

PR Award #: S423A200114

Organization Name: The University of Alabama

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Absolute Priority: AP 1 (Supporting Effective Teachers)

Competitive Preference Priorities:

2) Fostering Knowledge and Promoting the Development of Skills That Prepare Students to Be Informed, Thoughtful, and Productive Individuals and Citizens; and

3) Spurring Investment in Qualified Opportunity Zones.

Requested Total Award Amount: \$3,606,782.00

Project Description:

This project will give elementary educators the ability to deliver appropriate social and emotional learning (SEL) instruction to all early elementary learners (grades K-3) including those with or at risk for emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). The University of Alabama (UA) will develop and evaluate the Social and Emotional Learning Study Groups (SELSG+) for educators of students with EBD which includes: 1) evidence-based Tier 1 SEL instruction for all students in grades K-3 that is feasible, usable, and acceptable to teachers and students; 2) data-based SEL assessments to identify students needing Tier 2 intervention and progress monitoring to measure improvement; 3) evidence-based Tier 2 instruction delivered in small groups and individually that is tailored to students' needs; and 4) digitally-delivered professional learning augmented by in-person teacher study groups (TSGs) and personalized coaching.

Project Expected Outcomes:

Expected project outcomes are: (1) To develop a digitally-delivered Tier 1 and Tier 2 SEL curriculum with data-based differentiation for K-3 students, (2) to craft digital and in-person professional learning to train teachers and provide ongoing support as they implement the program, (3) to establish What Works Clearinghouse moderate evidence for SELSG+ through a randomized wait-list control study, and (4) to disseminate the results in peer-reviewed publications, reports, and through popular and social media channels. During the first two years, educators will be recruited from schools located in Qualified Opportunity Zones (QOZs) in three Alabama school districts: Montgomery, Tuscaloosa City, and Jasper City. Sixty-six teachers will participate in the development phases of the project (year 1 and 2). A randomized wait-list controlled trial pilot study will be conducted during the final year (year 3). Grade level teams of educators will be drawn from elementary schools within designated QOZs in Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, and Florida. We will create six grade level teacher study groups of ten elementary educators each and will randomly assign at the study group level to intervention (SELSG+) or comparison (business-as-usual), with blocking to ensure there are six study groups in each condition. The randomized wait-list controlled pilot study will involve 120 elementary educators and 480 students.

Project Special Features:

The majority of SEL programs in elementary schools are universal. These Tier 1 interventions fall short in providing in-depth, differentiated support that students with various social-emotional needs and challenging behavioral issues require. SELSG+ seeks to remedy this problem by providing teachers training in evidence-based core SEL instruction for all students, support to strategically use assessment to identify students for Tier 2 intervention, and flexible, targeted, small group and individual instruction for those needing additional support including those with or at risk for EBD.

Project Partners:

The University of Alabama (UA) in partnership with xSEL Labs, Oregon Research Institute (ORI), Trifolia, Research Press, and school partners.