

Minnesota Department of **Education** **Project Abstract: Preschool Development Grants-Pay for Success Feasibility Pilot: Pyramid Model Expansion**

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to study the feasibility of using a Pay for Success (PFS) funding structure to enhance the quality of voluntary pre-kindergarten (VPK) programs in Minnesota through the addition of the Pyramid Model to the program design. The Pyramid Model is an evidence-based approach to supporting children's social emotional development and has been successfully implemented on a limited basis in Minnesota since 2010. IDEA funds support robust use of the Pyramid Model in approximately 100 inclusion classrooms statewide. Resource limitations have prevented the state from scaling the initiative across early learning sectors.

Project Activities

The project's major activities include engaging stakeholders and developing partnerships necessary to conduct a meaningful feasibility study of the PFS funding model for use in Minnesota and developing a process to assure that the funding structure will in no way influence future special education placement decisions. The project will also include a detailed cost-benefit study of enhancing the existing VPK program design through the addition of the Pyramid Model.

Applicable Priorities

This project addresses the absolute priority which is to conduct a Pay for Success feasibility study. The project also addresses the competitive preference priority of measuring outcomes across domains including the domain of social emotional development.

Proposed Project Outcomes

Compared to children in the original VPK program, children who attended a VPK enhanced with the Pyramid Model will demonstrate:

Intermediate Child Outcomes (measured during VPK participation)

- More growth in child assessment scores in academic and social emotional domains between entry and exit from preschool
- Fewer suspensions and expulsions
- Fewer Behavioral Incident Reports (BIR)
- Less chronic absenteeism

Long Term Child Outcomes (measured during kindergarten through Grade 3)

- Reduction in special education placements
- Better performance on state achievement tests
- Less retention in grade
- Fewer Behavioral Incident Reports (BIR)
- Less chronic absenteeism

Program Outcome

- More E-VPK teachers will stay in their positions compared to VPK teachers