

ABSTRACT

The School District of Palm Beach County (SDPBC), Florida, in partnership with Florida Atlantic University (FAU), will conduct **Teachers Helping to Increase Non-Cognitive Knowledge (THINK)** to increase the non-cognitive skills of high needs middle grade students. THINK will implement, refine and evaluate *Student Success Skills (SSS)*, a K-12 evidence-based model that helps students develop key non-cognitive, social, learning, and self-management skills through Classroom and Small Group components (*Absolute Priority 1*). The program will be implemented in six high poverty, high minority middle schools and serve over 15,520 high needs students (*Absolute Priority 2*). English Language Arts teachers will be trained in the SSS Classroom component while professional school counselors will be trained in the SSS Small Group component. THINK will also validate the 15-item *Protective Factor Index (PFI)* assessment rubric, thereby providing a brief assessment of non-cognitive skill development.

In order meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards with reservations, the project will be evaluated using a cluster-randomized design in which schools will be randomly assigned to either treatment or control conditions to determine whether SSS, either as a Classroom only or Classroom plus Small Group model, is an effective strategy for impacting student achievement, behavior outcomes, and non-cognitive skill development. Objectives are:

- Students who participate in THINK will demonstrate statistically significant improvement on their reading and mathematics scores.
- Schools that implement THINK will demonstrate statistically significant decreases in the number of office discipline referrals and school suspensions.
- Students who participate in THINK will demonstrate statistically significant improvement in their non-cognitive skills.
- The Protective Factor Index (PFI), will be validated as an accurate tool to assess non-cognitive skills.