School District 1J Multnomah County
Portland Public Schools

TUNING THE TOOLS FOR NON-COGNITIVE SUCCESS

ABSTRACT

Portland Public Schools, in partnership with Portland State University, will develop, refine, and implement a set of tools and processes with the potential to strengthen key non-cognitive skills for high-need middle school students. With a focus on a dedicated and determined cadre of teachers, results from program participation will drive positive changes in curricular tool revisions, culturally relevant curriculum content, student behaviors, and student academic performance.

Tuning the Tools for Non-Cognitive Success (T^3) builds from 25 teachers in five middle-schools to 65 teachers in fourteen middle schools. In total, over 1,000 students will be impacted by association with teachers who have been trained in the various T^3 tools and strategies. Over the three year grant cycle, the project will demonstrate the ability as well as strategies for replication. In addition, the project will provide a unique opportunity to study methodologies that integrate non-cognitive awareness and techniques at the teacher level.

T^3 is grounded by three goals:

- Produce high-quality tools and approaches to expand non-cognitive skills of high-need middle-grade students to increase student success,
- Improve participating students' academic and behavioral outcomes using these tools, and
- Distribute validated tools, strategies, and professional guidance for use in other settings.

The work of T^3 is unique due to the following factors:

- It specifically addresses the research question presented by Farrington el al (2012), looking at high leverage points identified through the literature on non-cognitive factors as positive influences on academics: *what can teachers learn and do to promote this growth?*
- Partnership with multiple GEAR UP school sites, GEAR UP teachers involved with middle school students, and GEAR UP recent history with non-cognitive studies,
- Integration of full research support of faculty and graduate students from Portland State University, expected to include researchers in the classrooms, sharing analyses, and participating on both the T^3Core Team and Advisory Committee.