

**Early-Phase Competition Absolute Priority 4 (SEL)
The School District of Philadelphia
S411C220120**

**Relationships First: Scaling up a multi-tiered schoolwide restorative approach in the
School District of Philadelphia**

Applicant Name: The School District of Philadelphia

Project Title: Relationships First: Scaling up a multi-tiered schoolwide restorative approach in the School District of Philadelphia

Type of Grant Requested: Early-Phase

Absolute Priorities the Project Addresses: (select all that apply)

Absolute Priority 1—Demonstrate a Rationale (Early), Moderate (Mid), Strong (Expansion)

Absolute Priority 4-- Field-Initiated Innovations— Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs

Competitive Preference Priorities the Project Addresses: (select all that apply)

Competitive Preference Priority 1—Promoting Equity

Competitive Preference Priority 2-- Addressing the Impact of COVID-19

Total Number of students to be served by the project: 40,000 students in 72 schools

Grade level(s) to be served by the project: K-12

Your definition of high-need students: Students whose personal and/or family circumstances have been negatively impacted by marginalization, structural racism, and/or economic inequity.

Proposed project & activities: The project will scale up and rigorously evaluate Relationships First (RF), a multi-tiered school-wide restorative practices model, in the School District of Philadelphia (SDP). The project will implement RF to 72 SDP schools (18 schools per year over four years) during a five-year project period from January 2023 through December 2027.

Summary of project objectives and expected outcomes: By fundamentally shifting relationships among and between adults and students in schools through a multi-tiered, school wide restorative model, RF aims to create a more positive and equitable school climate and improve a range of student disciplinary, academic, and SEL outcomes. The RF evaluation activities aim to establish the efficacy of RF in improving school climate and student and teacher outcomes and to identify factors affecting RF's implementation fidelity and sustainability.

Describe how the proposed project is innovative: RF responds to prior research by combining: 1) a restorative practices model that focuses on racial equity, acknowledging trauma, adult and student buy-in, youth leadership, and systems change, with 2) a relationships-focused approach to multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS). RF was developed by SDP based on research and practitioner insights about the shortcomings of other restorative-practices and MTSS approaches.

Related studies and/practice: There is no prior research on Relationships First. Its approach is supported by emerging research on restorative practices in schools (e.g. Augustine et al., 2018) and strong evidence of the impacts of MTSS (Bradshaw et al., 2021; Scott et al., 2019)

Proposed implementation sites: Elementary, middle, and high schools in SDP.

Partnering Organizations: SDP (including multiple departments), Research for Action.