

Abstract

Title: Promoting Student Success in Urban Middle Schools: A Comparison of Three Non-Cognitive Approaches in a Randomized Controlled Trial

The purpose of the proposed project is to implement, evaluate, and refine three different non-cognitive interventions across two middle schools (Grades 6 to 8) over a period of three years in a high-need, high-minority public school district: Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District (CH-UH). Specifically, the project aims to provide local educational agencies rigorous and relevant strategies for enhancing non-cognitive skills through the dissemination of its evaluation results, tools, and products pertaining to: (a) program adoption, (b) program implementation, (c) curriculum development, (d) efficacy or treatment impact, (e) parent and community engagement, and (f) diffusion and replication. The three non-cognitive approaches to be implemented and evaluated within the curricula of Health and Physical Education classes are Lion's Quest – Skills for Adolescence, Youth Participatory Action Research (yPAR), and Brainology® Growth Mindset Induction Curriculum. Building on its partnership with Cleveland State University (CSU), district personnel will collaborate with researchers to design, execute, and manage the project. A variety of non-cognitive, academic, behavioral, and school climate outcomes will be evaluated as evidence of program effectiveness, including grade point average, achievement test scores, disciplinary referrals, and attendance rates. The experimental design and its innovative research agenda will provide timely, useful information to the field of non-cognitive and social-emotional learning (SEL) interventions. The estimated student enrollment at the first and second middle school is 590 and 620, respectively. A robust, sustainable system of ongoing feedback and continuous program improvement will be utilized throughout the grant.