

**U.S. Department of Justice**  
Office of Justice Programs  
*National Institute of Justice*



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## **National Institute of Justice**

# **The Comprehensive School Safety Initiative: Awards Made in Fiscal Year 2015**

**October 2015 (updated April 2016)**

**NCJ 249228**

## Comprehensive School Safety Initiative Fiscal Year 2015 Funded Project List

Project Title	Award Amount
<b>Category 1. Developing Knowledge about What Works to Make School Safe</b>	
Coping Power in the City: Promoting Safety and Coping Skills in Baltimore City High Schools	\$4,987,399
A Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial of the Safe Public Spaces in Schools Program	\$2,042,273
A Randomized Impact Evaluation of Capturing Kids Hearts	\$3,469,720
Comprehensive Approaches to Addressing Mental Health Needs and Enhancing School Security: A Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial	\$4,430,775
School Safety and School-Based Mental Health Services in a Large Metropolitan School District	\$4,993,730
Evaluation of an Intensive Truancy Reduction Program within Communities in Schools of the Dallas Region	\$4,609,701
Implementation and Evaluation of Tools for Life in Jackson Public School District in Mississippi	\$4,988,217
Improving School Safety in the District of Columbia: Evaluating the Safe School Certification Program	\$3,837,189
School Climate Enhancement and Bullying Prevention in Southern Illinois	\$786,409
Interconnecting Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports and School Mental Health to Improve School Safety: A Randomized Trial	\$4,106,951
Trauma-Informed Approaches to Improve School Safety	\$2,662,969
<b>Category 2. Causes and Consequences of School Violence</b>	
Teacher Victimization: Understanding Prevalence, Causation, and Negative Consequences	\$359,501
Peers Influence Response to Threat: Cultural Norms, Reciprocity and Self-Identity	\$638,040
University of Missouri-St. Louis Comprehensive School Safety Initiative	\$1,603,690
Understanding the Impact of School Safety on the High School Transition Experience: From Etiology to Prevention	\$849,281
When Does Rejection Trigger Aggression? A Multi-method Examination of the Multi-motive Model	\$1,619,644
Individual, Institutional, and Community Sources of School Violence: A Meta-Analysis	\$380,122
<b>Category 3. Shorter Term Studies on School Safety</b>	
A Multiple Perspectives Analysis of the Influences on the School-to-Prison Pipeline in Virginia	\$914,241
Coaching Teachers in Detection and Intervention Related To Bullying	\$999,952
Sexual Misconduct by School Employees: Policy Implementation and Effectiveness	\$445,052
Bullying and Violence on the School Bus: A Mixed-Methods Assessment of Behavioral Management Strategies	\$677,259
Suspension Practices in the Context of PBIS: Implications for K-8 Students in the School District of Philadelphia	\$883,519
<b>Category 4. Developing and Evaluating A Comprehensive School Safety Framework</b>	
Comprehensive School Safety in Atlanta Public Schools	\$7,499,668
A Roadmap to Evidence-Based School Safety: Safe Communities Safe Schools	\$6,230,136
Project SOARS: Student Ownership, Accountability, and Responsibility for School Safety	\$5,622,172
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 69,737,610</b>

## **COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SAFETY INITIATIVE FISCAL YEAR 2015 FUNDED PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS**

NIJ's Comprehensive School Safety Initiative (CSSI) is designed to produce practical knowledge based on rigorous research that improves the safety of the nation's schools and students for years to come. The initiative is carried out through partnerships between researchers, educators and other stakeholders, including law enforcement and mental health professionals. In FY15, the second year of the initiative, NIJ funded projects in four funding categories — with different expectations and requirements — to accomplish the goals of the CSSI.

### **CATEGORY 1: DEVELOPING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT WHAT WORKS TO MAKE SCHOOLS SAFE**

Category 1 awards support demonstrations and evaluations of programs, practices, policies, and strategies to enhance school and student safety.

#### ***Coping Power in the City: Promoting Safety and Coping Skills in Baltimore City High Schools***

**Baltimore City Public Schools (Baltimore, MD)**

**\$4,987,399**

This four-year project is a multi-partner response to recent and historical youth violence in Baltimore City Schools. The goal of "Coping Power in the City" is to increase school and student safety and reduce violence, discipline problems, and related mental health concerns. The project — a partnership of Baltimore City Public Schools, Johns Hopkins University, the University of Virginia, Sheppard Pratt Health System, and the Maryland Center for School Safety — is comprised of two major components: 1) a research-based preventive intervention with 9<sup>th</sup> grade students called "Coping Power," and 2) support of the Baltimore City Schools Police Force (BCSPF) in its transition to a community policing model, including officer training based on data from upgraded video surveillance technology. "Coping Power" includes clinician-led groups and individual sessions for students who demonstrate aggressive behaviors, along with separate sessions for their parents and teachers. The BCSPF component features training that incorporates: 1) mental health first aid and trauma-informed approaches, 2) threat assessment and other de-escalation techniques, and 3) youth-integrated training to increase responsiveness and sensitivity to urban adolescent development and culture. The researchers will use a randomized controlled trial with 600 students in 10 high schools — randomly assigned to receive "Coping Power" or to continue current practices — to determine the program's effectiveness in improving school safety and student mental health and reducing aggressive behavior. The researchers will also evaluate the program's impact on officer knowledge and student behaviors and perceptions.

***A Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial of the Safe Public Spaces in Schools Program***  
**American Institutes for Research (AIR) (Washington, DC)**

**\$2,042,273**

The Safe Public Spaces in Schools Program (SPSSP) in New York City public middle schools is a comprehensive school-wide program currently being implemented in New York and other cities that aims to promote caring and supportive relationships among students and adults and a sense of safety in all out-of-classroom spaces, including hallways, cafeteria, bathrooms, school entry and exit areas. SPSSP focuses on the use of consistent and firm discipline and includes components to promote a safe and supportive climate, prevent students from engaging in violent and illegal behavior, and intervene with restorative interventions. In addition to AIR, the project team consists of researchers at Rutgers University, University of Delaware, the Research Alliance for New York City Schools, the New York City Mayor's office, the Department of Education, and the New York Police Department. The three-year project includes review of the implementation, outcomes and costs. The researchers will use a randomized controlled trial (RCT) — in which 24 middle schools will be randomly assigned to carry out the SPSSP intervention or continue their current practices — to determine whether SPSSP reduces misbehavior, including violent and delinquent behavior in and around public middle schools.

***A Randomized Impact Evaluation of Capturing Kids Hearts***  
**WestEd (San Francisco, CA)**

**\$3,469,720**

Capturing Kids' Hearts (CKH) is a widely used, school-level intervention that is designed to improve the relational and conflict management skills of students and, in turn, to improve school climate. This promising model targets school safety issues (such as violence perpetration and victimization), students' connectedness to school, bonds to teachers and peers, and personal and social competencies such as self-efficacy and empathy. In a three-year study, researchers will examine the effectiveness of CKH using a cluster randomized experimental design in which 24 South Carolina middle schools with a predominantly minority population are randomly assigned to an experimental group (in which teachers and administrators will implement the program) or to a waitlisted control group (which will continue to use existing school safety practices during the study). Data collection will occur in the year prior to the implementation of CKH and two years following implementation. In addition, the researchers will perform a student-level random control study of the effectiveness of a CKH Teen Leadership course in high enrollment schools that are implementing CKH.

***Comprehensive Approaches to Addressing Mental Health Needs and Enhancing School Security: A Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial***

**Michigan State University (East Lansing, MI)**

**\$4,430,775**

This four-year study will develop and evaluate a school safety program in Genesee County, Michigan, a community with significant neighborhood instability, disadvantage and violent crime. Development of the program — which will focus on promoting a positive school climate for elementary school students ages 9-12 years — will be guided by a school-based three-person leadership team (the school resource officer and representatives from the school and mental health) in consultation with parents and students. The team will provide leadership on three key components of the program: (1) assessing its adaptation to the physical environment of the school, (2) Mental Health First Aid training, and (3) restorative justice practices. Using school system data and student surveys, the researchers will evaluate the program's effectiveness in a two-year randomized control trial in 20 schools. They will look at outcomes such as violence (fights, bullying, victimization), mental health (anxiety, referrals), and school climate. The researchers will also examine school-level effects on outcomes and perform a process evaluation and a cost-benefit analysis.

***School Safety and School-Based Mental Health Services in a Large Metropolitan School District***

**RTI International (Research Triangle Park, NC)**

**\$4,993,730**

Building on the school-based mental health (SBMH) program currently available in some Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina schools, RTI International will use a randomized design to evaluate the implementation, outcomes, and cost-effectiveness of an enhanced model of SBMH in 24 elementary and middle schools. The four-year study will begin with training and implementation of the new model. Then, the researchers will compare schools receiving two versions of the enhanced SBMH model with comparable schools that continue to operate with their current approaches to mental health. In addition to determining the benefits for students who receive mental health services, the researchers will assess student-level outcomes, including violence and bullying perpetration, victimization, and witnessing violence at school, and school-level outcomes, including school climate, perceptions of school safety, and disciplinary infractions. The project will feature a process evaluation using implementation-science principles, an outcome evaluation using sophisticated statistical modeling, and a cost-effectiveness evaluation that will offer practitioners and policymakers practical, research-based information for making school safety decisions.

***Evaluation of an Intensive Truancy Reduction Program within Communities in Schools of the Dallas Region***

**Edvance Research, Inc. (San Antonio, TX)**

**\$4,609,701**

Dallas County, Texas, has high truancy rates and high numbers of students being adjudicated for truancy in adult, rather than juvenile court. Edvance Research will work with the Dallas Independent School District to conduct a four-year study of an intensive truancy reduction program (called “CISDRXT”) administered by the Communities In Schools program of the Dallas Region (CISDR) in five middle schools. The project will begin with implementation of the CISDRXT program and then proceed with an assessment of program implementation and a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether scaling up the program is feasible. To determine the effectiveness of the intensive truancy reduction program, the researchers will compare schools and highly at risk students who receive the CISDRXT program to schools that continue to use the existing program. They will determine whether the highly intensive program improves student engagement and school connectedness, such as attendance, behavior, and grades — and reduces truancy. The goal of the study is to inform nationwide practices and policies regarding ways — including “dosage” of interventions and student supports — to decrease truancy and increase student engagement. Future studies may examine whether the program has an impact on school climate and safety.

***Implementation and Evaluation of Tools for Life in Jackson Public School District in Mississippi***

**RAND Corporation (Santa Monica, CA)**

**\$4,988,217**

Tools for Life: Relationship-building Solutions (TFL) is a classroom-and home-based program for children age 3 through grade 8 that develops interpersonal skills (such as relationship-building and communication) and intrapersonal skills (such as self-regulation and resiliency) with the goal of improving school climate and school and student safety. TFL has been adopted in over 100 schools in North America, but no rigorous evaluation of its effects on school climate and safety has been performed. In this project, the Jackson Public School District (JPSD) in Mississippi and RAND Corporation have joined forces to scientifically test the effectiveness of TFL. The JPSD has serious school safety challenges, and many students live in poverty and have poor academic performance. In this three-year project, TFL will be implemented in randomly selected elementary and middle schools (grades K-8). The researchers will evaluate the fidelity of implementation, examine its cost-effectiveness, and assess the program’s impact on school climate and safety. Multiple methods will be used to gather data on implementation and outcomes, including student and school staff surveys, staff logs of TFL use, observations, interviews, focus groups, and school administrative data.

***Improving School Safety in the District of Columbia: Evaluating the Safe School Certification Program***

**Child Trends Incorporated (Bethesda, MD)**

**\$3,837,189**

In 2013, nearly 70 percent of middle school students in the District of Columbia reported that they had been in a physical fight during the previous school year. Child Trends, the Safe School Certification Program (SSCP), the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), and the DC Office of Human Rights (OHR) have partnered to implement and rigorously evaluate an innovative and researched-informed framework to strengthen the capacity of DC middle schools to improve school safety and school climates. This four-year project builds upon an existing partnership between Child Trends, SSCP, and OHR to support implementation of DC's anti-bullying law, the Youth Bullying Prevention Act of 2012. To date, that work has focused primarily on helping education institutions develop written anti-bullying policies that comply with the new law. This project is the next step: technical assistance to help schools collect data, understand needs, and implement evidence-based programs and practices. This study will evaluate the impact of this framework on school violence and school climate by using a matched-pair cluster randomized design in which 18 pairs of public and charter schools are matched and one in each pair is randomly assigned to receive technical assistance and the other continues its existing school safety prevention practices. The project will also include an implementation evaluation to help improve the Safe School Certification Program model for wider dissemination.

***School Climate Enhancement and Bullying Prevention in Southern Illinois***

**Southern Illinois University (Carbondale, IL)**

**\$786,409**

There is a need to identify low-cost programs and strategies to prevent bullying and improve school climate in schools with limited resources and in rural communities. In this three-year project, researchers from Southern Illinois University will work with the Illinois Regional Office of Education #30 to assess the school safety needs of 55 predominantly rural schools in Southern Illinois and then identify *components* of existing successful programs that could be used to develop new lower-cost programs to target bullying. The researchers will use random control methods and pre-and post-intervention data collection from students, teachers and staff, principals and administrators to determine the effectiveness of the strategies and programs. They will also assess the implementation of an anonymous, web-based platform for reporting bullying and other school safety issues.

***Interconnecting Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports and School Mental Health to Improve School Safety: A Randomized Trial***

**University of South Carolina (Columbia, SC)**

**\$4,106,951**

The goal of this project is to improve school safety and school climate — including reducing student behavioral and discipline problems and increasing their mental and

behavioral health — by comparing the effectiveness of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to the effectiveness a system that combines PBIS with the work of school mental health (SMH) clinicians, who normally work independently of PBIS programs. PBIS is a multi-tiered evidence-based framework for preventing and reducing aggression and other problem behavior in schools. SMH provides enhanced school-based services to students with emotional and behavioral problems that may lead to aggression, disruptive behavior, and academic failure. This four-year project is the first-ever scientific evaluation of the effectiveness of combining PBIS and SMH into an “Interconnected Systems Framework (ISF).” ISF provides implementation guidance to schools on the systematic interconnection between PBIS and SMH and promotes a comprehensive continuum of prevention, intervention, and treatment. The aims of the study are to: (1) understand the differences between schools implementing PBIS vs. PBIS plus SMH vs. ISF on school discipline rates, teacher and student perceptions of school safety and climate, and reported behavioral functioning of students; and (2) determine the impact of PBIS vs. PBIS plus SMH vs. ISF on the functioning of teams, and access to treatment, quality of intervention, and cost-effectiveness relative to curbing student maladaptive behavior and improving school safety. Twelve elementary schools in two school districts, one in South Carolina and one in Florida, implementing PBIS will participate. Each school will be randomly assigned to receive ISF, PBIS plus SMH, or PBIS only.

***Trauma-Informed Approaches to Improve School Safety***

**Administrators of the Tulane Educational Fund (New Orleans, LA)**

**\$2,662,969**

This New Orleans-based project is examining the impact of trauma on students and how that affects the attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of school staff. New Orleans — a city in which many students are exposed to traumatic experiences — is one of 15 cities supported by the Department of Justice-led National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention (Forum). The five-year project brings together expertise from the Forum, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (funded by SAMHSA, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) and other experts on trauma, trauma-informed care, and school-based research. Guided by a Trauma-Informed Schools Learning Collaborative, the team will develop and implement a multi-component program in six kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade schools that primarily serve low-income African-American children. The program will include professional staff development in trauma-informed care, onsite coaching in how to use trauma-informed strategies, and technical assistance. To evaluate the effectiveness of the program, the researchers will randomly assign schools to start the program at different times.

## **CATEGORY 2: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE**

Category 2 awards support research to better understand the potential root causes and related factors that contribute to school violence, as well as the impact and consequences of school violence.

### ***Teacher Victimization: Understanding Prevalence, Causation, and Negative Consequences* University of Texas at San Antonio (San Antonio, TX)**

**\$359,501**

There have been relatively few empirical studies that examine the scope and predictors of the victimization of teachers and its impact. This two-year project will investigate teacher victimization in the preceding year and its effect on their emotional and physical well-being, job performance, connectedness to students and the school, and job satisfaction. The researchers will conduct an online survey of 2,000 teachers in public schools in San Antonio, Texas, and its suburbs.

### ***Peers Influence Response to Threat: Cultural Norms, Reciprocity and Self-Identity* University of Washington (Seattle, WA)**

**\$638,040**

This three-year project will examine how positive peer influence and cultural competence can be used to improve student responses to perceived threats. Working in collaboration with local schools and tribal partners, the researchers will survey and interview 256 students of Mexican-, African-, European-, and Native American heritage in grades 9-11 in urban and rural Washington State. The project will: (1) test a culturally informed model of peer-helping, reciprocity and influence; (2) develop measures of honor and dignity norms that exist within different cultures; (3) determine youth views on effective nonviolent responses to peer victimization; and (4) develop cultural competency curricula for both student programs and staff professional development workshops.

### ***University of Missouri-St. Louis Comprehensive School Safety Initiative* University of Missouri-St. Louis (St. Louis, MO)**

**\$1,603,690**

This project augments existing data from the NIJ-funded evaluation of the Gang Resistance, Education, and Training (GREAT) program with newly collected data from the same middle schools to explore the long-term (ten years) and short-term (three years) patterns of school violence. In this three-year study, researchers will combine data from GREAT evaluations of 31 middle schools in seven U.S. cities with a new survey of 4,000 7th and 8th grade students who attend those same schools. The new survey questions will focus on more nuanced individual, situational and school factors that are associated with school safety, including bullying and cyberbullying. The study will also include in-person interviews with some students to garner more detailed information about situational factors associated with school violence, and the parents of these students will be interviewed to provide family-level context.

***Understanding the Impact of School Safety on the High School Transition Experience: From Etiology to Prevention***

**Michigan State University (East Lansing, MI)**

**\$849,281**

The transition of adolescents into high school has important consequences for their mental health and level of engagement in school, including the possibility of dropping out. Exposure to school and community violence also peaks around this time. In this three-year project, a multi-disciplinary team of researchers from Michigan State University and the University of Michigan will examine the sources and consequences of school violence and victimization during the transition from middle to high school in Flint, Michigan, a city with high rates of community crime and violence. First, the researchers will survey 1,400 students in 7th through 10th grades to determine the prevalence, sources, and correlates of student victimization; then, they will interview 100 students every 6 months beginning in the spring of the 8th grade year and continuing through the 9th grade. These data will be integrated with crime incident data from the Flint Police Department. And, finally, a community workgroup will guide the translation of these findings into an action plan.

***When Does Rejection Trigger Aggression? A Multi-method Examination of the Multi-motive Model***

**Mississippi State University (Mississippi State, MS)**

**\$1,619,644**

Many studies have found that social rejection often precedes aggressive behavior. This “outcast/lash-out” effect has been retrospectively observed in school shooters, but it is not limited to this group. The question remains, however, what distinguishes the few who decide to engage in acts of aggression towards their peers from the many other adolescents who also experience social rejection? In this three-year study, the researchers will integrate the Multi-motive model — which identifies six key factors that could predict whether rejection triggers anti-social, pro-social or a-social behavior — with research on individual differences in the “outcast/lash-out” effect and intergroup conflicts among 1,250 students in rural Mississippi where two high schools have recently merged, providing a unique sample of students during a transition period where group-level interactions are particularly important. The students will complete annual surveys and daily diaries to measure actual and perceived social rejection and their responses. They will also participate in laboratory experiments that simulate social situations and responses.

***Individual, Institutional, and Community Sources of School Violence: A Meta-Analysis***

**University of Cincinnati (Cincinnati, OH)**

**\$380,122**

In this one-year study, researchers will conduct a meta-analysis of data to determine the individual-, school-, and community-level factors that influence being a perpetrator or a victim of violence in school. The researchers will determine which individual-level

factors are most important in predicting who is most at risk for experiencing violence at school (both as a victim and a perpetrator) and what school-level factors influence the likelihood that a student will offend or be victimized at school. Also, because schools are also embedded in a community, the researchers will examine community-level factors that are most strongly associated with higher likelihood that youth will either offend or will be victimized at school.

### **CATEGORY 3: SHORTER TERM STUDIES ON SCHOOL SAFETY**

Category 3 awards support research that can be produced within a 24-month period to inform school safety practices and policies.

#### ***A Multiple Perspectives Analysis of the Influences on the School-to-Prison Pipeline in Virginia***

**Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Blacksburg, VA)**

**\$914,241**

More evidence-based alternatives are needed to prevent the school-to-prison pipeline in which disciplinary policies and practices increase the likelihood that a child will not graduate or will become involved in the criminal justice system. This two-year study — led by researchers at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University — will draw on state-level data regarding school-threat assessments, school-climate surveys, school safety audits, incidents of school discipline and violence, and juvenile court referrals. The researchers will identify factors that contribute to decision-making that results in a school-to-prison pathway. They will also perform in-depth case studies to determine how schools have successfully avoided facilitating the entry of students into the school-to-prison pipeline.

#### ***Coaching Teachers in Detection and Intervention Related To Bullying***

**University of Virginia (Charlottesville, VA)**

**\$999,952**

Despite mandates for professional teacher development regarding bullying, research shows that teachers still struggle to detect bullying and rarely implement effective strategies to respond when it is detected. This four-year study will integrate an evidence-based teacher coaching model called the Bullying Classroom Check-Up with an innovative, highly transportable training simulator called TeachLivE. The program will be tailored to meet the needs of urban, minority middle school students living in low-Socioeconomic Status communities. The goal of the project is to increase teachers' detection and effective intervention with bullying behaviors and, in turn, improve school safety and climate. Following development of the model, the researchers will assess the implementation of the coaching model and pilot-test it using a small-scale randomized controlled trial to determine its effectiveness.

***Sexual Misconduct by School Employees: Policy Implementation and Effectiveness***  
**Magnolia Consulting (Charlottesville, VA)**

**\$445,052**

Although some states have recently updated laws related to school employee sexual misconduct, there has been no assessment or evaluation to determine potential inconsistencies and loopholes in these policies. This two-year project will examine how districts that recently experienced an incident of school employee sexual misconduct defined, interpreted, and implemented policies before and after the incident. The researchers will study five geographically and demographically diverse school districts in the U.S. that experienced employee sexual misconduct in 2014. They will conduct 100 interviews and 15 focus groups with school employees and county officials who were directly and indirectly involved with the incident to analyze the districts' policies and procedures to prevent and respond to cases of misconduct.

***Bullying and Violence on the School Bus: A Mixed-Methods Assessment of Behavioral Management Strategies***

**RTI International (Research Triangle Park, NC)**

**\$677,259**

Little is known about the effectiveness of strategies for managing student behavior on the school bus. In this two-year project, researchers at RTI International — in partnership with the National Association for Pupil Transportation — will first perform a national web-based survey of school district transportation directors about behavior management strategies used on school buses and their perceptions of effectiveness. In the next phase, they will conduct telephone interviews with transportation directors to determine how they select, implement, and assess such strategies and where they see challenges. Finally, the researchers will perform evaluability assessments in 6–8 districts where strategies are considered effective and without significant challenges to establish a foundation for future evaluations.

***Suspension Practices in the Context of PBIS: Implications for K-8 Students in the School District of Philadelphia***

**University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, PA)**

**\$883,519**

In this 18-month project, researchers are examining how the School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) initiative being implemented in the School District of Philadelphia interacts with suspension practices in the schools. The project — a collaboration between Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) at the University of Pennsylvania and the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) — will determine the effects of disciplinary practices on patterns of student suspension in Philadelphia and help the district align their policies toward SWPBIS. The researchers are using school disciplinary and suspension data and teacher and administrator surveys to develop a typology of disciplinary practices. They will then do case studies to examine discipline structures and practices in-depth. The goal is to develop policy and practice

recommendations regarding SWPBIS, which other fiscally challenged urban school districts might use to reduce suspensions.

#### **Category 4: DEVELOPING AND EVALUATING A COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SAFETY FRAMEWORK**

Category 4 awards support multidisciplinary partnerships — including, educators, law enforcement, and behavioral and mental health professionals — that will use scientifically proven school and student safety programs and strategies to develop a “framework,” which will then be implemented in selected school districts, and evaluated for effectiveness and cost.

##### ***Comprehensive School Safety in Atlanta Public Schools***

**WestEd (San Francisco, CA)**

**\$7,499,668**

Working with the Atlanta Public Schools and Georgia State University, researchers from WestEd will develop multi-pronged systems of support to ensure that the practices of school police are strategically aligned with policies and resources of schools. The five-year project — which will build strong community engagement — is designed to help students and staff understand and address perceptions of safety and support; promote social, emotional and character development; and tap into external sources of support to meet student needs. Students will be involved in creating solutions to behavioral and discipline issues, and community partners will be actively engaged throughout the project. After the framework of programs, strategies and policies has been developed, the researchers will evaluate its effectiveness, using a random control study comparing outcomes in schools in which the framework is implemented to schools that continued their current practices. A wide range of school-classroom-and student-level outcomes will be studied, including student behavior and the use of exclusionary practices, such as suspension.

##### ***A Roadmap to Evidence-Based School Safety: Safe Communities Safe Schools***

**University of Colorado (Boulder, CO)**

**\$6,230,136**

The updated Safe Communities Safe Schools (SCSS) model is a comprehensive, cost-effective school safety planning approach that integrates the recommendations of the Columbine Commission with other evidence-based programming. SCSS has three core components: (1) a multidisciplinary school design team and key community partnerships; (2) implementation of an intelligence-gathering system that collects and interprets data at the school-and student-levels; and (3) development of a multi-tiered system of supports that builds staff capacity to use evidence-based practices and strategies, which emphasize early intervention of problem behavior. On the multi-disciplinary team are experts in implementation science, systems dynamics, social and emotional learning, cultural responsiveness, bullying and violence prevention, and

mental health and trauma services. The team will implement the updated SCSS model, using a staggered cluster randomized control trial of 32 Colorado middle schools. The researchers will look at a wide range of outcomes to determine the model's effectiveness, including socio-emotional learning, collective efficacy, school climate, school safety, problem behaviors, and pro-social behaviors.

***Project SOARS: Student Ownership, Accountability, and Responsibility for School Safety***

**IRIS Media, Inc., dba IRIS Educational Media (Eugene, OR)**

**\$5,622,172**

Project SOARS — Student Ownership, Accountability, and Responsibility for School Safety — is a student-centered, technology-driven framework that develops, tests, and evaluates school safety practices, strategies and policies. Grounded in how students communicate with each other via various technologies, SOARS is designed to increase their resilience to factors that can lead to school violence, such as mental illness, access to weapons, bullying, harassment, and social isolation. SOARS is based on four key components: (a) tools that allow students, teachers and parents to assess their school's climate and evaluate how, where and why their perceptions are the same or different; (b) a student-driven campaign — based on principles of building social capital and increasing safety awareness — that promotes student ownership of school safety, (c) a web-based tip-line with training delivered via a mobile app (such as a smartphone or tablet) that encourages student responsibility for sharing critical information; and (d) student and staff training in restorative problem solving to promote student accountability for their behavior. In this six-year project, IRIS Educational Media — a company with a long track record of translating research into practices and policies — will compare a wide variety of outcomes in two SOARS high schools (one in Oregon and one in Illinois) to two high schools in which SOARS was not implemented. The evaluation will determine the impact of SOARS on teacher and parent perceptions of school safety, bullying and harassment, student ownership of school safety, including reporting concerning behaviors and their ability to use problem-solving techniques before incidents occur.

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In other school-safety research activities, NIJ has entered into an agreement with the Library of Congress in which the Federal Research Division will review and analyze federal legislation, policies, programs, grant funding and other activities related to school safety in K–12 public and public charter schools from 1990–2015. The \$335,920 project — which focuses on policies and programs of the U.S. departments of Education, Justice, and Health and Human Services — will provide an authoritative, comprehensive reference for policymakers, practitioners and researchers on the issues of school and student safety and school crime and violence.