Student Well-Being Model: Improving High-need Students' Learning through a Community-Driven Model Centering Equity and Social and Emotional Skills
Transcend
Table of Contents

Priorities Addressed: Transcend Inc., in partnership with District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), Van Ness Elementary School (Van Ness ES is a co-developer and a DCPS demonstration site), [redacted] and SRI International, are eager as first-time applicants, to apply for an **Early-phase Grant** aimed at improving student outcomes, including learning and SEL skills, for high-needs students (as defined in Section B3). We propose to address Absolute Priority **AP1** "Demonstrates a Rationale" and **AP4** "Field-Initiated Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Innovations" through our SEL-focused **Student Well-Being Model (SWBM),** developed in partnership with Van Ness ES. Additionally, the SWBM is tightly aligned with Competitive Preference Priority **CPP2** "Addressing the Impact of COVID-19" and **CPP3** "Promoting Equity" (see section B1 for detailed CPP alignment). We will work with 20 elementary schools across two partner districts, serving approximately 11,250 students[1] from high-need schools to achieve four goals: (1) **Ignite** a community-driven process that builds a learning environment to nurture the whole child; (2) **Advance** key SEL practices through piloting local adaptations of the SWBM and cultivating adult well-being; (3) **Spread** the SWBM throughout the whole school and deepen educator knowledge; and **(**4) **Sustain** student well-being by identifying and codifying the practices that lead to students feeling safe and loved, and developing their social and emotional *and* academic skills. SRI will test the impact of the SWBM on key teacher, student, and school outcomes through a rigorous quasi-experimental evaluation (QED) designed to meet What Works Clearinghouse with reservations.

A. Significance As it relates to both **CPP2** (COVID19) and **CPP3** (equity), the relationship between children's social and emotional health and academic success (both short- and long-term) is (1) a top priority for every parent, teacher, and school in the wake of the COVID pandemic (**CPP2**); (2) inextricably linked; and (3) well-documented.[2, 3] A growing research base shows

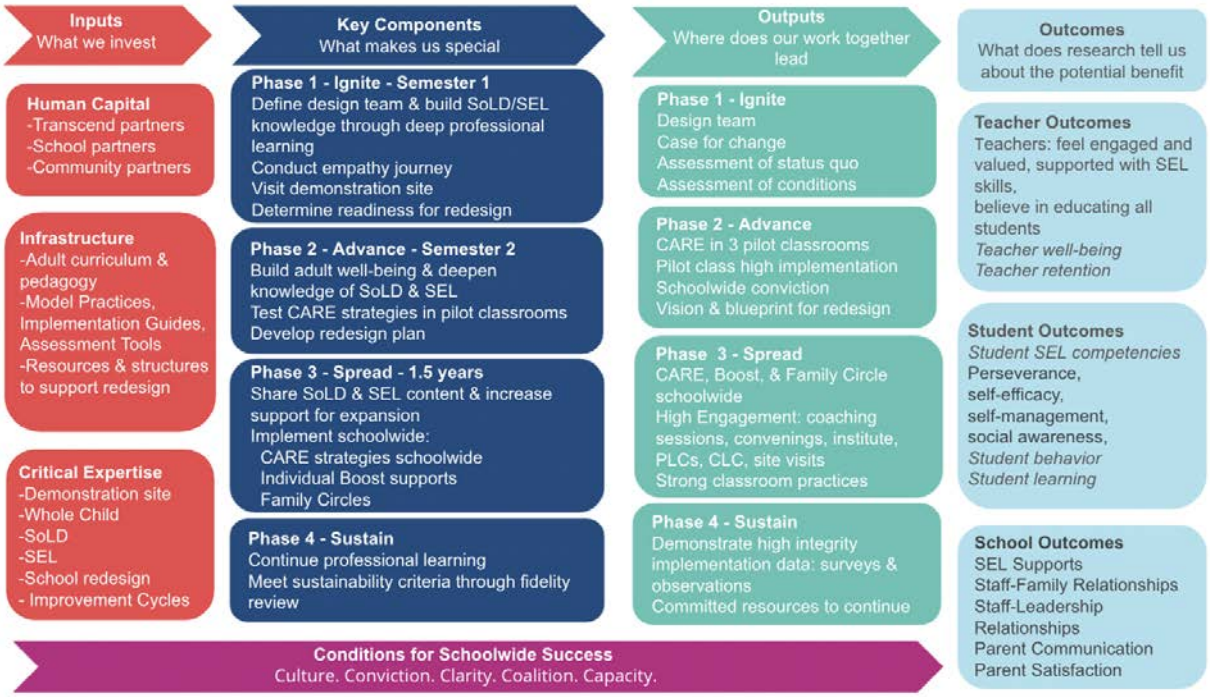
that a focus on social and emotional development helps students build the skills and mindsets they use to acquire academic content, enhance their academic performance by developing academic tenacity and resilience,[4] and develop cognitive and developmental skills that allow them to engage in the classroom.[5] A focus on social and emotional development also promotes overall well-being[6] by promoting happiness, reducing mental health challenges like depression, promoting prosocial behaviors, and helping them become well-adjusted and able to persevere both in academics and in life.[7] Social and emotional support is particularly important for children who have experienced trauma or toxic stress, as these experiences can impair the development of cognitive, social and emotional skills and mindsets, which in turn impact the capacity for learning. Estimates say as many as 1 in 5 children experience a mental disorder in a given year[8] and that approximately 79% of children aged 6-17 have an unmet need for mental health services.[9] This situation is even more dire in low income communities, exacerbating inequities (**CPP3**). Living in poverty is a significant risk factor for mental health challenges. Poverty is often linked with other traumas and risk factors, such as housing instability and homelessness, food instability, poor nutrition, and lack of adequate health care. These identified risk factors disproportionately affect children of color and their mental health.[10] Additionally, these inequities have been amplified due to COVID-19 and current racial tensions. In a recent nationally-representative survey of 13- 19-year-olds, almost 40 % reported a lower ability to concentrate, make decisions, and feel happy.[11] Two-thirds[12] of students from low-income households and of students of color reported feeling "depressed, stressed, or anxious" as the primary obstacle to learning. This constellation of negative effects from societal inequities (**CPP3**) compounded by the COVID crisis (**CPP2**) creates an alarming predicament for our schools and teachers.

Now more than ever, our nation's schools and teachers are the front lines of mental health support for our children, especially in high-needs schools. Unfortunately, there is a gap between what is needed to address mental health inequities and what is currently happening. This gap has been amplified by COVID-19 and broader social inequities. Supporting well-being (**CPP2**) and thereby meeting each student's needs is an equity issue (**CPP3**) requiring a cohesive approach that redesigns the school. Teachers and school leaders simply do not have the time and resources to research, test, and much less, share information across campus to develop a cohesive approach. Without a cohesive model, the burden falls on each teacher to figure out how to support students' social and emotional needs in addition to all the other demands. Educators are often left to try strategies that are either too general (build relationships) or discrete and incomplete (greet each student at the door). While there is no "one-size fits all" approach, the SWBM is a cohesive, research-based model that guides the implementation of SEL practices schoolwide in a unique community-driven approach. In the school redesign process that is at the heart of SWBM, educators create a strong foundation based on awareness, knowledge, and conviction leading to a powerful coalition for implementation that is potentially more effective—and more lasting—than discrete or incomplete practices by individual teachers.

A1. Extent to which project demonstrates promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies. The SWBM's vision is for every child to attend a school in which his or her well-being is a central priority. Imagine a nation where schools mitigate the negative effects of stress and trauma by establishing environments in which all students feel safe and loved, and can develop the social and emotional *and* academic skills they need to thrive. This vision is more critical now than ever due to the inequitable impacts of COVID-19 (**CPP2**).

To inspire and "fuel" change, schools and communities need strong models of how to support whole child development and the capacity and conditions to implement the models. A transformative approach to SEL requires much more than just adopting a new curriculum – it has implications for every aspect of the learning environment, from the curriculum and pedagogy to the physical environment and behavior system. Our SWBM provides a much-needed cohesive model, offering concrete, aligned practices for high-quality, schoolwide implementation. This grant competition offers a clear opportunity to further codify and test the ways schools must evolve to fully support SEL-centered, whole-child learning environments.

Demonstrates a rationale (AP1) Key components of SWBM (see Section B1 for model description) are grounded in existing strategies supported by **strong evidence from the Institute of Education Sciences Practice Guide,**[13] which suggests the activities are likely to improve critical outcomes defined in the logic model, student SEL skills and competencies, and student learning meeting strong evidence standards (also see Appendix G Logic Model).



Existing practices that SWBM builds from include an integrated approach to modifying the classroom learning environment to promote prosocial interactions; revisiting and reinforcing classroom routines and expectations, while positively-reinforcing guidelines for a variety of situations; rearranging the schedule and learning activities to meet students' needs, and/or individually adapting activities to promote high rates of student engagement; and teaching and reinforcing new skills through breaking skills into concrete teachable steps, modeling skills, providing chances for guided and independent practice, and giving specific feedback. Other components of the SWBM that also draw on existing practices include building collaborative and consistent relationships with teacher colleagues and families and adopting schoolwide strategies to foster positive interactions.

A2. Extent to which results will be disseminated that enable others to use the information

Transcend values widely sharing learnings and has a robust history of doing so. We have built a strong approach to producing open-source knowledge products and thought leadership that are broadcast across our networks and the field. Transcend has a 2,000+ member open online network, the Transcend Design Community (TDC), where we regularly post learnings and share resources. We routinely produce knowledge products such as papers, conference presentations, articles, webinars, and multimedia content addressing the most pressing school issues. More than 76,000 unique users have accessed our website over 130,000 times this year. For an example of an open-source knowledge product, see our mental health practices and resources.[14] We share our evidence, learnings, and insights externally through our owned social media channels and newsletter; earned media opportunities (including both education-related and non-education outlets); thought-leadership campaigns; leveraging our partnerships with other organizations to

share with their audiences; and learning conversations, webinars, and communities of practice across the TDC.

As it relates specifically to the SWBM, Transcend, in partnership with model co-developer and demonstration site, Van Ness ES, will leverage Transcend's resources and capacity to produce and widely disseminate open-source resources including guidance and tools for implementing key components of the SWBM, knowledge from the evaluation translated into formats that are practical for school teams, codified learnings, and experiences that schools can learn from and implement. Transcend is committed to creating actionable insights and knowledge to accelerate progress across the field of education.

B. Quality of the Project Design The SWBM has a sound conceptual framework, includes measurable goals and objectives, and is appropriate for high-needs students.

B1. Extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying proposed research and the quality of that framework The logic model or framework describes the throughline between key project inputs, components and outcomes needed for an inclusive environment where educators and students thrive (see Appendix G).

The SWBM uses a unique, community-driven approach based on design principles that build a strong coalition for redesigning school practice. The SWBM consists of **three research-based components**: CARE, Boost, and Family Circle; implemented across **four phases** intended to build conviction, adult well-being, and shift teacher mindsets and practices, thereby increasing student SEL skills and competencies. The goals are increased prosocial interactions and academic learning within an inclusive environment where strong teachers want to stay and families feel valued. The overall model is described below. **Model Design: (1) CARE** (Compassion-Assertiveness-Relationships-Environment) is designed to create a safe and

predictable classroom community where students feel valued, learn to self-regulate, and work in ways that help them meet individual and class goals. It comprises whole-class, predictable routines (e.g., Strong Start - greeting, community building, breathing, and goal setting; Social Stories - pictures/books to reinforce routines and experiences; and Visual Expectations - images and pictures conveying tangible explicit directions), classroom structures (e.g., jobs - as a structure for fueling self-worth and community, building skills, and increasing autonomy and efficiency), a set of teacher moves, (e.g., specific greetings, displaying student work, minimizing stimuli to foster relationships and create a safe and predictable environment), and room design guidelines (e.g, Classroom Design - accessible, personal, comfortable; and Safe Place - seating, visual representation of feelings, and self-regulation tools) to create an equitable environment that promotes self-regulation **(CPP2b5)**. When CARE is implemented with integrity, students are able to engage in learning, and the need for additional intervention is significantly reduced **(CPP3e)**. CARE draws upon practices from research-based interventions that are typically reserved for students with Tier 2[15] or 3 needs.[16] (**2) Boost:** Approximately 5-10% of our students need a "boost" in order to feel safe, build trusting relationships, and learn to self-regulate **(CPP2b3)**. Boosts include a set of tailored interventions that classroom teachers can use directly (e.g., personalized social stories, teacher-child interaction therapy or "special time" to strengthen relationships); proactive group therapies where students get additional practice with self-regulation skills (e.g., art therapy, lunch bunches, play therapy); and individual interventions based on an analysis of the function of a child's behavior and his or her history of trauma **(CPP2b4)**. These boosts prioritize (a) offering each student the highest-leverage supports for their specific needs and (b) feasibility for staff to implement with integrity. (**3) Family Circle:** This critical element of the SWBM helps create a supportive network of relationships comprising

a student's school and home supports. We believe this circle is essential if we are to support a child's holistic development. To build this circle, we conduct home visits or similar relationship-building strategy with every student, communicate regularly with families through individual customized texts and class newsletters, and partner with parents on academics, parent listening sessions, and other family events that foster community and teach strategies for how to support students at home **(CPP2b1, 3d)**.[17]

The SWBM is implemented through four community-driven phases intended to build conviction, reflect community values, and be inclusive of all voices, thus fostering a more equitable environment **(CPP3)**. **Phase 1** is an **ignite** phase where educators and community members, led by a design team, assess whether they have the enabling conditions needed to engage in a community-driven process to transform their learning environment, then start to build those conditions that are needed. Conditions include: clarity, conviction, culture, coalition, and capacity. Key activities in this phase include assessing the current status through deep empathy interviews with students and community members (**CPP2a)**, building knowledge about the Science of Learning and Development (SoLD) and SEL, and creating a case for change. **Phase 2 advances** the SWBM through planning, whole-staff knowledge development, and piloting. In Phase 2 the school team builds an implementation blueprint for the SWBM strategies and practices and develops adult well-being through deepening SoLD and SEL content knowledge and skills, including exploring biases and triggers **(CPP2b8, 3a3iii, 3c)**. Phase 2 also includes a pilot where three to five "early adopter" teachers pilot CARE in their classrooms to build momentum and buy-in for what this work looks like in a school's local context. **Phase 3 spreads** adoption of the SWBM schoolwide by implementing CARE, Boost, and Family Circles schoolwide, while continuing to deepen educators' understanding of SoLD and SEL. **Phase 4**

sustains the SWBM by continuing to build and refine enabling conditions, deepening educator knowledge, and monitoring and supporting implementation integrity of the SWBM components.

During each phase, school teams receive support through a combination of structures: one-day convenings across the year, a summer institute, monthly professional learning communities (pilot teachers from multiple schools coming together), collaborative learning communities (pilot teachers leading their school colleagues), bi-weekly coaching sessions with design teams, school leader coaching, and two to three annual site visits.

Every aspect of the SWBM experience is designed to ensure that students feel a deep sense of belonging in the school community **(CPP3a3iv)**, have trusting relationships with their teachers and peers, and are empowered to learn in the ways that best meet their needs, while actively contributing to their community. The SWBM puts social and emotional learning and the needs of each student at the center of school in order to create the conditions in which learners are able to thrive because they feel safe and connected, and educators want to stay because they feel valued and empowered **(Cpp3a3)**. We believe (and extensive research confirms)[18] that in developing SEL skills, students will be empowered to self-regulate, persist through challenges, and set and meet ambitious goals.

B2. Extent to which goals, objectives, and outcomes are clearly specified and measurable

Exhibit 1 defines the goals, objectives, and target measures. Detailed activities associated with each objective are in the management plan (see Section C1). Section D describes how we will test for impacts using a QED with a matched comparison group.

Exhibit 1: Goals, Objectives, & Outcomes (see Section D for data sources)
Goal 1: Ignite a community-driven process that builds a learning environment to nurture the **whole child**

Obj 1A. Create the structures for a community-driven approach to student well-being 1A.i. In Year 1, 80% of educators understand conditions for supporting student well-being 1A.ii. By Year 2, 80% of educators demonstrate conviction for transforming their school
Obj 1B. Empower the community/educators through building awareness and knowledge 1B.i. Improve school and family relationships by 5% annually 1B.ii. Increase educator knowledge about the SoLD and SEL by 10% annually 1B.iii. 80% of educators engage with SEL professional learning annually 1B.iv. InYear 1, 80% of educators report a clear articulation of motivation for redesign
Goal 2: Advance key practices by piloting local adaptations and cultivating adult well-being
Obj 2A. Develop schoolwide teacher well-being enabling student supports 2A.i. Increase teachers' sense of well-being and SEL foundation by 10% annually
Obj 2B. Create pilot classrooms for inspiration 2B.i. By Year 2, coaches observe SEL practices being implemented with integrity in 80% of pilot classrooms
Obj 2C. Continue cultivating conditions and articulate a clear plan for redesign 2C.i. By Year 2, 80% of educators agree there is a clear plan for implementation 2C.ii. By Year 2, 80% of educators demonstrate support for SWBM
Goal 3: Spread student well-being throughout the whole school and deepen educator knowledge
Obj 3A. Expand SEL practices schoolwide 3A.i. By Year 2, 80% of teachers report receiving support for implementing SEL practices

with integrity 3A.ii. By Year 2, 80% of classes implement SEL practices with integrity
Goal 4: Sustain student well-being by identifying and codifying the practices that lead to students feeling safe and loved, and developing social and emotional *and* academic skills
Obj 4A. Contribute to an evidence base documenting extraordinary and equitable outcomes 4A.i. SWBM schools demonstrate a positive statistical difference in teacher retention 4A.ii. Improve students' SEL skills and competencies by 10% annually 4A.iii. Increase pro-social behavior by reducing out of school suspensions by 75% 4A.iv. SWBM schools demonstrate a positive statistical difference in student learning 4A.v. Improve school SEL environment by 10% annually 4A.vi. Create and share 3 thought leadership products and 10 open-source products

B3. Extent to which the proposed project is appropriate and will successfully address the needs of the target population This project proposes to partner with schools serving a disproportionate number of high-needs students in districts prioritizing SEL skills and equity. There is undeniable empirical evidence (see Section A Significance) documenting the association between poverty and numerous risk factors that impede healthy development and learning. This is an optimal moment for an investment in the SWBM given the widespread agreement on the importance of strong social and emotional supports in schools and the gap between interest and implementation. A recent CASEL study found that although 83% of principals strongly endorse SEL and 98% believe it would benefit students from all backgrounds, only 35% have a plan for teaching SEL.[19] The SWBM provides a much-needed model and concrete practices for high-quality implementation. Our target population intentionally includes high-needs students most at risk for mental health issues and suffering from systemic inequities (CPP3). These districts have

visions and strategic priorities focused on student well-being and equity, ensuring ongoing support for this work beyond the grant period. This proposal defines high-needs students as those qualifying for the federal free or reduced lunch program, students of color, and students who are English learners. Working with our partner districts, [redacted] and DCPS, we will recruit two cohorts of five high-needs elementary schools from each district, totaling 20 schools and 11,250 students. These schools will participate in the SWBM as early adopter sites for their districts and be matched to 20 other demographically-similar schools in a quasi-experimental evaluation design to test the impact of the SWBM on student SEL and learning outcomes. All participating schools will serve large numbers of students representing populations at disproportionate risk for poor academic outcomes, including exclusionary discipline practices due to historically and systematically unfair policies and practices (**CPP3e**). Approximately 70% of the students supported by this project will qualify as high-needs. See Exhibit 2 for district-specific demographics.

Exhibit 2: District	% FRPL	% Black	% Hispanic	% White	% ELs
[redacted]	80	8	73	11	20
DCPS	75	58	21	16	15

[redacted] identified equity and access, ensuring safe and nurturing learning environments, and parent, community, and student engagement as key priorities in their strategic plan.[20] The district has invested heavily in developing roadmaps for social and emotional well-being aimed at educators and families. DCPS has identified promoting equity, engaging families, and student well-being and social and emotional learning as three of its five priorities.[21] These priorities closely align with the community-driven SWBM. The district has taken initial steps to orient

principals to the need for the work, encouraging schools to draw upon CASEL's expertise and recommendations.

The research base documenting the association among risk factors, SEL skills and competencies, and important outcomes, combined with the priorities of the partner districts and their student populations, ensures this is a strong approach that will successfully address the needs of the target population.

C. Adequacy of the Resources and Quality of the Management Plan Transcend and its partners bring deep expertise in developing SEL skills through community-driven processes that center equity. This partnership dedicates best-in-class leadership, guaranteeing comprehensive management to meet project goals, ensuring high-quality and sufficient staffing, and aligning budget and reporting processes. Project Co-Directors for Transcend, [redacted] and [redacted], will lead grant management, implementation, and reporting. [redacted] brings over 20 years experience in education evaluation and research and 10 years experience managing and implementing seven large-scale federal grants including two SEED, three EIR/i3 mid-phase, and two EIR/i3 expansion grants. [redacted] has over 15 years experience building and leading top-performing teams; she has spent the past four years leading the partnership with Van Ness ES to develop the SWBM model. She is a subject matter expert in the social and emotional learning skills and competencies needed by adults and students to create learning environments where every individual thrives.

C1. Management plan, activities, defined responsibilities, and timelines (Exhibit 3)

Exhibit 3: Activities/Milestones	**Respon. Party***	**Years**** (1=Cohort 1; 2 = Cohort 2)				
		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5

*Roles: Project Co-Directors (PD), Project Lead (PL), Coaches (C), External Evaluation Team (EE) ** Years: Y1=2022, Y2=2023, Y3=2024, Y4=2025, Y5=2026						
Hire staff to build out a strong team	PD, PL	X				
Establish grant management team, meeting cadence, & regular reporting	PD, PL	X				
Recruit/confirm individual schools (MOU)	PD, PL	1	2			
Finalize study design & revise instruments	EE	X	X			
Initiate IRB review & district research applications	PD, EE	X				
Implement Phase 1 Program (Ignite the conditions and coalition for the SWBM)	PD, PL, C	1	2			
Form a design team to guide the work & share with school community	PD, PL	1	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2	
Regularly engage students, family, & educators	PD, PL	1	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2	
Assess current status through empathy journeys & inspiration visits	PD, PL, C	1	2			
Share SoLD & SEL content	PL, C	1	2			
Build trust through consistent touchpoints & articulate a clear case for change	C	1	2			
Implement Phase 2 Program (Advance the SWBM)	PL, C		1	2		
Provide professional learning focused on adult mindsets, bias, & self-regulation	PL, C		1	2		
Learn about & ensure consistent use of specific SEL practices	PL, C		1	2		
Select early adopter teachers to pilot CARE in 3-5 classrooms for a semester & facilitate sharing between pilot teachers & full staff	PL, C		1	2		
Implement Phase 3 Program (Spread the SWBM)	PL, C		1	1, 2	1, 2	
Implement CARE, Boost, & Family Circle	PL, C		1	1, 2	1, 2	

programs schoolwide						
Deepen educators knowledge of SoLD & SEL including onboarding new staff to support whole child development	PL, C		1	1, 2	1, 2	
Implement Phase 4 Program (Sustain the SWBM)	PD, PL, C				1	1, 2
Continue to build conditions & educator knowledge	PL, C				1	1, 2
Support fidelity of program schoolwide	PL, C				1	1, 2
Convene stakeholders & share feedback to adjust implementation	PD, PL, C				1	1, 2
Implement regular structure for program implementation (annual summer institute and site visits, monthly convenings and PL, and bi-weekly coaching)	PD, PL, C	1	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2	2
Collect school-level data, including baseline & match schools	EE	1	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2
Collect teacher rosters & retention outcomes	EE	1	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2
Conduct pilot, annual site visits, & interviews	EE	1	1	1, 2	1, 2	2
Administer and analyze teacher survey	EE	1	1, 2	1, 2	1, 2	2
Share learnings with the field	PD, PL				1	1, 2
Monthly Reporting	EE	X	X	X	X	X

C2. Qualifications and relevant training/experience of key project personnel Key personnel have relevant experience in large-scale federal grant management, rigorous evaluation, and the core project components needed for building inclusive learning environments (Exhibit 4).

Exhibit 4: Key Personnel	Relevant Experience
Transcend Project Co-Director (PD)	Extensive experience leading teams in the planning and implementation

[redacted]	of SEL-focused school redesign, including 4 years of direct experience in building and implementing the SWBM.
Transcend Project Co-Director (PD) [redacted]	10+ years experience managing and implementing large-scale federal grants focused on seamlessly integrating SEL skills and competencies into teacher practices and student experiences.
Transcend Project Lead (PL) [redacted]	Former school leader with extensive experience in innovative and equitable school redesign, leadership development, and change management in urban schools serving low-income students of color.
SRI External Evaluation (EE) Co-Directors [redacted] and Implementation Study Lead [redacted]	Extensive experience leading complex, multiyear mixed-methods program evaluations; expertise in experimental and quasi-experimental designs and advanced methods for estimating impacts of interventions on students and teachers; and research focused on positive youth development and adolescent academic and social development.

C3. Extent to which costs are reasonable in relation to objectives, design and potential significance of the project Several factors contribute to the SWBM as a cost-effective approach to meaningfully impacting students' developmental progress and academic learning. First, schools have money to redirect. It is well documented that schools spend billions each year (an estimated $18K teacher/year) on professional development that fails to substantively change classroom practices or results for students.[22] This finding, the reauthorized Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, which requires that all schools measure non-academic skills), and the ensuing funding infusion via the American Rescue Plan provide an opportunity to redirect

funding towards more effective models. As stated by SoLD Alliance, "Our nation must address the effects of overlapping crises, including the ongoing COVID pandemic, longstanding racial injustices, and challenging economic conditions. Our goal must be not only to respond to current crises and accelerate learning, but to transform our education systems to….establish equitable, whole-child learning environments that can accelerate COVID recovery, improve education equity, and redesign education systems such that all students can thrive."[23] The SWBM offers an integrated and cohesive approach to improving adult well-being, student SEL skills and competencies, and student learning for reasonable costs. [redacted]

C4. Adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement of grant operations This project will ensure continuous improvement of grant operations and implementation through two strategies. Strategy 1) Transcend will define a grant management team consisting of key leadership across partner organizations (LEAs, SRI, and Transcend program, impact and budget teams). Through reporting and meeting structures, this team will have consistent touch points across different levels of the grant. Reporting and meetings will focus on updates for implementation, evaluation, budget, and management that define bright spots, barriers, and next steps. See Exhibit 5 for continuous improvement structures. Strategy 2) To support smooth grant operations, feedback loops will ensure continuous improvement of implementation. Research and design (R&D) in the form of ongoing feedback loops is built into the DNA of the SWBM through rigorous, user-centered, and evidence-based processes to develop, test, codify, and spread local adaptations. As part of the model, a series of embedded

R&D cycles identify the outcome we are trying to influence, the main hypotheses we are seeking to test, and the data we will use to assess our progress and adjust course. For instance, we will identify the set of experiences and types of support we think students need in order to reach specific outcomes and identify the interim data we will use to determine whether our approach is effective or how it needs to be adjusted. This will happen on large and small scales. On a small scale, this might look like using post-session data to test whether a particular approach to practicing a new skill, such as identifying the most likely cause of a child's behavior, is effective in helping teachers do it on their own. On a larger scale, we use observation rubrics and teacher interviews to test whether group training and 1:1 coaching enables teachers to implement Tier 1 best practices with integrity and use this data to refine and evolve our approach. See Exhibit 5.

Exhibit 5: Meeting Type (Participants)	Meeting Purpose
Annual convenings (District and school leadership and design teams, Transcend grant team,* SRI team)	Each year, school and district stakeholders will meet with Transcend and SRI to review learnings and plan adjustments for the next year
Quarterly stepbacks (School design teams, Transcend grant team, SRI team)	Each quarter, Transcend staff, school design teams, and SRI will share updates, learnings, and align plans for upcoming quarter
Quarterly ED check-ins (ED program officer, Transcend grant team)	Each quarter, Transcend staff will check in with our Education Department program officer to share updates, learnings, and hotspots

Monthly site meetings and reports (Transcend grant team and SRI team)	Each month, Transcend teams will meet with SRI and each school team to share updates, forecast upcoming evaluation activities, and coordinate / SRI will submit monthly evaluation updates
*Transcend grant team consists of Co-PDs, impact, budget, and program staff.	

D. Quality of the Project Evaluation Transcend Education will contract with SRI to conduct an independent evaluation of the SWBM to assess its implementation and estimate its impact on teachers and students. The proposed evaluation features a QED-- comparing schools that have adopted the SWBM with similar, but non-SWBM, schools in the same districts. This evaluation should **demonstrate impact based on moderate evidence, as the study sample will include 6,320 students from 40 schools across two site study sites.** SRI will provide annual feedback on implementation and will estimate the impact of the SWBM on teachers and students in each phase of implementation, from piloting (Phase 2) to sustainability (Phase 4).

The evaluation will address two areas of impact: Main (confirmatory) Impact and Implementation Impact. For Main Impact, we are interested in the following questions, does schoolwide adoption of the SWBM result in: (1) improved teacher engagement, SEL efficacy, and commitment to educating all students?; (2) improved retention of fully-certified, experienced teachers?; (3) improved student achievement in math and ELA?; (4) improved student SEL competencies (perseverance, self-efficacy, self-management, social awareness)?; (5) improved student behavior?; (6) improved school-level outcomes (SEL supports and environments, staff-family relationships, staff-leadership relationships, parent communication and satisfaction)?; and (7) do these impacts differ by student, teacher, or school characteristics? Our Implementation

Impact questions center around whether the core components of the SWBM are implemented with fidelity across classrooms within schools?; and how implementation differs within and across schools and sites?

D1. Extent to which methods will produce evidence that meets WWC standards SRI's main impact analysis is designed to meet WWC group design standards with reservations. The first cohort of 10 treatment schools will begin Fall 2022 and the second cohort of 10 schools begins Fall 2023. SRI will match these 20 schools with 20 comparison schools within the same districts, using baseline school-level measures of student demographics (e.g., % free and reduced-price lunch, % of historically underserved students); ELA and mathematics achievement on state assessments (e.g., % of students scoring basic and above or proficient and above, accountability rating); and school and student SEL measures derived from the Panorama/student experience surveys administered annually in each district. We will use a combination of specific variable matching and Mahalanobis matching (combining all variables) to select a comparison school for each treatment school. SRI will estimate the impact of the SWBM on teacher and student outcomes after 2 and 3 years of implementation (during Phase 3 and and Phase 4 respectively), combining cohorts across years to maximize sample size. SRI will also estimate impact after the pilot phase (1 year after baseline) in pilot classrooms as an interim exploratory analysis.

All planned teacher and student measures are deemed eligible outcomes under the WWC review protocols for Supportive Learning Environment Interventions, v4.0 and Teacher Excellence, v4.0. To ensure student and teacher analytic samples do not include joiners, SRI will identify those samples at baseline by collecting rosters from the spring prior to the start of the intervention and in the fall of the intervention's first year. SRI will use school-, teacher- and student-level baseline outcome measures and matching variables to establish baseline

equivalence and will include those measures in impact models to control for any remaining differences and increase precision.

SRI will estimate the SWBM impact on teachers and students for the first time at the end of the Phase 2 pilot in 3-5 classrooms. All teachers and students in SWBM pilot classrooms will be included in this initial outcome analysis. For the evaluation's main impact analysis during Phases 3 (schoolwide implementation) and 4 (sustaining), all teachers in treatment and matched comparison schools and all students in grades 3-5 will be included in the teacher and student impact analysis, respectively. All outcome data will be drawn from extant datasets maintained by the study districts and collected identically across sites for both treatment and control conditions. Student outcomes will include state standardized assessments of math and ELA achievement, SEL measures from the Panorama student survey, and student disciplinary data archived in district databases (e.g., in-school and out-of-school suspensions). Teacher outcomes will include retention in school and staff engagement and SEL efficacy measures from the Panorama teacher survey. School-level outcome measures (SEL supports and environments, staff-family relationships, staff-leader relationships, parent communication and satisfaction) will be derived from the Panorama student, staff, and family surveys.

Impacts on students: SRI will collect annual student-level test scores on state assessments in math and ELA from Spring 2022 through Spring 2026 for all students in grades 3-5. SRI will collect student-level SEL measures at the same time, drawing on extant student-level annual Panorama Education survey data from study districts. The Panorama survey measures perseverance, self-management, self-efficacy, and social awareness range in reliability from .73-.84 (see Appendix J). To assess outcomes on behavior, SRI will collect disciplinary data from study districts and measures of student engagement from the Panorama survey. S*ample:* The

analytic sample for the confirmatory impact analyses will include all students in grades 3-5 in the study schools in 2023-24 for Cohort 1 and in 2024-25 for Cohort 2, who are in the school in grades 1 to 3 at baseline right before the intervention starts. *Analysis:* School-level test scores and SEL measures by grade from Spring 2022 and 2023 will serve as the baseline for Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 schools separately. Student-level test scores and SEL measures in the baseline year will also be available for 5th grade students. The same measures from Spring 2024 and Spring 2025 will be the outcomes estimating SWBM's impact after 2 years of implementation for Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 schools respectively (Spring 2025 and Spring 2026 will be the outcomes after 3 years of implementation), with the data pooling across sites. The analysis will posit a two-level hierarchical model with student and school levels, with SWBM program impacts estimated at the school level. Additional models will add interaction terms to examine the potential differential impact of the SWBM on different students and schools (see Appendix J for detail). *Power:* The minimum detectable effect size (MDES) is 0.21 for math/ELA achievement, and 0.29 for SEL and behavioral student outcomes, assuming 158 students per school in 40 treatment and comparison schools across sites (with half in treatment, see Appendix J for additional assumptions).

Impacts on teachers: Teacher outcomes will be derived from Panorama Education's teacher survey assessing teacher engagement, SEL efficacy and professional learning in SEL, and beliefs about students (see Appendix J for detail). Independent researchers at the REL Mid-Atlantic have validated Panorama's teacher surveys in DCPS and determined they meet commonly accepted criteria for reliability and validity.[25, 26] *Sample:* SRI will collect data from Panorama Education's teacher survey in Spring 2022 through Spring 2026 from the two districts for all study schools. *Analysis:* SRI will analyze the impact of the SWBM on teacher outcomes

after 2 and 3 years of implementation, using Spring 2024 through Spring 2026 Panorama survey measures as the outcome after 2 and 3 years of implementation for Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 teachers respectively, and their corresponding Spring 2022 and Spring 2023 survey measures as the baseline. SRI will pool data across sites to conduct the impact analysis. We will posit a two-level hierarchical model with teacher and school levels and with the treatment effect estimated at the school level (see Appendix J). *Power:* The MDES for teacher outcomes is 0.33, assuming an average of 19 teachers each in 40 schools (with half in treatment, see Appendix J for additional assumptions).

Impacts on schools: School outcomes will be derived from the Panorama student, teacher, and family surveys that measure school SEL environments and supports, family communication, staff-family relationships, and staff-leader relationships (see Appendix J for detail). We will posit the same HLM models as described above for school outcome measures derived from student and teacher surveys, and will posit a similar HLM model with outcome measures from the family survey. The MDES for school outcomes is 0.29 for student and family survey measures, 0.33 for teacher survey measures, assuming 158 students, 158 parents, and 19 teachers in each of the 40 schools.

D2. Extent to which methods will permit assessment of progress to outcomes The proposed evaluation is designed to measure implementation of the project's key components, mediators, and outcomes as depicted in the logic model, also in Appendix G. SRI will collaborate with Transcend staff to specify meaningful and measurable indicators of key program components and thresholds for high, medium, and low implementation fidelity for each that are aligned with the intervention's design principles (see Exhibit J4.1 in Appendix J for a representative selection of indicators aligned to program components). Data sources for measures of implementation

fidelity include teacher surveys administered to staff in treatment and comparison schools in each year of the study and program records (e.g., training attendance records, school redesign team meeting minutes). Differences between treatment and comparison groups on key survey measures will allow the study team to assess the extent to which teachers' experience of the SWBM differs from teachers' experience under business-as-usual conditions. See Appendix J for detail on data sources and analysis.

SRI will conduct site visits to treatment schools in the four study years (2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25, 2025-26) to examine how the SWBM is implemented in different district and school contexts. Site visits will support formative feedback to Transcend to supplement implementation fidelity analysis. SRI will visit a purposive sample of four treatment schools each year, representing both high- and low-fidelity implementation based on survey data and program lead recommendations. Within each, SRI will interview principals, design team members, and a sample of up to 6 teachers of core content areas who are implementing the SWBM strategies in their classrooms. SRI will also interview district leaders supporting the SWBM implementation. See Appendix J for a description of qualitative research methods.

Formative Reporting to Transcend and Partner Sites: SRI will analyze and report implementation integrity measures for all participating schools in each year of the 4-year study. This fidelity reporting, coupled with the site visits described above, will form the basis of the evaluation's annual formative reporting to Transcend partner sites, supporting mid-course corrections in program design and delivery and informing efforts to codify and replicate the model beyond the grant period. In addition to supporting annual reporting on implementation to site-level stakeholders and participating in annual stakeholder engagement meetings, SRI will prepare a formative memo for Transcend after each round of site visits. Findings from this

qualitative analysis will be used to interpret and explain implementation fidelity measures and to guide replication of the model after the grant period.

Assessment of Progress toward Outcomes: SRI will estimate the impact of the SWBM model on the full set of target outcomes at key milestones in the multi-year intervention, with Year 1, 2, and 3 of the implementation corresponding to the end of Phase 2 (pilot in a subset of classrooms), the mid-point of Phase 3 (schoolwide implementation), and the mid-point of Phase 4 (sustaining the intervention). Reporting on outcomes in early phases, including the pilot phase, will serve as an early indication of progress toward outcomes at the end of the grant period.

D3. Potential contribution to increased knowledge of the field Prior research has demonstrated teachers and other school staff play a powerful role in creating learning environments that support students' SEL learning, engagement, and sense of well-being in school.[27, 28] Interventions contributing to this evidence base have targeted individual teachers and classrooms, relying on tightly specified or "point solution" approaches to creating supportive learning environments. However, additional research suggests that systemic, schoolwide SEL approaches create maximally supportive learning and development contexts,[29] although effective schoolwide adoption of SEL practices is more difficult to implement and sustain. In the proposed project, Transcend offers a cohesive research-based model to support the implementation of SEL practices schoolwide in a unique community-driven approach. In the school redesign process that is at the heart of the SWBM, educators establish a strong foundation based on awareness, knowledge, and conviction leading to a powerful coalition for implementation that is potentially more effective—and more lasting—than interventions targeting individual teachers. The proposed evaluation offers a test of a schoolwide approach to SEL programming that acknowledges the importance of collective action by all school staff.

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