

Chicago Public Schools (CPS)
Start on Success (SoS) Program
Abstract Narrative

A growing body of research ties the academic success of students to their non-cognitive skills development (i.e. soft-skills and social-emotional intuitiveness). Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has a high rate of students who either a) are retained at least one grade, b) unsuccessfully transition to high school, or c) drop out of school even before attending high school. It is imperative that new approaches be explored to counter these issues during the middle grade years.

The proposed Start on Success (SoS) is a comprehensive model for 5th-8th grade students and teachers to be implemented at eight (8) high need schools. Through three Pilot cycles, CPS will test and refine the hypothesis that students will improve their academic performance and enter high school ready to learn when provided with additional non-cognitive supports during the middle grades. SoS will employ a wrap-around model, offering three Tiers of social-emotional learning (SEL) that will serve all students in grades 5-8 (Tier 1 Universal), approximately 15% of students in small groups (Tier 2), and a predicted 5% for individualized services (Tier 3). CPS will pilot the program at 2 schools in Year 1, 2 schools in Year 2, and 4 schools in Year 3.

CPS is partnering with the American Institute for Research (AIR) to develop a two stage evaluation of SoS. The project will begin with a two cycle formative evaluation featuring a continuous improvement approach and iterative development cycles. The final cycle will employ a summative evaluation utilizing a rigorous quasi-experimental design. Through this study, approximately 125 teachers will be trained in the Tier 1 *Developmental Designs* curricula and activities, with approximately 3,500 students benefitting. Approximately 600 students will receive Tier II services, with another 225 entering Tier III with program partner Youth Advocate Programs (YAP). Services will be concentrated in high need areas on the city's South, West, and Southwest sides.