

ABSTRACT

Charleston County School District's proposed EIR early-phase project, **C³: Choice in Cultural Competency**, addresses **Absolute Priorities 1: Demonstrates a Rationale** and **3: Teacher-Directed Professional Learning (PL)** and **Competitive Preference Priority 2: State Educational Agency Partnership**. Our theory of action proposes that if educators have access to teacher-directed PL centered on cultural competency through activities including (1) an effective stipend system; (2) high-quality teacher assessment to identify PL individual needs; and (3) ongoing implementation supports for assessments, coaching, and instructional practices in cultural competency, then this change will lead to culturally responsive instructional practices that empower the achievement and attainment of **high-need students** (students in poverty and disproportionate suspension rates and achievement between black and white students). Our field-initiated innovation will be tested at **ten K-12 Sea Island schools** (6 elementary, 1 elementary/middle, 1 middle, 1 middle/high, 1 high) with a target population of **5,765 students** and **433 classroom teachers**. Expected study outcomes include: (1) improve academic success and attainment of high-need students through a culturally competent learning environment that adapts to and values diversity and institutionalizes cultural knowledge; (2) provide teacher-directed PL that enables educators to deliver culturally proficient instruction; (3) engage in valid and reliable teacher cultural competency assessments to identify individual needs and support the selection of PL options; and (4) implement a learning loop that supports teacher assessment, coaching, and instructional practices that lead to continuous improvements in culturally competent instructional practices. Partners include a representative from our Cultural Competency Team, Diversity and Inclusion Board, and SC DOE (**Competitive Priority 2**), and content specialists including YWCA, Charleston Forum, College of Charleston, Tri-County Cradle to Career, Charleston Shared Future, SC State University, and MUSC.