



CONSORTIUM
OF FLORIDA EDUCATION
FOUNDATIONS



COVID Education Innovation in Florida

Virtual Mentoring (Statewide)

With a 25-year history of serving children's needs to enable success, Take Stock in Children had to totally revamp a successful in-person program model and pivot to a virtual platform this year. With limited access to community volunteer mentors, community nonprofits and their staff, this was a formidable task as Take Stock serves more than 8,500 students in grades 6-12 and more than 6,000 Take Stock scholars around the state, providing resources needed to succeed in college, career and life. The program affords an exceptional opportunity for deserving, academically qualified youth, many of whom are students of color, to escape the cycle of poverty through education. During the pandemic, the continuation of this lifeline for academic success was essential.

As a result, Take Stock reimagined and developed several new mentoring opportunities for students and mentors. Mentoring sessions could be safely conducted via a virtual platform (Zoom, WebEx, Teams, etc.) while being monitored by Take Stock staff for safety and security. Students live on their phones so the most exciting new enhancement in virtual mentoring is the Take Stock App. The Take Stock App allows mentors and mentees to remain in contact through "Video Chat," a FaceTime-like video call feature that enables mentors and mentees to coordinate and meet through the app's secure, monitored platform and "Text Chat" features. The app also has a keyword alert feature built into the platform to provide an extra safety layer.

To ensure students can access important information for postsecondary degree attainment, Take Stock in Children and Take Stock in College also developed recorded view-on-demand college readiness workshops around the key topics of FAFSA completion, mental health and stress management, and college preparation for seniors. College Coaches are even available to meet with students to ensure that students remain on a positive path.

Additionally, to streamline the collection of student forms, documentation and student support grants, Take Stock introduced the Script E-Signature platform. This platform allows students, parents and mentors to complete, and sign needed paperwork online using a computer or smartphone. Providing digital paperwork options has been instrumental in continuing the work since in-person interactions have been limited.

These new resources developed, and lessons learned as part of this process will continue to be utilized in the future to build and enhance the Take Stock program model and services.

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The Consortium elevates the impact of Florida's local education foundations through advocacy and providing a collegial community for ongoing learning, shared resources and support. These nonprofit organizations are aligned with nearly every school district in our state and collectively they raise more than \$80 million annually to innovate learning, power potential and celebrate success.

We believe strong collaboration is essential to ensure school success. Our effort to capture, elevate and share education innovations discovered amid the disruption of the pandemic is offered in that spirit.

Our **Top 10 Takeaways: COVID Education Innovation** report can be accessed at educationinnovationspotlight.com