

Early-Phase Competition Absolute Priority 4 (SEL)

University of Oregon Foundation

S411C220103

Freshmen Success: Implementation of Comprehensive Universal Supports for School Engagement

Applicant Name: Dr. Kent McIntosh

Project Title: Freshmen Success: Implementation of Comprehensive Universal Supports for School Engagement

Type of Grant Requested: Early-Phase

Absolute Priorities the Project Addresses:

Absolute Priority 1—Demonstrate a Rationale (Early), Moderate (Mid), Strong (Expansion)

Absolute Priority 4-- Field-Initiated Innovations—Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs

Competitive Preference Priorities the Project Addresses:

Competitive Preference Priority 1—Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities

Competitive Preference Priority 2-- Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty

Total number of students to be served by the project: Approximately 18,800 ninth grade students

Grade level(s) to be served by the project: 9th grade

Your definition of high-need students: Ninth grade students at-risk for school dropout due to diminishing student engagement and with poor academic and behavior outcomes. Especially for students of color (e.g., Black and Latino/x) who are chronically underserved in public high schools.

Brief description of proposed project, including project activities: Freshmen Success is a research-based preventative, universal program designed to improve 9th grade student engagement and academic and behavior outcomes through the implementation of (a) a 9th grade leadership team trained to conduct data-based decision making and monitor student outcomes, (b) explicit instruction of a prevention-oriented engagement curriculum taught by 9th grade teachers, and (c) peer support from selected and trained upperclassmen. Project activities will include implementing, testing, and further refinement of Freshmen Success within 40 high schools in 10 districts in the state of Florida.

Summary of project objectives and expected outcomes: The effects of Freshmen Success on 9th grade student outcomes will be evaluated using a mixed-model Time x Condition (TxC) analysis to test differences by school condition in student gains or growth over time, with student gains nested within schools. Key student outcomes will include course completions [on track], course performance, attendance, office discipline referrals, and school engagement. Moderation analyses will also be conducted to examine differential responses to Freshmen Success based on student characteristics (e.g., student race/ethnicity).

Describe how the proposed project is innovative: The national high school dropout rate remains a major problem in schools. The harmful effects of COVID-19 are likely worsening this problem,

especially for chronically underserved students (e.g., students of color) transitioning into high schools.

Freshmen Success provides high schools with a novel research-based, preventative, and comprehensive program to improve student engagement and academic and behavior outcomes for at risk students by providing supports to each entering 9th grade student.

Identify other studies and/practice related to the proposed project: Freshmen Success was developed and piloted through a successful IES NCER Development and Innovation Project (R05A150010) using a small-scale, cluster randomized controlled effectiveness trial with positive effects (Flannery et al., 2020).

Proposed implementation sites: Forty public high schools in 10 racially diverse school districts (non- White enrollment = 37.7 to 77.6%) in the state of Florida.

List all organizations partnering with this project: University of Oregon, The University of South Florida, 10 public school districts in Florida, and SRI International.