer to Peer programs in the state of North Dakota that focus on modeling appropriate social behaviors, building friendships, developing leadership and communication skills, and promoting independence and self-advocacy. It appears that mentees and mentors may develop different types of skills in the Peer to Peer program. Compared to mentors, mentees report greater improvements in academic skills while mentors report greater improvements in communication skills compared to mentees. These findings may help identify areas for growth in ongoing and new Peer to Peer programs. Peer to Peer programs may be able to include additional modules on communication skill building that would be beneficial for mentees. It is likely that students selected for the mentor role in Peer to Peer already have high academic skills which may make it difficult for Peer to Peer to help them improve these skills.

## Mentor and Mentee Relational Experiences in Peer to Peer



Mentors and mentees both provided information on whether they have more friends because of the Peer to Peer program. Mentors agree that they have more friends because of Peer to Peer. Similarly, mentees also believe they have more friends because of Peer to Peer, however, mentors report having more friends because of Peer to Peer at higher rates compared to mentees. Both mentors and mentees also consider their mentor or mentee their friend, although mentors more strongly endorse this belief. Many mentees

report high levels of liking the Peer to Peer program. Mentees also agree that their school accepts people with disabilities. Additionally, compared to mentors, mentees report believing people at their school try to include everyone at higher rates. Overall, relational experiences within Peer to Peer appear to be positive for both mentors and mentees. There may be additional ways Peer to Peer programs could encourage genuine friendships between mentors and mentees.