

**Early-Phase Competition Absolute Priority 4 (SEL)  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
S411C230165**

**Strengthening Social-Emotional Learning in High Schools with Integrated Multi-Tiered Mindfulness Programming**

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**Applicant Name:** Desiree W. Murray

**Project Title:** Strengthening Social-Emotional Learning in High Schools with Integrated Multi-Tiered Mindfulness Programming

**Type of Grant Requested:**  Early-Phase

**Absolute Priorities:**

Absolute Priority 1-Demonstrate a Rationale

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

**Total number of students to be served by the project:** 4800

**Grade level(s) to be served by the project:** 9th-12th

**Definition of high-need students:** students of color; students who are first generation to attend postsecondary education

**Brief description of proposed project, including project activities:** This project will further refine, implement, and test the efficacy of a multi-tiered mindfulness-based social-emotional learning (SEL) program led by school counselors. We will initially pilot the program in 4 schools, developing new components and making data-based refinements to enhance implementation. Then the fully developed program will be delivered to two cohorts of 10 schools each, half of whom will serve as wait-list controls. The Education Policy Initiative at Carolina (EPIC) team will conduct an independent evaluation of the impact of MTBC on teachers and students using surveys and administrative records within a randomized controlled design meeting What Works Clearinghouse criteria without reservations. Mixed methods will examine program implementation and educator capacity for SEL.

**Project objectives and expected outcomes:** The Multi-Tiered Be CALM (MTBC) program is expected to improve college readiness for underrepresented high school students who are dual-enrolled in college classes, including those who attend Early College High Schools (ECHSs). Specific project objectives are to 1) Further develop, refine, and evaluate implementation of core components of MTBC, 2) Build capacity of ECHS staff to implement the program, 3) Demonstrate the effectiveness of MTBC for enhancing teacher wellbeing, SEL competencies and school climate in intervention vs. comparison schools, 4) Demonstrate effectiveness of MTBC for promoting emotional wellbeing, SEL competencies, and college readiness for students in intervention schools relative to comparison school students, and 5) Prepare for scaling the MTBC program into traditional high schools to support dual-enrolled students.

**How the proposed project is innovative:** First, the project builds SEL competencies through mindfulness, which may be uniquely well-suited to address stress-related challenges experienced by students as well as teachers. Second, it focuses explicitly on building educator capacity for SEL, which is critical for implementation but often overlooked in existing programs. Third, we leverage school counselors' SEL leadership skills to integrate and coordinate multi-tiered SEL lacking in high schools.

**Other studies and/practice related to the proposed project:** 1) Mindfulness-Based Relationship Education Programming for Adolescents (90ZD0023-01-00). 2) Integrating mindfulness into school counseling to enhance resilience for adolescents in the context of stress (R305A230390)

**Proposed implementation sites (and partnering organizations):** EPIC Evaluation team; rural North