

**Mid-Phase Competition Absolute Priority 4 (SEL)
The Curators of the University of Missouri Special Trust
S411B230031
Prosocial and Active Learning (PAL) Classrooms 2.0**

Applicant Name: Curators of the University of Missouri

Project Title: Prosocial and Active Learning (PAL) Classrooms 2.0

Type of Grant Requested: (select one) Early-Phase Mid-Phase Expansion

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

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

Absolute Priority 2-- Field-Initiated Innovations—General

Absolute Priority 3-- Promoting STEM Education

Absolute Priority 4-- Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs

Absolute Priority 5-- Educator Recruitment and Retention

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

Competitive Preference Priority 1— Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners

Competitive Preference Priority 2—Supporting a Diverse Educator Workforce and Professional Growth to Strengthen Student Learning* (FOR EARLY-PHASE AP5 APPLICANTS ONLY)

Total number of students to be served by the project: 25,200 students

Grade level(s) to be served by the project: 6-8th grades

Definition of high-need students: High poverty, rural

Brief description of project activities: Prosocial and Active Learning (PAL) Classrooms 2.0 will provide professional development (PD) to support middle school educators' capacity to promote prosocial behavior in students in 80 predominantly high-poverty and/or rural schools (serving roughly 25,200 students). Prosocial behavior refers to behavior that benefits others and promotes harmonious relationships. Prosocial students are more likely to have social and academic success, and their teachers are less likely to experience stress and burnout. This addresses a pressing national challenge that student verbal abuse and disrespect toward teachers has risen over the past 20 years. PAL Classrooms 2.0 will give educators the tools they need to address this challenge in positive ways.

Participating schools will each form a school-level team responsible for implementing prosocial education strategies. All teachers in the building will participate in 6 days of PD and receive support from an in-building teacher-leader. Teacher-leaders will receive 3 additional days of PD to support mentoring their peers. Administrators will receive 3 days of PD focused on understanding prosocial education. A pilot study in Year 2 will be followed by a randomized experiment in Year 3 with the waitlist control group receiving treatment in Year 4.

Summary of project objectives and expected outcomes: PAL Classrooms 2.0 aims to improve students' prosocial behavior, reduce disciplinary incidents, improve teacher-student relationships and school climate, and increase academic engagement and achievement. PAL Classrooms 2.0 also aims to increase teachers' use of prosocial education strategies (i.e., use of praise and inductive discipline, positive teacher-student relationships, and emotional support to students), increase self-efficacy, reduce burnout, and improve retention.

Summary of how the project is innovative: PAL Classrooms 2.0 builds on a successful early-phase project that focused on increasing prosocial behavior among students in 5th grade math and science classrooms. The proposed mid-phase project will use a similar PD model but extend it to (a) middle schools, (b) including all subjects, (c) in multiple states, and (d) using a whole-school (rather than individual-teacher) approach. We will increase implementation fidelity by providing PD to school administrators and a specially trained teacher-leader who will mentor other teachers at each building.

We will support sustainability by implementing a train-the-trainer model in Year 5 in which certified teachers can serve as district-level trainers of PAL Classrooms 2.0.

Other studies related to the proposed project: The team are experienced in providing PD, having a WWC endorsement of “strong evidence of effectiveness” in a prior study (Meyers et al., 2015). The co PI has written a book for teachers “Designing a Prosocial Classroom” published by Norton. The prosocial education strategies have strong research support, as summarized in the narrative and Appendix G. Preliminary analysis, as-yet-unpublished, of an RCT indicates a significant improvement for the intervention group for almost all objectives compared to the control group, with an effect size of .14 on state achievement tests.

Proposed implementation sites: Middle schools in Central U.S. (e.g., Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas)

Organizations partnering with this project: eMINTs National Center, Prosocial Development and