

PROJECT ABSTRACT

The Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) requests a \$392,704 12-month grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Preschool Pay for Success Feasibility Pilot to determine the viability of using a Pay for Success (PFS) approach to improving early learning outcomes through the enhancement and expansion of high-quality preschool services within Santa Clara Unified School District (SCUSD) in Santa Clara County, California. This study will provide rigorous analysis of the feasibility of expanding and enhancing the existing California State Preschool Program (CSPP) in a diverse, representative, school district – potentially demonstrating that this program could be replicated in other districts.

The goal of Strong Start Pay for Success (S2P4S) is to conduct a feasibility study that determines the viability of using a PFS approach to expand and expand the SCCOE CSPP program in SCUSD, improving early learning outcomes and student success.

The related objectives for the 12-month period are: (1) To create an outcomes-based accountability system that directs outcome payments to the most effective preschool programs; (2) To encourage service providers, government agencies, and investors to develop a structure where effective, high-quality preschool programs are brought to scale; (3) To attract private funding to support effective preschool programs, expanding access to additional children; and (4) To analyze the increase in government cost savings and societal benefits upon achieving outcomes.

The measurable outcomes for the proposed project are: (1) To publish a PFS early learning feasibility report by December 2017; (2) To identify potential outcome measures that demonstrate improved student outcomes, resulting in potential cost savings to outcome payors and general benefits to the community by October 2017; (3) If viable, to implement outcomes-

based payment contracts across multiple levels of government, securing one to two outcome payors in Santa Clara by December 2017; and (4) If viable, to identify and engage at least five local private investors to leverage funds for evidence-based solutions via PFS contracts by December 2017.

The project activities associated with the feasibility study include: (1) Planning, (2) Kickoff & Governance, (3) Intervention Assessment & Referral Pathways, (4) Data Assessment and Access, (5) Outcome Metrics and Evaluation Assessment, (6) Legal and Regulatory Assessment, (7) Cost/Benefit Analysis and Economic Modeling, (8) Initial Funder Assessment, and (9) Feasibility Report and Close-Out.

The potential outcome measures to be evaluated in the proposed feasibility study are as follows: (1) increased kindergarten readiness; (2) increased reading and math achievement in third grade; (3) reduced chronic absences; (4) reduced special education placements; (5) increased language skills of English Learners; and (6) improved social and emotional skills.

S2P4S will address the Absolute Priority by conducting a feasibility study and the Competitive Preference Priority by identifying outcomes measures across various domains including improved social emotional skills.

The following members from Strong Start have come together collaboratively to form the Preschool PFS Partnership for S2P4S: SCCOE (lead applicant and service provider), Santa Clara Unified School District (outcomes “payor” and advisor), Third Sector Capital Partners (intermediary), Urban Institute (technical advisor), SRI International (evaluator), Silicon Valley Community Foundation (advisor), and First 5 Santa Clara County (advisor).