

## **ABSTRACT**

Newport News Public Schools (NNPS) in VA will implement a customized and innovative student leadership development model that will immediately address non-cognitive skills for middle school students, have a positive impact on student outcome data, and will be sustainable. The proposed model, entitled *Growing Non-Cognitive Skills by Building Student Leaders: A Middle School Intervention and Research Project*, will be a quasi-experimental treatment and comparison group designed intervention involving four NNPS high-need middle schools with similar characteristics.

NNPS's goal for this project is to produce research findings that codify and improve NNPS's efforts to develop non-cognitive skills in our middle school students and to share the research findings, materials, and techniques with the wider education community, adding to the body of knowledge about non-cognitive skill development in varied settings.

Two high-need middle schools will receive an intervention entitled *iLead 21*©. The *iLead 21* model is a rigorous, problem-based learning approach that specifically focuses on high-need students and is based on situations that require students to design unique solutions. The model builds competency by addressing actual needs in a real-world environment that research attributes to a wide range of non-cognitive competencies. Two middle schools with similar characteristics will be assigned as a comparison group.

The evaluation design will provide evidence about the project's effectiveness that will meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards with reservations. The evaluation will primarily focus on the impact of the non-cognitive skills embedded in the intervention (*iLead 21*) to have a causal, measurable impact on three variables associated with school success: (1) attendance, (2) academic performance, (3) discipline.

Secondary outcomes will focus on the fidelity of implementation of the *iLead 21* curriculum and the determination of leading and lagging indicators pertaining to teacher intervention competencies and methodologies. These findings will provide a common core of knowledge relating to teacher capacity that links teacher attributes and non-cognitive skill development.